

Foundation for Professionals Working in Services for Adolescents

MSc in Systemic and Family Psychotherapy (year 1)

I would like to firstly thank the FPSA for their generous contribution towards the first year of my part-time MSc post-graduate course in family and systemic psychotherapy. This first year has changed both my personal and professional development and for that I am very grateful.

A bit about the Course

The course takes place at Exeter University and brings integrative systemic theory alongside Evidence-Based practice. The first year has included modules on ethics and power, systemic assessments and therapeutic alliance and the incorporation of other modalities to systemic practice. Written assignments, video assessments and live supervision have been essential to my development of skills and have been essential to my development when working with adolescents affected by mental health difficulties.

The course encourages learning through self-reflection and self-awareness and this is developing all the time. I consider this aspect of the course crucial in underpinning the academic learning and clinical practice.

The impact on my practice

This course has allowed me to deepen my knowledge and understanding of clinical issues impacting children and young people and has supported me to develop skills to empower young people and their families to explore a relational meaning to the defined 'problem'. Overall the feedback we receive from our trainee clinic is that young people feel more understood by family members and evidenced based screeners suggest their symptoms have reduced.

The course has encouraged thinking about ethics, power and gender, promoting anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice. The space to reflect and deepen my foundation knowledge has allowed me to practice in a way that supports me to advocate for young people with an informed understanding about their situation.

What I have found particularly helpful is thinking about nonverbal creative ways of allowing young people to express themselves and how we may incorporate other modalities in to our practice. Ultimately this allows us as practitioners to ensure we approach young people's needs in a creative and flexible way which is needs led.

Impacts on the wider team

My colleagues in the child and adolescent mental health service where I work are always interested in what I am learning, and I share with them articles and material as well as contribute to trying out new ideas in practice. With increasing concerns about the growing numbers of young people affected by mental health difficulties, and the need for services to be up to date with current research and recommendations, this course is proving to be wholly beneficial in strengthening my own resource for working with adolescents but also the team I work in. I have contributed to setting up new Family Therapy clinics with our service which can help support the growing demand of the service and ensure we meet the young peoples needs in a timely manner.

Thank you to the FPSA for supporting my first year on the MSc it has inspired me to further develop my understanding, knowledge and skills.