

Intermediate Course in Systemic Theory and Practice

I am grateful for receiving support from the FPSA with some of the fees for the Intermediate Course in Systemic Theory and Practice, which I have recently successfully completed at the University of Bath.

I currently work as a band 6 Mental Health Practitioner within a Tier 3 Community CAMHS team. Understandably, much of the work I do involves working with families, parents and carers. I wanted to increase my skills and knowledge of evidence-based approaches in doing so, as I felt it was missing from my learning as a mental health nurse. Having completed the Foundation Course the previous year, which largely consisted of theory, I wanted to expand my practical skills, which this course allowed me to do.

The course was for a duration of 12 months, part-time, typically one day a month. As a requirement, we additionally needed to complete 60 hours of systemic practice, along with 10 hours of systemic supervision. The taught elements included lectures and small supervision groups, which reviewed theory and ideas from the Foundation course, as well as teaching various applications of systemic practice to different settings or client groups. One concept was around how to use systemic ideas when working in teams or with networks.

This course has certainly improved my practice; expanding my thinking and my skills to a family context, as opposed to focusing on the young person individually. It has also given me the confidence to use systemic ideas and practice when working with more than one member of a family. Additionally, I am able to draw on these concepts when I am part of network or multi-agency meetings to notice what is happening in the system that may be affecting the young person and supporting changes to be made in order to help create difference.

Not only has the course affected my individual practice but it has also expanded the capacity of the team to provide systemic work and family therapy to young people and their families. I now form part of the weekly family therapy clinic and I am able to offer systemic work to families that may need some support in thinking about their communication but not necessarily through the delivery of family therapy.

I have enjoyed the training and I am planning to continue to consolidate my learning through increased practice before deciding whether to apply to complete the Masters Course. This is particularly as much of my practice hours have been gained through virtual formats because of Covid-19, instead of being in the room with families.