



**Abertay
University®**



1st International Conference on Pluralistic Counselling & Psychotherapy

17-18 March 2018

Book of Abstracts



WELCOME

Welcome to the 1st International Conference on Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy.

We are delighted to welcome participants from many parts of the world, and feel honoured to have been able to co-ordinate an event that offers such a diverse range of contributions and themes. Pluralistic therapy is a relatively new approach, and an important aim of the conference is to identify ways that we can all work more closely in the future to support each other in offering flexible, collaborative forms of help to our clients and service users. We would like to acknowledge the invaluable role of the Pluralistic Practice Network in establishing a forum in which like-minded practitioners and researchers can connect with each other. We encourage everyone attending the conference to talk with members of the Network about the work they have been doing, and to think about ways in which these efforts can be expanded.

The closing plenary at the conference will provide a space in which new initiatives can be explored. We hope that the conference will be an event where anyone can speak to anyone else – we all have valuable experience and skills to share. Finally, we also hope that, if you have come from afar, you will take this opportunity to get to know our lovely city of Dundee.

Kate Smith & Julia McLeod
Conference Co-Chairs

ABSTRACTS

Saturday 17 March 2018

10.15 – Keynote

Mick Cooper

Directionality: Deepening an understanding of goal-oriented theory and practice

At the heart of a pluralistic approach to therapy is a desire to help clients articulate, and work towards, their goals. Pluralistic therapy strives to prioritise the client's own aims for therapy, over and above the therapist's particular orientation or assumptions. But what if clients don't know what they want from therapy? And how can pluralistic therapists work with 'unconscious' goals, or more amorphous hopes and desires? In this talk, Mick will present a new way of thinking about goals and goal-directed behaviour that may be able to encompass a broader, deeper and more complex range of intentional phenomena. Based around the concept of 'directionality', Mick will argue that we can understand human beings in terms of a future-oriented, agentic, being-towards-the-future; and that this directionality has different phases: from emergence and awareness to intention and action. Based on this model, Mick will go on to explore the relationship between directionality, wellbeing and distress; and how this understanding of human being can serve as a unifying principle for a range of therapeutic practice.

11.30 – Paper

Marcella Finnerty

How do integrative psychotherapists integrate?

It is considered that psychotherapy integration is widespread amongst practitioners, becoming the rule rather than the exception, and further research should look to understand when and how practitioners do this. Psychotherapists use their own expertise, as well as active collaboration with clients, to tailor their interventions to clients' needs. Understanding more about this flexible process of tailoring psychotherapy to clients' needs may make a valuable contribution toward the goal of understanding what works for whom and when in therapy. The accumulated experience of practicing therapists is a relatively untapped reservoir of knowledge. This qualitative study sought to explore the views and practices of 14 experienced integrative psychotherapists working in an Irish context, in relation to training, supervision, personal experiences and their attitudes towards the body of research evidence in the field. The data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and the master themes that evolved included Practice, Therapeutic Relationship and Identity. The findings of the research have implications for clinical training, supervision and the on-going professional development of therapists. The results demonstrated the pluralistic nature of the application of psychotherapy integration and the influence of personal histories on professional practice. They also raised questions about the methods used in the training of integrative psychotherapists and what role they may play in producing clinicians with an ad-hoc eclectic approach to their work. It would seem from this study that the idiosyncratic nature of integration on the ground differs from integration as described in much of the literature.

11.30 – Paper

Christian Hanser

The 'Welcome Hut' as salutogenic, open access dwelling in the public sphere. Case study of life storytelling and narrative arts applied in a civic shelter in France

This study discusses an unusual listening practice in the public sphere, taking place around the wood fire stove in a mobile shepherd's hut. The 'Welcome Hut' was initially sketched out as a concept for existential and experiential socialising during a postgraduate degree in adult education at a Scottish university and is now operationalised as a hospitality hub. Intervening also in the health care sector, the hut's transition from an experimental artistic space (2010) into a regular caring practice funded by the French government (since 2015) was accompanied by the applicant's professional training as humanistic existentialist counsellor and facilitator for life storytelling (Biografiearbeit). This presentation, illustrated through audio-visual archives of shepherd's hut interventions from previous action research, investigates the possibilities and limitations of creating non-clinical, therapeutic spaces beyond the consultation room. Working with clinical health care, but rooted in an outdoor positionality 'beyond walls' had been a choice of the applicant, informed by psychosocial theories about unequal access to narrative capital in a storied society. 8 years in the field indicate the potential of valorising individuals' narratives in challenging circumstances, particularly as crowded housing districts lack civic sanctuaries from where to develop resilient perspectives on life. The presentation will however point at several fragilities and questions that arise from operationalising this approach. Conceived across sectors, government services request the shepherd's hut because of a strong potential to foster grassroots relationships in the context of a crisis of citizen disengagement. Parallels will be drawn between the broadly observed withdrawal of citizens from public sphere activities and the observation that the shepherd's hut NGO, facilitating shared experiences of retreat and shelter, has seen more and more people re-engaging in voluntary activities around this unusual stance of person-centered and collective welcome. This association could be theorised as activist, advocating listening spaces and each person's access to authentic dialogue in a noisy and at times incoherent world. This presentation ultimately opens a space for discussion: how could pluralistic counsellors as an organised and professional network, building on values of solidarity, peer care and supervision, address the psycho-social challenges in contemporary society by opening up diverse new settings and spaces?

