

## PT30 Intervene in patterns within and across systems

### OVERVIEW

This standard shows the factors a systemic psychotherapist maintains awareness of, in order to address problematic patterns and promote positive ones. A therapist engages with the system in order to help change the patterns. This standard describes therapeutic practice that has been shown to benefit families and other clients engaged in family and systemic therapy. (See reference in the additional information section on page 3.) To apply this standard, practitioners also need to take account of the multiple problems and complex co-morbidities that clients may bring to therapy. Family and systemic therapy should be offered as part of an explicit and structured approach agreed within the treatment team and with the client and the system. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. This standard should be understood in the context of the Digest of National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies. Version No 1

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

#### **Systemic approaches that enable therapeutic change**

1. the role systems can play in psychological problems and health
2. how patterns of interaction and relationships within systems contribute to and maintain psychological, social, relational and cultural problems and health
3. explanations of how changes in any part of the system may have an impact on the rest of the system
4. how members of the system make use of resources that promote resilience and maintain change
5. psychological, social, relational and cultural problems that arise from lack of fit between attempted solutions and the current contexts
6. how systems develop helpful and unhelpful patterns of interaction and meaning systems and narratives
7. how to use the members of the system and the system as a whole as a resource for the promotion and maintenance of change
8. how the therapist, colleagues and the broader professional system interact with, and form part of, the system with which they are working
9. the role of historical and trans-generational factors, stressful life events and their impact on family functioning in the development and maintenance of psychological disturbance, health and recovery

- 10. how families respond to presenting problems and become organised by them
- 11. the relationship of responses and subsequent organisation to historical and current pattern of relationships
- 12. the development, maintenance and resolution of psychological disturbance within patterns of relationships

### **Specific systemic techniques**

- 13. the theory and use of circular questioning techniques and skills
- 14. the construction of various methods of system mapping
- 15. how to reframe problem descriptions and externalising problems
- 16. how and when to use enactment techniques
- 17. how and when to use problem solving techniques
- 18. how and when to adopt a challenging perspective

### **The therapeutic relationship**

- 19. ethical, non-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices
- 20. how to form and maintain collaborative relationships in age and culturally appropriate ways with everyone in the system
- 21. how to make use of self and relational reflexivity to enhance therapeutic relationships
- 22. the impact of personal and professional narratives on the therapeutic process

### **Basic principles and rationale of systemic approaches**

- 23. the various systemic models and other related concepts and their limitations
- 24. theories of systemic change and clients' theories of change
- 25. the assumptions contained in the various systemic models
- 26. how to develop an account of patterns in relationships in families and wider systems
- 27. family based attachment theories across the life cycle from a systemic perspective

### **Systemic principles that inform the therapeutic approach**

- 28. the range of contexts in which the client needs to be viewed
- 29. how the contexts manifest and constitute the system of significance
- 30. the personal, family and cultural factors and interactions between those factors that shape the individual
- 31. ways in which people understand themselves and the world around them
- 32. the influence of power relationships and different socio-cultural contexts on the development of meaning, relationships and behaviour for the client and the therapist
- 33. the influence of varied individual accounts of the same event on relationships and understanding in the system
- 34. the influence of recursive cycles of feedback on systems and individuals' narratives, beliefs, emotions, feelings, actions, interactions and relationships

### **Risk**

- 35. the assessment of risks to individuals and the risks they pose to others in a range of settings
- 36. current legislation and local guidelines and procedures about child and vulnerable adult safeguarding
- 37. the relevant professional systems of health care, social care, local authority and

education applicable to safeguarding  
38.how to balance the risk or safety and opportunity in therapeutic interventions  
39.ethical issues of valid consent for all members of a system

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

- 1.establish the client's definition and hierarchy of problems
- 2.identify the client's successful and unsuccessful attempted solutions
- 3.identify the client's openness to changing their situation for the better
- 4.identify and respectfully highlight repetitive, unhelpful or stuck interactions and patterns of communication
- 5.identify historical and trans-generational factors that constrain, promote or maintain change
- 6.review and pause unhelpful or stuck interactions and patterns of communication and develop new, helpful ones
- 7.enable the client and wider system to talk together when you consider there to be an opportunity for therapeutic gain
- 8.practice new alternatives to unhelpful and stuck interactions and patterns of communication that:
  - 1.fit with individuals' negotiated outcomes
  - 2.offer a positive balance of costs and gains
- 9.amplify and promote positive patterns and communication that can impact on the rest of the system
- 10.seek feedback from the client about the effects and impact of the challenge and their part in it and modify your approach accordingly
- 11.consider, live and retrospectively, the impact of your involvement in the client's patterns via self-reflexivity and the use of a team and your supervisor

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard is derived from research reported in Roth, A., Pilling, S. and Stratton, P (2009) The competences required to deliver effective Systemic Therapies. Centre for Outcomes Research & Effectiveness (CORE) University College London. This standard has indicative links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: Core 2 Personal and people development