

SYPDT002: Systemic Psychotherapy (M6 Year 1)

I am a social worker with 15 years practice experience. I work in Westminster Children's Services.

FPSA awarded me a financial grant to complete year 1 of the systemic psychotherapy course at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. The academic year began on 26 September 2019 and ended 8th May 2020.

I would not have been able to complete the training without the support of FPSA. Year 1 included 2- day monthly teaching blocks and a weekly clinical supervision group. The monthly blocks covered a theory, clinical applications, and clinical development group. We had a chance to discuss and apply systemic theory to our work contexts and family therapy clinic. Also, I developed the self of the therapist in the clinical development group. Monthly lectures covered topics such as culture, power and gender, risk assessment, attachment and working with children and adolescents.

Additionally, I had a chance to grow and stretch my clinical skills as a systemic psychotherapy trainee in an adult outpatient unit. I worked as a lead therapist and formed part of the reflecting team alongside 3 other classmates and a supervisor. I learnt how to attend to both my inner dialogue as well as the emotions within the therapy room with a range of family compositions. This included couples, parents and children and adult family members with adult children.

Prior to M6, I found it hard to sit with the distress of children and families and would often quickly look for solutions to problems. However, I have learnt how to provide a safe space for clients to express their distress and can now sit more with my own uncomfortable feelings. This has been challenging but I have noticed how slowing down in this way, can help clients process their experiences. It has also enabled me to create a space for new conversations.

Prior to the course I was drawn to working creatively with children on their own, but I was given the chance to do this with children within their families by using a white board, drawing and role play. This included families with members with learning disabilities. I look forward to finding other ways of being playful and taking relational risks with families in year 2, when I am placed in a CAMHS setting for my supervision group.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the teaching ended as planned however my clinical supervision group was affected. It was extended by a few weeks because we had to wait for permission to see patients on Zoom. We are now scheduled to end mid- July 2020. Albeit the supervision group served as a reflexive space where I could process the uncertainty that covid-19 has brought to my personal and professional life.

I highly recommend this course and encourage you to begin your systemic journey by enrolling on the foundational level. It will enrich your practice both as a manager or practitioner.

Thank you once again FPSA, I could not have done this without your support!