

the TRANSACTIONAL ANALYST

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UNITED KINGDOM ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS' QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



Launching Eco-TA

'Like Earth itself, when lived with in respect, there is abundance, sustainability and flourishing to be found in nourishing a model that acknowledges inter-connectedness. It can be owned by no one but belongs to us all.' page 4

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Editorial

Ali Bird and Celia Simpson

HELLO AND WELCOME to this Spring quarter's magazine. This issue is the second of our two-parter focused on ecotherapy. It is not only our privilege to have Giles Barrow and Hayley Marshall – leading thinkers in this area – as guest editors for this second issue, but our huge privilege to be able to publish the launch of Eco-TA in this magazine. Hayley and Giles feel that the current time is right for this move: 'Precipitated by this changed world [of Covid-19] we offer what we believe is an urgent and sharper calibration of our philosophical lens. We consider that the current crisis is part of an existing global ecological emergency and as such calls for more immediate action wherever, and whichever part of the ecosystem we are placed.'

They launch here the principles for a new movement, 'Ecological Transactional Analysis', making clear that it is an emergent movement not a new school, more a philosophical stance and what they refer to as an 'attitudinal position', one that if adopted keeps us as transactional analysts 'fit for purpose' in the face of climate collapse and societal readjustment. It is oriented towards an ecological understanding of the individual embedded in relationship with others and the wider natural world.

From the exploration of principles to the development of our professional selves, Hayley and Giles – along with contributions from those attending the first workshops on developing Eco-TA – outline the Eco TA course they were running before social distancing changed its, and all of our, directions.

Our reconnection with 'Soul, Soil and Society' is beautifully articulated in these articles which are nourishing in their breadth and exciting in their depth of potential for us and our clients in moving towards the ecological self and away from the egological self.

There is no need to elaborate further as the three main pieces here are a wonderful introduction to Eco-TA, and, **for those interested in being part of this 'work in progress' initiative there is an online gathering point for people to register interest <https://ecota.dev>.**

Hayley's delightful seasonal columns covering Summer and Autumn, 'The view from here', first published some six or seven(!) years ago in this magazine are reprinted for us all to enjoy again. The Winter and Spring columns were republished in the first issue of this two-parter. We have printed the contents of the first ecotherapy issue on the page opposite as the two issues really combine to provide a wealth of articles on the rich

potential of working ecologically.

Marion Umney's book reviews section continues the ecological and psychological theme with stimulating reviews from Hilary Spenceley, Alastair Moodie and Giles Barrow. Hilary talks about going outdoors to get away from her struggles writing the review only to find that 'without concentration or hard thinking, I find answers to things that are on my mind.' Alastair considers the psychophysiological stress recovery that activates through exposure to nature; while Giles articulates what many of us may be thinking during the lockdown that 'going back to normal' is the thing we fear most and that 'now is the time to build our tomorrow.'

So, onto lockdown. Another focus area of the magazine this quarter is our professional life in lockdown, specifically working at a distance. There have been many guidelines issued from our professional bodies so there is no need to repeat them here. What we have here instead are two excellent and *really helpful* articles. One from Sally Evans, a Certified Cyber Therapist – and consequently a very experienced working at a distance practitioner – who graciously shares her knowledge, experience and personal reflections on the challenges of e-therapy. Thank you Sally. And, one from Andy Williams whose wit and wisdom sit together convivially as he takes us through his thinking on ethics, experience and expertise of working at a distance.

In our 'New writing' section Jackie Lunt shares her resilience model, developed to help counter adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and therefore reduce life long mental and physical suffering. While Anthony Wood, continues our 'Personal and professional' section with the tale of a traumatic accident that led him to see his script more clearly and enabled a change in professional direction. Meanwhile, our columnists pick up both the lockdown and eco themes: thanks to Dee Longhurst, Anoushka Beazley and Salma Siddique.

There have been so many articles sent to the magazine in the last few months that we have been unable to work through them all – they will unfortunately have to wait to the summer issue to be published. Thanks so much to authors for sending them in and for your patience.

Meanwhile, take care, stay safe and enjoy reconnecting to the abundance of the natural world this Spring with both your personal and professional hats on.

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*****available to download from the UKATA website *****

the TRANSACTIONAL ANALYST

VOLUME 9: Issue 4: AUTUMN 2019

Articles from the **Autumn 2019* special focus issue on: ECOTHERAPY – I**

From the guest editors

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Greening the Adult ego state: seasonal column
– Winter by *Hayley Marshall* page 6

Walking the land: framing education with nature in mind

Giles Barrow scopes out the lay of the land of educational theory and practice involved in working outdoors, introducing the TA traveller to potentially unexplored terrain. page 8

Finding still spaces – ecotherapy, ecopsychology and TA

Sarah Devine introduces key elements of ecotherapy and ecopsychology, exploring how transactional analysis can help us hold nature in mind. page 13

Forest Bathing: Shinrin-yoku

Richard Youell explores Forest Bathing as a means of developing listening and awareness skills for coaches, counsellors, therapists and supervisors. page 17

Reparenting and reconnecting with nature in education

Sean Henn works in a Special Educational Needs and Disability school, here he shares his experience of working with a fourteen-year-old outside the normal built school environment. page 23

The downhill sigh of another story exhaled

Sarah Pritchard, now a practicing outdoor therapist, reflects on her experiences, over a number of years, of being an outdoor client. page 27

Brimful of ash at the waterside

Mary Dees shares her personal reflections on nature as self-care for psychotherapists. page 31

Rooted: creating therapeutic space in the heart of the woods

Rooted UK is a woodland based early intervention course created to support teenage girls. *Jenny Biglands*, Rooted co-founder, tells us how it began and how it works. page 34

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Focus on Ecotherapy:

Rooted – a woodland based early intervention therapeutic space for teenage girls. See page 34

*available to download from UKATA website

Introducing Eco-TA

– a movement of our time

GILES BARROW and **HAYLEY MARSHALL**, guest editors of this
second special focus issue, launch Eco-TA

AS THE EMERGENT voices of spring herald our second eco-TA focus issue, we again welcome you to consider working in the ecological space, and what this has to offer our TA community and the world beyond.

It is sobering that the human presence at this ebullient time of year is considerably muted by the Covid-19 virus. We are experiencing a situation which gives us much to contend with as we navigate a frightening and disturbing process. With a telling contrast between the vitality of the more-than-human elements of the natural world, and the 'deadening' of our own, it would also seem that we are being brutally reminded of our place in the wider scheme of things.

We are experiencing a liminal phase, 'betwixt and between' the old way and what is yet to emerge with many of us obliged to re-assess our position in life generally. It may be that as part of this re-assessment, we will begin to understand where 'our place' actually is. Rebecca Solnit writing in *The Guardian* states: 'The first lesson a disaster teaches is that everything is connected' (Solnit, April 2020). So, one of the possible outcomes of this time is for us to experience a clearer sense of being part-of the world around us and to understand the implications of this.

With our first focus issue on Eco-TA published Autumn 2019, vol 9:4 (see page 3 for contents) we covered a wide range of cross-field eco-practice. Vibrant voices from varied terrain presented readers with a feel for the wider living landscape of the outdoor TA world. As guest editors we also intimated that we were 'preparing the ground' for yet more growth. Precipitated by this changed world of April 2020, we offer what we believe is an urgent and sharper calibration of our philosophical lens. We consider that the current crisis is part of an existing global ecological emergency, and as such, calls for more immediate action wherever, and whichever part of the ecosystem we are placed. As two transactional analysts we want to make our contribution within the TA community and as a result, in this second issue, we present Ecological Transactional Analysis (Eco-TA). We believe that this the right time to make this presentation, alongside a clear statement of intent to cultivate and support this emergent ecological turn in TA.

Accordingly, to set the wheel turning we begin with a paper by us to outline Eco-TA as we currently understand it. The paper introduces distinct principles offering these as the basis for a new direction for TA theory and practice. Incorporating well-established concepts from non-Western indigenous cultures, we suggest a need to make an explicit shift from a Western person(s)-centred frame to an ecological one. The aim is to provoke, inspire, and invite change in our collective frame of reference. In our view this will ready TA for 21st century concerns. This paper, which we plan to publish abridged in *Script* and *EATA News*, is written in the spirit of activism, as a clarion call to get the initial word out to as many TA practitioners around the world as possible. **For those interested in being part of this initiative, we have established an initial on-line gathering point and welcome readers registering interest at: <https://ecota.dev>**

With Eco-TA in an emergent phase, our second article explores some of the training possibilities in this new realm. We report on the first Eco-TA course, about to enter its third and final module at the Berne Institute in Kegworth. Our collaborative piece is formed as an account from us as course facilitators, replete with voices from the group reflecting their experience of this innovative course. This piece also brings us back to the engagement with the Covid-19 virus. While offering the course we had to move the second and third modules online. Experiencing a super-fast learning curve, we reflect on the surprise and value of working ecologically via an online medium.

Finally, in this issue we also include the other two seasonal columns 'The View from Here' written by Hayley in the somewhat quieter times of 2014. These snapshots capture the connective essence of outdoor work – some of the early seeds for Eco-TA.

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The Transactional Analyst, vol 9:4 Autumn 2019

Ecological Transactional Analysis: principles for a new movement

GILES BARROW and **HAYLEY MARSHALL** introduce Eco-TA as an emergent movement within TA – a transactional analysis that is practiced in alliance with the Earth.

‘The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.’

Chief Seattle

‘To shut ourselves off from these other voices, to continue by our lifestyles to condemn these other sensibilities to the oblivion of extinction, is to rob our own senses of their integrity, and to rob our minds of their coherence.

We are human only in contact,
and conviviality, with what is not human.’

David Abrams

IN THIS PAPER we introduce the principles of ecological transactional analysis (Eco-TA) and offer this as the basis for a new movement within the TA community. Our intention in doing so is in part to report on ‘work in progress’ and in part to plant a seed that we have cached for some time. Intuitively we sense that the conditions are right for its sowing. Throughout this paper we will be using naturalistic terminology to emphasise the character of this new movement and readers might find it helpful to engage with the ideas, not exclusively at an intellectual level, but to allow in what is evoked somatically through the reading. In fact, **we would recommend that this article is taken outdoors if possible, and read beneath the tree, a favourite garden seat or simply looking out at the sky from a balcony, with a breeze, or the sun on your face.**

We present Eco-TA as an emergent movement, not a new school, or institute of transactional analysis, but a philosophical stance, and an attitudinal position. By adopting these we anticipate that the TA practitioner will necessarily work from a different ‘ground’ that incorporates and/or attends to both the human and more-than-human dynamic in their practice.

We will argue that this also begins to form a kind of activism in response to what we propose are significant human disconnections from the natural world, inherently embedded in mainstream western societies, and which have formed the root of destructive responses to cultures

in other kinds of communities over previous decades. While the TA community has a strong tradition of social activism, as we explain later, this now needs to be extended to incorporate a new dimension of ecological activism. This paper offers a definition and a series of principles by which such an activism might be founded and by doing so suggests a means by which TA theory and practice, and indeed the TA professional community, might remain relevant and fit-for-purpose in the face of climate collapse and societal re-adjustment.

If you have heeded our encouragement and are now outside, pause for a few moments, look around, notice what’s there with you, and take a breath. Perhaps allow yourself to be welcomed by whatever natural features are around you. When it feels right, return the welcome with some gratitude for being able to be with other expressions of the life that is also in your own body. Ready yourself for a journey of sorts, as we move into presenting what we hope will become the ‘ecological turn’ in TA theory, practice and professional dialogue.

Background context

Both of us have been working outdoors for many years in our respective fields of education and psychotherapy, providing work with groups and individuals through clinical intervention, training, encounter work and supervision. While the impact and implications of working outdoors has been familiar territory for us individually we have recently had the opportunity to work together to co-create a programme introducing

‘We present Eco-TA as an emergent movement, not a new school . . . but a philosophical stance, and an attitudinal position. By adopting these we anticipate that the TA practitioner will necessarily work from a different “ground”.’

participants to Ecological TA. The specific format and experience of this workshop series is explored separate to this paper but suffice to say that this current practice is immediately influencing our ideas as they evolve from our initial considerations.

It was part way through the first ever Eco-TA programme (The Berne Institute UK, Jan-April 2020) that the Covid-19 outbreak arrived, immobilising most communities in the relatively rich and financially aspirant regions of the world, and making an obvious impact on the format of the course and the experience of the participants. This sharpened our thinking about the value and potential of Eco-TA for the professional community and motivated us in bringing these ideas forward to fuel discussion and collaboration amongst colleagues. Our initial intention was to wait awhile until this seed of an idea had germinated and taken root. However, as is so often the case, as human beings we have needed to accept that not everything can be controlled purely by our will and that we are subject to the interconnectedness of which we are part. Consequently, nested within this current context, we offer these ideas as an emergent, coherent frame of reference for TA practitioners. We invite your curiosity, ask that you hold this gently for now and cultivate what might be a springtime for our professional community.

We are equally aware that while we are presenting an innovation in TA development this is not the first attempt at raising awareness about ecological issues within the TA professional community and literature. While there is very little existing material that explicitly addresses this issue, Pearl Drego published an article in the *TAJ* back in 2009 in which she explored the links between her earlier concept of the Cultural Parent and the growing implications of globalisation on raising children and young people (Drego, 2009). Other than our own previously published work (see for example, Barrow, 2014, 2018, 2020 and Marshall, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2016b, and the previous special issue of this magazine – Autumn 2019, *the Transactional Analyst* Vol9(4)), there is no other writing that develops the discourse about ecology within transactional analysis theory and practice.

Ecological Transactional Analysis

What follows is a definition of a movement in transactional analysis (TA) that is orientated toward an ecological understanding of the individual embedded in relationship with others and the wider natural world. It is based on the premise that TA has historically been anthropocentric, by which is meant that human psychology is primarily understood in terms of what goes on within the individual person and between people, in other words, the intra-psycho and inter-personal domains. In common with most psychological frameworks, TA has been 'person(s)-centred'. By

'Eco-TA is an approach for understanding human and more-than-human experience that is forged in connection with the ecological context in which it occurs. . . . this inter-connected process incorporates the embodied agency of both human and the more-than-human participants in the encounter. It is, to be more succinct, the practice of transactional analysis in alliance with Earth.'

introducing Ecological TA (Eco-TA) as a distinct movement the intention is to draw attention to the ecological domain in advocating for a new direction in TA theory and practice.

We offer an initial working definition of Eco-TA as follows:

Eco-TA is an approach for understanding human and more-than-human experience that is forged in connection with the ecological context in which it occurs. Furthermore, that this inter-connected process incorporates the embodied agency of both human and the more-than-human participants in the encounter. It is, to be more succinct, the practice of transactional analysis in alliance with Earth.

At this point we invite you to take another brief pause in reading to give some space for this definition to fully arrive for you at a somatic level. In this process, also take some time just to receive your surroundings again before we head onwards.

Our definition is based on a core assumption – an ontological premise – which is that human experience is but one component in a wider system of connections, extending beyond those simply involving other people. In this respect it is systemic, but one that incorporates the impact of the more-than-human factors and is therefore better understood as eco-systemic.

At this introductory stage of exploring Eco-TA it is important to resist reducing this frame of reference as referring to 'fields' of application because if the 'truth' of inter-connectedness is to be coherent and credible then it must apply whether the task is to cure, to resolve, to support or to educate. How this core understanding of connectedness 'shows up' in practice will be reflected in the particular frames of reference, competences and theorising of counsellors, therapists, consultants and

‘Like Earth itself, when lived with in respect, there is abundance, sustainability and flourishing to be found in nourishing a model that acknowledges inter-connectedness. It can be owned by no-one but belongs to us all.’

educators. What is distinctive about Eco-TA is that its point of origin is outside of any one field of practice. It is, in the context of TA categorisation, coming from beyond the notion of fields of application. It has neither emerged from, nor belongs to any one field. It is in some respects the first time TA practitioners can claim an approach as ‘ours’, to be cultivated, shared and enjoyed by all of us, irrespective of where we practice, with whom we practice and how we define our role.

Like Earth itself, when lived with in respect, there is abundance, sustainability and flourishing to be found in nourishing a model that acknowledges inter-connectedness. It can be owned by no-one but belongs to us all.

Key features of Eco-TA

In exploring the scope of Eco-TA, the following features begin to create an outline of this approach to TA and distinguish it from what has come before in terms of theoretical and practical development. Each feature is designed to emphasise and support an overall aim of Eco-TA which is to advocate a key shift whereby ‘client’ (or group) and practitioner regard their working relationship not as being apart from, but to one of being a part of nature and the planet.

- A move toward the concept of the **ecological self** and away from the egological self. The ecological dimension offers a sense of the ‘I’ formed within and incorporating the wider web of life. This involves becoming increasingly ecocentric and acknowledging the limitations of an anthropocentric frame of reference. One dimension of this shift is that humanism is no longer sufficient as a basis for developing progressive, planet-focused theory and practice.
- Linked to the above is the centrality of our **embodied experience** and ‘knowings’ inextricably embedded in an ecological context. The moving, sensing body is viewed as inherently connective and an important ecological guide.

- A recognition that it is increasingly necessary to develop an understanding of the implications of working in/from and through the **ecological space**, as different from the relational space. Or, to be more precise, that in referring to the ‘relationality’ of TA practice, this includes the interplay of embodied social, conscious, unconscious and environmental processes.
- Working with **natural agency** as it emerges in our TA practice. This has significant implications for how *physis* is re-framed conceptually. In Eco-TA *physis* is understood as being universally present, existing both within and outside of the individual self. It is this use of *physis* that draws attention to the tendency toward homonymy alongside the familiar TA goal of autonomy.
- An understanding that people establish an **eco-script** both individually and culturally in relation to nature, ecology and Earth. Eco-TA is aimed at expanding the frame of reference, encouraging permissions and becoming increasingly ‘script-free’ in relation to matters of the environment. Individuals and communities have narratives that can (dis)connect with the ecological domain. (A specific, vivid example of this relates to Berne’s own language regarding his reference to ‘thinking Martian’. We prefer an alternative position which is about increasing our capacity to be ‘earthlings’.*) Ecological scripting has remained unexplored territory in TA and Eco-TA exists in part to bring about a new phase of organisational psycho-educational development in the professional community.

Implications

In our view, we advocate that Eco-TA is central in re-orientating the collective frame of reference for TA professionals. We see this as important for two reasons; first, because increasingly our clients are bringing concerns, motivations and a curiosity about their relationship to a growing awareness about ecological issues. Second, in terms of ‘raising’ the next generation of practitioners, the TA community has little to say about the issues which are set to dominate the challenges inherent in the wider public context. It is perhaps not too melodramatic to suggest that by discounting the reality of ecological issues in relation to TA theory and practice, the

‘By adopting an Eco-TA attitude of bodymind, the professional community ‘future proofs’ the longstanding accomplishment of TA as a relevant.’

