

# Conference and Other Events

## Staff SIG Local Practitioners Networking Day

Date                    21stMay 2010

Time                    11am to 3pm

Venue                    University of Bradford

                              Room D1 Richmond Building

"Caught in a Trap, (I can't walk out)" Dual relationships in Staff Counselling, past and present

You know the song; now take the time to think about the experience with colleagues!

Various authors have written about the ethical issues surrounding dual relationships and the impact this has on the therapeutic relationship and we have professional guidance from BACP on the subject; this workshop will provide you with the space to think about the tangled web of relationships that we staff counsellors live with from the perspective of the impact they have on us personally.

How do we provide for others, live up to their many expectations and preserve a sense of self? How do we feel when clients seem to inhabit our spaces and thus inhibit our actions and choices?

We work in institutions that are analogous to small villages and the opportunities for bumping into or hearing about our clients are endless. At work, in our communities, the counselling room, committee meetings, training venues, dinner parties, pubs, with managers, the gym, to name but a few!

Given the inevitability of these dilemmas do we see them as problematic boundary issues or as challenges to extend our professionalism and our humanity? Where are our limits? How do we maintain a sense of humour, perspective and ethical practice?

In this interactive workshop we hope that colleagues will be able to share their experiences and their strategies, and perhaps learn a few new ones so that we can take a look at what these often unavoidable collisions do to us and to our clients.

Chief among the activities organised by AUCC is the annual conference. This year's AUCC conference will be held at Edinburgh University between the 23rd June - 25th June 2010. The theme of the conference will be a celebration of AUCC - 'Back to the future: looking backwards, moving forwards'. We have gathered together a group of exciting workshops and speakers and hope you will be able to make it there either as a full or day delegate. Please [click here](#) for more details.

Conference and Events The conference is a chance to spend from one to several days reflecting on the work we do in the company of our fellow members, many of whom we may see only on this occasion. For some of us there is an on going yearly conversation, often continued by JISCmail, but a chance to top up with the personal face-to-face which is an important aspect of relationship. The conference always provides meaty themes – speakers, workshops and seminars allow big-to-small group events, and there are usually some experiential ones where we may dip our toes (sometimes literally) into the unknown. The conference is a moveable feast, so that different areas have a chance to attend without too much inconvenience. Some of us like to see faraway places... Our conference sub-committee, in conjunction with BACP Events Team, work very hard to provide the

best possible speakers and venue – and an evening of entertainment.

See below for a sample of the last few conferences . . . 2009: Held in the delightful setting of Chichester University, the theme 'Who do you think you are?' reflected how changes occurring in many aspects of life have led us to question who we are as individuals, as counsellors in further and higher education and as a society. Dr Chess Denman set the tone with an enthralling keynote presentation about how young people form their identities and subsequent presentations invited delegates to think about how our own personal and professional identities are shaped. 17 workshops covered a range of topics. Some explored identity through specific lenses, including gender, sexual orientation, eating disorders, on-line relationships and cultural perceptions. Others related to counselling service provision and the implications of new ways of working and government regulation. As usual, there were plenty of opportunities to enjoy ourselves, with a quiz, a singing workshop, a film and the traditional gala dinner and dancing to facilitate fun and networking.

2008: Held at Liverpool Hope University, the theme of The Power and the Glory started with a rousing keynote speech by Dr Gillian Proctor about who regulation is for – she postulated it as more for us as a profession than for the clients, and asked us to look at the danger in all the debates of not helping those in most need of counselling, the least empowered clients. Ruth Caleb, Chair-Elect of AUCC, had a lively discussion with Ronnie Millar about her route to where she is now in our profession. The Vice-Chancellor also welcomed us hoping we would see the commitment to beauty in the surroundings at Liverpool Hope, and this was evident in some of the meeting places, particularly the atrium. He also invited us to get out of our counselling rooms and into interacting with all sorts of people in our institutions.

2007: Held at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, the theme was Lost in Space, recovering intimacy in education. We had the good fortune to open with Andrew Samuels giving the keynote speech, who led us straight into deep discussion about promiscuity, solitude, aggression and hysteria as shadow aspects of student's and our own existence but which might be 'back passages to the experience of intimacy' that we should not pathologise. Luckily the lecture theatre was so designed that lively discussion could take place without a microphone. This set the scene for a rich conference which was voted one of the most relaxing because the venue was so welcoming, and the theme so apposite to our work. Janet Aldridge was a warm and welcoming Chair.

2006: Held at Bangor, the theme was 'Riding the Waves or stemming the tide? coping with the impact of the outside world', inspired by the tsunami, and happily embraced by Chair Dave Berger as an avid sailor! The conference was opened with a solemn keynote speech by Brian Thorne about keeping what is really important in counselling in times of extreme violence and environmental threats, and how we might prepare ourselves for what our clients are facing in such times. The following day there was a fascinating keynote talk by Camilla Batmanghelidj about her successful (but under-funded) work with children with her charity Kids Company in violent inner city areas of London, and her theories about their levels of trauma, and how they survive. The venue was rather rainy, windy and under-heated, but the content rose above it!

2005: Held at the University of Nottingham's new Jubilee campus, which provided modern buildings, good facilities and pleasant surroundings. The theme of the conference was All things to all people: 'Balancing the needs of the students and the institution.' Professor Sue Wheeler opened the conference by inviting us to consider the impact of our counselling work on ourselves in a presentation entitled 'Healing and Surviving: the needs of the counsellor.' Elsa Bell followed this with a presentation entitled 'High wires, spinning plates and human pyramids: the skills of balancing while performing in public' in which she explored how counsellors working in FE and HE balance the conflicting demands made upon them. The conference offered a wide range of workshops, a Salsa dance session which delegates joined in energetically after dinner, urged on by Colin Lago, and ended with a set by Liz Bentley called 'Therapist by day, comedienne by night,' reflecting her own particular balancing act.

2004: At Leicester University, the theme was Attachment, and Sir Richard Bowlby, son of the famous

theorist, gave the keynote speech offering his addition to the attachment debate about the importance of fathers, after the initial bond with mother or primary carer has been established in the early months of life.