



Newsletter Editor
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Welcome to the second edition of the NWCPP newsletter. The first edition was completed by Katie Salisbury and this is a hard act to follow. What appeared at first glance to be a simple job of "pulling a few articles together" ended up being a combination of 'encouraging' people to contribute articles, interviewing people, persuading people to pose for photographs, understanding graphics and desktop publishing software, and a hundred other 'little' jobs that all come together at the same time. So a big thank you to Katie for starting the whole idea of a Programme newsletter, and apologies for not fully appreciating the amount of work you put into setting it all up and getting the first one out.

This edition includes a brief introduction to the first year cohort, as well as a welcome to our new staff members, Rebecca and Frances. It also includes an article on the use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with carers of people with learning disabilities and a report of the lecture given by Bob Woods as part of his Shapiro award last December. There is an article on the systemic working conference held in Gregynog in October as well as interesting 'bits and pieces' about the programme scattered throughout the following few pages. I hope to get the next edition of the newsletter out early in the Summer so please let me know if you think of any ideas for future editions.

NORTH WALES CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMME

OPEN MEETING

25th May 2007 at the Talardy Hotel, St Asaph

PROGRAMME

10.00am

Key Note Speaker: Roslyn Hope (NIMHE) –
Mental Health: New Ways of Working for Everyone

Followed by a questions and answer session

12.00pm

Isabel Hargreaves – Programme Update

12.15pm

Robert Jones - Outline of developing CPD Programme

What is a clinical psychologist?

It is now over 25 years since I began my training as a clinical psychologist. During that time the profession has often been asked that question and a variety of answers have been offered. It is rare, however, for the question to be asked without engendering some kind of anxiety.

Once again many in the profession feel pressurised to come up with an answer that will assure our employers that we represent value for money and that they would not be better off employing others to carry out the tasks that we currently get paid for. As a response to these concerns we have decided to run a series of CPD workshops exploring this theme. At present these are in the planning stage but I would be most grateful for any ideas for workshop presenters or topics around this central theme. More details at the open meeting!

Robert

Congratulations



To Bob Woods on receiving the M.B. Shapiro Award for Eminence in the Profession of Clinical Psychology.

For the second time, a member of the Programme Team in Bangor has received this prestigious award. Following in the footsteps of Mark Williams, Bob Woods was recognised for his role in developing clinical psychology with older people. Bob gave the award lecture, entitled "Dementia the final frontier", at the DCP annual conference in December.

His lecture was written up in the January 2007 edition of the Psychologist as follows:

"A century after Alois Alzheimer described the symptoms of Auguste D, Bob Woods (University of Wales Bangor) delivered a fascinating lecture covering clinical psychology's involvement in the field of dementia. Whereas dramas about dementia focus on loss and tragedy, and the media on possible cures, psychology has attempted to 'rediscover' the person with dementia.

Moving from an emphasis on assessment in the 1950s, with the work of Shapiro himself, Woods described his attempts to subject psychological approaches to the same form of evaluation as we require of new drugs. This approach met with some success: an evidence-based group therapy programme of cognitive stimulation led to significant improvements in quality of life for those attending, and an effect size similar to drugs.

Woods then outlined reminiscence therapy, and in particular Pam Schweitzer's Remembering Yesterday Caring Today programme. This lively set of activities provides a rich array of memory triggers, focusing on the relationship with the person's caregiver. Woods refined the programme and developed and validated outcome measures. He found that the programme slowed the steady worsening of autobiographical memory and carer depression that was found in the control group.

According to Woods there is a growing evidence base for psychological therapies, and this should impact on clinical guidelines and, hopefully, funding for the future. A glimmer of hope in the face of a growing problem, which many describe as 'a fate worse than death.'



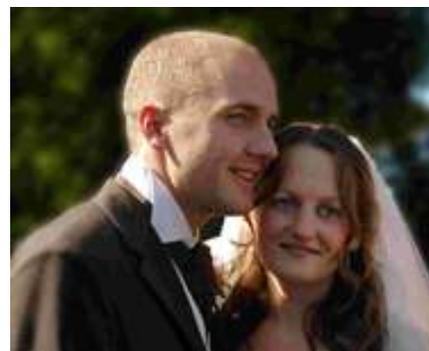
To Richard Hastings on being elected to Fellowship of the BPS in recognition for his contribution to the study of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.



To Dawn Thompson on achieving the award of part-time student of the year for her studies during her access course in Coleg Menai. Dawn is now studying for a part-time social studies degree in Bangor.



To first year trainee Beth Mathias (previously Linney) on her marriage to Mike Mathias on 5th August 2006 in Pembrokeshire.



To second year trainee Cathryn Roberts (previously Evans) on her marriage to Ross Roberts on 15th September 2006 in Tal y bont.

Working Systemically in Clinical Psychology

Gregynog Conference October 2006

Working Systemically Conference
18th - 20th October 2006



Lisa Morgan Lang



The Gregynog conference was on the topic of systemic working and provided a great deal of thought-provoking material.