*We are grateful to Sarah Devine for offering this suggestion.

professional community risks obsolescence. Or, conversely, by adopting an Eco-TA attitude of bodymind, the professional community 'future proofs' the longstanding accomplishment of TA as a relevant, progressive and potent body of theory and practice. However, we argue that while a change of attitude is central to establishing Eco-TA, there are several ways in which changes might be considered that would make such a shift more effective in the TA community. Examples include:

- legitimising the importance of outdoor work for practitioners and clients by devising guidance for this practice and acknowledging this type of approach in credentialing practitioners
- incorporating references to ecological awareness in examination criteria, through marking schemes, written examination guidance, theory questions and oral examination
- allocating a special issue in the TAJ to the theme of Eco-TA and working outdoors
- generating discussion and debate that raises awareness of the limitations of a default 'indoor mind' position and to open up discourse about other ways of envisioning where and how practice might take place
- incorporating Ecological TA in existing TA training programmes
- including ecological considerations within TA professional ethical frameworks.

If you are still outside as you come to the end of reading this, what do you notice (both internally and externally) as you take stock of the ideas presented in this paper?

- Perhaps it might be useful to consider the following:
- What is being asked of you through considering the ecological domain with regard to your clients?
 - How might attending to ecological implications meet your best interest and development?
 - What is being asked of you generally by the natural environment that serves you?

Summary

We have set out the basis for what we regard as a much needed and pertinent movement for the TA community. We are also aware that this paper is very much a report on 'work in progress'. This is emergent and we want to encourage others in creating a momentum within the professional community to not only raise awareness of the absence of the ecological dynamic in TA theory, but as importantly begin to explore ways of incorporating it within practice. In many respects this paper is a call to action, motivated by a concern of what lies ahead if we do not pay attention to ecology in the TA domain, and also hope for a further flourishing for transactional analysis.

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An introduction to Eco-TA professional development

GILES BARROW and **HAYLEY MARSHALL** outline the Eco-TA course they were running before social distancing changed its direction with surprising results. Contributions from **Catherine Allen, Helen Blackburn, Isabelle Delannoy, Rebecca Easton and Nicki Wisbey.**

IN THIS PIECE we present an overview of an innovative course introducing Eco-TA that we have been running in the UK over the past few months. The programme comprises three workshops and the focus of this paper is on the process of the second workshop, which took place just as the UK government was introducing restrictions on movement due to the Covid-19 outbreak. An important feature in this report are the contributions of several participants, and while we as authors set out the framework of the course itself, the 'gold', as it were in this piece, is in the text of the contributory team, for which we are extremely appreciative.

The original idea for the programme came about a year ago through discussions between us and Adrienne Lee, Director at the Berne Institute, in Kegworth. There were three objectives for establishing the course, the first of which was to experiment with the concept of ecological transactional analysis. We wanted to test out if a series of guiding principles, forged out of several years of working in the field, might make for a coherent professional development experience. Second, we have been increasingly aware of the need to provide specific support for TA practitioners interested in working outdoors. Finally, as part of the Berne Institute's mission, we wanted to offer a cross-field training opportunity with specific reference to education and clinical work.

The format of the programme was based on three workshops each spanning a three-hour evening session, followed by two training days. The first and third of these was based at the Berne Institute, and the middle session was to be at Giles' smallholding in east Suffolk. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak the second and third workshops were delivered online. Although initially the prospect of running a programme on outdoor practice via an online indoor format appeared incongruent, the reality proved otherwise, as this paper will demonstrate.

Programme overview

The core principles of the programme are covered in more detail in our accompanying paper on Eco-TA in this issue (see pp 5-8). However, it is worth sharing some

additional observations about the general arc of the programme. We wanted to focus on the importance of re-connection, based on the premise that there is a widespread cultural, psychological and educational dislocation in most western societies from self, others and the planet. Succinctly summed up as Soul, Soil and Society, these three reference points landmarked the three workshops. So, the first event centred on re-discovering the story we tell ourselves about our relationship to the planet and how that impacts our sense of self and relationship with others. Whereas the second workshop was orientated toward being in deeper connection with place, the natural and ecological realm emphasising themes of embodiment and somatic inquiry. Finally, the third workshop looks to connecting an emergent sense of being outdoors with developing professional practice. Additional themes covered included liminality, vocational purpose, ecological scripting, protocol, natality and indigenous wisdom.

Alongside the overarching frame of the three connections – soil, soul, society – we incorporated a series of 'practices', specific features to scaffold the range of activity engaged within the three workshops. These were centred on the component elements of ritual. In practice this involved establishing threshold markers to delineate 'practice' space from space used for general activities, creating mandalas of significant journeying activity, journaling, and collecting elemental objects.

'We wanted to focus on the importance of re-connection, based on the premise that there is a widespread cultural, psychological and educational dislocation in most western societies from self, others and the planet. Succinctly summed up as Soul, Soil and Society.'

Symbolically, at the first workshop as part of the initial checking-in process, participants each planted a seed and talked of what was being hoped for in engaging with the programme. These plants were to become a connecting thread across the four months duration of the course.

Perhaps, self-evidently, much of the time involved being outdoors involved a range of activities. Unlike indoor work this has the obvious practical implications with participants needing suitable outdoor wear for managing sessions of several hours (we were working in late winter through to early spring). However, a more important practical consideration is that when working outdoors the management of time becomes three dimensional in that factors of movement from one place to another, and the shift from one type of space to another, combine in a way that time management in this work becomes quite different from indoor work. The rule – less is more – is no more keenly applicable than in outdoor work.

In practice

To turn to the work itself we want to draw mainly on the experience of the second workshop. It is worth remembering that this two-day event was shifted from 'live' work to an online format within 12 hours of the start time. This required a high level of flexibility on behalf of the participants and some swift technical action to ensure that the group could still 'gather'. In all, 13 of the 16 participants were able to join the workshop.

The central theme of this workshop was to bring participants into closer engagement with natural space. The original plan had been to use the environment of the smallholding, the nearby coast and an area of ancient woodland to stimulate this connection but given that this was not an option we turned the focus to the outdoor space that was immediately available to individual participants. This proved to be an important part of the shift online in that participants had the opportunity to more fully connect with their local patch in a way that wouldn't have been possible had they attended the course at the farm.

The group had already had experience in some core practices in working outdoors including sensory journeying, mandala making, journaling and moving gently into the somatic realm through 'niching'. This latter skill refers to identifying a very specific spot (a niche) outdoors and centering down into that place to the extent that the individual eventually experiences a merging with its locality. This could be, for example, a slight incline in a field, a corner of hedgerow, a shallow ditch or base of a tree. Niching – or nesting – is about finding a place out of which the body can see the world from being deeply sensed as within it. Helen and Nicki share their experiences of a sensory walk and niching in the first workshop.

'[One of the skills involved] refers to identifying a very specific spot (a niche) outdoors and centering down into that place to the extent that the individual eventually experiences a merging with its locality.'

Helen's story

WE WALKED AS a group from the churchyard to the canal, being invited to change our focus into different senses every five minutes or so – I shifted my awareness into seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, tasting, feeling more happily curious about my surroundings as we went down the road and along the footpath.

Once we arrived by the canal, we were invited to add two other senses: the sense of being with other humans; and the sense of being part of the world. I looked up and waved to my colleagues, delighted that they waved back, then noticed the cars driving down the road, and waved at the people in them, noticed the houses on the other side of the green, and waved at the people in them, noticed an aeroplane flying and waved at the people in that. I felt a sudden release of joyful energy at having the permission to notice and acknowledge all these others who usually pass me by.

When I turned my attention to connecting with the world I crouched down feeling sturdy, and looked at the grass, the earth, the mud around my boots, I deeply wanted to rub some on my face as a greeting, fearing being judged I resisted this impulse, then did it anyway. I moved on and gazed into a puddle, it became a miniature lake, I said I was sorry for the damage we humans are doing, that I felt so much remorse, and then doubted that I truly did, which surprised me that I needed to be honest.

I looked for a 'niche' to explore – I found a space right next to the canal, sat on a strip of concrete, my legs dangling down over the water, a steep bank behind so I had a little private spot. I breathed deeply and freely, feeling loosely relaxed in the space, trusting my legs and backside to keep me steady and balanced and not to fall in, enjoying the slight risk in benign relationship with the water. I looked across the canal at the tall trees and bushes beyond. Writing would have taken my attention away, and it was spitting with rain, so I started saying a prayerlike poem to the trees across the water, and I felt like I was trying too hard, too distant, too serious.

Then I wondered how to connect with my niche. As I was quite low down the bank and no one else was about I tried talking to the plants growing and became fascinated

‘The first event centred on re-discovering the story we tell ourselves about our relationship to the planet and how that impacts our sense of self and relationship with others.’

with them, I got chatty and happy that I recognised a lot of them, praising them for their brightness and newness and resilience and all the tiny perfect things about them. I talked to the stately old stalks of last year’s hogweed as an aeroplane flew past and said they’d been on the planet long before aeroplanes, and hello to the little winter aconite leaves which were just starting. I pulled apart a piece of dead wood finding lots of insects, and apologised for disturbing them, and then gently moved a stone to see an exquisite tiny snail. I felt relaxed and comfortable in my body, and in my movements, trusting where to put my feet.

When I came out of the niche and thought about someone saying how terrible they felt about what human beings are doing to the world, I couldn’t feel that at all, anywhere in my body or my senses. I felt happy and that I belonged. I continued to ponder my feeling of absolute OKness when I was in that niche, and which stayed with me. I wondered how being outdoors in that way could also help to strengthen my clients’ sense of OKness, by existing and being themselves in relation to these small plants, trees, shrubs that exist around and with us. I thought about creating viable cultural and environmental change when the positions being taken are so often I+U- or I+U-, or humans – planet +. Maybe we need to be in I+U+ between us as humans and the rest of the planet. I considered exploring this idea by strengthening my sense of OKness through practising what I had just done when I came home, to see if it would affect my perception of how I can live in harmony with this world and whether that would give me a helpful insight into wider cultural change. I considered my natural Child ego state, and how in Adult in the here and now of that natural niche I could integrate that more. I also noticed the joy I felt at giving praise, giving strokes – the noticing of others, the noticing of my environment, with no judgement, just in the noticing there came a sense of connection and joy. ‘

Nicki’s story

‘GO FORTH AND niche was the invitation! I walk towards the river and a tree on the bank. I look to see where my classmates are going, are they watching me, will someone else walk towards my tree, will someone want my spot? I slide my way through the muddy field to reach the tree and sit myself down on my piece of plastic, in a vain hope of trying to stay clean

and keep dry, aware of just how cold the ground is and wondering how you go about niching, what even is niching? I look around to see if my classmates are niching already and am I the only one who is feeling silly and worried that I might get this wrong?

A duck flapping and stretching its wings on the river catches my attention and I immediately smile and am transported back to happy days as a child when I would have leapt into the water, unaware of the cold, not worried about who might be watching me and uncaring as to whether the water was clean or not. I would just respond to my urge to be in the water. I remember stormy days by the beach as a child, running in and out of the huge bolstering waves without a care, playing with the water and with what nature provides. The smile spreads throughout my body.

I pick up twigs and leaves, needing a connection with my environment, feeling myself become familiar with being a part of this world. As a child I spent many hours making homes for insects using the leaves and the grasses around me. I am drawn to the tree again. This time as I stand and slip through the mud closer to the riverbank and to the tree, I feel confident that I will be OK. I feel the bark of the tree, tracing the patterns with my finger, I am excited by the pattern and feel inspired to draw and colour.

I move around the tree curiously, keen to explore it, keeping my hands on the trunk, eager for that connection and the familiarity that it provides. I peer into the crevice between the main trunk and a branch and am intrigued by the leaves that it is filled with. I lift a piece of dried bark from the crevice and see the scurrying of beetles and other bugs, as they run from the light that’s been created. I smile as I watch the bugs scurrying around thinking about what these bugs will tell their children about the careless human who nearly destroyed their world as I replace the piece of bark hoping that no harm has been done.

I smile relaxed and peaceful immersed in this natural world, engaged and amused. I take a deep refreshing breath and realise my peers are returning to the meet up point. I feel excited, alive and engaged. I say goodbye to the bugs and the tree. My child has been allowed to explore freely being guided by intrigue, curiosity and creativity. Possibility flows through me.’

‘The second workshop was orientated toward being in deeper connection with place, the natural and ecological realm emphasising themes of embodiment and somatic inquiry.’

'The third workshop looks to connecting an emergent sense of being outdoors with developing professional practice.'

OUR INTENTION OF encouraging the visceral connection between participants and their locality was planned through a series of activities, each of which involved solo work *in situ*, followed up by online paired de-briefing, before rejoining as a full group. Some members were able to share some of their experience during the process through photos, giving a rich sense of the diversity of places being visited. These included an allotment, back garden, local park, a beach, smallholding and woodland.

To frame the experiences, we used a variety of input. For some participants the stimulus of a poem – *Seven Sacred Directions* by Lisa Starr – proved powerful, while others were impacted by the opportunity to 'niche' in their own space. A process based on an indigenous medicine wheel exercise was an idea that we had some doubts might work in a virtual format, but this became an especially valued part of the second day's work. What follows are three more accounts by participants, reporting their reflections on the workshop, with reference to a combination of the practice.

Reflections

Rebecca's story

THE TIMING OF this section of the course couldn't have been more perfect, nor more ironic. On the one hand, our environment is ready for spring, growth, and new life. On the other hand, our society is in retreat, moving further inside rather than coming out, there is death and loss. 'Soil' could mean many things, for this specific time, in this place; soil is looking to the muddy depths of who and what we are to uncover, what we need to confront to be able to catch up with nature.

I worked at the pond in my garden. It has been earmarked to eventually be an allotment, but for now it's just a space full of moss and mud, an unfinished pond and whatever weeds and flowers have managed to grow without human interference. It's surrounded by tall trees and hidden away from the house and the road outside. It took some time connecting to feel like I was a part of the space. Movement, breathing and using my senses got me to a point of feeling comfortable there, but I still felt like a separate entity to everything that I was amongst. The impact of the broader situation we faced as a world – the virus – was keeping me in my ruminating mind and stopping me from slowing down.

There were several exercises across the two days, but the one that had the biggest impact on me was working with the poem *The Seven Sacred Directions*. Reading the questions out loud brought me to tears, it articulated the fear I had been suppressing from my Child ego state, and my space gave me the safety to express it. The answers in the poem were not showing me anything I wanted to know but showing me everything I needed to know. Something shifted in me and I wasn't 'me' in a place any longer, I was with the elements of my space, the trees, birds, earth, frogs.

We followed this by using a Medicine Wheel in the same place. I was too overwhelmed from the preceding weeks that I couldn't even form a question to bring to the wheel. All I could think to ask was 'What is this all about?' Being drawn towards the East, it only struck me afterwards that the direction represented death and re-birth; I just needed to take a few steps to realise that I would not find an answer to my question. In the foreground were the frogs, blissfully ignorant of any trauma to human society, laying spawn, continuing the cycle of life. I looked high, towards the trees that surrounded my garden and saw nothing, beyond them only more trees further away. Birds carry on tweeting, branches carry on rustling, frogs carry on mating. 'It' is everything. 'It' just is. 'It' is life and death, bright and murky, safety and risk, powerful and vulnerable, soft and hard. It's ugly, glorious, cold, beautiful. It's not going to stop, and it is not going to explain itself to me.

This time in my space, with these exercises gave me perspective, it helped me to see that my desire to understand the uncertain time we are in is driven by something in me. As much as it feels contrary, it's actually counterproductive to me being able to flourish. I came face to face with my own script, my coping mechanisms and deep-rooted beliefs about myself and my role in this world and found freedom in the outside and letting go.

Since that weekend in March, I've gained a greater appreciation for what being in my space can offer me. I've come to understand which elements of my space make me feel grounded, and I seek those things when venturing beyond my boundary for the walks we've been encouraged to take. I am integrating the therapy that can only be found by connecting to the earth to my normal routine to keep hold of the peace that I have found.'

Caff's story

AT THE START of my walk today I passed a dead squirrel. For some reason I always find dead animals more disturbing than dead people. I think it's the way their eyes are like black glass, reflecting nothing. All the energy and vitality of life, without the overthinking of the human mind, has completely gone and an eerie stillness is all that remains.

This is not the beginning of my experience, just another part of nature that impacted me before writing this piece, and I'm learning to take account of what that impact is telling me. We were asked to find a place outdoors in which we could first relax into, and then both receive and be received in whatever way that came to us. I walked to a park which I'm quite familiar with, it's very close to an old workplace and I would see it on a daily basis some years ago. I should note that this is not a place in my current 'home' – in fact I was staying 400 miles away from there at the time.

I sat down on a bench and followed the tips given to us to find our centre and ground ourselves in the space. After a while of observing my surroundings I noticed that the bottoms of my feet were tingling and I had a sensation of there being no end to the ground and no start to me, it was as if the tingling represented a movement and blurring of the line between the two. I then started to see that things seemed to present themselves visually in layers. I could see one piece, and as I continued to look another layer came into focus behind it, and then another and so on, it was as if my eyes were being given more to see as they looked further. I was also starting to experience sounds as if they were travelling inwards to me, as opposed to me listening 'outwards'. The longer I sat with my ears open, the more sound came in from further places. This, I thought, must be the 'receiving' part of the exercise.

As I continued to receive these sights and sounds I noticed how small the people seemed in relation to the trees as they walked through the park, and quite suddenly I felt as though I was in a bubble, not connected to the people or the specific place, but still very much connected to the earth. This was an odd sensation of both disconnection from the immediate surroundings, even though I was very familiar with them, and an OK-ness of feeling connected to something bigger.

On return and in discussion with a peer I started to make sense of this strange yet oddly comfortable feeling. When I was young my family moved a lot, I had three first schools. I've also moved a fair bit myself in my adult life and found myself in a job that involved a great deal of travel and working in different places with different people. People often say they struggle to sleep in new places. I don't.

I think because of never forming a connection to a specific place or group of people in my early life I've found a way to 'be' in any space as it's still got the same ground and the same sky. This is something I will now use to remind myself that I am connected when I feel otherwise, particularly in the current social climate.

On the way back from this experience I saw a plant growing out of a wall. I took a photo of it as it really struck me that the plant had found a way to grow through all the brick. How hard it must have been to navigate a

way through, the cold darkness of the brick and not knowing how far it was to the other side. We find ourselves in a space like that at this time in 2020. Hard to do, the coldness of social disconnection, and not being able to see a way out of the wall yet.

And yet the plant found a way.

Eco-TA has served to remind me that we are 'a part of nature and not apart from it.' Nature pushes forwards, and even in my bubble, I trust that I can go with that inertia, and that there is something on the other side of the wall. At the end of my walk today I chose to look away from the squirrel. I chose not to focus on the emptiness and ending that its eyes represented to me. I chose instead to think about my picture of the plant. Life finds a way; we are life too. A part of it, and not apart from it.'

Isabelle's story

FIRST, I RELAXED, centred and grounded and received, letting nature have its way with me. I am only just being reborn, and I feel the earth holding me, grounding me. I feel the air in my hair and on my skin. I wish it were sea air, but this is good enough. I know the sea is not far. I can go there anytime. I feel alive. I see the water and its energy. Its calm and potential for movement, its fluidity, its nourishing properties. It is enlivening. It is Life.

