

## **FPSA Report MSc Family Therapy Year 1 2023-2024**

I would like to thank FPSA for their generous support and allowing me to complete the MSc in Family Therapy, as this would not have been possible otherwise. Embarking on the masters training has been a deeper dive into theory and integrating it into my practice. I have been busy seeing families in CAMHS and have completed 150 hours of clinical work as both lead therapist and part of a reflecting team.

Within my live supervision placement, I have been working with a 13-year-old boy who has been unable to attend school for over a year due to anxiety and his family. Our work together has highlighted how the parents' difficulties communicating without heightened emotions can increase their son's anxiety. They all reported having found our sessions helpful and noticed an improvement in their communication. In addition, the 13-year-old has started attending school for 1 hour a day, and it is hoped this will increase incrementally.

In my work in CAMHS as a mental health practitioner I have worked with many teenagers. In the last year since starting the masters I have developed my capacity to hold more complexity and risk in the teenagers and families I have supported. One adolescent girl I worked with had not engaged with therapy at all, however I was able to build a trusting therapeutic relationship with her and she disclosed her experiences of significant abuse which she had previously not shared with anyone. I also recommended she be assessed for autism, and she was given this diagnosis. This information was integral to being able to put in place the right support for her moving forward. I have developed flexibility in my approach to therapy and adapt my approach in order to best support families to bring about the change they wish to see.

My systemic training has helped me to understand more about the layers of context we all are informed by, and how power interacts within different contexts. I have deepened my knowledge of the social graces and the way understanding identity and intersectionality is integral to offering therapy that is useful for clients, especially across difference.

This year has also helped me connect more to my creativity and use creative strategies to support adolescents to feel more comfortable attending and participating in therapy. Recently, I utilised the idea of emailing a "sparkling moment" to a 14-year-old I was working with who did not attend our session. I was worried he may not return to sessions and wanted to authentically share with him all the successes I had noticed in our work so far. I was please he did return after receiving the letter.

I am frequently working with adolescents who are neurodiverse. The traditional approach to therapy, focused on speaking in a therapy room, often does not work for young people who struggle to communicate using verbal language. The first year has supported me to develop the skills to adapt my language to better support neurodiverse young people as well as increasing my use of visual aids or therapeutic activities that use movement rather than speech.

All of this work would not have been possible without your generous support, I cannot thank you enough.