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Perceptions and experiences of educational psychologists: training within the framework of a systemic reflecting team model

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ABSTRACT

Currently there is a growing interest around the world in exploring mental health from a systemic perspective. A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive study using semi-structured interviews was conducted in order to explore the experiences and perceptions of 8 practicing educational psychologists who have worked in a systemic reflecting team. The research aimed to ascertain whether this type of training has been perceived as influencing the educational psychologists' way of thinking in terms of the importance of working systemically within the South African context. Findings suggest positive perceptions of systemic intervention, although various challenges hinder implementation. The reflecting team was perceived as being useful in terms of supervision and training. The educational psychologists perceived their training on a reflecting team as being beneficial for their own development and in terms of their current practice. While this was the case the educational psychologists perceived being observed by the reflecting team during their training on the reflecting team as anxiety provoking. The findings suggest the need for more practical training and an in-depth theoretical foundation of systemic family therapy. Future research which explores other methods of family therapy as well as the effectiveness of family therapy within the school system has been recommended.

Keywords: educational psychologists, family therapy, reflecting team, supervision, systemic intervention, training