I feel at home. I feel connected with my birthplace, the seaside, the tall grass in the sand dunes, the bird song. It takes me back to the niching activity we did in the first part of the training. I am becoming part of the landscape, which I was only witnessing from afar until not so long ago. I feel more and more part of it now. I am not an outcast, a bystander anymore, I am in it, in the potential. I am the potential. I have jumped in the river and feel ready to go back windsurfing. I will not crash again.

Flow is now what I do. Not resisting, not needing, simply living, being part of the story, not telling a story. I am in the creation. I am creation, creativity, sacred, worth, love, alive. I am needless. Everything is as it should be. I can connect without being swallowed. I am not being swallowed anymore. Struggles and challenges can come, I will adapt, I will be fine, my integrity will remain. I love life and I hope I do not die soon, but if I have to, I am able to face it with equanimity. I have achieved great things, taught love to those close to me, felt the thrill of the most incredible sensations in my body and survived the scariest, life threatening experiences. That gives me joy. I am at peace.

Our first attachment is to place. Is that to say we belong to it, no matter what?

We can securely detach, just as it is our job to securely detach and build a comfortable separateness from primary caregivers. I can detach from my homeland, knowing that it does not disappear. I remain connected to

my land, wherever I am. Can we remain connected to people in the same way? I think so, however it is in a connect-disconnect pattern, according to where the focus is. Our connection to the earth remains all the time. If I lose it, I lose myself.

After this grounding phase, the reading of *The Seven Directions* moved me to tears. The end went like this:

'And one more thing dear one...
sometimes you are afraid
to look me in the eye,
And then, and only then,
Do I feel lonely.'

To me, it meant that, when I struggle and I do not reach out to those dear to me, to nature, those dear people feel sad, nature feels sad. It gave me the permission to believe that, whatever I feel, no matter how dark my thoughts are, how much I ache inside, I am never too much. The people I trust to receive my pain and hold it for me, nature, are honoured by my sharing. They are not scared. My pain is not deadening. It is not scary. Sharing gives vitality. It is a source of sharing and recognising our humanity, our vulnerability. It is in the place where I stay on my own, inside, out of reach from nature and from those people close to me, that the risk is greatest. I lose myself; I lose them too. I become invisible. I can be swallowed.

In therapy and in the connections I have been making through my training, I have been developing my attachment to life, to myself. These first two parts of the Eco-TA course have confirmed the central role that nature plays in my survival. I was raised by the sea and spent a lot of time playing on the rocks and on the beach by the seashore. The sea was my primary caregiver. Nature raised me. I was always outside, free, as I was growing up. Anytime I am inside, I feel dead. My mum lost her mum when she was pregnant with me. So, it makes sense, inside feels deadening and incredibly painful. I need to be outside as much as possible. I also know where this deadening feeling comes from and that it does not mean I cannot bring joy or that people cannot bring joy to me. It is a mix. It will always be a mix. There is life in this variety. Dopamine balances cortisol, hence, why I smile.

Summary

THIS PAPER HAS been very much a report on 'work in progress' and our intention has been to bring some life to the ideas we have described elsewhere about Eco-TA. There are significant areas to develop; the theoretical implications of this practice, for instance. We are increasingly aware that any such conceptual expansion will arise through the practice of being outdoors, primarily through the experience of the earth rather than

vice versa. It will require more of us practitioners moving toward an 'outdoor mind' before we are really ready to name new theory.

We are also impacted by the experiences accounted by the participants. There is a potential deception in leaning into nature in that some might seek it out as a 'retreat', a way of escaping the rigours of normal life. Indeed, in many traditional cultures the notion of leaving the village for the forest can be regarded as a retreat of sorts. However, the purpose of the move toward the natural elements is also to be and feel disrupted, to experience the live agency, the pulse of a different expression of physics than our own, to be moved by and within it, and consequently altered by it. The point is not to use nature to escape from life, but to find ourselves alive, anew, and then to return. To find a life with others, as increasingly whole-selves-connected-to-place is the purpose. We have been both grateful and in awe of those who have come with us, in this first journey into Eco-TA.



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Summer – a sustaining transaction

HAYLEY MARSHALL shares a sense of 'minding her landscape' as she walks out in high summer.

AS MY OUTDOOR psychotherapy work developed since its beginnings in 2007, I crafted a regular practice of 'minding my landscape.' This involves going out and walking my local topography into my body/mind/psyche while also reflecting on the process in terms of its potential for psychotherapy. I originally wrote these seasonal columns back in 2013/14 to share some of these wanderings/wonderings.

IT'S HIGH SUMMER; and as I walk up an old road towards the moorland of the Goyt Valley, the land is responding to the persistent sun by releasing a dusty haze. The going is slow and arduous, with the bedrock here pouring from the land to reclaim its prominence. The track is strewn with gritstone boulders and rubble.

I cut across the moor to the left, my destination; a sonorous drone in the distance. The glowering mass of Axe Edge is an eminent ridge that local people are drawn to in order to witness the June solstice. This apex of the year is one time when significant connection to local landscape is distinct in people's minds. Today a recent loss in my life is on my mind, and I too feel an urge to connect with the solidity and consistency of the surrounding landforms, albeit for a different reason. While this is undoubtedly about seeking solace, it also involves a need to incorporate an enduring sense of support. This is landscape as elemental sustenance.

In therapeutic terms I relate this to aspects of the Winnicottian concept of the holding environment, as written about by Ogden (2004). He refers to one aspect of holding as 'the means by which the sense of continuity of being is sustained over time'; and, as 'an unobtrusive state of "coming together in one place" that has both a psychological and physical dimension'.

Clearly, I am broadening this concept beyond the intrapsychic and interpersonal spaces concerning the human to human relationship, to include sustaining

interactions with the wider context of the natural environment. In this instance, I bring to the foreground the ongoing presence and structures of landscape, as enduring reference points; functioning as a 'gathering place' for parts of us that need integrating; and that can, over time, be incorporated in the body-mind as an internal holding environment.

Back on the moor, I lean in to the gradient and my physiology fires up as I engage with the strain of climbing. I begin to breathe fast and reflect on how one aspect of the development of this holding environment seems to involve an internalisation of the shape of the land. This is a kind of embodied storying (storing), achieved through walking the local topography into my body-mind. I am absorbing the contours as I walk, building an internal structural map. It forms part of a practice I term 'minding my landscape' (Marshall, 2016), and one that I find immensely sustaining. In my view this perspective is important for thinking about mental well-being generally; in terms of how some people may develop and access a more expansive sense of relational support in their lives, via forming an embodied connection with their local terrain.

A related process is evident in nature-based psychotherapy, where clients can explore different aspects of the landscape to match and illuminate their internal experience. This is an intervention that is important in terms of the client feeling supported by the environment that the therapy takes place in. What is less apparent is that the therapist too will usually experience the place as providing a significant holding for their counter-transferential experiences and for the therapeutic work. For both members of the dyad, this typically results in the formation of a strong bond with the 'therapeutic place'.

Arriving on the summit I sit, relaxing in the presence of permanence; the hills steadily asserting their authority. I savour the panoramic view of the peaks cradling my home; this wonderful visual metaphor instilling a more expansive sense of my feeling held by this environment. I am also mindful that direct contact with what Robert Macfarlane calls the 'grand vistas of time and space', offers me an opportunity to reach for new perspectives, not least on my experience of the loss I walked out with.

On a final note, it occurs to me that the view I express

'People may develop and access a more expansive sense of relational support in their lives [by] forming an embodied connection with their local terrain.'

here entails understanding the physical environment much more as part of our identity; a way of being that in westernized cultures we seem to have lost touch with, certainly on any conscious level. I believe that 'minding our landscape' also has implications for us developing more reciprocal relationships with the natural world; for, as a connective practice, it inherently invokes care for the place. Overall, this amounts to what I would term a sustaining transaction, where both individual and environment are potentially nourished by the contact.

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Autumn – relational by nature

After a static morning at the computer
HAYLEY MARSHALL heads outside and
steps into the flow of autumn

I HAVE COME to a halt. A static fug has ushered itself into my mind and body, the dispiriting legacy of a morning at the computer. In my etherised state, I half-heartedly decide to head for what might be called some 'nearby nature' (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). For me this is the local allotments which open out onto a piece of farmland on the south side of town.

With harvest in full swing, this cultivating environment is brimming with conspicuous creaturely activity. Humans and animals alike are engaged with the earth; reaping and replenishing autumn nourishment. I observe all of this, yet remain untouched, and feel detached. So, I pass on by, out into the fields.

Drifting along, I resonate with the outdoor therapeutic process for those client groups who are depressed or withdrawn and are experiencing a significant deadening of aspects of their experience. For them, initially, outdoor therapy involves contacting more directly the ways in which that deadening is very much 'alive' for them.

Recalling this on my walk, I am dimly aware that the removed world continues to happen around me, but nothing is happening for me, or so I think. On reaching a stone wall I decide to sit awhile and wait.

A throaty cawing cuts into the air some way above. Looking up, I notice a vague mistiness in the sky as the inky black of the crow blots its way into the distance. Then, as though emerging from beneath a lifting veil, I gradually sense the autumnal air carrying its augur of chill. Essence of wood smoke unfurling within a lingering dampness brings further awakening.

With these tantalising whispers of scent, the world shifts through me and – finally – I catch the turning of the season. Climbing over the wall, I begin to move on.

In my experience, connection with the web of sentient beings and living processes in a natural environment can help awaken our emotional, psychological, and ecological awareness. Through sustained exposure to the natural

world we are prompted to open ourselves to new experience – to breathe the flow of life into our halting script processes. Out in the world 'anything can happen'; and so, both the creative ways in which we hold the world at bay, as well as new prospects can be clearly felt and explored. Nature, it appears, helps to promote 'movement from fixity to changingness, from rigid structure to flow, from stasis to process' (Tudor & Worrall 2006).

So, this is the heart of the relational project in outdoor psychotherapy – promotion of what I would call a process-oriented focus. With this I refer to the fact that the presence of a 'living third' (Jordan and Marshall 2010) in the therapeutic dynamic invites both therapist and client into an active expansive relational dialogue with each other and the non-human world. Potentially far beyond two person psychologies (Stark 1999), this is a dynamic 'contextual psychology' (Wachtel 2008), whereby the perpetual relationality in the living context can promote a fully-fledged fluidity between inner and outer experience.

In practice this involves the therapeutic dyad encountering the vagaries of the weather, terrain, animals, plant-life, and other human beings; and attending to the manner in which these are met, along with the associated conscious, unconscious, and non-conscious meanings and experiences evoked. The multidirectional lived world of 'we-in-context' relating (Tudor 2011); and has the effect of imbuing the client's script process with a 'here-and-now' immediacy that, if well caught by the therapist, can promote embodied relational insight, connection and engagement. In effect this is the casting of new relational light into our innermost sanctuary of stasis, and as such, is a fundamental aspect of personal transformation.

Returning to the world in my walk, I am now feeling the need to go back and revisit the vibrancy of the allotments. Along the way, hearing a farmer calling to the nearby slumbering sheep, I stand still as they rise up and sprint across the scrubby field to receive the food he has to offer. Another kind of awakening perhaps, but with the dissipation of my morning torpor I now savour the flow of these constant happenings immediately around me; feeling, quite literally, moved by them.

'With these tantalising whispers
of scent, the world shifts through me
and – finally – I catch the
turning of the season.
Climbing over the wall,
I begin to move on.'

‘Out in the world “anything can happen”; and so, both the creative ways in which we hold the world at bay, as well as new prospects can be clearly felt and explored.’

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BOOK REVIEWS

Introduced by MARION UMNEY



THIS SEEMS LIKE a strange time and yet a wholly appropriate time to be introducing reviews of books about ecopsychology and working outside. Some of us are possibly not able to be outside at all, others may be feeling limited in their access to nature and yet others may be conscious of an increased attachment to nature as they are

separated from much of their normal human contact. In any case I am guessing that the significance of the outside has been heightened for most of us.

While two of these reviews were written long before we found ourselves in the current Covid-19 crisis, there is so much in the reflections of both reviewers, which, for me are resonating even more strongly than when I first saw them. This has encouraged me to reflect on what is still the same, but heightened, rather than what is changing and being threatened by the uncertainty surrounding us all.

Hilary Spenceley experienced Mary Jane Rust and Nick Totton's *Vital Signs* as a book which reflected on lack of connection with the physical environment. By contrast she starts her lovely review by sharing with us her process of engaging with the book through her own active reflection on the significance of the natural world for her personally, as a place "where without concentration or hard thinking, I find answers to things that are on my mind".

This brings to mind how at the current time I am finding, through reading, conversations and my own reflections that many people are finding different ways to connect, with nature, their environment and relationships. I love the idea of finding answers to things that are on my mind without concentration or hard thinking, and am aware that for me too, that is more likely to happen in the calm solitude of the natural world.

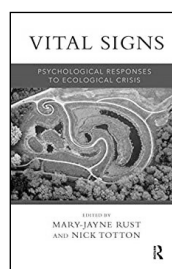
Alastair Moodie's review of Roger Duncan's *Nature in Mind* is a little more pragmatic, which I imagine reflects the flavour of the book. A theoretical analysis of the efficacy of working outside and the healing power of nature, but more than that. I was interested in the observations on the destructive nature of Western capitalist societies and how so many of us are currently being forced to rethink how we engage with those forces and/or embrace, what this book would describe as healthier relationship with our environment and breathed a big sigh of relief when I read that the author 'advocates the benefit of practical, manual engagement through traditional crafts and activities such as

gardening, cooking, pottery, and basket weaving'. While I haven't got round to pottery or basket weaving, I am finding myself surprisingly soothed by my own engagement with cooking, gardening and other creative manual activities.

Finally, Giles Barrow has reviewed something of a tome, *The International Handbook of Holistic Education*, and appears to have been quite captivated by the range and diversity within it 'a kind of house party event with a whole bunch of guests you'd not expect to get in the same room, but hoped it might happen'. I do so agree with Giles that this time of more time (at least for some of us) may well provide a valuable opportunity to engage in a different kind of reading.

On that note I will leave you to consider the relevance of each book to your own approach to ecopsychology, both at a personal and professional level. I wish you good reading during this strange and uncertain time, and would like to remind you that if you do find a book which entrances you, or you find a title that sparks your curiosity then please do let me know. If it has been published within the last three years or so I would be delighted to publish your thoughts and reflections here. Remember review copies are free to keep for the reviewer.

Marion Umney, TSTA,
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Vital Signs – Psychological Responses to Ecological Crisis

Edited by Mary-Jayne Rust and Nick Totton

Published by Routledge, Oxon, 2018
(first published by Karnac Books, 2012)

Reviewed by HILARY SPENCELEY

I WAS STRUGGLING to write this review. Anxiety rising, critical voices intruding. I knew I had to change something. I put it all aside and went out on a damp late autumn day, up the hill near my house, through the beech woods, squelching through the leaves, romped around with five collies, had a brief exchange with their owner. Then I consulted a crow, regal atop a holly tree, and sensed a nod of approval to the plan that was hatching.

Being alone, out of doors, engaged with the 'more-than-human' world has run consistently through my life, the place where I find sustenance, where I ruminate,

where song lines, memories, and fragments of conversation pop up unbidden, where without concentration or hard thinking, I find answers to things that are on my mind.

Vital Signs has done something similar for me. This is the first book I have read which brings a psychological perspective to what is, I believe, the greatest issue of our time. I wish I had read it years ago. It has woven together many themes which are important to me, engaging me experientially, emotionally, and intellectually – a recipe for a good learning experience. Since reading it, I have a greater sense of coherence, of hope amidst the seriousness of the crises we are in, and greater clarity of what my role can be. I have noticed subtle changes in how I think and talk with friends, colleagues, and clients. Not a practical guide, rather it is a book which has changed the way I am in the world, and how I think about humanity's place in it. I believe it will have meaning for transactional analysts in all four fields.

This is a collection of 20 standalone essays, mainly by psychotherapists and psychologists, largely UK based. Many have additional experience including teaching, academia, and ecology. The book introduces the reader to thinking in this evolving field up to 2012, and I believe it continues to be relevant today. It makes no apology for the variety of views and styles among the authors, rather celebrating this as a 'vital sign' of health (ppxxii). For me, this diversity helped me form my own view. The areas where all agree are on the seriousness of the issues and 'the depth of psychological change required before we can make the practical changes which the situation requires' (ppxxi-xxii).

The introduction provides a good overview of the emergence of ecopsychology practice since the 1980s, and of the book's further six parts: Contexts; Other-than-human and More-than-human; The view from post modernism; and the final three parts, each entitled 'What to do', and subtitled Possible futures; Influencing attitudes; and Clinical practice.

I found much of the writing very accessible. Familiarity with psychological language helped, however, I think many chapters would be of interest to the general reader. Some chapters (such as those bringing in philosophy, science, complexity, and chaos theory) were denser and more academic in style and had me occasionally reaching for the dictionary. These all rewarded a second reading. Taken as a whole, I found the book struck a good balance of theory and descriptions of experiences and undertakings. In achieving this, it strikes me that it models a view of the ecosystem with each necessary part combining (not necessarily in complete harmony) to create a cohesive whole. For that reason, I recommend reading it in its entirety.

I found myself considering the book's themes at individual, group, and systems levels, and applying them

'Under favourable conditions, we can experience a therapeutic opening to both the personal and collective unconscious: new seeds of meaning are planted and take root, deepening our compassion and understanding.'

Vital Signs, pp65-66

not only to environmental issues (for example to the polarisation and division currently evident in the UK). This makes sense to me since, using a mathematical analogy, I think about the ecosystem as the Universal Set (of which all things are members, including itself).

I often had a strong physical response of relaxing and sinking into some of the very lyrical writing, authors sharing their personal experience outdoors. I resonated with Margaret Kerr and David Key who, in a chapter called The ecology of the unconscious, write 'Under favourable conditions, we can experience a therapeutic opening to both the personal and collective unconscious: new seeds of meaning are planted and take root, deepening our compassion and understanding' (pp65-66). The book does not romanticise or idealise engagement with the rest of the natural world. Certainly, some of my experiences have been far from pleasant!

I liked the way several authors draw on and honour ancient practices, those of indigenous peoples, and the metaphors in world religions. They suggest that these customs and beliefs (for instance fear of the gods) helped to keep the ecosystem in balance until relatively recently. Now, they propose, changing attitudes and technological 'advancement' have led to our species destabilising the continuously evolving system of which we are only one component. The most prevalent theme for me in the 'What to do now' chapters was of finding ways to foster goals and values which are meaningful in a modern context, and which will help us to self-regulate and restore equilibrium in the environment and in society. I found chapters by Sandra White, 'Denial, sacrifice and the ecological self', and Tom Compton, 'Back to nature, then back to the office', particularly interesting, thought provoking, and helpful in bringing clarity about how I might engage personally, rather than turn away in despair or be paralysed by fear or guilt.