The 2nd shepherd's hut (addressing the existential questions of belonging and home) will be touring rural Scotland from June 2018 to June 2019 as part of a citizen initiative award, in partnership with the School of Education, University of Glasgow. More information on www.revotheque.fr (website mainly in French and German).

11.30 – Paper

Patricia Joyce, Mick Cooper and Joel Vos

Development of a young persons' therapy personalisation form

Aim/Purpose: The Therapy Personalisation Form (Bowens, Johnston & Cooper, 2007) was developed to give opportunity for continuous dialogue with clients on their treatment preferences for therapy. The present study builds on this work: its aim is to construct and pilot a young person-specific therapy personalisation form.

Design/Methodology: In stage one of the measure development process, a semi structured interview protocol was used to dialogue with 20 therapists who worked with young people to understand the dichotomies they faced in their work, and what they felt would be appropriate for inclusion in a young person's therapy preference tool. The findings were then thematically analysed to construct dimensions for the tool. In stage two, semi structured interviews were carried out with 27 young people and three therapists who had used the form at end of counselling/end of study to explore the acceptability of the form. The form was then tested with young people with addiction issues as part of a pilot randomised trial.

Results/Findings: An 8-item therapy preference tool for young people was developed. Evidence suggests that it is acceptable to both clients and therapists and shows clinical validity. Initial data gives indications of young people's therapeutic preferences.

Research Limitations: The measure relies on a series of single item indicators, and is therefore more akin to a checklist than an internally reliable measure.

Conclusions/Implications (including implications to practice): As a short, easy to complete, instrument, the YP-TPF can easily be used by therapists to open a dialogue with young clients on their therapy preferences.

11.30 – Paper

Gary Tebble

Developing a pluralistic model of practice for counselling work with young people (11-16) with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND), using a mixed methods approach

Background to research study: There is very little research in the counselling literature that directly involves the recruitment of young people as participants (Fraser, 2004; O'Reilly & Parker, 2014). A fundamental objective from the current study is to place the young person at the centre of the work, where the project will provide a vehicle to voice their counselling needs and perceptions. When searching the counselling literature extensively, there also appears to be very few counselling models that specifically target young people who belong to a special educational needs category. Whilst this could be a sole justification, there is a developing pluralistic notion within the literature, suggesting a potential usefulness of a more integrative approach to counselling with young people (Cooper & Dryden, 2015). The current study also attempts to inform and bring closer together the fields of education and counselling, aiming to develop better targeted support and awareness for counselling SEND children.

Methods: The current study uses a mixed-methods research design, centered on a collection of systematic case studies (Iwakabe & Gazzola, 2009). This design has been specifically chosen as it promotes the main aims of the study, focusing on capturing the richness of client experience, the mysteries of the therapeutic process and the identification of helpful or unhelpful factors by the young person. The current study is grounded in a pluralistic stance. The project is supported by my educational setting, who have given me explicit permission to recruit their SEND students. I have chosen to carry out a systematic case study design, and am using a three pronged approach to data collection, collecting session recordings and transcripts (Audio), outcome Measure: YP-CORE form and process Measure: HAT form. A grounded theory approach to analysis is being applied allowing me to assume an inductive approach to my research.

Results/Analysis: Results so far after working therapeutically with two SEND young people (participants): 1: Therapeutic mistakes appear fundamental to change 2: Doing something together/collaboration takes the directness away/makes things tangible 3: Clean, simple language helps promote and develop a shared decision making approach 4: The process of Empowerment is central to therapy for SEND young people 5: Hope springs growth *All of these themes are supported by the YP-CORE/HAT FORM in descriptive analysis.

Conclusions so far: Although my study is in its early stages there appears to be several implications for professional practice, when counselling SEND young people. Our approach as therapist's must be overtly empowering, allowing the young people to make decisions and take control of at least one part of their life-the therapy. Other implications seem to highlight the use of therapeutic activities which appear to help the young people open up in a less direct way (completing art tasks, mind mapping etc). Muddling through together and generally completing things in a collaborative way also seem to promote empowerment and help the young person therapeutically develop.