The workshop opened with a talk by Dave Daley where he introduced the theoretical foundations of systemic work.

This talk was followed by a presentation by Lisa Morgan-Lang on working systemically with children and adolescents and highlighted how clinical intervention can be made at many different levels (sometimes concurrently) and how such systemic working is part and parcel of the work of a clinical psychologist in this area.

Steve Noone



Steve Noone then presented an inspiring talk on working systemically with people with learning disabilities. This centred on the effects of this work on the clinician and particularly on the need to help front line staff (re)discover their own value-base and their commitment to working with people who have typically been rejected by society.

Finally, Geoff Watt's presentation on working systemically with older adults pulled everything together. Using well-chosen case examples, Geoff managed the difficult task of integrating theoretical perspectives with specific clinical examples.

A number of points emerged from the general discussions. There was little that was new or surprising in the talks. Rather they tended to remind people of how much systemic work forms part of day-to-day clinical practice. Perhaps we tend to take for granted much that we do well already?

Overall, it was a very well-organised and delivered conference and helped focus the minds of people present on the importance of placing systemic awareness at the forefront of our vision of what is important in clinical training.

Geoff Watts



Welcome to the First Year Cohort



The 2006 intake joined the programme in October and began their first placement in November.



James Lea

Currently on placement with Bob Woods, James most recently worked as an assistant psychologist in the North Wales Adolescent Service based in Colwyn Bay.



Carmel Harrison

Currently on placement with Louise Cunliffe, Carmel's last job was as a research assistant at Liverpool University and an assistant psychologist in Wirral Looked After Children's team.



Melany Ball

Currently on placement with Helen Ross, Melany most recently worked as an assistant psychologist with Wrexham CAMHS.



Robin Owen

Currently on placement with Fiona Sanders, Robin's previous post was as an assistant psychologist in Conwy and Denbighshire working with Children with Learning Disabilities.



Imara Gray

Currently on placement with Andy Muse and Hilary Hall, Imara's last job was working as an assistant psychologist in a low secure unit in Liverpool.



Beth Mathias

Currently on placement with Renee Rickard and Keith Mathews, Beth has spent the last 2 years working as a psychology assistant in Adult Mental Health for Pembrokeshire and Derwen NHS Trust



Rachel Lancaster

Currently on placement with Beth Parry-Jones, Rachel's previous post was as a Research Assistant on a study to estimate the prevalence of people with LD in UK prison populations.



Elly Jones

Currently on placement with Carolien Lamers, Elly most recently worked as an assistant psychologist with Older Adults in North Wales.



Jonathan Williams

Currently on placement with Simon Neal and Brigitte Boarder, Jonathan's previous post was working as an assistant psychologist within a community CAMHS service.



Building Resilience in Carers of People with Learning Disability and Challenging Behaviour

The Health Foundation used to be known as the PPP Healthcare Medical Trust Board and they are an independent charitable foundation, which spends up to £20 million annually on projects throughout the UK. They also support health improvement in the developing world. In 2005, Steve Noone received one of their Leading Practice Through Research awards. At the time of the award the Health Foundation's Press release said the following about Steve:

Caring for people with challenging needs such as mental health problems, dementia or chronic illness can lead to difficulties for staff including stress, depression, anxiety and burnout. Dr Noone, Deputy Head of Clinical Psychology Learning Disabilities at North West Wales NHS Trust, will be conducting a research project that aims to develop and test a new way of supporting staff in various care settings. Working with researchers at The University of Wales, Bangor, his research will look at how to develop carers' resilience and their ability to cope with stress.

Specifically, Dr Noone will investigate whether an acceptance-based intervention for work stress can be adapted and used with staff working in intellectual disability services. He will also look at whether an acceptance-based intervention is more effective than using a stress reduction programme.

In November 2006 Robert caught up with Steve to ask how the project was progressing. Steve was awarded a grant to cover a year's salary (part time over two years). To date Steve has worked with 40 staff in a local community organisation investigating whether an intervention based on an adaptation of Acceptance and Commitment Training helps build resilience in carers of clients with intellectual disability and challenging behaviour.

The core philosophy of this intervention will be familiar to psychologists with an awareness of the principles of ACT. As Steve explained: "It's about the high price that we pay for the advantages of having language because we have evolved a mind-machine that is continually anticipating threats. This is fine for external environmental threats, but creates real problems when it is applied to our inner emotional world.

The exciting thing about the intervention is that it is the furthest development in behavioural analysis understanding of language but also brings you back to core ideas that are thousands of years old and at the heart of something like Buddhism

Language enables you to re-create any emotional trauma as if it was happening now and anticipates any potential threat as if it was occurring at this moment. This means that we can be quite safe and have anything that we need and yet our mind can create conditions that make us unhappy and this disconnects us from what is happening in the present moment”.