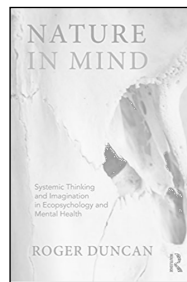
We know that without a positive emotional engagement, telling people what is wrong with them and what to do about it seldom creates good learning conditions. *Vital Signs* reflects on many people's lack of connection with the physical environment and other species nowadays, and on the impact of this 'othering'. It sees remedying this disconnection as crucial, and as Compton writes, '[not through] activities that promote

separation, objectification, or distancing ...rather, hands-on, nondirective, explorative, personal experiences are needed' (p205). One chapter considers the importance of early experience, describing young children's natural curiosity and competence in nature when grownups stay out of the way, and several chapters describe projects involving adults with the more-than-human and other-than-human. The book makes one mention of TA in 'The natural change project', another chapter by Kerr and Key. The authors use the functional ego state model to illustrate 'common egoic responses to our ecological predicament', and ways in which these can be counterproductive (pp244-6). They go on to describe the Natural Change project in which 'the focus of the work shifts out from personal, to social, to ecological self' (pp247-8). I found this engaging and their diagram useful – on second reading! Initially, I am abashed to say, I felt a bit indignant on my tribe's behalf (a personal example of how quickly I can move to 'othering'), before conceding, somewhat ruefully, that recently several TA writers have addressed the need for more emphasis in our discourse on connection with and concern for others.

Transactional analysts will be familiar with the concept of one or more individuals in a group experiencing something on behalf of the whole. Several of the book's authors write about the impetus for change often coming from the margins, using examples of people who might once have been diagnosed as mentally ill, or who have a particular affinity with the more-than-human and other-than-human. Eight years from *Vital Signs'* first publication, we may now (I hope) be heeding the loud messages the planet itself is giving us, and taking seriously the voices of young people and of individuals identifying as neuro-atypical who are demanding action on environmental issues. And in our profession, including in this magazine and the previous issue (vol 9:4), we are now paying more attention to relationships with places and other species, as well as with other people.

Please don't think this book is not for you if you don't wish to work outside. As one of the editors, Nick Totton, says in his chapter 'Nothing's out of order', 'it is possible to bring the out-of-doors indoors: to work in an ecological style when sitting in chairs in a consulting room' (p264). I believe we have a responsibility to help get these ideas into society's mainstream thinking, by finding our own unique ways of bringing them to the contexts in which we live and work. I hope this review will stimulate you to read about them.

HILARY SPENCELEY, BSc., CTA(P), works as a psychotherapist and counsellor in Edinburgh. She spends a lot of time out of doors and has a lifetime's passion and involvement in building sustainable, inclusive communities which value diversity.
<http://www.hilaryspenceley.org.uk/>



Nature in Mind: Systemic thinking and imagination in ecopsychology and mental health

By Roger Duncan

Published by Routledge,

Reviewed by ALASTAIR MOODIE

THIS BOOK ARGUES the case for bringing nature-based work into mainstream education and therapy practice and it provides a practical and epistemological guide to reconnecting human thinking with the ecosystems of the earth. Roger Duncan is a systemic psychotherapist who has trained in family therapy.

The three main components of the book are: an account of the author's biographical narrative that links his experiences with the development of his thinking and practice; three chapters describing therapeutic group work in outdoor settings; and four chapters that set out his understanding of a systemic approach and explain some nature-based models of human development.

The first chapter, 'Our indigenous heritage', contains an interesting account of his travels in Africa and the Middle East where he experienced cultures based on an intimate connection with the land and natural ecosystems. He draws out the contrast between the worldview of the urbanised, industrialised and commercialised societies that most of us belong to and the worldview of people who are wholly dependent for their survival on their relationship with the natural world.

He borrows from Jared Diamond the acronym, WEIRD, whenever he refers to the prevalent culture of Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich and Democratic societies that in many respects are alienated from and destructive of the natural world and its ecosystems. He attributes much of our ill health, mental and physical, to WEIRD culture that is associated with social and environmental stressors.

Duncan provides a brief explanation of three theories as to why encountering nature is a therapeutic experience. The Biophilia hypothesis posits that we have an evolved predisposition to love nature and to feel better and function more effectively in a natural environment. Attention restoration theory refers to the experience of undirected attention in a different and fascinating natural environment with the effect of relaxing the prefrontal cortex. Thirdly, psychophysiological stress recovery theory is based on the activation of a stress-reducing, calming reflex in the limbic system of the brain by exposure to nature – such as woodlands and forests, plants, flowing water, and meadows. Alongside this, he advocates the

‘Psychophysiological stress recovery theory is based on the activation of a stress-reducing, calming reflex in the limbic system of the brain by exposure to nature – such as woodlands and forests, plants, flowing water, and meadows.’

benefit of practical, manual engagement through traditional crafts and activities such as gardening, cooking, pottery, and basket weaving.

There are quite detailed descriptions of nature-based therapeutic work with groups of secondary school students and the developmental benefits for such teenagers being given an extended wilderness experience. Research both in the UK and the US has confirmed the success of these programmes in improving mental and physical health, social behaviour and attitudes. In particular, he refers to the effectiveness of this experiential group work with groups of vulnerable and difficult adolescents, compared with much more costly interventions in the criminal justice system.

Another chapter describes briefly a skills-based course in woodland management for traumatised young people with special needs. This year-long educational programme is staffed by a team who combine a range of expertise. There is a further chapter on nature-based rites of passage such as vision quests and vision fasts which involve three or four days of solitary, continuous exposure to nature with skilled facilitation before and after the experience. The book provides testimonials from several participants and design criteria for such a programme.

The author is a former teacher and youth worker and he sets out some very interesting nature-based developmental models. The starting point is a circle divided into four quadrants to represent the four seasons and also the cardinal points of the compass. He explains the Circle of Courage in the North American Lakota tradition; it describes stages – Belonging (Attachment), Mastery (Achievement), Independence (Autonomy) and Generosity (Altruism). Belonging is associated with learning to feel safe in the world. Mastery focuses on the acquisition of physical and social skills. Independence is about taking responsibility for ourselves. Generosity/Altruism is promoted as ‘the ultimate resource for coping with life’s conflicts’, and it reinforces a deeper sense of belonging within our community.

Duncan offers an intrapsychic version of the developmental wheel, called the Four Shields to help our understanding of the inner psyche or soul states that can also be recognised in nature. Each shield represents the

response to a question: East – What aspect of my life is waiting to manifest? South – Where do I embrace joy and play in my life? West – What aspects of my life are dying away? North – Where do I embrace responsibility and care for others in my life? Finally in this section he explains Bill Plotkin’s Soulcentric and Ecocentric wheel consisting of eight stages of human development.

These models remind me of Pamela Levin’s seven stages of the Cycles of Development for which she won the Eric Berne Memorial Award (1984). Her model was also used with wonderful effect by Jean Illsley Clarke in her pioneering work with parents and children (EBMA 1995).

Roger Duncan, in his introduction, suggests that a chapter on ‘the complex issues of epistemology is probably the most challenging.’ I have devoted a lot of time to re-reading this chapter and other chapters about his theory of systemic thinking and imagination because his language lacks clarity. He introduces references to gnostic and alchemical philosophy which are not well explained and which I consider to be unhelpful and even contradictory.

Gnostic philosophy is based on the idea that we can access secret knowledge to escape from the evil of the material world and return to the ‘pleroma’ or divine, spiritual world. According to Duncan, Carl Jung and Gregory Bateson redefined gnostic dualism so that ‘pleroma’ represents the non-living world and ‘creatura’ represents the living world. But essentially the Gnostic tradition despised the natural world! Therefore I consider that its application to the human experience of the natural world is inappropriate and confusing.

The author also cites Rudolph Steiner, Henry Corbin and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as guides to the ‘imaginal world’ as the home of the psyche or soul. According to information on the Collective Wisdom Initiative’s website, archetypal psychology values the imaginal realm which seems to be accessed mainly through dream work. The image evokes an emotional response, a felt experience. But Duncan does not explain clearly how his imaginal approach is a way of seeing and experiencing the natural world.

In addition, he refers to the metaphorical use of alchemy, but the philosophy of alchemy is based on the belief that the base material of the natural world needs to be perfected by changing it into something of greater

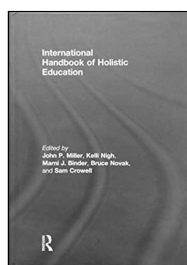
‘Generosity/Altruism is promoted as “the ultimate resource for coping with life’s conflicts”, and it reinforces a deeper sense of belonging within our community.’

value. Today alchemy consists in such processes as transforming oil, a fossilised substance, into synthetic, durable materials such as plastic and polyester. In fact, the original philosophy of improving what is natural in pursuit of perfection has been developed in a way that has contributed to the disconnection of human culture from nature.

In support of his thesis that WEIRD culture is derived from the suppression of pre-Christian Gnostic philosophy, he cites a very popular book called *The Jesus Mysteries* (Freke & Gandy, 2002) but its conspiracy theory has been discredited as 'wildly inaccurate' and 'grossly misconceived' by reputable academics and historians. In his ignorance of this subject, Duncan confuses the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered at Qumran in Palestine, with the Gnostic Gospels, discovered at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt.

In summary, a lot of this book is interesting and useful with regard to nature-based models of human development and to therapeutic group and individual work in outdoor settings, particularly with young people. In comparison with other books on Ecopsychotherapy, the attempt to develop an epistemological perspective, based on interpretations of ancient Gnostic and Alchemy philosophies, is unconvincing.

ALASTAIR MOODIE, *TSTA*, former chair of the ITA, has worked with clients in hospitals, prisons, colleges and in private practice. He is interested in the contribution that TA can make in building healthy communities and a better world. Alastair is based in Glasgow.
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International Handbook of Holistic Education

By John P. Miller, Kelli Nigh, Marni Binder, Bruce Novak and Sam Crowell

Published by Routledge, 2019

Reviewed by GILES BARROW

THIS IS A big book, in several ways. First, it is literally a big book at over 350 pages, 5 sections and 37 chapters. Second, it is big in terms of scope and ambition, and third, in its diversity of perspectives. However, let me begin with why a review of this title is offered in this magazine. In the previous special issue on working outdoors (*the Transactional Analyst*, vol 9:4) I presented a piece on surveying the landscape of educational perspectives orientated to the

'I was surprised to find a much more diverse range than I had experienced in earlier work edited by Miller. This came across as a kind of house party event with a whole bunch of guests you'd not expect to get in the same room, but hoped it might happen.'

environment. I identified three domains of philosophy and theory including holistic, embodied and eco-activist. For those readers interested in developing practice outdoors, especially those involved in teaching and training, the references in that article will prove useful in terms of deepening understanding of specific areas. However, if there was one publication to reach into each of those domains, then it would be this comprehensive collection, released just last year by a formidable line-up of contributors in the field.

John Miller is arguably the most consistent thinker, practitioner and writer in the development of our understanding of holistic education. He has held an overview of this area of work for decades sharing ideas to do with spirituality, nature and planetary concerns in relation to education. While his main focus of practice has been higher education the impact of his work has stretched into all sectors of education. In this most recent publication the reader gets a sense that this is a crescendo, a culmination, of the best of the best in holistic education in terms of ideas, themes, writers and practice. I was surprised to find a much more diverse range than I had experienced in earlier work edited by Miller. This came across as a kind of house party event with a whole bunch of guests you'd not expect to get in the same room, but hoped it might happen.

The book is structured into five sections opening with 'Foundations' in which there's a strong emphasis on principles, history and philosophy. Right from the start we know that this will certainly be an international collection, with contributions coming from different corners of the globe and including writers from western, non-western and indigenous perspectives. 'Teaching-Learning-Curriculum' is the second section, again diverse and with a push toward envisioning an education

'For some in education we know that 'going back to normal' is the thing we fear most and that now is the time to build our tomorrow.'

‘A bold start [in building our tomorrow] would be to engage with some of the writing in this collection and I recommend it to those who can beg, borrow or steal the wherewithal to get hold of a copy.’

fit for the 21st century. ‘Examples and practices in holistic education and research’ constitute the third and this is really where the diversity is most striking. Chapters on practice range from Madrassa schools in East Africa to Bhutanese education policy, cultivating a pedagogy of love and considering queer bodies and holistic imaginaries. A fourth section is a treat with eight chapters each offering alternative research methodologies that might appeal to those trainees writing up their research question for the CTA written exam! The fifth and final section on ‘Future directions’ takes the reader back to the meta-perspective with hopes for a de-colonialising, transformational, interconnected vision of education.

Readers will be getting my enthusiasm for the title and indeed this is certainly one to have on the bookshelf for those seriously committed to working in the field. There are a couple of cautionary notes. First, this is a costly purchase at over £70, even for the e-copy. There is indeed a lot of content for the money, and certainly it's the equivalent of three other titles on the topic some by authors whose work is featured in the *Handbook*. Second, it is not a quick read! It is best to regard this as a reference book with a view to dropping into individual chapters rather than tackling it as a single project.

In the current time we might want to be anticipating the kind of education we want to see emerge out of this period of reflection and re-set. For some in education we know that ‘going back to normal’ is the thing we fear most and that now is the time to build our tomorrow. A bold start would be to engage with some of the writing in this collection and I recommend it to those who can beg, borrow or steal the wherewithal to get hold of a copy.

GILES BARROW is a TSTA (Ed) based in East Anglia. He tutors on various training programmes at the farm, and he is the tutor for the MSc in Educational TA at The Berne Institute. He also writes on a range of themes to do with education, TA theory and practice.

Covid-19: working at a distance – a creative adjustment

SALLY EVANS, Certified Cyber Therapist, shares her knowledge, experience and reflections on the challenges of e-therapy or telemental health.

WHEN BORIS JOHNSON ushered in social distancing and lockdown responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, like many others, my private psychotherapy and supervision practices changed overnight.

I'd seen the distressing and traumatic news coming out of China, Italy and Spain, so when the lockdown came it wasn't a great surprise. In my anticipation of it, I'd begun having discussions and re-contracting with my clients and supervisees, to gain their consent to move our work together online, or more correctly to begin working together at a distance via technology; a safe, social distance. My clients' responses were varied, ranging from pragmatic, 'well, we have no choice', to excited 'oh that'll be different', to 'I'm not sure but I'll give it a go', to 'no I'll take a break and come back once the lockdown is over'.

What do I mean by working at a distance? BACP define it as the 'delivery of psychological therapies "at a distance", where communication between client and therapist takes place using a variety of technologies (Competencies p3) webcam, the phone, emails and IM (instant messaging)' ACTO (Association of Counselling and Therapy Online). I think of working at a distance as a continuum of technology usage in association with the physical body and actual time. The continuum starts with webcam, then moves to the phone, then IM and lastly email. I think of it in this order as to me it corresponds to how much of the physical body of each other do we have present together in real time? With webcam I have part physical bodies together at the same time (synchronously) a reduction with the phone even less with IM and finally email, where the physical body of the other is absent and at a different time to me (asynchronously). For me, the physical body is present in one shape or form even if our presence together is at a distance.

From Tuesday 17th March 2020, I went completely at a distance with all my known clients and supervisees. This change didn't daunt me. My (insured for working at a distance and registered with the ICO Information Commissioner Office) practice was already a blended

one, meaning I already had a number of distant clients and supervisees working synchronously via either webcam, phone or IM. I have been offering therapy and supervision at a distance, since I became the Clinical Lead for Kooth.com, a nationally award-winning children and young people's counselling service in 2007-2014. I cut my online teeth working exclusively with anonymous young people often disclosing abuse and suicidal ideation; working at a distance I'm not easily scared (see Evans 2013 & 2014). I am also a trained and qualified Certified Cyber Therapist and a member of ACTO, I have extensive experience of training counsellors to work at a distance with children and young people and was a member of the Expert Reference group who drew up the BACP Telephone and E-Counselling Training Curriculum (2016), so I'm familiar with this way of working.

I recognise that many colleagues may have been daunted by this unfamiliar way of working. Therapists who have never trained or felt inclined to work at a distance, may have found they had to, were suddenly out of their comfort zone or perhaps felt this way of working was beyond their competency with existing clients and particularly in thinking about taking on new clients. My competency stops at email therapy. I can work in this way and choose not to, I simply don't like it nor have the confidence to do so. For some it will have been a steep learning curve and creative adjustments will have had to be made, it may have felt like a new alien language, familiar but slightly different and hard to place. ACTO says it is 'wise to consider working online if the situation warrants it' and Covid-19 certainly warrants it.

This article is my contribution to the sharing of knowledge, my reflections about the challenges and potential of E-Therapy or telemental health, where technology is seen 'as a lens or conduit' (Evans, 2018, p92) to facilitate our communication with our clients.

Platform: Webcam

Our choice of platform/software is critical as it says much about our commitment to safety, security and confidentiality regarding our client work. Using webcam for conducting sessions may have been the medium of

choice for many as it is the most similar way to working face to face (f2f), we have some of the 'body' of the other present so many will have probably felt less out of their comfort zone?

There is a lot of debate over which is the safest and most secure platform, which complies with GDPR compliance, offers total end to end encryption or is HIPPA compliant, (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act 1996, a US standard). In the UK, the platform of choice presently is undoubtedly Zoom.com, it is considered safe and secure and the platform recommended by both ACTO and BACP, so it was of concern to read criticism about its security (Morrison 2nd April 2020). Zoom's response (Zoom 02/02/20) didn't prevent further criticism a week later (*The Guardian*, 11th April 2020). Protecting our client's data is paramount; for expert advice regarding security see <https://www.catherineknibbs.co.uk>

The ICO decision of 'not prosecuting' for any unauthorised data breaches during the Covid-19 pandemic is on the one hand an acknowledgment of the sheer number of people who may be unfamiliar with working at a distance, now finding themselves doing so, but it's cold comfort to our clients if their data is breached. As therapists 'we want to do our best to protect our clients by using software that is secure and we can trust, know how to use it, and apply all the relevant data protecting laws' (Knibbs 2020).

Other platforms do exist including Vsee.com used by Nasa and HIPPA compliant (<https://vsee.com>) and Doxy.me (<https://doxy.me>). If you are continuing to use Skype, you may wish to read ACTO: 'Good guidance Note for Therapists: Skype'. Skype was described to me by Kate Anthony (personal communication), Director of Online Training Institute as the equivalent of offering face-to-face therapy with the door wide open due to what many consider its lack of confidentiality and data protection.

Many may experience webcam working as intense, as your face and your clients' faces are probably closer to each other than they ever have been in the actual therapy room. If the computer freezes we are both left frozen in time and I have a unique opportunity to see and explore my client's face like never before, even if I think I knew it well, knew what that expression meant, now I find I don't (they can do the same as now I'm on show too, whether on speaker or gallery form, I can see myself). In this there is an intimacy that has been previously absent, this has required my clients and I to find ways to navigate and comment about the closeness of our faces (us) and what this means for us both.

'You're too near. I don't like it' says Marie* and as a consequence we experiment with distance, moving my laptop back and forth until we found a comfortable distance, not too near, not too far away. This was a

*All client names have been changed.

'Headphones . . . transfer my client's voice directly into my ears, my head, my body. I hear my clients, their fears, sadness, scare, tears uninterrupted and unfiltered in my actual head. I become aware of the somatic impact of their distress on my body, and consider working without them.'

dynamic exploration of closeness and its significance, which would not have happened if we had continued to sit statically with each other in the room, 'humans yearn to experience the wholeness and the safety of togetherness, yet we are also separate enough to be wary of others and to desire our individuality' (Heiller and Sills 2010 p.245). How clever to be able to experience this via technology, how to connect and manage our distance simultaneously.

