

Systemic Family Psychotherapy MSc Year 1 – 2025/2026.

I have received confirmation of passing my first year of the masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy at the University of Leeds. I contacted the FPSA for support with funding the course as I would not have been able to self-fund and the ability for the NHS to fund this training is increasingly less likely. I have wanted to access this training for 13 years and so to be able to say how far I have come is incredible to me. I would not have been able to do this if it was not for the contribution and financial support of the FPSA.

The course is demanding beyond the extent of learning, it changes you in all areas of your life both professionally and personally. This is a lot to manage and navigate, so to have one thing taken care of in being able to fund the course is invaluable.

There is a saying I like which I think fits my experience of this training; 'The best view comes after the hardest climb'. Climbing a mountain is difficult and you must expect for the unexpected. I think systemic therapy is like this, it is a deep dive into human experiences that is both chaotic and beautiful. As you reach the top of the mountain everything looks different, perspective changes because your position has changed. To be a systemic therapist it is to take these different positions so that new views can be appreciated.

I work in an all-age mental health service, we see the devastating impact significant mental illness has on each family member; this training is giving me new ways meet each person and the family in their experience. Systemic Therapy holds a core assumption that the client and their family hold the solutions to the challenges they face and I have been able to see this come to fruition with the application of more effective ways to create the context which will allow this to be brought forward. The power of these assumptions reflected in the recent ODESSI trial is that families feel empowered to have authority over their own lives and decrease the overall demand and strain on services.

Working in an NHS service we are often responding to competing demands which can over time lead to burnout and reductionist views of problems and processes both in therapy and organisationally. As individual practitioners we bring our own experiences and resources to the work with families. I have been very excited to share systemic thinking with colleagues in supervision encouraging appreciation for multiple possibilities dependant on what is viewed and privileged. I am reminded that human beings are not machines that can be classified and fixed. I am being trained to sit with uncertainty, difficult emotions and to encourage all voices to come forward. I now believe that this is all information that contains possibility and hope which I try to share with colleague and the families I work alongside.

I am now going into my final year to achieve a qualification in Systemic Psychotherapy, I cannot believe how far I have come and can only imagine where this will take me next. I am very grateful to FPSA for their recognition in how access to training promotes better ways of working with young people accessing mental health services. I would encourage anyone to reach out for support from FPSA if funding is a barrier to them taking that next step.