

I am a Social Worker and Multi Systemic Therapist. I work for CAMHS. I received funding for year 1 of an MSc in Systemic Psychotherapy at The Tavistock and Portman Clinic. This involves weekly supervised sessions with families, and monthly 2 day academic blocks. Year 1 ran from September to April 2019

I was fortunate to received funding from FPSA for my first year's training for an MSc in Systemic Psychotherapy at the Tavistock and Portman Clinic. This training will lead to a professional qualification with the Association for Family Therapy as a Systemic Psychotherapist.

I currently work in CAMHS as a Social Worker, and have been completing the course part time, alongside my full time CAMHS post. The course has involved spending one afternoon per week in another clinic, where I and a small team of family therapy trainees are supervised in seeing families. The families we see have children with emotional and behavioural challenges. The presentations are relatively low level, with limited risk, which enables the team to be creative in their approaches to therapy, using techniques such as narrative therapy, role play and solution focused approaches. The team uses a reflecting team, who observe through a screen and offer reflections in order to help guide the therapist and family in treatment.

The direct work on the course with families, coupled with the 100 hours you are required to complete with families in my work placement has help me develop key family therapy skills. These include, helping families makes sense of their experience, looking for patterns of behaviour, sitting with uncomfortable emotions, and working toward solutions so that families can sustain change within their own ecology and family system. I have found the work challenging at times, however, the learning has been incredibly valuable, as I have been required to think about my approaches to practice in new and meaningful ways. This reflexive process has involved reviewing video recordings of family sessions, live supervision, as well as group and written feedback.

There is a 2 day academic block which takes place each month, and teaches theory and applications to practice. I have found the academic side of the course incredibly stimulating, owing to its reflexive nature, as it requires you to think about your own experiences, and how these impact on your approach to therapy. This has enabled me to learn, and unlearn ways of working, and to think in new and more effective ways when hypothesising and formulating with my team as well as directly with families.

The course is very clear in its aims, which include delivering a high standard of family therapy treatment, which is evidence based and draws on theory and treatment approaches in line with the NICE guidelines. I am due to begin my final year of training in September 2019, where I will begin a research project. The first year of teaching has provided me with the skills and experience I need to begin the process of undertaking my final year research project.

I would recommend this course to anyone who wants to work systemically with families in a therapeutic setting, and who is keen to better their understanding of themselves, and their approach to therapy.

I would not have been able to complete this course, and further my career without the help from FPSA. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, and I hope that this will enable me to offer a more thoughtful and helpful service to family who experience mental health difficulties.