Webcam working can feel exhausting as my attention and focus is directed towards a face on a small screen for uninterrupted lengths of time. There are less distractions than when we are in the room together, noises outside the tick of the clock, the occasional glance away. I concentrate more on my clients' words, their facial expressions, their tone and pitch of voice, eye movements, I lose the body 'tells' that told me so much. I therefore work harder to fill in the conscious and unconscious gaps, the silences (pauses or glitches?), sometimes making correct interventions, sometimes not. I have to see and in particular hear them in a different way. Hearing my clients is amplified as I use headphones which increase confidentiality as my clients can't be overheard. Headphones however, also transfers my client's voice directly into my ears, my head, my body. I hear my clients, their fears, sadness, scare, tears uninterrupted and unfiltered in my actual head. I become aware of the somatic impact of their distress on my body, or vicarious trauma and consider working without them until I can process my countertransference in supervision. I find I sit still for longer during webcam therapy, my body can ache and I need to stretch in between and after sessions and either stare off into the distance or close my eyes once a session is over.

Online environment: the new therapy frame

'You're in the wrong fucking room!' shouted Lisa when we met for the first time at a distance.

In trying to be a good cyber therapist, I moved into my study where the modem is located. In line with my cyber training, I wanted to provide a more secure connection offered by plugging myself in rather than working via

‘Clients who I thought I knew, may present differently at a distance, they may say far more than they would have done face to face, or share distressing aspects of their history that I wasn’t aware of.’

wifi. This was not the connection Lisa required. She demanded to see me in my familiar place on the settee by the window. For her predictability in these unpredictable times was crucial. She wanted reassurance, a human connection. I felt like a bad cyber therapist, needless to say, next week I moved rooms!

Stilman, in his timely article ‘i-Self: accounting for our digital identity’ published in the last (Vol 10:1) issue of *the Transactional Analyst* asked ‘As a small thought experiment, I wonder if you share more about yourself online than you ever shared with your neighbour?’ (Stilman, p8). My reply is a resounding ‘Yes’ due the online phenomenon called the online disinhibition effect (Suler 1997, 2004).

Clients who I thought I knew, may present differently at a distance, they may say far more than they would have done f2f, or share distressing aspects of their history that I wasn’t aware of. I’d been working f2f with Zoe for 3 years. In her first distanced session, she disclosed the sexually abusiveness of her partner. I was taken back, I had no idea, I thought I knew her. For her not having me present provided her with the freedom and the relief to say all she had to. While some would argue that the impact of her words on me are missing, these particular words about abuse had been missing for three years. (For a detailed read of the Online Disinhibition Effect and the different types see Suler 1998 and 2004.)

With new clients the pace of disclosures may come earlier in the work when I may not have a ‘feel for client’ yet and can leave me feeling overwhelmed. The pacing of sessions becomes important, for some the online disinhibition effect is liberating while others feel that this new ability to express themselves freely represents them better, ‘in removing the physical aspect of counselling, the pure expression of mind and soul maybe communicated effectively, bypassing the defences of counsellor and client’ (Anthony, 2000).

Having a dedicated, private space, free from being overheard and overseen are considered important for our work and it would be favourable if my clients could also find a dedicated, private space. At a distance, I cannot insist on this nor control their space and lockdown has further compromised privacy as in most cases partners, families and housemates are around. Currently I am

carrying out therapy sessions with clients in their garden shed, their bedroom, their car and their permitted one walk a day. They are creatively adjusting to finding ways to continue with their therapy. I have also carried out sessions where small children have come into the room, cats and dogs lie at clients’ feet and sessions where clients have taken me on a mini tour of their room as they search out tissues. Do I make these interruptions explicit, or do I simply acknowledge to myself that these are unprecedented times and have them remain outside of the work with my client? If I don’t comment am I pretending it didn’t happen and colluding in something?

My assumption about the sanctuary and sacredness of the therapeutic space is consequently compromised. The therapeutic frame is changed, and needs to be re-negotiated for this new way of working together, boundaries are blurred in cyberspace and can appear messy and fuzzy and this can lead to exploration for their therapeutic value and meaning. One blurred boundary is heightened by my use of my laptop for therapy and virtual pub meet ups; it has dual functions and I need to differentiate between work and leisure and know that although it is the same tool, it has different functions and purposes. One quick way I was taught to differentiate between the two was to dress appropriately and differently and take my distanced work as seriously as my work offline. Another way was to recognise that although the medium may have changed, my work as a therapist hasn’t and I was still bound to the principles of ethical practice and Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice (UKCP) still apply in cyberspace.

One particular boundary blur is, whereas before I could only imagine how my client lived, now I can see into their space, their private world. Upon enquiry about this, one client said she felt the sessions were more mutual now. She experienced a power imbalance stepping into my therapy space, she felt disempowered, ‘clients in online therapeutic relationships regularly report feeling a greater equality and autonomy, and more frequently identify feeling an internal locus of control’ (Dunn, 2014, p81-82). Mutuality, the flattening of power and hierarchy is something that online work is famous for. What became important for my client and I was our

‘Online therapy metaphors and symbolism go hand in hand and the Covid-19 virus as a metaphor, symbol and a reality has been noticeable in all of the therapy sessions over the first three weeks as clients recall their lockdown tales.’

discussion of 'who owns the space between us, the space we now occupy together?' We concluded that neither of us did, it was co-owned, co-created a sort of 'third (cyber) space', 'a space that is filled with a wide array of meanings and purposes' (Suler 1998). The third (cyber) space provides space to play, to be creative, to use imagination, it is dynamic playground for the unconscious. A place to explore meaning, metaphor and symbolism.

Another client said they felt intruded upon, 'I come to you and leave my shit with you, I walk home and my house is nice, unspoilt'. This reminded me of how do I support my clients in the transition from therapy space to living space? There is no stepping in and out of my front door, there is no time to adjust while travelling home. Clients end therapy and are in their living space with their partners, family and housemates immediately there and consequently may feel an increased sense of vulnerability. I was also aware of being the intruder and how that impacted upon me.

This client towards the end of the next session asked me if I noticed anything different in her living room. I had, she'd closed the kitchen door and there was less furniture around, yet to have said this would have been inappropriate but how could I not notice arrgg! With their environment on view I have more of my clients in mind. She explained that she had moved her seating 'off camera' so that she has a special place where I couldn't intrude. She had creatively adjusted her environment to protect herself. Online therapy metaphors and symbolism go hand in hand and the Covid-19 virus as a metaphor, symbol and a reality has been noticeable in all of the therapy sessions over the first three weeks as clients recall their lockdown tales.

Another way I can re-negotiate the frame is through the creative adjustment of my theory. While there are specific theories, essential skills and considerations regarding providing therapy at a distance, for example assessment for suitability for online working including risk assessment, the online disinhibition effect, working

'For some the . . . disinhibition effect is liberating while others feel that this new ability to express themselves freely represents them better, "in removing the physical aspect of counselling, the pure expression of mind and soul maybe communicated effectively, bypassing the defences of counsellor and client" (Anthony, 2000).'

without the physical presence, fantasy and anonymity, I believe, as a transactional analyst I have a wealth of theory which can be tweaked and adapted to the online environment. Stilman (2019/20) adapted Cox's Model of Self (2001) to include the 'i-self' (p10). In 2014, I talked about young people expressing 'their identity through their username and their choice of avatar which can represent either people (past and present), aspects of self, (both false and real – Winnicott, 1951) or differing ego states in particular . . . the Child ego state', (Evans, 2015, p155), together with adapting, Hargaden and Sills (2002) Development of Self. I'm sure Berne would approve.

My client Trisha lives alone. I have always 'known' about her isolation however, seeing her in her home I have an overwhelming sense of her loneliness. To witness her alone in her home is different to her recounting her loneliness, she can actually show me and in the showing me, we share the experience, and consequently she feels less lonely.

It has always been my opinion since working with anonymous young people that although you 'lose' the whole body or part body of the other in working online, the body you never lose, is yours. Bollas states 'that in order to find the patient we must look for him within ourselves' (1987, p202). Technology is now the lens, the conduit through which I am tasked with finding my clients and supervisees. My countertransference is crucial in working at a distance. I need to pay attention to how do I feel in my body in the absence of their physical presence and as Dunn says 'describe it' to my clients. 'Transference and countertransference phenomena feature powerfully with online interactions. . . without the other clues (body language, etc.) that exist in f2f meeting, there is more need and, indeed, more freedom to describe inner responses and to request information from the other about the same' (Dunn, 2014, p82, found in Evans 2018, p91). Kate describes me as 'softer' online, Hazel comments how she doesn't think I'll suit longer hair. These descriptions may require me to be more active than I would necessarily be in f2f work to uncover their meaning and significance.

When I started working at Kooth.com though, I considered any distant relationship and consequently therapy for that matter to be inferior or secondary to the relationships I engaged in f2f. I believed relationships conducted via technology could never compete with the 'real' thing. I was in hindsight asking 'how do we have a therapeutic relationship when the other person isn't in the same room as me, the same city, the same country and we can't even see each other?'

I believe I engage in the distant therapeutic relationship in the same way I do f2f, albeit with some additional awareness derived from the different medium. I adopt the philosophical underpinning of TA, namely I'm ok, You're ok. Hargaden, writes that what helps people is

'our personal relational abilities for emotional engagement, discernment, nuanced attunement and most of all our integrity that will inform how we work with people' (2016, p1). While she wrote this about the f2f supervisory relationships it can equally be applied to working via technology. Relational depth and working at a distance are not mutually exclusive. The distance between myself and my clients still requires us to digest and make meaning of what emerges individually and between us and for me. The meanings we make may be different than the meanings we'd make f2f, however, the therapeutic relationship whether at a distance or f2f is the heart of the work I do with clients. Ruptures and enactments still occur, more so due to the disinhibition effect.

Since working at a distance, I have been converted to seeing the potential of working this way, increased accessibility, convenience, reduced stigma etc. I have also been aware of the challenges this way of working poses. When I worked at Kooth.com, I was constantly being asked 'how do you work with risky behavior and safeguarding in cyberspace when your clients are anonymous?' It was a pertinent question. I have a client who self-harms. In the room I can monitor her threshold, her tolerance to what we are talking about. At a distance where her body is only partly visible, this becomes problematic. I can't see her in the same way and my anxiety increases. When I used to train therapists and counsellors to work at a distance with risk, my mantra was 'to successfully work at a distance with risk you have to contain your anxiety in order to contain the client'. Is that any different to working f2f?

Supervision and training

I originally trained in cyber therapy as I was working in the field and wanted to have an academic understanding of the medium to supplement my clinical understanding of the online counselling service I worked for. I felt strongly that as I was the visible face of the service it was paramount that I was a trained and qualified cyber therapist. To go to national conferences and present workshops about working at a distance with children and young people without the specific training and qualification was not an option for me.

BACP and ACTO say it is preferable if you are trained to work online and if you want to consider further training, I've included a list of training providers. The same consideration is given to supervision, you 'should' have a supervisor who is either trained or at least familiar with this way of working, however a global pandemic might not be the best time to change supervisors!

I have found supervision fundamental to understanding the relational dynamic evoked through the emergence and spread of the Covid-19 virus, I am aware of us all being in uncharted waters. In my nearly 20

Online training organisations

- Academy for Online Counselling and Psychotherapy
<https://www.acadtherapy.online>
- Online Training for Counsellors
<https://www.onlinetrainingforcounsellors.com>
- Online Therapy Institute
<https://www.onlinetherapyinstitute.com>

years of practice, this is the first time that I, as a therapist together with my clients and supervisees have been experiencing the same devastating and existential threat at the same time.

Marie comes to her session saying she has nothing to discuss, she hasn't been anywhere or done anything. We sit quietly together until she eventually says that she isn't sleeping well. She spent a large part of the night awake worrying about death and loss. We explore this together, then she suddenly looks up and says, 'oh sorry, this must be really hard for you to hear, you must have your own stuff going on too.' While her reaction can be traced back to her history, there is a current reality to her concern, we share the existential threat from Covid-19, a collective experience of grief, loss and trauma.

At the time of writing this article we are entering the fourth week of lockdown, by the time it is published we may or may not still be in this position? Presently though, our new normal is that therapy will be offered at a distance for the foreseeable future. In my practice the technology has become secondary as clients become familiar with it, it is becoming normalised and cyberspace as the new therapy space is becoming normalised too. Therapy has resumed, and what has emerged in all of the work is how our protocol has been disturbed by both the pandemic and lockdown. Tales of loss of freedom, jobs, missing family and friends, loss of identity and the restructuring of it, history is being retold in the present; it has been exhausting.

One of the challenges about offering telemental therapy at this current time is that we are doing so in a time of global crisis and national lockdown. While working at a distance has provided us all with the means to carry on working privately, to carry on with our continuum of care towards our clients, to continue to earn a living, what has been missing for many therapists and clients is positive choice. Many are working via technology not because they want to but because they have no choice and will probably return to f2f therapy while considering their distance therapy a temporary holding experience. This I think misses an opportunity to explore what we find important in our relationships both those at a distance and closer. We can 'avoid entering into dialogue about what we care about, what we value and what we might miss while we use hardware to facilitate

expression of our internal world' (Evans, 2014, p164). Personally, I will continue to offer a blended therapy and supervision service, where for some working at a distance is and has become their 'preferred dwelling place' (Oates 2011, p155), it suits me and won't suit, and hasn't suited, everyone. It is different to working f2f, not better, certainly not worse or second best. I hope if you haven't experienced offering therapy or supervision at a distance before, you didn't get lost in cyberspace and find your way home.

March 2020 was the month our profession changed. Like an annoying little sibling therapy offered at a distance grew up overnight, came to the rescue and provided us all with a creative learning opportunity. Technology really did become our essential piece of kit, a hardware that rapidly became an 'architect of our intimacies' (Turkle 2011, p1), (Evans, 2014, p164).

Key texts

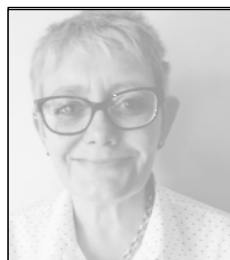
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Working online – discoveries and emergent practice

ANDY WILLIAMS shares his experience and thinking about
setting up work online with clients, supervisees and trainees

ONE OF MY memories from being a teenager was the televising of John Wyndham's book *Day of the Triffids* (1951), a post-apocalyptic novel by this English science fiction author. After most people in the world are blinded by an apparent meteor shower, an aggressive species of plant starts killing people, immobilising them with its toxic sting.

I am not surprised that this novel and TV series comes to my mind. The book is full of post-apocalyptic themes: families desperately attempting to find one another and taking actions to survive, altruism and heroism, aggression and selfishness and attempts to get through under the shadows of great danger. I think at an unconscious level I have been drawing the parallels between the novel and our current times. I have the privilege and, at times, the horror of being therapist to some senior hospital medics and consultants. To date, all have survived the virus but I know that all have recorded videos for their family and friends as an offering and object of solace should they die from Covid-19.

One of the scenes from the TV adaptation of *Day of the Triffids* that remains fixed in my mind is the totally blind man, tapping his walking cane on the pavement as he makes his way across London, perhaps on Westminster Bridge. I don't remember his words but the theme was a sense of 'serves the buggers right!' – he was talking about how he had had to cope with being sightless in a 'sighted world' up until now. Now that the world's population is sightless they can come and join him, and, for the moment, he has the power and advantage. Sadly, little does he know that the world is now populated by terrifying, man-eating plants which will probably devour him.

So... my internal fear has been that those practitioners who have worked online for many years – and perhaps at some very subtle level (or perhaps not-so-subtle) been looked down upon by us face-to-face workers – would rise up! The online therapists would be saying: 'You don't look so clever now do you?', 'You lot with your criticisms about lost transference and lack of emotional depth.' This has not come to pass! Instead there has been a wealth of responsiveness and generosity from many quarters. Individuals and organisations, too many to

mention, have stepped forward and offered their generosity and skilled experience of working online to help others, to whom it might have felt a new modality and medium or even threatening.

As Covid-19 sloshed around our global communities I could see the writing on the wall for my practice, and my levels of anxiety grew exponentially at the same time.

Here in Leeds, my spouse and I have three sources of income; Jane rents out rooms in our therapy centre, I have a busy, mostly face-to-face, private practice and then we are co-directors along with our core team (Bev Gibbons, Beren Aldridge and Michelle Hyams-Ssekasi) running the TA Training Organisation, a vibrant RTE. Jane and I are totally self-employed, and, as our face-to-face therapists walked out of the centre our income vanished and my financial terror grew.

I have worked online for many years, some specially insured clients I work with in China and UAE Dubai and with several supervisees from across the UK – but in percentage terms this must be less than 3% of my practice. How was I to move all my clients to an online modality and quickly?

A good collaborative approach seemed to work well for me and my clients. I suggested that every client 'give it a go' and experiment with working online – and then we could decide if it was right for them or not. This collaborative, experimental, adult-to-adult, pluralistic approaches worked well and most, to date, have remained working with me. I was also delighted to pick up some new couples work – where the members of the couple were living apart and the online therapy space could now act as a new, virtual space of holding and containment. This work continues and we meet weekly as a three – therapist and couple members joining from their respective locations.

Ethics and working online

Information was, and continues to emerge about working online, and especially what the big parents are saying – BACP, UKCP, BABCP etc. Facebook chats had many entries around 'what am I allowed to do, what are the rules, am I qualified?' etc. I'm not saying I'm right but I felt the only way to turn was to ethics and to seek out

Focus on: Working at a distance

Ethical principle	Clients I work with	Supervisees I work with	TA Training Organisation trainees	Me	The TA community
Commitment in relationship	Not leaving my clients in the lurch so finding alternative ways of working with them	Standing with my supervisee creatively – offering the true support and parallel process of working online with me as they work with their clients	“We’re not going anywhere – we are going to work this through, and complete all programmes”	Am I attending to my needs? Am I noticing my body and somatic experiences? Am I accounting my distress?	How can I share my learning with my colleagues and support them?
Respect	Offering them clear, honest alternatives and real choices about how we work or don’t work together	Offer a consistency as they navigate their professional world	Holding on to our philosophy as a training organisation. We support Adult to Adult relationships and self-determination	Trusting that my thinking is sound and worth accounting	How can I respect my colleagues who already work online? How can I recognise their position and skills?
Responsibility	Ensuring that my clients are fully aware of my levels of competency	Supporting them to self-assess their capacity and competency. Maintaining a good Adult-Adult stance	Attending to advice and guidance from UKATA and UKCP and EATA	Awareness that I hold a lot of people’s experiences and so self-care is essential	As a TSTA(P) I need to demonstrate ethical leadership
Empowerment	Not rescuing my clients. Ensuring they can make true choices and participate in choosing options that work for all	Attention to the new normative, developmental formative stretch and restorative attention	Using the parallel process of training online to equip students to work online themselves with confidence	How do I “lean into” the new, the future and not resist it? How can I empower myself and see this as a growth opportunity?	How can I empower my colleagues – leave competition behind and value homonymy and collaboration?
Protection	Am I competent? Is the client competent? Is the client environment competent to work online? (private, contained and containing)	Supporting my supervisees to feel professionally and personally protected at their work. Attending to Potency, Protection and Permission for all	Ensuring that training attends to individuals’ learning needs, sufficient rest and breaks, materials available in advance, psychological safety in training	How do I professionally protect myself and check that I am not harming myself through acting beyond my competency?	How can I protect the future of TA in the UK and beyond? – and protect my colleagues in a holistic way

'I look into my clients' eyes and they can do the same with me. It reminds me of the mutual regulation of that early and healthy symbiotic relationship between probably mum and baby.'

some good practice guidelines and to do some good 'Adult' ethical thinking. I decided to base my actions on moving to working online across three arenas:

1. Ethical principles. I deeply appreciate the ethical principles that we are offered in UKATA and EATA, and the concept of applying these to 'audiences' – so opposite is a figure of my initial thinking around the question of moving my practice from predominantly face-to-face to entirely virtual and online, and making a decision within an ethical frame.
2. Training and Development. I wanted to think about this arena in proportion. The 'Online Therapy Institute' was offering an initial conversion course of 10 hours input – offering an online reflective and didactic course to consider the content and processes and nuances of working online with clients. I found this course really useful and, as well as more concrete practicalities, also raised more subtle issues such as the disinhibition of the online client and ways of being 'present' as a therapist.
3. Finally I wanted to know what my particular 'parent' was saying – so took the issue to clinical supervision but also was particularly supported by a paragraph from UKCP and their guidance on 'Psychotherapeutic Practice and Working In Isolation': 'If you are able to provide psychotherapeutic support to clients but are unable to see them physically face-to-face, consider if you and the client have the means, competence and facilities to conduct online therapy safely and securely and whether this is appropriate for the client and you.'

