

REPORT FOR FPSA

FUNDING FOR FIRST YEAR OF MSc IN SYSTEMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY 2016-2017

Thanks to the amazing support of FPSA I am delighted to say that I have completed the first year of my Systemic Psychotherapy MSc at University of Birmingham. Without their help it would not have been possible to accept a place on a course which is proving to be exceptionally beneficial to my practice and the families I help treat.

I work in an inpatient 12 bedded adolescent eating disorder service in Birmingham that follows the NICE recommended family based treatment models. Undertaking the course has broadened my understanding of this and meant that all the families we treat have been offered best evidenced care.

As the course has a large clinical contingent, I have had the opportunity to work with a wide range of families outside of my usual setting, giving me a much richer experience of working in a systemic way and providing me with the opportunity to bring the new skills back into my practice for the benefit of the service.

As a result of being on the course I have been able to take a more leading role in multi-family therapy (MFT). We run the sessions fortnightly on the inpatient unit. It is a chance for families with similar problems to come together for joint learning, relationship building, stigma reduction and support for family members such as siblings, who can often be forgotten in treatment. The families involved in this feedback very positively and the sessions are well attended, with some families even going on to make lasting supportive relationships beyond the treatment on the ward. It is an excellent way to expose symptoms, reduce stigma and develop effective tools/strategies for dealing with the eating disorder in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. The course has inspired me to visit the research base on MFT, conducting a literature review as part of the academic commitment and discovering all the in-depth information/studies on the topic, as well as giving the team new and fresh ideas as to how we can improve and develop the sessions.

Before starting this course I was beginning to think that after 10 years, my time in adolescent services may be coming to an end, but starting the MSc has given me renewed enthusiasm and excitement for the years ahead, realising that systemic work has huge potential to provide better outcomes for families. I feel like I have found a fascinating and useful new direction in my work that is of enormous benefit to the families we treat.

My newly developed skills have also been of benefit to the team I work within; my thinking about how I lead the team is changing and different ways that I manage difficult situations and team dynamics is proving more effective. Also my enthusiasm for systemic working has been infectious, with others showing interest in learning more. I am now taking these skills into clinical supervision and using them with my supervisees, helping them to approach

their practice in different ways, looking for alternative stories and widened possibilities. This fits very well.

Again, a huge heartfelt thank you to FPSA for their crucial financial support. Without your help, I would not have been able to start this amazing, useful and brilliant course.

Marc Clegg 11-07-17