

## **Course funded - Year 1 Foundation Level in Family Therapy & Systemic Practice (AFT accredited)**

Completed May 2024

Role - Clinical Lead CYP Urgent Support

During my time on the course I have developed an understanding of key underpinning theory's that influence systemic practice. Initially the introduction of social graces offered the opportunity to develop my own practice and how my own views and experiences impact the therapeutic care I provide. I found this first session was pinnacle to opening the door to my own systemic journey. In practice I became very aware of how my own graces could impact my views, but I also feel that I became a much more curious practitioner on which graces that they young person or family identified the most. My questioning came from a curious stance which developed my role within systemic thinking.

The awareness of social graces that do not influence my own day to day life so much became much more apparent especially when working with other gender and race. The inequalities and shift in conceived power was key to my own reflections in practice. The concept of power in a therapeutic relationship further than the therapist-client relationship was a new ideology that I had not previously considered. I became more aware of my own power privileges and how this could create a barrier in therapeutic relationships. The visible, invisible and voiced and un voiced resonated with me and I have certainly developed my practice to become more reflexive in these areas and offer curiosity in my own practice of how I may be determined and if voicing the un voiced is required on occasions to develop the relationship.

I have begun to challenge my own views when developing alternative hypothesis and remaining open for changes within these hypotheses. The introduction of the reflective team showed me how the team works to develop ideas and thoughts for the family to consider different views. The aim that no thought is right, and that the family are the experts in their own experiences was beneficial in my own understanding of how family therapy would come across to the family. Taking part in role play developed my confidence and playfulness within the sessions. I felt once I had tried out techniques within the sessions much more confident to develop these within my sessions with young people and their families.

My reflexive practice became deeper and initially I had always considered that I was a reflective practitioner however throughout the course I became to be able to understand some of my own discomfort with situations and recognise and accept these. Neutrality became more natural to me, coming from a safeguarding background this concept was challenging to let go of my agencies highest context marker and to develop the sessions so that they would be more beneficial to the family and young person whilst recognising their highest context markers may differ from my own agencies. The growth within my own therapeutic practice I felt was strong and recognisable to myself but also to my own colleagues.

Looking at the family cycle and how challenges and experience can change through generations brought forward an understanding of how the challenges throughout life can be interchangeable.

Using the model of family life cycle brought forward the initial understanding. Working through this it can be seen that in society today the stages can be different and due to multiple layers within a family that previously had not been so common the complexities will bring different experiences to different stages of life. Within this I was able to reflect on my own families' complexities and how the experiences of others within my family will differ from my own. This demonstrates how my reflections throughout the course has positively impacted my own views of my family. I believe that I have become more open and curious to challenges at different stages of life and considering how the episode could be determined through other family members with other aspects of their life influencing them.

Genograms have been in bedded in my own professional practice especially when looking at a family in relation to safeguarding. I found that adapting my approach to genograms and challenging my initial views of using these within practice impacted my own professional and personal practice. Developing ideas such as themes within the family I found eye opening and took this view back to my own team to utilise. I have developed my own practice to use genograms within the systemic thinking approach and explore with families' themes within their own genogram. I ensure that this is a balanced approach, and I am currently focusing upon resilience with a family as this encompasses the challenges, they are currently experiencing but also shows hope for the future. Creating my own genogram and viewing this as though I was a professional involved also developed my own understanding of my own genogram and family network. I personally have reflected upon themes within my own family. This awareness has helped my own personal development within the course.

The course has offered me an opportunity to develop my own professional practice which in turn has impacted the families and young people I care for. I have gained confidence using techniques learnt within the course in sessions solo with young people but also with families in my own agency's context. I feel this has given my approach more depth and have received positive feedback from other practitioner when sharing ideas to utilise.

Personally, my journey has developed a greater understanding of myself as a practitioner but also as a person in this world. I feel exploring the social graces especially gave me a fuller understanding of what areas of my life are most important but also influences and where these have stemmed from. This greater awareness has developed me as a practitioner and a colleague with recognition and self-reflexive practice becoming in bedded in my daily practice and sharing this with other practitioners.

During my practice I will often have a moment to consider how the session is going and if there are any barriers that may be influencing the session. I ask how young people and their families are feeling around the questioning and this has developed how I can navigate a session and ensure that the person remains the expert. My confidence in leading sessions especially with family members who are more vocal has grown and I am enjoying the technique of pausing and exploring from circular questions with family members.