I really appreciated the way this guidance invited me to consider the means, competency and facilities of all parties to conduct safe and secure online therapy and services.

My questions and experiences so far

This article is not intended to be an official guide to working online, clearly there are persons and parties who are far more experienced. However I did want to remind myself and share with you some discoveries that I have found as a therapist; that we have found as a training team or I have been supportively told by members of the community.

- a) Wonderings about early, introjective transferences – mirroring, twinning and idealisation. There is something about working with online video (such as

Zoom) where one is positioned apparently 'much closer' to the client than in a physical, face-to-face session. I look into my client's eyes and they can do the same with me. It reminds me of the mutual regulation of that early and healthy symbiotic relationship between probably mum and baby. How might this be thought about or employed in online therapy?

- b) There is something about boundary, barrier and merging – it is as if the walls of the therapy room have dissolved, meanwhile the client's home has become accessible. I can now see their sofa, their pictures, their washing-up piled high. If they are sitting in front of French windows I get a sense of distance beyond them and possibility. If they are wedged against the lounge wall I can feel enclosed and that we both cannot penetrate into a space 'beyond'. Boundary for me is 'barbed wire' – we can see through and see the field full of grass and sheep but probably won't persist into entering that space. Barrier is Belfast Peace Wall – huge sheets of corrugated iron reaching for the skies and causing acute shadow. Neither client nor I can see through or reach one another. How do I work with boundary not barrier?
- c) Disinhibition – all the online training courses go on about disinhibition think I! I've not seen any evidence; surely this is a feature that is left over from the early days of telephone or email counselling? – and then suddenly my client is off ... he reversed his webcam and is taking me on grand tour of his house. 'Would you like to meet my dog?' he asks. 'No!' I think. 'Yes why not' I say. We enter his bedroom and his boxers are drying on the radiator. Who has become disinhibited, the client offering to take me on tour of his house or the therapist who apparently has lost the immediate ability to say 'No' and explore the client's motivation. I regain my sense of self, exit my objectivity and regain my subjectivity. We spend the rest of the session discussing this event and its respective meanings for both of us. So just to let you know, there is no such thing as increased disinhibition...
- d) Fatigue – we have noticed in the training setting that tiredness can set in. Rather like the treatment of chronic fatigue good 'pacing' is needed and taking of breaks regularly, even if not tired. With the online training we are taking breaks every 50 minutes for a good 10 minutes. I'm wondering how that might expand to one-to-one therapy? Should there be an interval?
- e) One of my colleagues discussed with me the shared sense of vulnerability considering the therapeutic frame. It is as if we have a wall missing in our houses. In these vulnerable times, does working online inherently result in greater exposure?

Security – Zoom or Skype, VSee or something else?

By now I have received endless emails from EAP companies telling me which platform that I should and shouldn't be using. Nuffield Health are saying that Zoom is of the devil, meanwhile colleagues are stating that Skype own your data and will sell it to people traffickers. Also your client can see when you are online! – except that I think you can probably adjust that setting. What is a poor therapist to do?

As of this date, I have chosen to go with Zoom. My poor colleague had a scary experience with Zoom where his next client suddenly appeared in his current meeting. Just like someone opening the therapy room door and saying 'Oh – excuse me!' I guess we learn from these events – and, as I write, here is the received wisdom for using Zoom with reasonable safety:

1. Send your client an individual link for a meeting – don't use your Zoom number.
2. Never publicise links publically on websites – anyone can come to your meeting.
3. Use a password for the meeting too – a password will be required to enter.
4. Use the 'Waiting Room' feature so it is you who vets each participant as you let them in to the virtual 'meeting room' proper.
5. Lock the door behind you. When everyone is in – lock the meeting room and then no one else can dial in and enter.

NASA use VSee which I think is probably a big clue and something I need to look into.

This article is not intended as a definitive training piece – it is a personal account of the journey of moving online. I'm sure there will be developments with platforms and more news to follow. Zoom offer great training videos to help us attend to safety, GDPR and security.

The therapist – doing it

Advice from the Online Therapy Institute (website below) suggests that if you are moving to working online in this crisis, to then model your practice on your usual way of doing things. In other words, the online process apes that of the usual face-to-face process. This is supported by expressions in Zoom such as 'Waiting Room' and 'Meeting Room'. At first this seems to make perfect sense – but then I wonder about our normal sense of humanity, our propensity to repeat behaviours and our endemic nature of resisting change.

What does it mean to 'lean in' to the new technology and to the changes it may be offering us as practitioners.

As psychotherapists – everything is a 'thing'. The client may be just late, they may have forgotten to pay us,

or they leave mud all over our carpet on exit. At one level this is just a random, unintentional event – but we also know as therapists that this is also potentially a 'thing'. It may be evidence of the unconscious or pre-conscious material leaking into the process between us and the client. As the mud is scraped onto your therapy rug, perhaps some of the client's rage at you is being expressed or left behind for you to vacuum up?

Likewise working online, we need to think about what we are doing – because a thing is probably a thing:

- What is our environment like? Will I be using my usual therapy room as background or will I be working from areas of my home? How do I 'curate' my online presence and office to be helpful and protective. Do I have photos of my family behind me?
- What drinking vessel will I use while online with a client? A mug, when tipped up for drinking presents a large, circular disk of ceramic shoved in the client's face. A clear glass means contact is maintained better as it is transparent and the client can still see me and hold contact.
- Will I preserve some space before and after the session in order to prepare and debrief myself?
- How do I move from chopping onions in the kitchen, to moving into working clinically with a client, and then returning to get dinner finished? – does this need thinking about and what can the client detect? Can the client transferentially smell the onions at the other end, and our desperation to get supper finished?

As a therapist there are the more normative factors to consider:

- correct insurance
- a clear process from enquiry to clinical work to discharge
- how will I assess safely and intelligently including being able to reject work if I or the client lack capacity to work safely, ethically and positively together
- a meaningful written contract with terms and conditions, clear payment processes and accurate in areas such as GDPR and consents.

I also need to think about the client and their preparation for working online. Below is an information leaflet that I send to my clients before the commencement of our work. It is not exhaustive and I am constantly updating it as generous colleagues offer me their thinking.

Conclusion

By the time this comes out in print the world will have moved on. To help you place the timing of the writing of this article, Boris Johnson is still in intensive care in hospital – there are so many unknowns. I hope that you might find something useful in this article for you and please do email me if you would like a copy of the information page for clients. May I wish us all well with our unknowns and 'leaning in' to our futures.

continued

GETTING READY FOR WORKING ONLINE WITH YOUR THERAPIST

By Video - Example Zoom, Skype, Video WhatsApp, Video Facetime

When you attend a face-to-face therapy appointment, the counsellor will do everything in their power to keep the environment safe, appropriate and confidential. Working online, this might need the client spending some time thinking about their own psychological safety and the environment in which they are going to work.

Here are some suggestions and tips to think about as you get ready for online therapy:

- Confidentiality and privacy. Make sure you have a good, private place to take the call where you won't be interrupted for the duration of the appointment.
- Turn off your other electronics and pop-up reminders and news items – as these might distract you during the session. (Mobiles etc)
- You might want to access the best of the Wifi bandwidth available – so turn all items in the house to airplane mode (stop the kids watching Netflix while you are in therapy!)
- Pets in or pets out of the room?
- You will need to dress appropriately, so that you are keeping yourself modest and safe.
- Your laptop, tablet or phone will need to be on a solid surface and not bounding around on a bed or soft surface on which you too are sitting – it makes the other person feel seasick when working with you.
- Be mindful that the therapist will see your environment – you might want to check photographs, pictures etc to ensure you are happy that these are being viewed.
- You might want to put a Do Not Disturb sign on your door as you work.
- Get yourself ready: tissues? Hot drink? Water? Your diary? Pen? Notebook?
- Comfortable chair with the room at the right temperature if possible.
- You may want to invest in a headset with earphones and microphone?
- Agree with the therapist who calls who?
- Agree with the therapist what happens if the call drops.

By Phone

- All parties must check the identity of the person at the other end of the call.
- Is that your therapist? Is that the client?
- Silences during a phone call are natural and normal – don't be intimidated or worried if there are moments of stillness and silence – your therapist will reassure you that they are still present.
- Who is initiating the call and ringing whom?

Generally

- The client will need to provide an emergency contact and contact number if the call or video suddenly drops or if an emergency situation develops.
- Therapy is a unique and important space. You may want to consider how you will prepare yourself before and after the session. For example reserving some space and time to think, prepare before and reflect after with potentially journaling.

Useful organisations

- Academy for Online Counselling and Psychotherapy
www.acadtherapy.online
- Online Training for Counsellors
www.onlinetrainingforcounsellors.com
- Online Therapy

- Institute
www.onlinetherapyinstitute.com
- Online Counselling Services & Training
www.ocst.co.uk
- Lucy Hyde
lucyhydetherapy.com
- www.onlineevents.com



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Adverse Childhood Experiences developing ACE resilience

By promoting a shared language between professionals, with respect to treating and preventing ACEs, **JACKIE LUNT** is helping Liverpool to become a trauma-informed city

IN FEBRUARY 2018, I received an email about a forthcoming screening of a documentary called *Resilience* at a cinema in Warrington in mid-March. As secretary of the Merseyside Association for Family Therapy (MAFT) I get regular emails advertising various training events. This event looked interesting and I happened to be available that particular Monday afternoon. I bought my ticket and went along. Attending a training event in a cinema was not something that I had done before and it turned out to be a pleasant, relaxed environment with good quality coffee available and folks eating popcorn. I noted how this atmosphere felt helpful for our mental state to be relaxed and alert and ready to think. This was particularly important considering the profound nature of some of the material we were about to watch.

The documentary looked at the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children, young people, parents and communities. The 'biology' of the stress body's response was talked about and how this has an impact on the individual throughout their entire lifetime. We were introduced to the concept of TOXIC STRESS by Dr Jack Shonkoff from the Harvard medical school. This is a type of stress that is far beyond the usual childhood stuff that activates our capacity to problem solve and rise to a challenge. Toxic stress results from chronic, severe, unpredictable and inescapable stress. Dr Shonkoff talked about the crucial importance of having at least one reliable, trusted adult to whom we can turn to for support. This always available, reliable, trusted adult is one major factor in mitigating the impact of ACEs. This fitted just perfectly with attachment theory and the psychological need for a secure base (Bowlby 1988). Dr Nadine Burke-Harris, a paediatrician working in an impoverished suburb of California, talked about how an appreciation of the impact of ACEs are crucial in her clinical work. She spoke of how it dramatically changed her thinking and practice when she applied the understandings from the ACEs study. Coming from an approach of thorough developmental history taking she had been much better able to understand the aetiology of her young patients presenting medical problems. Dr Burke-Harris employed

mental health therapists and parenting professionals within her paediatric practice. She talked about the incredible outcomes she had been seeing as a result of these changes. She talked about the crucial value of good 'parental buffering'. There was consideration of the need for supporting parents who have their own history of ACEs and also examples of applying knowledge about ACEs within primary schools. As a psychotherapist and experienced CAMHS clinician an appreciation of the severity of the stress children can suffer was not new but, the language with which to understand this was just what I had been waiting for. The documentary summed up the hundreds of conversations that I had been having with parents for more than a decade and what every therapist knows as their bread and butter; what happens to us in childhood impacts the rest of our lives.

The accompanying statistics for poor physical health outcomes for children who had experienced multiple ACEs were the stuff of nightmares. Two thirds of the population have experienced at least one ACE. Dr Anda talked about how he has been all over the USA and many other countries presenting the findings of the original ACE's study. As part of these presentations he would take an anonymous audience ACE score. He found the ACE score results to be consistent no matter whom the audience was made up of. The highest ACE scoring group he presented turned out to be a group of psychotherapists. ACEs are about all of us, only one third of the population do not report any ACEs. This is not about one group of people looking in from the outside, talking about another group of people; we are all in the

'As a psychotherapist and experienced CAMHS clinician an appreciation of the severity of the stress children can suffer was not new but, the language with which to understand this was just what I had been waiting for.'

same boat. This lends itself to a collaborative approach and being able to talk about ACEs with service users from a genuine position of I'm Ok You're Ok (Harris 1967).

The original ACEs study published in 1998 (Felitti & Anda et al) identified 10 adverse childhood experiences. (See bottom of poster/diagram). The sample was from 25,000 consecutive patients at Kaiser Permanente health care provider with 17,421 completed questionnaires. Fitting all the possible ACEs within these 10 categories really is 'boiling down' an incredibly complex set of developmental, cultural and multi-systemic circumstances. The enormous advantage of this, is that it makes this stuff easier to begin to comprehend for a general population audience not, just us therapists. I could feel the excitement grow within me as I kept thinking this is it, this is me, this is how I think and this is going to be immeasurably helpful to our understanding as a society. The documentary presented the information in a language and style that was so easy to understand. Also really importantly the original ACE study was conducted in a population that 'were mostly white, middle class, middle aged, well educated, and financially secure enough to have good medical insurance' (Van De Kolk 2014) p145. No one could say that this was just about poverty, racism, and poor life choices.

A quote stood out to me from the film: 'If we can weave the science through these different professions and get it into the hands of the general population, they will invent very wise actions.' Resilience KPJR Films (2015)

I was determined to bring this documentary to Liverpool as soon as possible. Driving home this idea was running through my mind. I was clear that I very much wanted to be part of getting this information 'out there' to as many professionals and parents as possible. The first logical place to start would be to arrange for this documentary to be shown in Liverpool. I was going to need some help with this and contacted the best man in Liverpool I knew to advocate for very young children's mental health, Dr Michael Galbraith, Clinical lead for the Liverpool Parent Infant Partnership (LivPip) and perinatal mental health expert. We came up with a plan to advertise the screening and by mid-May we had our first screening at the Liverpool Odeon cinema. We facilitated a workshop Q and A following the screening in the cinema and collected feedback sheets. The feedback indicated that the professionals who attended were as 'moved' as I had been by the documentary. Some people who attended expressed anger and outrage that this information was not more widely available to professionals, parents and most importantly social policy decision makers. We could not have agreed more. We went on to organise several more screenings, in total just under 400 people purchased tickets and attended. We also managed to get a number of local politicians to attend. Notably local cabinet member for health and social care Barry Cushner

'ACEs are about all of us, only one third of the population do not report any ACEs. This is not about one group of people looking in from the outside, talking about another group of people; we are all in the same boat.'

attended a screening and has remained involved and interested in this issue within Liverpool.

In addition to the *Resilience* documentary we also arranged two screenings of the sister documentary *Paper Tigers* (KPJR Films 2014). This film focuses on how one special educational high school in the USA used trauma informed thinking to work with their young people. The head of this school Jim Sporleder talked about how he heard about the ACEs research and decided to put it into practice in his school. The school became a centre for healing as well as providing a more formal education. Their outcomes for the young people were exciting. Over a hundred people came to see this film. We offer this documentary as part of a flexible training package for schools.

This felt like the end of the beginning of helping to promote a shared language between professionals in order to be better able to work together treating and preventing ACEs. We are aiming towards Liverpool being a much more 'trauma informed' city.

The next step was to purchase the screening rights for the *Resilience* and *Paper Tigers* documentaries so we could be more flexible about when and where we offered screenings. We developed a training day for professionals so that we could introduce ACEs more comprehensively and make the links with existing bodies of knowledge including greater detail about the biology of stress. We also wanted to be able to talk more about mitigating the impact of ACEs and then explore context. We found that we were thinking a great deal about resilience's in our conversations with professionals about this material. Just like the larger the number of ACEs one has experienced the poorer the outcome was likely to be, the larger the number of resilience factors one has experienced the better the outcomes were. I began to think about the pull downwards of the ACEs and the lift upwards of the resilience factors. I had seen this model before in the Drowning Man diagram (Lee 1998). I had found the diagram to be really useful in understanding what drags us down and what gives us buoyancy in the sea of life. It occurred to me that this idea could be applied to the understanding of ACEs and resilience's with either the ACEs needing to be reduced or the resilience's be increased (or better still both), for recovery to be



Figure 1: ACEs and Resilience – Attachment Matters, 2020

‘A limited number of therapy sessions can’t provide the conditions for the therapist to be the child’s Always Available (trusted) Adult. . . . it may be more helpful to skill up the primary carer to be this psychological life preserver for the child. “Better parents make better kids.” (Siegal 2014)’

facilitated. If nothing else, the presence of a primary attachment figure would be the ‘life preserver’ that stopped a person from going under. I thought about the countless conversations I had had over the years with social workers and school staff sometimes getting really frustrated with my advice that it was more important to reduce the dose of adversity for the child before any attempt to offer therapy. I put pencil to paper and produced this diagram.

The diagram has been useful in talking with a number of professionals about the need to reduce the level of adversity for children and families. The diagram can also be used with parents who have difficulties with their literacy. The diagram has opened up conversations with a number of professionals. It is possible to express so much in an image that can take a lot of words to explain. Some folks prefer to learn in this way too. The visual presentation has facilitated assessment conversations about how many ACEs children may be experiencing and what needs to be done to reduce these. It has also made it possible to bring the issue of who is the child’s primary attachment figure to the forefront of assessment/consultation. Sometimes it’s clear that this is not going to be the child’s parent and it may be a member of school staff or a grandparent. It has also made it easier to explain how a limited number of therapy sessions can’t provide the conditions for the therapist to be the child’s Always Available (trusted) Adult. This needs to be someone who is much more available than a therapist could ever be. In these circumstances it may be more helpful to skill up the primary carer to be this psychological life preserver for the child. “Better parents make better kids” (Siegal 2014).

