

## **MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing**

**Funded for Year 2 (2-year Part Time Masters)**

**Edge Hill University**

**June 2023 – September 2024**

Thank you for the generous grant awarded by the FPSA, which has enabled me to continue to learn and develop in my career as a mental health practitioner with children and young people.

I am currently a Mental Health Practitioner within a crisis team for children and young people aged 0-16. I am a registered Allied Healthcare Professional and to further develop my skills and enhance my knowledge and understanding I completed my master's in child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing.

The course was completed part time over a two-year period which enabled me to continue to practice in the crisis response team and apply the knowledge and skills I learned to improve my assessment style, consider the ongoing formulation for the young person whilst identifying any specific needs for further therapeutic intervention.

The course covered a wide range of topics and aims including;

The impact of Trauma and Complexity on Children and Young People – offered critical perspectives and applications to practice in relation to complexity and trauma in children and young people. It explored current perspectives and theoretical models whilst considering factors that influence how children and young people respond to trauma and assess how that may impact on the process of recovery over the lifespan, including short- and longer-term impacts on mental and physical health. This module was particularly interesting as it explored current therapeutic intervention and tailored support available for those who have experienced trauma and has helped inform my practice and formulation.

Working across boundaries, wellness, and early help – these modules examined current legislation and policies relating to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. It helped to explore the influential role of wellbeing maintenance for the prevention of issues as well as risk factors associated with poor mental health. These modules also equipped me with the understanding of systems theories and practice which is included across a range of sectors involved with children and young people. It helped me to explore and evaluate the increasing need for organisations and agencies to work effectively across boundaries and services to provide the highest quality of care and experiences for children, young people, and their families.

My understanding of generational trauma, relational patterns and communication styles within families has enhanced significantly. Having knowledge-based evidence has been crucial in supporting young people and their families with safeguarding issues and liaising with social care.

My understanding of systems theory has also had a positive impact on my professional working relationships and has been a factor impacting my ability to provide systemic based interventions for families who present in crisis whilst supporting my colleagues in conversations and interventions of a similar nature.

A key component of the master's degree was the requirement to complete a thesis which focussed on overnight crisis presentations to Accident and Emergency Departments across Cheshire and

Wirral which I was awarded a distinction for the thesis and degree overall. This was a service evaluation which required seeking ethical approval from both the NHS trust and Edge Hill University whilst also adhering to the research requirements of the trust. The evaluation and subsequent statistical analysis has helped to identify seasonality trends and patterns of mental health crisis presentations in young people which has helped to influence staffing models and service provision. This has been a very rewarding and beneficial project for both the team and the wider NHS Trust. My University Professor has also provided feedback that suggests the paper could provide a significant contribution to the field.

Whilst completing the part-time master's alongside challenging professional role has been difficult at times, I am so pleased to have had the opportunity to achieve this qualification and very grateful for the FSPA for sponsoring me to do so. I wish to continue to apply my learnt knowledge and have already begun my foundation year in Systemic Family Practice. I hope to continue along this professional journey and aim to complete my intermediate level soon. This journey has been rewarding and a fulfilling accomplishment and many thanks again for FSPA's support.