

Report for FPSA for received funding 2016-17 in MSc in Systemic and Family Psychotherapy.

Date: 20.06.2017

I would like to extend a huge heartfelt thank you to FPSA for enabling me to complete the first year of the MSc in Family Psychotherapy. The course included academic lectures, seminars and supervised clinical work in a weekly family clinic supervision group. The course is run by the Institute of Family Therapy (IFT) and accredited via the University of Bedfordshire.

I am based within a south London Youth Offending Service (YOS) as a Clinical Practitioner and these studies have greatly improved my clinical practice in working with adolescents and their families. I have applied my learning from the course in with young people with offending behaviours providing family therapy to young people and families who would not ordinary receive or feel able to engage with such a service in a different context.

The new knowledge and skills I developed have also helped me enormously in my role to support other YOS staff in their practice in working with adolescents generally and specifically adolescents with mental health problems. It has also helped further embed thinking about ethics, power, gender and promoting anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in a highly complex work environment.

As part of court directed work the young people engaging with YOS staff often form very health relationships with them. These relationships are a great opportunity to work with mental health, for example anxiety, depression and trauma informed work. However, as staff are not qualified mental health practitioner they need continued guidance and support in this difficult and complex part of their work.

A large portion of young people involved with YOS have various formal mental health diagnoses for example around ADHD, Autism, SLCN, depression, anxiety, substance misuse and so on and many sadly do not feel able to engage with any specialist mental health service. YOS staff is frequently the only professionals these young people engage with and they often constitute some of society's most vulnerable adolescent as well as being committers of criminality.

Without the financial support from FPSA I would not have been able to accept my offer to start the MSc or complete this first year's studies. As a parent and living in London the funding from FPSA was fundamental for me being able to complete these studies.