



Lambeth Heart of Practice Training Programme – Using Systemic approach to work with Children and Families

The Heart of Practice training programme aims to develop managers and practitioners in systemic work. We offer managers, experienced practitioners as well as newly qualified social workers training using the systemic approach for better outcomes for children and their families.

Management and Supervision Training:

This is an **8-day course**, each day of the programme will combine both a formal, didactic approach to teaching with an experiential, skills-based approach to application of learning.

Managers will be encouraged to bring their own experiences from practice to apply the concepts and ideas. We will combine this more formal, traditional approach to learning with an innovative response to 'testing' out the effectiveness of the teaching by using a live coaching model with an actor to practice the application of systemic supervision.

Practitioner foundation Training:

This is a **15-day foundation year course** which introduces social workers to a range of evidence based systemic models and considers their application in a children's social care context. Within this programme there is an emphasis on case formulation, systemic questions and reflexivity as a theory of change. Students will be equipped with a solid foundation in theoretical knowledge in systemic social work but with equal importance placed on the acquisition of skills. Students will understand the application of systemic social work practice through practice using set case studies but also by bringing in their own anonymised case work.

At the end of the programme, practitioners will be able to lead a case consultation by presenting a succinct summary of areas of risk / concern, a three-generation genogram and initial hypotheses about patterns which are maintaining family difficulties. They will be able to take a reflexive position in relation to their own ideas, inviting room for new perspectives and considering how to take ideas forward in their work with the family. A written assessment from their current work will form the basis of an assessed paper. They must complete a clinical log of 15 hours with families, 10 of which must be at least a dyad interview.

Practitioner Introductory Training:

This is a **3-day introductory course**. We have adopted Systemic Theory and methodologies as our overarching practice approach. We believe the systemic model is the best mechanism through which our values and beliefs about how social work should be delivered to families can be best realised. We believe a systemic practice approach will increase our rigour in understanding patterns of interactions within families which contribute to risk for children.



With systemic social work as our practice approach; we can competently and ethically make use of additional evidence-based tools or models which help us to be clearer about our work with children and families and direct interventions more effectively.

Signs of Safety will be used as the model for us to organise, articulate and structure our work with children and families. *Attachment and resilience theory* is a powerful lens through which to understand carer-child interactions and make sense of how relationships work in families. In addition, attachment theory and our ideas about relationships within the family help us to understand their interior worlds and make connections, so that we as social workers are able to become part of the secure base for families which we know vastly improves the likelihood of our interventions working and families being able to change. *Brief solution focussed* interventions will contribute to effective change centred on collaboratively developed goals.

Working with Adolescents Training:

This is a **1-day training course**. The course will consider what it means to work systemically with adolescents who are involved with Children's Social Care. Working with adolescents can be very challenging, and practitioners can find themselves struggling to consider the risk posed from CSE, gang involvement, alcohol and substance misuse, disengagement with education as well as intra-familial abuse and neglect. We know that these young people can quickly find themselves on the edge of care.

Domestic Violence Training:

This is a **1-day training course**. This course is designed to address the complex issue of working with families where domestic violence and abuse is present. The course will consider both the immediate and long term behavioural and emotional effects that domestic violence and abuse can have on children. It will offer ideas of how to get parents to mentalise about the impact of this on their children.

The dilemma for many social workers is trying to assess the risk to children whilst at the same time, considering whether it is safe to offer treatment options to enable change to occur.

The course will outline whether and how to carry out a safe and thorough assessment of the viability for couple work in the context of domestic violence and abuse, using Arlene Vetere and Jan Cooper's 'Reading Safer Families Project'. Positive indicators and most crucially, contra-indications for systemic work with couples will be looked at in detail. Issues of power and gender in relationships will be explored and systemic concepts such as social graces family scripts, patterns, beliefs and life cycles will be used to formulate ideas about family functioning.

Practitioners will be encouraged to think self-reflexively about how to manage their own responses to this work and to have awareness of the personal and professional impact of working in the context of domestic violence and abuse.