

## **Intermediate Certificate in Systemic Child Focused Practice at IFT**

In September 2022 I embarked on the Intermediate Certificate in Systemic in the Child Focused stream at The Institute of Family Therapy (IFT). Without the funding from Foundation for PSA undertaking this course would not have been possible. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity, and the privilege it has afforded me. Having completed my initial degree in Early Years Child development, the child focussed stream was a natural choice for me. I chose to study at IFT as they are the only provider in the UK teaching the application of systemic ideas in relation to work primarily with children, adolescents, families, and their carers.

The course took place twice a month, supporting both theoretical and practical systemic techniques. I attended 18 days of in person and online training. This method of delivery supported me being able to maintain my professional role, and workload, whilst also managing health. The course aims to build on the Foundation level, to give you a well-rounded experience of systemic practice and its application to several practice contexts. The course helped me to develop and embed knowledge from the foundation degree and the intermediate. This included using reflective teams in a clinical environment which was useful for when I qualify, and as I had no experience of working inside a therapy/NHS environment. The course provided me with an opportunity to continue to examine and evolve my understanding of my motives, values, prejudices, and unique personal experiences in relation to helping others and in relation to my work with families, couples, and individuals. It supported my process of self and relational reflexivity.

Before embarking on the Intermediate certification, I completed a 15-day foundation course in Systemic social work with families. This provided me with an insight that I had been working with young people in schools, children centres and communities systemically for many years. Having the knowledge and theory to apply the values of systemic practise has embedded this further and has helped me develop this with colleagues.

Having multiple disabilities has challenged my relationship to studying, but this has also encouraged the reason I wish to train to be a psychotherapist with young people in the future. The next stage in my training will hopefully be a Masters, this will allow me to work as a Children and Families Systemic Psychotherapist within many arenas such as Local Authorities, NHS and charities sector.

A career change led me to work in a Local Authority setting with young people and families in crisis. I help to identify and collaboratively work on the Supporting Families agenda. I carry out direct work as a practitioner based in a Systemic framework setting. I work with young people on Triage and out of court disposals, the Your Choice research pilot, and systemic work with young people and families directly relating to the Supporting Families agenda. This includes but is not limited to Mental Illness, education, domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, crime, physical health. The course has helped me develop resilience. This has directly given me techniques to respond compassionately in difficult circumstances, relating to a high-profile tragic incident. Alongside my work supervision I undertook external Systemic supervision. This supported my learning, and facilitated moving through areas of challenge & strength, and what I personally brought to my role.

As a broader result of undertaking my training, I have taken part in the national Early Intervention evaluation and research relating to Systemic Practise in Early Help. I have presented at systemic training days; I help embed and facilitate social care audits and provide group peer supervision for a social work team. I also came to be one of the course representatives, ensuring feedback was meaningful and creating a cohesive student experience. The course has had such a large impact on

the young people I work with, my colleague and my personal and professional development. I am excited to study further and help foster a practise that ensures young people's voice felt heard and held. I will continue to promote life cycles, scripts, strengths, and challenges young people face, in order to foster a sense of belonging, both from a relational and systemic perspective.

In summary I wouldn't hesitate to recommend studying the Intermediate Systemic Certificate and would encourage others to apply for funding to remove the financial barriers, that may be present.