

Overview

This standard describes how explaining the rationale for a programme of systemic psychotherapy is an intrinsic, ongoing part of the therapy. It involves helping the family and significant systems understand how systemic psychotherapy works and relating it to their own problems and experience so that they may give their valid consent. Establishing and maintaining an environment of respect, open communication and collaboration are essential contexts for this standard.

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 6). 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.

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 discuss the systemic approach with the client in a way that is likely to fit with their perspectives
- P2 discuss the beliefs and values underpinning the therapy
- P3 discuss the scope and limitations of the systemic approach including how issues of risk and safety will be addressed
- P4 provide a brief account of the efficacy data for treatment programmes for the specific problem if this is seen as helpful to the client
- P5 work collaboratively to help each individual, the family and their significant system find the potential relevance and utility of the systemic approach for their special difficulties
- P6 acknowledge the client's and family's strengths and successes
- P7 discuss with the client and the family the recursive relationship between situations, individuals, bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- P8 help the client to realise that they and the system of which they are part have the resources to enable change
- P9 discuss with the client, family and wider system how changes in one part of the system is likely to result in changes in other parts of the system
- P10 model, through engagement and collaboration with all members of the significant system in the room, how the systemic approach works and how courtesy and consideration enable the system to work well
- P11 help the client to understand:
 - P11.1 the role of the therapist
 - P11.2 where appropriate the role of the team and how this will be negotiated
 - P11.3 how members of the wider system will be involved in the systemic therapy
 - P11.4 the different combinations and settings that may be pertinent to the therapy
- P12 explain the possibility of the usefulness of different therapeutic settings
- P13 use language, examples and a level of explanation that all clients are likely to understand and which are appropriate to the individual
- P14 discuss and explore each individual's understanding of the systemic approach
- P15 encourage the client's questions and feedback
- P16 elicit and discuss any concerns or queries any individual has regarding the systemic approach and their own situation
- P17 elicit and respect any individual's ambiguities, questions or scepticism about the rationale, openly and non-defensively, inviting consideration of alternatives

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

P18 create descriptive information for the client which offers a basic introduction to therapy and, where relevant, the team

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Basic principles and rationale of systemic approaches

- K1 various systemic models and other related concepts and their limitations
- K2 theories of systemic change and clients' theories of change
- K3 the assumptions contained in various systemic models
- K4 how to develop an account of patterns in relationships in families and wider systems
- K5 family based attachment theories across the life cycle from a systemic perspective

Specific systemic techniques

You need to know and understand:

- K6 the role of hypotheses to generate and guide formulations
- K7 theories underpinning the use of multiple perspectives of reflecting teams
- K8 how teams can be used in working directly with clients and the connections to theories of change

Systemic principles that inform the therapeutic approach

You need to know and understand:

- K9 the range of contexts in which the client needs to be viewed
- K10 how the contexts manifest and constitute the system of significance
- K11 the personal, family and cultural factors and interactions between those factors that shape the individual
- K12 ways in which people understand themselves and the world around them
- K13 the influence of power relationships and different socio-cultural contexts on the development of meaning, relationships and behaviour for the client and the therapist
- K14 the influence of varied individual accounts of the same event on relationships and understanding in the system
- K15 the influence of recursive cycles of feedback on systems and individuals' narratives, beliefs, emotions, feelings, actions, interactions and relationship

Systemic approaches that enable therapeutic change

You need to know and understand:

- K16 the role systems can play in psychological problems and health
- K17 how patterns of interaction and relationships within systems contribute to and maintain psychological, social, relational and cultural problems and health
- K18 explanations of how changes in any part of the system may have an impact on the rest of the system
- K19 how members of the system make use of resources that promote resilience and maintain change

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

- K20 psychological, social, relational and cultural problems that arise from lack of fit between attempted solutions and the current contexts
- K21 how systems develop helpful and unhelpful patterns of interaction and meaning systems and narratives
- K22 methods of utilising the members of the system and the system as a whole as a source for the promotion and maintenance of change
- K23 how the therapist, colleagues and the broader professional system interact with, and form part of, the system with which they are working
- K24 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

Treatment strategy

You need to know and understand:

- K25 the general process of systemic therapy
- K26 the different phases of systemic therapy as a whole, and the phases within each therapeutic session

The therapeutic relationship

You need to know and understand:

- K27 ethical, non-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices
- K28 how to form and maintain collaborative relationships in age and culturally appropriate ways with everyone in the system
- K29 the impact of personal and professional narratives on the therapeutic process

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

Additional Information

External links

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: To be confirmed
Planned Review Date: 2014

SFHPT25

Explain the rationale for systemic approaches

Developed by Skills for Health

Version number 1

Date approved June 2010

Indicative review date June 2012

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating organisation Skills for Health

Original URN PT25

Relevant occupations Health, Public Services and Care; Health and Social Care; Health Professionals; Healthcare and Related Personal Services

Suite Psychological Therapies

Key words Family, systemic, therapy, mental health, psychological therapy psychotherapy, counselling, systems, therapeutic, collaboration.