

MSc In Systemic Psychotherapy; Year 3 Post Graduate Diploma

I am very grateful to the FPSA, in granting me financial support which has enabled me to undertake year 3 of my Systemic Family Psychotherapy training at the University of Derby. I am now coming to the end of the third year of the course, before embarking on the final year from September, which will lead, should I be successful, in me completing the accredited Association of Family Therapy professional training to become a qualified Systemic Psychotherapist.

I have found this year extremely difficult, but also rewarding, working within a live family therapy team which provides supervision as we deliver family therapy intervention to young people and their families referred to CAHMs for difficulties and presenting concerns such as self-harm, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, gender identity and managing anger and aggressive behaviours. In total I have worked with young people and their families for 20 hours as the Lead Practitioner as well as participating in the Live supervision and reflecting team for 150 hours. To give examples, I have worked directly with a young person struggling to be able to talk openly within the family about the emotions and underlying reasons which trigger her self-harm; and another young person who wants to be accepted and understood in terms of gender identity and the impact this has had upon the family as a whole. Without being understood and validated, the risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation was high, which was also frightening for the family. I have learned to work as part of a team in using systemic techniques with the families and being supported by the Team as well as gaining supervision feedback on how to improve my practice. I have found that my skills base has increased as is my confidence, albeit slowly, in terms of being curious, neutral, tentative; using circular, relational and reflexive questions, tracking patterns within the families communication as well as specific methods for supporting eating disorder, using the Maudsley model and Non Violent Resistance, to address aggressive behaviours within the family

The academic part of the course, involves attending the University of Derby for taught lectures on different approaches, methods and techniques and making links with theory and practice. There is also the Personal, Professional Development module which runs throughout the year to be analytical and offer critical thinking about the use of self; and applying self-reflexivity to practice.

In my Agency I also need to be able to evidence that I have used Systemic methods and techniques for 100 hours this year. For me this has been the most important element, as in learning about theory and how to relate to practice means I am able to transfer these new techniques to working within my Agency; providing systemic consultation to families and professionals as well as direct intervention with children and their carers.

As I think about moving into the final year, I am looking forward to working on my research dissertation project for the MSc element of the course, which is about interviewing young people to ascertain their views on the therapeutic experience, both in the form of evaluation of the intervention and a source of feedback to improve the service they receive.

Thank you again to the FPSA, for my funding to help me achieve, learn and impart this knowledge to the families I work with, both here at my Agency and at CAMHS.

N Herring 31/5/18