The workshop is like many stress-based workshops in how it gets participants to describe their stress buttons and their responses. The difference is that it gets people to reflect on how effective they have been and it challenges the assumption that there is such a thing as a stress-free life. ACT makes the assumption that much psychopathology comes as a direct result of our attempts to remove or avoid pain or suffering. The alternative to avoidance is to promote willingness to accept whatever experience is there *as it is* without defence.

“The other half of the intervention is really about promoting participants’ individual values. What we know about stress and suffering is that humans have an extraordinary tolerance for stressful experiences if they believe that these experiences are in the pursuit of something worthwhile. We provide several exercises to help people clarify what their values are.”

The initial work on adapting ACT principles to teaching groups of staff came from Bond and Bruce (2000) and this work has, in turn, been adapted by Steve. This work is based on a rich theoretical model and on a rapidly developing series of clinical evaluation studies. Results in other areas suggest that people with occupational stress have been more creative and diligent (showing innovation and lack of mistakes) following ACT based stress reduction using this model.

Results so far suggest that the intervention is effective in reducing stress as measured by the GHQ while other measures of negative thinking remain unchanged.

In talking about the experience of running the workshops Steve said “I’m pleased that people don’t find it too intrusive or unsettling, and I’m sure some people remain untouched, but I’ve been moved by how some people have responded to the core ideas. Within any group you will find people who score within caseness on the GHQ. They are most likely to respond. There were only two people post intervention who didn’t show change.

One person, for example, came up afterwards and said “This has changed my life, you know, and I’ve been able to give up smoking.” He told me he had a distressful time in his life and the idea that you can live with this distress as opposed to try to remove it was a revelation that he found inspiring and very useful.”

Having negative thoughts isn't the problem - it's when we believe that these thoughts are true. The ACT training helps people experience the distinction between the observer and the thoughts.

Paradoxically the take home message of these workshops isn’t that we are going to reduce your stress – rather it’s a question: “Are you willing to experience the discomforts that come your way from time to time as you work towards living a life in accordance with your values?” This acceptance itself leads to the reduction of stress as a side-effect but it is the acceptance, rather than the stress-reduction, that is central.

“Life-enhancing experiences for people with challenging behaviour can’t be created at the expense of the quality of life of staff. If we can help staff have a greater psychological flexibility (in other words have full access to their full range of creative talents and skills), and they are clearer about their core values as caring people, their interactions with clients will be far more creative, and far more resourceful.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about The Health Foundation can do so by logging onto their website at <http://www.health.org.uk>



New Faces On The Team

Frances Vaughan

Rebecca Williams

Last September the programme was delighted to appoint Dr Frances Vaughan and Dr Rebecca Williams as Senior Academic Tutors with the team. Both are familiar faces in clinical psychology in North Wales.

Frances has worked in and around the School of Psychology at Bangor almost continuously since 1988 and has seen the department grow “from tiny to terrific” in that time.

Initially, she had a series of post-doc research posts, mainly concerned with neuropsychological problems in different clinical groups. In 1996, she was offered a trainee place on the NWCPP and hasn't looked back since! Her first clinical job was in the Older Adult service in North West Wales, and after a couple of years she moved over to the North Wales Brain Injury Service in Colwyn Bay, where she still works three days a week.

In the meantime, she also spent four years on a part-time secondment at the University, setting up and then running a Clinical Neuropsychology MSc for clinical psychologists working towards the BPS Division of Neuropsychology Practitioner Full Membership Qualification. (“Saying it is almost harder than doing it!”) Unfortunately, the neuropsychology programme had to close, but this did give her the opportunity to move across to join the clinical psychology programme.

Her current interests are a bit disparate but keep her busy. She is particularly interested in using mindfulness and acceptance-based approaches to psychotherapy in her clinical work. She also has a special interest in working with the family caregivers of people with a brain injury and is involved in research and service development around this.

On the programme team her curriculum-related roles are neuropsychology teaching and the co-ordination of the first and third year teaching. More generally, she will be involved in the planning and development of the academic curriculum and assessment. Frances is also reviewing and re-organising the test library.

Rebecca was born and raised just outside Caernarfon, and went on to study and gain her doctorate at the University of Hull via travels in South America, Africa and India. Her doctoral thesis was a feminist constructionist project in health psychology, developing a formulation of the difficulties women experience pre and post hysterectomy.

On qualifying, the mountains of North Wales pulled her home, and she took up her post working in Arfon with children and adults with learning disabilities. She has a special interest in individual psychotherapy, and improving the way that care staff meet the emotional needs of people with learning disabilities. She is also interested in research that captures the voices of service users, and has a couple of ongoing research projects related to service users' emotional care needs.

On the programme team her key roles are LD and year 2 co-ordination, diversity, and process/ psychotherapy development (the latter jointly with Renee Rickard). She is currently overhauling the curriculum in terms of social inclusion and is also interested in service user involvement at the driving end (e.g. action research, planning the curriculum, and being involved in a meaningful way in the assessment of trainees). In her spare time she can usually be found half way up a mountain or rock face, or covered in plaster from the quarry shop she is currently renovating.