

# How my Systemic Family Therapy Training enhanced and enriched my practice as a Residential Social Worker

Karen Bowd

Residential Social worker – Short Term Children's Home (SE Trust)

Systemic Family Therapist – Action Mental Health (New Life Counselling)

# Why I became interested in the course:

- My experiences of young people being admitted in to and living within the care system...
- These young people can be accompanied by very **negative stories/labels**, That they are, '**Beyond parental control**', or '**the problem needing to be fixed**'.
- Residential team's main focus seemed to be working with **the individual young person** in the **context of the residential environment** and '**managing behaviours**' within it, attempting to understand these behaviours and then support and teach new coping techniques in times of crisis.
- This new learning was **not understood by the family** and so **breakdowns** continued to occur and **frustrations among family** members remained.



# How my Certificate and Diploma level Systemic Training helped me to:

Explore what I understand  
'Family' to be.



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Think differently about  
admissions to the home.



# Talk differently with families - Systemic techniques:

- Exceptions:

‘When is it NOT like this’?

- Circular Questions:

If ‘Jane’ was to tell me something positive about you as a Mum, what would that be?

**Manage difficult behaviours within the home and create therapeutic opportunities to discuss what may be causing these.**

**Behaviour may be viewed as ‘anger’, ‘aggression’ or ‘Kicking off’.**



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**‘REFRAMING’ to find a new meaning – ‘Hurt/sadness/scared’.**





Identify therapeutic opportunities in everyday moments within the home.....

- ‘My Mummy doesn’t love me’.



# Masters Level Training and Introducing Family Therapy Practice into residential Child Care:

## Clinical Placements

- My practice would be observed and then reflected upon by my supervisor and fellow students.
- The experience of my practice being observed and then commented upon in a safe and curious way was so empowering and challenged me further to think about how I help people, what I notice and pay attention to within conversations and what I might be afraid to ask about and why.

## Residential home

- unique position we are in as residential social workers - Observing each other's practice on a daily basis.
- Opportunities to reflect upon practice and introduce noticings into daily conversations as part of.....
- Handovers
- Team meetings
- Consultations
- Daily conversations about practice

# Safe space created for therapeutic work with families:

- Gaining so much more information for the team about the families and how they interact.
- Families voiced that they felt listened to.
- Families voiced they had stronger and more trusting working relationships with residential staff.
- Were not as concerned coming up to big meetings as they felt understood and supported in their experiences.



# My experience of the course overall:

- I had hoped to end the course as a Systemic Family therapist and look for a position practicing as such.
- What I did not expect was the greater understanding and appreciation that developed for my position as a residential social worker and the therapeutic opportunities that arise within everyday practice within a Children's home.