

Counselling and Psychotherapy MSc Salford (Year 2) 9/2018-6/2019

Introduction

I would firstly like to thank the FPSA for their invaluable support towards financing the final year of above BACP professionally accredited postgraduate programme in Psychotherapy, which would have been largely impossible without the backing of the organisation. This academic year of the course has largely focused on the development of in-depth clinical approaches to treating mental health disorders and hugely expanded my own practical / applied skills as a Mental Health Practitioner.

The final half of the program has comprised of a comprehensive mental health for counsellors module and a research method for clinicians' component. The latter half of the programme is focused on providing a critical engagement with mainstream theories around psychological distress and a reflective space to develop our own approaches to supporting clients presenting with a raft of mental health difficulties. Alongside the academic / taught component of the programme, I have also undertaken a supervised placement providing counselling to young people within a community clinic. This has allowed me to consolidate, practice and apply my developing therapeutic skills in the direct service of young people with a range of multiple complex needs.

Rationale for undertaking the course:

There is a strong evidence base for the use of direct therapeutic support / treatment for young people, particularly within an early interventionist framework as a means of promoting positive mental health results and preventing further escalation in symptoms or personal distress. My own personal rationale for embarking on the above programme can be summed up in the following points:

- To greatly develop upon my existing experience as qualified Social Worker and experienced Mental Health Practitioner in specifically working therapeutically with young people and supporting clients with more complex needs.
- To complete my accredited training as a therapist in order to eventually specialise in supporting young people dealing with the aftermath of trauma.
- My final aim is to grow as a frontline practitioner and learn a range of new practical or 'hands on skills' in supporting young people within two frontline services.

Reflection on the course (benefits):

In terms of the positive impact on my own professional development as a Mental Health Practitioner after embarking on the course and the direct benefit for the young people that I support, I can offer the following observations;

- The programme has provided an enriching environment to gain practical skills in the assessment and treatment of mental health difficulties in young people
- It's also facilitated my own personal development and self understanding as a trainee counsellor which is a crucial step in being able to offer a safe therapeutic environment for young people to recover or thrive
- I have also witnessed firsthand the positive impact on my client work, particularly in being able to bring a wealth of knowledge and techniques, including Cognitive Behavioural therapy to sessions. This has been further evidenced by better recorded outcomes from young people and more positive end of session feedback during my sessions.

To conclude, I believe the final year of my masters programme has provided a nourishing learning environment for my professional development as a practitioner and allowed me to take away a whole host of practical skills that have greatly benefited the young people, I support in both my professional frontline roles.

Once again, many thanks to the FPSA for their support

Social Worker and EWP / Mental Health Practitioner