‘.... the key to keeping a tolerable stress response from tipping over into the toxic stress zone is the presence of a buffering adult to adequately mitigate the impact of the stressor’ p85 (Burke-Harris 2018).

The ACE training day was attended by a wide range of professionals including psychotherapists, school staff, social workers, mental health practitioners, early years professionals, psychologists etc. from a wide range of organisations. The feedback was highly positive and

many said that they would have liked the training to be over two days rather than one. As part of the training day we screened the *Resilience* documentary. We have run three of these days now and the fourth was unfortunately cancelled due to the corona virus outbreak. We are planning to resume these training days when things return to normal.

In addition to the ACEs training day I have developed a training day that looks at the resilience’s within one’s life history. I use the Tree of Life approach to explore one’s life story in a way that leaves you feeling stronger. This approach was originally developed by Ncazelo Ncube when she was working with AIDS orphans in South Africa. The Tree of Life uses a metaphor of a tree to explore our resiliences and strengths. In this way we can ‘thicken’ the story of how we have survived and begin to bring our life script further into conscious awareness. This opens up potential for change or re-decision (McClure Goulding and Goulding 1979) (Jackson Nakazawa 2015) to the course of one’s life script (Steiner 1974). This is important both for the individual and for parents in order to avoid passing their script onto their child/ren. The Tree of Life approach is very much looking at the resiliences that are above the water. ‘When we name and address our own needs we are better able to recognise and respond to those needs in those we care about.’ (Fortune 2018, p14)

The Tree of Life approach has also been helpful in my therapy practice with individuals, families, couples and groups. In particular I have found this useful in promoting peer group support within school groups of adolescents. It can also be used in community development work.

The attachment relationship between primary caregiver and child is crucially important in mitigating the impact of ACEs. This is represented in the poster diagram as the life preserver due to the fundamental nature of attachment relationships for psychological wellbeing. As part of the suite of training days developed to help improve resilience I have put together a training day using play, games and activity. This day involves no power point and we play games and do exercises all day. The ‘games’ are designed to improve children’s capacity to playfully connect with their caregiver. The training day offers improved opportunities to have moments of deep, joyous connection with children and young people. There

‘The key to keeping a tolerable stress response from tipping over into the toxic stress zone is the presence of a buffering adult to adequately mitigate the impact of the stressor.’

is also a focus on helping children return to their window of tolerance with emotional regulation support (Norris & Rodwell 2017). This opportunity for connection may also help older children disclose to their parents and caregivers about the ACEs they are experiencing in the present or their past (Smith 1995). This training day is also suitable for therapeutic work with groups of children, young people, families and adults. I deliver these group play sessions within primary schools to help children with their social and emotional development and to foster peer group support.

These training days will be up and running again when it is clear that we can return to going out and being with others in a group.

The ACEs and resiliences poster is still a work in progress and in particular I feel it would benefit from including some consideration regarding context. A helpful context would make the resiliences stronger in their upward pull. An unhelpful context would make the ACEs downwards pull greater. The current ongoing Corona crisis may well be having the effect of making existing ACEs 'heavier' for children, young people and their families. The people who were already struggling are likely to be struggling even more in this pandemic and the enforced staying at home. Time will tell how this has worked out for people but, the reported rise in domestic violence reports do not bode well for those already weighed down with histories of toxic stress.

My future plans are to roll out the use of this poster within training days, schools consultation work, safeguarding consultations and in particular offer it to parents. I have for some time been a practitioner who believes that psychoeducation can be profoundly helpful and empowering for young people and parents. Sharing the theory with patients has been an established tradition within transactional analysis from the very early days (Berne, 1961, 1964). It's not possible to be able to help parents with every parenting decision they make every day. What can be offered is to help them develop their capacity to use a theory to think with. I look forward to this future development using the diagram and collecting feedback on the efficacy of how helpful it is in helping people think differently and move on to change their parenting.

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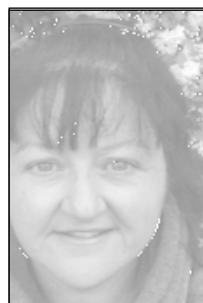
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A year ago today: changing my membership status

ANTHONY WOODS shares a life-threatening event which led him to reassess what was important to him and shed light on his script.

THE PARAGRAPHS BELOW are musings about my serious bicycle accident that happened a year ago, today, that lead me to consider the life I want, and in so doing go on to make a series of decisions that lead to me changing my membership status. To preserve this period of thought and my experiences that arose, I have kept this first draft intact, spontaneously written as it was, so as not to fall into the trap of 'getting it right' – going on to proofread, re-write and include numerous erudite references – the very things I want to step back from.

AT THE BEGINNING of 2019 I had thought of myself as on course to finish writing my CTA written exam – actively reflecting, gathering and collating material for my case study (Section C).

I was also continuing to read discursively across various topics to mine deeper into those therapeutic themes that were, or had, emerged with my case study client, as well as with my other clients, both in the relationship and through the treatment planning process: including such topics as attachment theory; working with personality disorders – Borderline, Narcissistic, and Schizoid adaptations; and analysing my own and my clients' dreams as transference reactions within the relationship through the lens of Jungian and Lacanian approaches to therapy. In addition, I was re-visiting TAJ papers and conference materials as they related to my understanding of the narcissist defences, specifically those by Cox, Heathcoat and Aaron Lederer.

Also my workshop proposal at a TACC Regional Conference had been accepted to be delivered in February 2019, 'The Hearts Flow Diagram – a framework to love and be loved', as was my workshop developed for Relate 'Challenges of Anger' – to be delivered in May 2019.

I was continuing to sustain my private practice through marketing on several platforms, as well as through my posting monthly blog posts – continuing to put out and celebrate models and concepts from classical TA that were proving useful in my client work, including: strokes, stroke bank theory, the credit bank, power plays and rackets. Those same TA models and concepts that were

to figure in the redraft of my paper 'Working with Couples: The Hearts Flow Diagram' – accepted by and published in *the Transactional Analyst*, Winter 2018/2019, vol 9(1).

I had found, and was seeing, a non-TA Transpersonal therapist, who was encouraging an intellectual freedom, to consider my childhood primal wounds and defences, and to consider how those related to my practice in the therapy room, principally transference reactions, many that were given expression in my own kinaesthetic responses. I was encouraged too, to revisit my undergraduate understandings – nearly 40 years old – of psychoanalytical perspectives I had favoured then, particularly to look at my historical nightmares through the lens of Jungian and Lacanian theory. In addition, to become curious about my scripting as a therapist – taking on the training journey while also keeping my full-time job, for what was ten years.

To all intents and purposes, I had felt I was balancing well my full time job in social care, for which I was receiving various awards and accolades, with my evening counselling practice and developing professional identity, and status, as a Trainee Psychotherapist – going about preparing for the final hurdle of my CTA Exams. Little did I consider then, my motivation to take on more and more projects as anything other than the result of a workaholic personality – that was after all helping to catapult me into establishing an identity as a CTA. But I did not consider the consequences for my health and family of a succession of circumstances that were arising

'I had felt I was balancing well my full time job in social care, for which I was receiving various [strokes], with my evening counselling practice and developing professional identity, and status, as a Trainee Psychotherapist – going about preparing for the final hurdle of my CTA Exams.'

in my professional and personal life that later were to catch up with me. Those included: accepting responsibilities associated with a promotion in my full time day job; the complications of dealing with my mother's death abroad and managing her estate; overseeing structural repairs to my own property; and managing changes in my home life with the necessary alterations in routines and relationships brought about because with my partner and her adult son, who has additional needs, we had decided it was in his best interests to come to our house for more overnight stays each week.

Throughout all my continuing professional development (CPD), I had thought of myself as aiming for completion of my case study to submit my CTA written exam in 2020; ready then to focus on preparing my tapes for my oral exam. I was considering taking early retirement from my full time job in social care, and indeed was financially planning for such an eventuality, to become a part time accredited psychotherapist. In the knowledge, that I had already, in this CPD year, reached and exceeded the EATA and UKCP required hours for accreditation, and that my case study proposal was 'excellent' (my clinical supervisor's words). I thought that it might even be feasible for me to look toward dropping my hours in my full time job, to remain financially secure, while taking on a mental health familiarisation placement.

With articles published and workshops underway, my overarching plan to build and strengthen my professional reputation in the TA community was on course.

However, a year ago today, an event happened that was the catalyst for making some choices about my life. Cycling to a shopping complex to purchase some materials for my presentation at the TACC conference later that week, I had a bicycle accident that left me lying unconscious on a country road on the ground – suffering a head injury, broken eye socket and cheek bone and as part of the subsequent surgical treatment being diagnosed with skin cancer. These events in themselves and my recovery over the following months allowed me some space to step away, to reflect and review my professional identity, my investment of time and money!

'Why was I giving up a full time job that I love?', I had asked my clinical supervisor. Given the time off, work day and weekends wise, to reflect on CPD, when other responsibilities were startlingly being brought to my attention, without the weight and responsibility of seeing clients, preparing for workshops, and writing my case study, my appetite for new projects or even clients diminished. Admitting I felt less connected emotionally to my practice, I considered no longer accepting new referrals. Taking this to clinical supervision, we talked and agreed my proposal to scale back my client caseload; keeping, and reviewing, my two long-term clients.

'TA has helped me enormously not only to understand and manage, navigate and ultimately change my professional and personal relationships for the better, in and outside of the therapy room, but also to reach the right choices for my health.'

Although recognising it had been my bicycle accident that had so abruptly brought my change of direction of CPD, I did not know then how this would play out over the following months.

Through the following months making further recovery from the head injury and facial surgery, as well as undergoing treatment for my skin cancer, I reflected, considered and talked some more with my supervisor; how might I scale back my workload. We agreed I would keep my obligations regarding leading only one workshop, but that I would take on no more such work. Then we spoke about me either pausing or cancelling my CTA Training Contract – originally entered into in 2012. We did indeed go on to cancel my training contract with EATA. Then, directed by UKATA, I duly completed and sent them a 'Change of Membership Status Form' with a Proposed New Membership Category 'UKATA Diploma', enclosing a copy of my RTE Diploma.

Receiving a link to UKATA's 'Continuing Professional Development Policy for Certified Transactional Analysts' I understood fully my obligations and requirements, in my newfound status as a Diploma Counsellor – cancelling two of my monthly supervisions that year (leaving me with the required number of 8). Plus, I began to consider how to arrange a 5-year peer group review of all CPD as required, approaching fellow members of the Yorkshire Counsellors Network with a view to coordinating, forming and joining a peer group. I continued my business website and kept my business phone effectively 'maintaining a business practice'. I rarely posted on my business website or on my Facebook business page or other associated social media.

'I reflected on the intrapsychic process that was unfolding, an impasse and its resolution, connected to my father whose life and work had influenced me in the first place to take up psychotherapy training.'

Time will tell how eagerly I pry myself away from classical TA, or return, if I do, to writing blogs and papers. Certainly, I know TA has helped me enormously not only to understand and manage, navigate and ultimately change my professional and personal relationships for the better, in and outside of the therapy room, but also to reach the right choices for my health, family and career. Perhaps this is no more evident than in the choices made these past few months about my CPD. I reflected on the intrapsychic process that was unfolding, an impasse and its resolution, connected to my father whose life and work had influenced me in the first place to take up psychotherapy training. When, at first, I had thought of my CPD as one might associate with a psychotherapist trainee close to submitting his exams, only to go on to recognise that I was already taking on these types of activities in my full time job.

I was realising my destiny irrespective of, or perhaps as a result of my scripting. Finding my father's influence in myself, not just his Parent in the Child, a healthy introject; embracing his positive scripting, a script program I had recognised since earlier on in my journey in personal therapy, in my case – 'Here's how to be a success, understand and create'. An important milestone was reached, as a therapist, by allowing the full force of change, contentment with and acceptance of a different lifestyle chosen this year fulfilling my father's advice: 'to be happy in life'.

Against the backdrop of circumstances that had arisen last year, the surprise is that I had not made this call before. Looking back, I had been made to consider my destiny – fearful, that as a result of my psychotherapy status, I had fallen into my father's career path; holding down a full time job while at the same time writing papers, presenting workshops and creating models for others to understand their interpersonal processes, at the cost of my relationships with myself and family.

Only to be reminded the lifestyle I was creating instead was not a problem (personal communication, Karpman, February 2019). My father would have been flattered and proud of me no matter what my career choices. That, he too would have recognised the generational scripting. Recognising too, I had reached a turning point by choosing the Counsellor Diploma status, fulfilling his advice given to me as a young adult, to be able to continue to 'do something in the world that benefits others'.

Leaving a Yorkshire Counselling Network meeting, walking through Bradford Cathedral grounds to the train station with a friend, having had the opportunity to share and reflect back on my experiences over these past 12 months, I felt an immense sense of gratitude to have been in this position: to have been able to make these decisions – finding a life I want, involved in cooperative projects and taking up writing again.



Anthony Woods has now closed his counselling practice as of end March 2020.

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Stay Homeland

ANOUSHKA BEAZLEY analyses the narratives we are watching in lockdown

UNORTHODOX – NETFLIX

A WOMAN IN tears while her hair is shaved in public, ordered to have sex and given a gun to finish herself off. Gangland crime thriller? Close. Day in the life of a Jewish wife deciding the strict Hasidic community may not offer what she needs. I feel my body tense as if it were an actual thriller. This story feels lived, feels real. I know that this is the procedural memory part of my implicit memory (Tosi, 2008), where my motor and cognitive processes store information. That they helped my explicit memory expand and that these memory systems work together to decode what has been stimulated; so much is relatable: 'Esty's' courageous move to give herself what she needs. Based on a memoir by Deborah Feldman, Esty walks differently, acknowledges herself as different and, from certain angles even looks different, almost stunted in growth. An intentional choice by the director to juxtapose the internal growth going on behind the scenes perhaps; growth that is independent, autonomous and most painfully of all, forbidden by her community. However, Feldman's memoir (2012) and the fictionalised *Unorthodox* are actually not so different. Feldman's mother was banished for coming out as a lesbian, Feldman herself chastised for not producing a child and eventually escaping the oppressive community life, fleeing to Germany with her son. 'Group life, whether in the contexts of therapy, counselling, consulting, teaching, community work, and so on, contains reservoirs of conflict, shame, and anxiety that ultimately need to be surfaced and addressed if the group is to work effectively and represent all of its members.' (Cornell, 2016, p145). This controversial story feels important. And yet I know that's just for me. Every community gives a different sense of belonging to different people: those who stay, and those who leave. The ones who do both have an expanded frame of reference, something we seek to give our clients. And is it wrong that 'Moishe,' a maverick Hasidic, expelled from the community for drinking, gambling and smoking, is shamefully attractive? Ok, yes, whole other conversation.

HOMELAND – CHANNEL 4

BASED ON THE Israeli series *Prisoners of War*, *Homeland* was America's version with Carrie Matheson, a CIA officer and a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Through the series we watch Matheson struggle to balance not only her medication but her personal life –

I mean she had a baby with a terrorist. The demands of her work – countless breaches of security, inappropriate intimate relationships and flagrant violations of national security protocol. And, motherhood – a social services paperwork nightmare. Personally, I have been a committed fan of Matheson, but sadly this is *Homeland's* final series. I'm sorry to say goodbye, I've enjoyed her, been inspired by her and, reflecting on why, I am left with the notion of resilience. Matheson was the queen of bad decisions, always a step away from a tribunal, but she never gave up. New York's Sinai hospital is leading the way in resilience research (Stix, 2018). A drug to increase psychological resilience has begun early clinical trials. It may not be Matheson's final season after all.

TWELVE MONKEYS

TOP OF THE pandemic movies not to watch if you have struggled to buy toilet paper, tried to make toilet paper from flour and struggled to buy flour or watched Trump recommend self-administering bleach. Set in 2035, 'the future,' yeah, my point exactly, the Earth is uninhabitable, bar wild animals – cue dinosaur-sized pangolins, bats and the new species of batgolins – and Bruce Willis travelling back in time to try and find the origin of the virus. In Gilliam's ground-breaking mid-90s movie (substantially less ground-breaking these days) no one is checking the meat markets in Wuhan or the back-up fridge in the White House but people are still surviving, albeit underground, and scientists, bless 'em, are still looking for a cure. So, what's the role for the therapist? Isn't the therapist meant to have an academically trained yet empathic understanding of the client's story, not living the shit at exactly the same time? Does this lift the magic curtain and show the illusion isn't real? What answers do we therapists have to offer in a pandemic? 'Every person must choose how much truth he can stand' (Yalom, 1992, p18).

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Anoushka Beazley is a Transactional Analysis Counsellor. She works in a GP surgery in London and in private practice. She is also a novelist.
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Life in Lockdown

We are all having good days and bad days
says **DEE LONGHURST**

LIKE MANY OF us, I have felt deeply impacted by the different ways that Covid-19 has affected friends and family over the last few months. Some friends are grieving, some are ill, some are overworked, some underworked and so on. We also have our unique script responses to this pandemic. Many of us have good days and bad days, and all of our feelings are OK. Staying in the present moment, and walking in nature, has been helpful for me during this time.

I came across this profound poem by Kitty O'Meara:

The People Stayed Home

And the people stayed home.
And read books, and listened, and rested,
and exercised, and made art, and played games,
and learned new ways of being, and were still.
And listened more deeply.
Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.
Some met their shadows.
And the people began to think differently.
And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant,
dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways,
the earth began to heal.
And when the danger passed, and the people joined together
again,
they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and
dreamed new images,
and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully,
as they had been healed.

As much as I appreciate O'Meara's words, I feel bemused that her experience is so removed from my own. I juggle three jobs from my small home, while attempting to teach three young children and provide them with the care, attention and stability they need during this crisis.

So naturally I decided to capture my own experience on paper. Writing my own poem was very cathartic, and the empathy I subsequently received from friends when sharing it with them was particularly helpful. Capturing my experience on paper not only helped me to step back and offer myself some self-compassion, it also enabled me to be heard and understood by others.

Lockdown

No signs of death
From where we are
Just painted rainbows
and parked-up cars.

There's a sense of unrest
No-one comes and goes
When will this end...
Nobody knows.

I need to work but
The kids want to play
Am I a teacher, a worker
Or a mummy today?

I'm overloaded with work
So I cover my ears
But they need my support
So I hide my tears.

'I'm terrible at maths!'
'I've forgotten my spellings!'
'Mummy, what's a noun?'
'Mum, what's a Kennings?'

Demands coming at me
From every right angle
I have no motivation
My mind is all tangled

We pack away the books
And the stresses we've shared
We are off on a bear hunt...
I pretend I'm not scared.

The sun shines brightly
The daffodils sway
The wind gently blows
My troubles away

In this present moment
Blue skies are above
The wind whispers softly,
'All they need is your love.'

Creative Writing Challenge: What is your own experience of Covid-19? Can you write an acrostic poem using the word 'Lockdown'? Share your experience with a friend.



