

# 5th International Adventure Therapy Conference

## Public Keynote Lecture

9 September 2009, 19.30–21.00  
Pollock Halls, Edinburgh First

Hosted by

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Liverpool John Moores University,  
Centre for Sport, Dance &  
Outdoor Education

Public Keynote Lecture – free to attend

## Meeting the mental health needs of children and adolescents: the role of adventure and wilderness therapy

**Professor Dene Berman**

Wright State University/Lifespan Counselling Associates, USA

**Professor Jennifer Davis-Berman**

University of Dayton, USA

### Further information

The aim of this lecture is to offer an opportunity for those unable to attend the full 5IATC to find out more about current debates in outdoor adventure therapy. The speakers are leading adventure therapists who, amongst other things, are authors of the classic text '*Wilderness therapy: foundations, theory and research*' (1994) and the recent publication '*The promise of wilderness therapy*' (2008), which will be launched in the UK at this lecture.

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## **Abstract**

This keynote lecture will begin by discussing the mental health needs of children and adolescents. Recent estimates of the one-year prevalence rate of psychiatric problems among this population are more than 20 percent. The U.S. Surgeon General has noted that there are not enough child psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, while other estimates are that more than 80 of those in need go untreated. Adventure therapy provides a range of offerings from those adjunctive to traditional therapy to alternatives to traditional services. At the same time, some services are aimed at improving strengths while others at diminishing deficits. We review this continuum of care and give examples of the types of services that are offered in each. It is our contention that it is possible to match the needs of children and adolescents with the types of services offered within the scope of adventure therapy. Since the unmet needs of this population are so great, there is more than enough room for both traditional and adventure therapy services to operate using a collaborative rather than competitive model. The justifications for adopting alternatives to what is often referred to as Treatment as Usual (TAU) will be presented. Factors such as safety, cost, and efficacy are critical in making such a determination. In determining efficacy we will look at two sets of criteria: Well-Established Treatments and Probably Efficacious Treatments. It is also likely that some therapies are effective, but have not been sufficiently studied. Putting all of these threads together, we make recommendations for the future development of the Adventure Therapy field as a valuable approach to meeting the needs of children and adolescents.

## **About the Speakers**

**Dene Berman, Ph.D.**, is a psychologist in practice with Lifespan Counseling Associates in Dayton, Ohio, USA. A part of this practice is the Wilderness Therapy Program. Dene is also Clinical Professor at the School of Professional Psychology, Wright State University. Dene is the former chair of the AEE Therapeutic Adventure professional Group and President of the Board of Trustees of the Wilderness Education Association. He has served on the Editorial Review Boards of the Journal of Experiential Education and the Journal of Outdoor Research and Experiential Learning, serving as the Special Editor for two issues of Journal of Experiential Education on Adventure therapy. Dene is a co-author of '*The backcountry classroom*' (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; 2005).

**Jennifer Davis-Berman, Ph.D.**, a social worker, is a Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at the University of Dayton, in Ohio, USA. She has presented research on various aspects of outdoor adventure at national and internal conferences. A regular reviewer of adventure therapy articles for Journal of Experiential Education, she has published articles on adventure therapy for the past 20 years. She is the first author of two books co-written with Dene: '*Wilderness therapy: Foundations, theory and research*' (1994) and '*The promise of wilderness therapy*' (2008). Jennifer enjoys sea kayaking and is an avid runner.

With sponsorship from BACP and Liverpool John Moores University, this lecture is part of the package for 5IATC conference delegates and is free for the general public. Even though the lecture is free of charge to the public, you will only be able to attend if you have made a prior booking as there are limited spaces available. If you are interested in attending please contact [katy.hobday@bacp.co.uk](mailto:katy.hobday@bacp.co.uk) to book a place.

For detailed keynote abstracts and further information about the conference, its history, definitions of adventure therapy and booking information please go to the 5IATC web pages on BACP's website: [www.bacp.co.uk/5iatc](http://www.bacp.co.uk/5iatc) or email [events@bacp.co.uk](mailto:events@bacp.co.uk). If you would like any further specific aspects of the event email [katy.hobday@bacp.co.uk](mailto:katy.hobday@bacp.co.uk) or call +44 (0) 1455 883362

Please note BACP cannot be responsible if, for whatever reason, the speakers are unable to attend.