



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work
Vancouver Campus



Continuing Education and Certificate Programs

Systemic Family Therapy: Core skills

Dates: March 6, 2026

Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm (PST)

CEU: 6 hours

Location: Virtual – Zoom sessions*

Cost: \$180

[Registration link](#)

Audience:

This workshop is ideal for therapists, social workers, and mental health practitioners seeking to enhance their family therapy skills and deepen their understanding of relational dynamics in practice.

Description:

Working from a systemic perspective in family therapy involves attending to the interconnectedness, distinctive patterns and unique dynamics present in each unique relationship and family system. These skills can be highly effective in therapeutic clinical practice with diverse families.

This one-day introductory course is designed to offer a comprehensive foundation in systemic family therapy, including its core theoretical principles, and an introduction to clinical application. Participants will also have the opportunity to begin developing and refining

The course structure integrates skills teaching with interactive discussion, case analysis, and experiential practice. It begins with an introduction to key systemic and relational theories, including concepts such as the family as a system, neutrality, circularity, and dynamics.

Particular emphasis will be placed on exploring how these theoretical frameworks inform clinical decision-making and how family systems shape both individual functioning and collective patterns of behavior. This course is suitable for clinicians seeking to deepen their understanding of systemic practice and its application across diverse clinical contexts.

This course is the first of a three-part series on Systemic Family Therapy, and a recommended prerequisite for the following two courses. *(See a short description of courses 2 and 3 at the bottom of this description.)*

Learning Objectives

1. Understand and apply the core principles underlying systemic family practice.
2. Identify opportunities to apply various components of systemic assessment for individuals, families and couples.
3. Understand and apply systemic practice strategies and therapeutic techniques for family practice.

Learning Activities:

- Lecture, practice examples, and skills teaching.
- Experiential learning through group discussions, activities, guided practice, and debriefing.

Time	Topic / Activity
9:00am – 9:30am	Introductions
9:30am – 10:00am	History of Systemic Therapy
10:00am – 11:15am	Core Premises of Systemic Theory
11:15am -11:30am	<i>Break</i>
11:30am – 12:00pm	Interactive Activity
12:00pm –1:00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
1:00pm – 1:30pm	Debrief Interactive Activity
1:30pm – 2:00pm	Systemic Assessment
2:30pm – 3:00pm	Intro to Systemic Interventions
3:00pm – 3:15pm	<i>Break</i>
3:15pm – 4:00pm	Case Conceptualization Activity and Close of Day

Facilitator: Katherine White MSc, RMFT-SQ, RCC-ACS



Katherine (She/Her) is a Couple and Family Therapist and has been working with individuals, couples, children, and families for over 20 years, across three countries. She received her training in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) from Arizona State University and holds a current license in Arizona as a Marriage and Family Therapist, and is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist and Supervisor in Canada. Throughout her career, she has trained in and practiced numerous therapeutic models, including systemic family therapy.

Katherine's early work supporting children, adolescents, and their parents began in schools in Arizona. She later served as both a Marriage and Family Therapist and clinical manager at various non-profit agencies. For two years, she worked in Sydney, Australia, as a clinician in a Family

Relationship Counselling Program. In 2011, she moved to Vancouver and began her therapy practice in Canada.

In addition to her private practice, she is the Executive Director and a faculty member at Living Systems Counselling, a non-profit organization in the Lower Mainland specializing in Bowen Family Systems Theory. She is also the president of the BC Branch of the CACFT.

Subsequent courses planned as part of this three-part series:

Course 2

Systemic Family Therapy: Assessing and intervening within a family system

This course will provide knowledge and skills for clinicians to increase their capacity to collaboratively assess patterns in a family system. It will build on concepts introduced from the first session and will highlight a sociocultural attuned perspective (McDowell, Knusdon-Martin & Bermudez, 2023), while exploring different systemic interventions.

Course 3

Systemic Family Therapy: Use of self work with relationships:

This course will cover two areas. Firstly, we will explore the importance of the therapist being aware of and reflexive regarding how their own childhood and maturing experiences in their family of origin affect their interpersonal functioning and clinical practice. This will be done by introducing the Safe and Effective use of Self (SEUS) model in relational practice. This course will use skills practice that will synthesize and expand upon the skills learning from the previous two sessions, with a particular focus on practice with relationships.