Dee Longhurst, Dip TA Practice, has a BA (Hons) in English & Creative Studies and a Masters in Creative Writing & Personal Development. Dee has a private practice in West Sussex. www.deniselonghurst.co.uk

GRACE

NOTES XXIX

DR SALMA SIDDIQUE considers loss, Lovelock and lockdown.

WE ARE LIVING in strange and bewildering times and it is challenging to be in a place of living in relationship with our life where art is imitating life or is it *vice versa*? As therapists we are feeling as disorientated as some of our clients, facing the same difficulty of trying to make sense of what is going on at present and whom to trust. Some are suggesting similarities of our present pandemic with Camus' (1947) novel *La Peste* (*The Plague*).

Dr Rieux, the fictional character in Camus' novel finds himself in lockdown battling with the plague and its every threat to home life. I read this story as a narrative of resistance punctuated between object survival – through mourning the impact of our environment on our sense of self – and how the outer world gets internalised without the good enough internalised object, when we don't have the capacity to tolerate being alone. The capacity for concern (Winnicott, 1963) is about the psychic and the potential transitional (between self and other) space.

From Camus to the new enchanted forests of bookshelf credibility (Shafak, 2019) – if there is one restorative book missing from your Zoom bookshelf it is Fukuoka's (2013) *Sowing seeds in the desert*. It wasn't until the night my street started clapping that I realised that this must be the era of the great realisation that nature cannot be split from the self in relationship with the other. This gives shape to the community that effects our hearts and minds through the stroking of grief and loss. It is through the practice of spontaneous and repetitious rituals for social ills that we bind ourselves with the dying and dead.

There is opportunity in this crisis where nature plays a critical role through its natural landscapes, environments and soundscapes. During this time of lockdown I found escape in my garden, a conceptual space I had

'It is through the practice of spontaneous and repetitious rituals for social ills that we bind ourselves with the dying and dead.'

abandoned for many years. Rediscovering through the seasons, the dirt, the flowers and the trees, I enjoyed the movement of my body with the ease of the wind rustling the leaves creating transformation. At dusk I encountered the spirits and other supernatural beings inhabiting the plants and creatures. I found that the daily commune with the spirits effects and influences the daily lives of the ecosystem at the bottom of my garden. This time of peace and reflection (re)minds you, me and us of the importance of preserving natural landscapes in order to protect a way of mental wellbeing and reclaiming our humanity.

I have found it helpful to share my realisations with my clients when they are presently anxious and fearful during this pandemic and feeling out of control and often at a loss to know how to fill their time. The sharing of my experience also encouraged a feeling of community rather than divisiveness and othering. The awareness of moving away from anthropocentrism is crucial at this time in moving out of an 'I' to a 'we' process; for healing within and between nature is realising the *gaia* (Lovelock, 1972) hypothesis of equity and equilibrium. I believe that during this strange and bewildering time we do indeed have the potential to sow seeds in the desert.

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Dr Salma Siddique PTSTA, FHEA, FRAI FRSA. Salma's main research teaching is based on the dialogue between psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and anthropology, influenced by her clinical experience working with trauma. She is an academic based at University of St Andrews s.siddique@st-andrews.ac.uk.

EDUCATIONAL TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

The Educational TA programme has been running at The Berne Institute for three years. It has stimulated a great deal of interest and innovation in Education and we encourage anyone who is an educator and has an interest in TA to join the multi-level training programme starting in September 2020. Our joint CTA/MSc accreditation is the first of its kind, and it is also possible to take the special Berne Institute Diploma in TA Education. Giles Barrow is the lead trainer for the course, and other trainers are Trudi Newton and Mil Rousseau, all renowned trainers in TA Education field.

The Ed TA option is ideally suited for those already working in some kind of educational context – adult learning, community education, colleges and schools. It will be relevant for anyone working in the more public domain with children, young people, parents and professionals in the caring professions. If you have been wondering about how TA is applied outside of a clinical frame of reference, this will be worthwhile exploring.

This programme at The Berne is one that Giles Barrow has developed over several years and is a distinctive approach to combining TA as a useful educational psychology with ideas about teaching and learning – it is much more than an advanced TA training course. At the heart of the programme there are three connections:

- We explore the landscape of educational philosophy, theory and practice. In other words, we get into the range of ideas that have developed about understanding the 'why' of education. As this unfolds, so the course integrates this material with TA models and movements which most resonate and illuminate what education is about. This connection is all about getting into the **soil** of education.
- The second connection focuses on the integration of **soul** and role, and here the emphasis is on the question of 'who' is showing up as educator? We will be looking inwards, at the motivations, influences and early decisions about who we think we are as educators; in other words, our educational 'script'. For some this personal work is about reclaiming a sense of vocation. Whilst for others it can be a profound experience to discover their identity as an educator.
- Thirdly, the programme looks at how education connects within the context of community, or **society**. It is in this aspect of the course that we appreciate the power of TA for understanding the relational aspects of teaching and learning. Focusing on how our educational work informs, reforms and transforms the wider society in which it takes place is critical in Ed TA training.

The Ed TA programme comprises of six modules, which span two years, and are mostly integrated into the typical Berne training weekend, which includes a tutor group supervision day followed by a training day. At least one of the weekends will take place at the Mill House in Suffolk. The format is designed so that assignments and training hours can be counted for both Masters and CTA accreditation. For those working in any kind of educational role, you may already have substantial 'client' hours and also have plenty of opportunity to design a case study for your dissertation. This can be supported through the tutorial component of the programme. There will also be a new Advanced Fields Training Group for those who have completed the modules and are preparing for examination. For those who wish to transfer into Ed TA from other fields of TA training, please note that your completed TA Advanced training hours can be added to your portfolio for qualification by EATA and ITAA.

This programme is quality assured by Middlesex University and you will receive a Middlesex award on successful completion.

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Promoting Excellence, Autonomy & Homonomy

ORGANISATIONAL TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

If you want to be a consultant or coach in organisations, we invite you to consider training as an Organisational Transactional Analyst.

The first book Eric Berne wrote was about the understanding of and the working with groups and organisations. His innovative and creative thinking has been expanded with many new developments in TA organisational theory.

If you have already studied in one of the other fields of TA, you can add Organisational TA to your portfolio of training and specialise in the Organisational field for your final accreditation. You can also join the Organisational training after having done a TA101.

The Berne Institute offers you a two-year Organisational TA course, in which you learn to apply TA in organisations, become an Organisational Consultant or Coach specialising in Transactional Analysis.

It is important to point out two essentials aspects of this course:

- **The focus on people in role:** searching, finding, making and taking up a role is essential in life, and even more so for anyone involved in and committed to organisations and groups.
- **The focus on collective behaviour:** studying group-behaviour to get a better understanding of the structure and dynamics of groups in order to create options for successful interventions in organisations.

Participating in the Organisational TA course at The Berne Institute is a unique opportunity to meet other managers, (team)coaches, consultants, business owners working in, for or with organisations. Together, we can discuss, analyse and understand the structure and dynamics of groups and organisations. Organisational TA brings you new ways to improve your leadership and coaching and stimulate organisational change and transformation. The course leader is Marian Timmermans from the TA Academy in The Netherlands.

The course consists of 6 two-day modules (three each year) and 6 assignments. It is possible to take the Organisational TA Diploma exam at The Berne Institute and if you want to gain a Masters' Degree (MSc) in Organisational TA (accredited by the Middlesex University), you will need extra time for exam preparation, and can attend our Advanced Fields Group to gain them. If you have already gained accreditation as a CTA (Certified Transactional Analyst) in Organisational TA, you can easily convert this to an MSc via our Accredited Prior Learning (APL) system. Please contact The Berne Institute for information: office@theberne.com

"I delivered this multinational IT project below budget, ahead of schedule and without the usual stress for me and my team. My manager wanted to know how I did this. My answer? By applying Berne's boundary model and consciously contracting on roles."
(Current Student)

This programme is quality assured by Middlesex University and you will receive a Middlesex award on successful completion.

The Berne Institute

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Promoting Excellence, Autonomy & Homonomy

ta training organisation

We offer a rich and contemporary mixture of online training and development, focused on practising TA in the UK today.

Online and CPD events

Vitality in a Virtual World, Working online with Creativity 3 July 3 - 5pm £10

How can we be creative and use creativity when working online?
This taster workshop offers solutions to the issue of working online with creativity.
Presented by senior members of our training team, Bev Gibbons PTSTA(P), Andy Williams TSTA(P) and Michelle Hyams-Ssekasi PTSTA(P).

Creativity Summer School Online 25 July 2020 10am – 5pm

A full day workshop as a follow on from the Vitality seminar. We will be looking at creativity and how we can use it to enhance our work with clients and supervisees.

TSTA Summer School Online 11 - 14 August 2020

Aimed at PTSTAs, this dynamic online summer school with Andy Williams TSTA(P) and Lin Cheung TSTA(P) offers in-depth teaching to enhance the depth of theory, supervision and training skills leading to TSTA exams. Email us for more information.

Online TA101 (2 days) 27 & 28 June

September 2020 onwards

Foundation Certificate in TA – now taking applications ready for September start. On-site training (subject to covid-19 guidance). See our website for more information.

Exam Preparation Group

1 weekend and 6 Saturdays during the year for those in the process of preparing for CTA exam. See our website for more information.

Our team

Our training team includes Training Director Andy Williams TSTA(P), Beren Aldridge PTSTA(P), Bev Gibbons PTSTA(P) and Michelle Hyams-Ssekasi PTSTA(P).

For more information, go to <https://tatraining.org/training-courses/online-courses/> or contact us on contact@tatraining.org on 0113 2583399. All our training currently takes place on Zoom.

For psychotherapy training that is fresh, up to date and outward looking – with an exciting programme of online CPD opportunities





The Link Centre is now offering ONLINE courses and workshops.



We have embraced working online, launching an exciting new range of accessible courses and workshops. Many are donation-only, allowing anyone to partake.

Tuesday TA Talks

Every Tuesday, 6.30-8.00pm

Tuesday TA Talks are donation-only online talks, presentations and discussions about Transactional Analysis. We will be discussing a different topic on Zoom each week.

28th April: **Working with Anxiety/Depression** – Mark Widdowson

5th May: **Transactional and Vicarious Trauma** – Janine Piccerella

12th May: **Passive Behaviours** – Leilani Mitchell

19th May: **Structural Ego States** – Geoff Hopping

26th May: **Strokes Revisited** – Mark Head

TA in Crisis Workshops

Every Monday (10am-12pm) and Thursdays (6pm-8pm)

The Link Centre – in collaboration with Online Events – brings you TA in Crisis Workshops twice a week. These workshops are by donation, so you choose what you pay.

30th April: **The Process of Feelings in a Crisis** – Janine Piccerella

4th May: **Depression** – Mark Widdowson

6th May: **Mindfulness** – Mark Head

7th May: **Physis, Intuition and Autonomy** – Geoff Hopping

11th May: **Relational Co creative Supervision** – Janine Piccerella

14th May: **Constructivism, TA and Corona Virus** – Mark Head

18th May: **TA and the Brain** – Rebecca Davies

21st May: TBC

25th May: **Protocol** – Steph Oates

28th May: **Trauma** – Janine Piccerella

Working with Personality Disorders

The Link Centre, in collaboration with Online Events, brings you five workshops presented by Geoff Hopping on working with people with PD. These are by donation only.

29th April: **PD 1 – Cluster A**

6th May: **PD 2 – Cluster B**

27th May: **PD 3 – Cluster C**

10th June: **Psychopathy**

17th June: **Working with PD in Groups**

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To support students and practitioners, we have decided to offer our three-tier counselling skills courses online and at a discounted price – £320 (normally £450).

Basic Counselling Skills

Suitable for those wanting to learn counselling skills for the first time.

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Great for those wanting to enhance their existing learning.

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RED KITE
Training and Therapy



Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy Training

At Red Kite Training, we take a co-creative, relational approach to TA. Much of the course is delivered by team teaching. Our approach integrates new findings about the importance of the somatic, neurological and ecology for human wellbeing and psychotherapy training. We include mindfulness in the programme. Trainees are encouraged to be creative in their thinking and writing. Several of our trainees have been awarded the UKATA Research Prize.

Carol Wain (Training Director)

BSc (Hons), MSc (TA Psych), Certified Transactional Analyst, PTSTA (Psychotherapy). UKCP Reg. Psychotherapist.

Hayley Marshall

BA (Hons), PG Dip, MSc (TA Psych), CTA, PTSTA (Psychotherapy), Dip. Sup., UKCP Reg. Psychotherapist & Approved Supervisor.

This is a four-year post-graduate rolling programme. We offer training up to CTA level with Diploma qualifications en-route (see Website for details). A CTA preparation group meets after the formal training (contact **Dr Celia Simpson** for details). Early application is advised for September intake.

Official Introduction to Transactional Analysis (TA 101)

4th, 5th & 11th July 2020 (10am-3pm daily) *This 3-day workshop will be delivered Online.*

Dr Celia Simpson

PGCE, PhD (Discourse Analysis), CTA, PTSTA (Psychotherapy), Cert. Sup., UKCP Reg. Psychotherapist & Approved Supervisor.

This course is the prerequisite to further TA training. Transactional Analysis is a theory of personality, which offers useful models for understanding self, communication, and relationships. The course will be helpful to therapists, social workers, educators and facilitators, parents etc., as well as for individuals on the path of self-development. (*EATA Certificate*; 12 hours CPD)

Red Kite Training is a UKATA Registered Training Establishment

www.theredkite.net

www.facebook.com/RedKiteTherapyandTraining

Further information from Brian Simpson (Business Director) training@theredkite.net

Diploma in Counselling Supervision

Are you an experienced counsellor looking for “another string to your bow”?

Or are you already a supervisor but feel uncertain about the theory that underpins your work?

Or are you a psychotherapist interested in developing a supervision practice?



This course could be just what you're looking for!



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Starting in **October 2020**, the COSCA validated Physis Scotland Diploma in Counselling Supervision course will be delivered over 10 days of highly interactive and experiential training, spread over 11 months.

This dynamic training will enable you to:

- Develop an in-depth knowledge of several models of supervision, both developmental and task focussed
- Establish a clear ethical framework for your work as a supervisor, and enable your supervisees to develop their ethical thinking and practice
- Understand the differences between therapeutic work and supervision, and be able to work at the boundary of these aspects whilst maintaining the role of supervisor
- Learn supervision skills for working with both novice and experienced counsellors, and apply appropriate interventions to working with both groups
- Understand and critique applications of supervision for both individual and group supervision
- Develop your identity as a supervisor based on your own philosophy of supervision

Applicants must have a COSCA Diploma in Counselling or equivalent minimum level of counselling/psychotherapy training, have worked as a counsellor or psychotherapist for two years post Diploma qualification and completed at least 450 hours of practice as a counsellor or psychotherapist. Applicants must also be in ongoing supervision for their clinical practice.

DATES: 3/4 October 2020, 23/24 January 2021, 20/21 March 2021, 5/6 June 2021, 21/22 August 2021

FEE: £1050 (4 taught modules over 5 weekends). £150 deposit plus 3 X £300

COURSE TUTORS:

Bev Gibbons, PTSTA

Ronen Stilman, PTSTA



For an application form and/or further details, please contact Fiona Firman or Fiona Cook – Directors of Training – enquiries.physis@gmail.com or call 07927 557217



Foundation Certificate in Transactional Analysis

Are you interested in taking Transactional Analysis to the next level after the TA101?

Or are you a counsellor interested in adding to your knowledge and skills?

Do you have a professional role that involves personal interaction and want to develop your communication skills further?

Or are you simply interested in investing in learning more about yourself and your interactions with others – at home, in your personal life and in your work life?



The Foundation Certificate in Transactional Analysis could be the opportunity you've been looking for!



Physis Foundation Certificate in Transactional Analysis begins again in September 2020. This course is the first year of Physis 3-year Diploma in Counselling using TA, and of the 4-year TA psychotherapy course.

Our Foundation Year programme is for anyone who would like to deepen their theoretical knowledge of TA and learn how to apply it in a variety of settings including counselling, coaching, education, organisations, psychotherapy and personal development.

- Physis Foundation Certificate in TA continues the style of the TA101 workshop, providing interactive and dynamic training to enable you to apply the core concepts of TA theory to yourself and your environment
- You may discover more options for relating with others, more ways of resolving conflict, and more possibilities for change in your own life experience. The focus is on applying the core theory to your own process and to your interactions with the trainer and the training group, enabling you to develop your understanding of yourself and others
- The Foundation Certificate can exist as a standalone training experience, simply for personal development, or to enhance existing knowledge and training as a counsellor, or to facilitate your work in an organisation that requires interaction with others

Physis Foundation Certificate is delivered over 8 weekends between September and June, and four additional training days.

Please note, the TA101 is a prerequisite of enrolling in the Foundation Year programme.

For more information about our Foundation Year programme please email enquiries.physis@gmail.com or contact Fiona Firman or Fiona Cook, Directors of Training on 07927 557217.

Apply now and begin your transformational TA journey!



Contact us:

Physis Scotland, 22 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN

☎: 07927 557217

✉: enquiries.physis@gmail.com

www.physisscotland.co.uk



Understanding You, Me and Us

The Official "TA 101" Introduction to Transactional Analysis **on line**
5th/6th/7th June 2020 1pm-5.30pm BST each day

Facilitator – Fiona Firman PTSTA and Fiona Cook PTSTA



Transactional Analysis (TA) is an **amazingly powerful psychological theory** that has the surprising quality of being **easily accessible** for the newcomer, yet with a depth and complexity that can fascinate and satisfy practitioners for a lifetime.

TA is a powerful system of psychological models that can be used to understand **and work with our personal and interpersonal dynamics in the workplace**, in **personal relationships**, and in **educational and training settings**.

TA enables us to identify quickly and clearly:

- ❖ Where breakdowns in communication are taking place
- ❖ Where there are blocks to learning & development
- ❖ Where there are unrealised potentials within a team
- ❖ How an organisation can maximise opportunities to achieve its potential
- ❖ What are our personal blocks to success & happiness

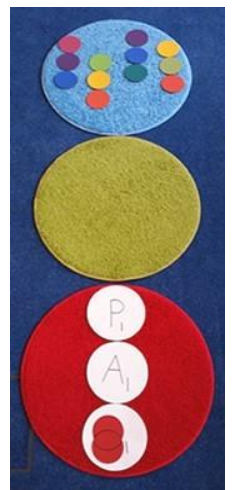
TA also offers **simple tools** for making **long lasting and far reaching change** at a personal level, and across systems and organisations, enabling creativity, problem solving, effective communication and development. TA is used by management consultants, counsellors and psychotherapists, and educators.

The 3 day TA101 course will provide you with a dynamic and interactive experience which will

- ❖ introduce you to the key theory of personality, communication and development
- ❖ enable you to apply the theory to situations in your work and personal relationships
- ❖ entitle you to receive the internationally recognised TA101 Certificate which is a prerequisite for anyone wishing to train further in TA

Cost: £139 for the 3 day course for self-funding individuals
£158 for Organisations

Book online via www.physisscotland.co.uk or contact enquiries.physis@gmail.com
This programme will be run on line to enable participants from around the globe to participate



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ITAA: www.itaaworld.org
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