

Report of the intermediate level systemic family therapy practice training.

Firstly I would like to say a big thank you to the Foundation for Professionals in the Service to Adolescents, for providing the funding for me to attend the systemic family therapy course. The course ran over ten months, it consisted of 11 one-day teaching sessions, 6 one-day seminar/skills workshop days and tutorials and 60 hours of supervised systemic practice in a family therapy clinic.

The main aims of the course were to ensure understanding of the core theories and practice of the systemic approach. To gain the ability to evaluate theory critically and to explore ideas and their application to different families, to further develop an awareness of my personal development process and the ability to self-reflect in practice. To gain knowledge of skills required to convene and engage a range of client groups, using a systemic approach.

Throughout the training I have been able to practice weekly in a family therapy clinic, gaining experience of working in a systemic way. Systemic thinking and practice consider the client in context of his or her past and present family, his or her past and present team or organisation, of his or her socio-political and socio-economic setting and his or her community. Issues are seen as created and maintained by patterns of inter-relationships, rather than caused in a linear way. Systemic work focuses on communication and behaviour patterns. Issues are viewed from a life cycle or historical perspective. Resources for effective change are embedded within the context of every individual.

The systemic approach in therapy I feel helps in understanding how individuals' symptoms are related to the context in which they live. The significance of the processes within families is stressed and the wider social processes which impinge on families are also explored. It emphasises integration of the range of models that have evolved within systemic theorising including structural, strategic, trans-generational, cognitive-behavioural, and attachment ideas. It takes the perspective that relationships reflect the experiences of the particular individuals over their respective life cycles but that these relationships are themselves continually evolving and do so within a wider social system.

I have worked as a family support worker for the last ten years in different settings, ranging from, social care, fostering and adoption, children's centres and now the Children and Adolescent Mental Health service.

This training I feel has been amazing, not only I have been able to work in different clinics, I have been able to put my learning into practice on an individual level and with the families I work with both in clinical settings and at their homes. It has allowed me to see a bigger picture and use different skills and techniques to support families. This for me has been the best course I have been on. The way it was delivered was outstanding and by learning new skills has allowed me to develop my knowledge and understanding when working with

families. It has completely changed the way I think and work and I feel has made a big change to the families I support.