

Participant recruitment letter of invitation

Are you a qualified counsellor/student counsellor with experience of working with bereavement counselling using Continuing Bonds Theory?

I am an MA student in Professional Counselling at Waverley Abbey College, and I am inviting qualified practitioners and student counsellors to take part in a qualitative research study exploring therapeutic work in bereavement using continuing bonds theory. This study seeks to explore how therapists/trainees understand and work with continuing bonds theory in practice, with a particular focus on relational, and experiential aspects of the work. It aims to generate practice-based insights that reflect the complexity of therapeutic engagement in this area. The research takes a qualitative approach, informed by an interpretivist perspective. This means it is interested not only in the bereaved building a continuing bond with the deceased as a lived and relational phenomenon, but also in how counsellors' different levels of experience impact the use of the theory through reflection and clinical experience.

Participation would involve a one-to-one semi-structured interview (approximately 60 minutes), conducted online at a time convenient to you. The interview will explore your experiences of working with bereaved clients, including:

- The experience of using continuing bonds theory
- Challenges within the therapeutic process using continuing bonds theory
- The role of reflexivity and self-awareness

The study will use Reflexive Thematic Analysis to explore patterns of meaning across participants' accounts.

Who can take part?

I plan to recruit two types of counsellors. Participants must be UK based, aged 18 and over. Group one: qualified counsellors with at least 10 years clinical experience, have registered in a recognised professional body (such as BACP, ACC, UKCP or equivalent), have worked with clients in bereavement counselling and utilized Continuing Bonds Theory. Group two: student counsellors, registered with a main UK governing body (such as BACP, ACC, UKCP or equivalent), working with clients in bereavement counselling and utilizing Continuing Bonds Theory.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants can withdraw any time without giving a reason and there is no negative consequences. All data will be treated confidentially and anonymised in line with Waverley Abbey College data-protection requirements.

The study has received ethical approval from Waverley Abbey College. If you would like more information or would like to register to take part, please contact Yan Allen at Yan.Allen@waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk.