

Report detailing the ‘Applied Systemic Theory (D4)’ course at the Tavistock and Portman Clinic, September 2013 to June 2014

Overview

I would like to firstly thank the FPSA for the funding provided for this training. The course took place one afternoon per week between September 2013 and June 2014 at the Tavistock and Portman Clinic, and resulted in a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Systems Theory.

The course firstly provided an introduction to systemic ideas and practice, thinking about the theories and origins of family therapy and systemic ideas and how they have developed over time. It also covered more recent theoretical developments in systemic practice and outlined practical techniques and methods for engaging with families and systems as well as providing a space for self-reflection and examination of our own contexts and belief systems and how this impacts on our work.

Course outline

The course involved attending theory seminars which involved teaching on the theories underlying family therapy and discussion of key concepts and ideas. Following this we were split into application groups to think about how these ideas applied to our clinical practice and to use role play and examination of taped clinical work to explore and practice some of the techniques learnt about in the seminars. The course also involved completing a theory essay and a case study to facilitate reflection on our own genograms and ideas of difference and prejudices. The final piece of assessment was a clinical viva which involved a written piece, and then presentation to examiners.

Impact of training on clinical work

For the duration of this course I worked in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) with young people experiencing emotional and mental health difficulties, their families and the other systems around them including schools, other health professionals and social workers. Participating in this course has had a very beneficial impact on this work. It has enabled me to develop theoretical understanding to guide my interventions as well as practical techniques. It has also broadened and improved my understanding and ability to work with systems surrounding adolescents and to think about the impact of these systems on young people. It has greatly improved my confidence in working with families and not just individual young people.

I am very grateful for the funding that FPSA provided which enabled me to undertake this valuable training, which I would not have been able to access otherwise.

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