

Msc in Systemic Psychotherapy.

I am extremely grateful for the funds granted to me by the FPSA. The funding has enabled me to undertake the first year of an Msc course in Systemic Psychotherapy at Derby University. I have previously completed 2 years training to become a Systemic Practitioner and this first year of the Msc course has enabled me to take my learning and practice forward - towards qualification and accreditation as a fully qualified family therapist/systemic psychotherapist.

The course of study involves attendance at taught seminars and membership of a live training team where we deliver systemic interventions to families referred to CAMHS. There are academic assignments to be completed alongside a professional portfolio which details work done within the training team, includes a reflective account of personal and professional development and provides details of how the training informs work within my agency. The course of study also involves carrying out a piece of original research, for which I have already submitted a research proposal. The emphasis is on development of the practitioner's approach, the methods used and technique's applied to work with families. Theory and practice are integrated in all the teaching and work with families.

I have been able to apply my learning from the course both in the live training team and in my work as a social worker within a therapeutic services team in within Leicester City Council. I have been able to use systemic concepts and techniques in my thinking and practice with families where children are adopted and in foster care. For example, I have used narrative techniques in my work with a family where a young person is experiencing significant anxiety with school attendance and I have used techniques from the Milan school of Family therapy with a family where a young person has been exhibiting sexually problematic behaviour, supporting family members to increase the range of meanings they give to their and his experiences and to expand the options for action available to them. I have had the opportunity to use a systemic approach with kinship carers, resulting in the maintenance of their grandchildren's home with them and with a mother and son where the son has been disturbed by intrusive thoughts about harming others. I have run a training day for kinship carers, along with a colleague, in the planning and delivery of this day I was influenced by my training – in terms of my professional conduct, my focus on goal setting/contracting and collaboration with those attending the training. Systemic theory and techniques are becoming integrated in my interactions at work - when speaking with families, with fellow professionals and with colleagues I am influenced by systemic ideas. In my work I am oriented towards creating a relationship/encounter which opens up space for different ideas and for change.

In addition to developing my own skills and understanding I have been able to share my learning with colleagues – providing training sessions about systemic practice techniques for the team in which I am based. My proposed research project concerns developing understanding of social workers within my agency, in particular their experience of their role and relationships with families with whom they work. My hope is that this research will not only develop understanding but will provide a platform for systemic ideas and practice within the wider department.

I wish to extend my thanks again to the FPSA for their financial support in my endeavours to improve the services I provide to families.

Charlotte Jaggar (14th June 2016).