12.00 – Paper

Jay Beichman

How therapists make sense of pluralistic approaches to therapy: a qualitative interview study

Aim/Purpose: The study explores how therapists themselves make sense of pluralistic approaches to therapy. Interview data was used to develop a contextual understanding of pluralism within the therapy professions.

Design/Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with therapists who identified with different approaches via opportunity sampling. 12 therapists were interviewed. Four participants were male and eight were female. Their ages ranged from 29 to 74 and post-qualification experience varied from 1 to 28 years. The overarching question was: 'How do you make sense of pluralistic approaches to counselling and psychotherapy?' with sub-questions exploring the therapists' experiences and practices in relation to the main question.

Results/Findings: Seven themes were identified. Three themes ('Identity and Approach', 'The Flexibility-Rigidity Continuum', and 'It's the Relationship') were interpreted as belonging to 'contentious issues' that fed into a central theme 'Debates about Pluralism and Therapy'. These debates, in turn, lead to three additional themes interpreted as 'diplomatic attempts at resolution' ('The Practice of Metacommunication', 'Uncertainty and Understanding', and 'Common Factors'). Some interviewees are comfortable with pluralism: 'I can bring in behaviourism, I can bring in humanistic stuff, I can bring in cognitive stuff' (Participant 4) whereas others are less comfortable: 'I suppose my struggle is around when it's almost like "Well, I offer person-centred counselling but I'll throw CBT in" and it's like "Okay, well how does that work? How can that be possible if there is a real understanding and commitment to the person-centred approach?"' (Participant 9)

Research Limitations: Only three therapists from psychodynamic and CBT approaches were interviewed. Further research might focus on how CBT and psychodynamic practitioners in particular make sense of pluralism in relation to their practices. The aim of the analysis was to understand the interviewees' own subjective positions ('personal knowledge'). In terms of managing researcher subjectivity I bracketed off my assumptions, applying a phenomenological approach, and maintained a reflexive diary.

Conclusions/Implications: The interviews allowed for the identification and interpretation of themes which could form the basis for further research. How this sample of therapists makes sense of pluralism in relation to their own practice and the contexts in which they practice could be of use to practitioners, providers and clients in better understanding the implications of pluralistic practices and perspectives.

12.00 – Paper

Miriam Finnegan

The challenges of language: communicating with young people in counselling and psychotherapy

There is little research in counselling and psychotherapy about the role language and communication plays when counselling adolescents with complex needs. Language is implicit to self-talk and inner dialogue is critical to emotion regulation and problem solving. Young people with language impairment will likely have deficits in aspects of self-talk demonstrated by negative responses in the face of uncertainty.

The review examines the growing evidence base that highlights language and communication difficulties in the youth justice population. When working in this field, it became apparent that significant language and communication deficits could be observed among many young people in

the Irish detention and care system. In many cases, labels such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) functioned to misdirect clinical practice away from attention to underlying language difficulties.

This research study emerged from personal reflection on attempts to develop constructive therapeutic relationships with adolescent clients with complex needs, many of whom had substance misuse issues and served time in a detention or care facility.

Approval for the study was obtained from the Institute of Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethics Committee.

Method and Analysis: Qualitative methods, based on semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, were used to explore the experiences of counsellors and psychotherapists around recognising language and communication difficulties in young people with complex needs, and developing strategies for dealing with these issues. Analysis of data transcript made it possible to identify a number of core themes: learning about language in therapy; collaborating with other professional groups; using the quality of the therapeutic relationship as a reference point for identifying language difficulties; acquiring and applying new types of intervention; acting as an agent of social justice on behalf of misunderstood clients.

Conclusion: My hope in carrying out this research is to assist counsellors and psychotherapists working with young people to appreciate the degree to which language and communication issues stunt the young person's ability to engage with interventions, and to regard learning about language as a topic for professional.

12.00 – Paper

Teresa McKenna

How young people engage with the YP-CORE

Background: Quantitative research and therapist observations suggest that young people engage positively or negatively in the process of scoring outcome measures. However, little is known about the engagement aspects of the process or how this influences the outcome scoring, and not a lot of qualitative research has been conducted in the area with young people verbalising their experience on the process.

Aims: This current study therefore aimed to gain an in-depth understanding in collecting accounts from seven young participants describing their experience in response to scoring the YP-CORE outcome measurement tool, highlighting engagement aspects.

Method: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) was applied to the research question and a cognitive pre-testing method (Karabenick, Wooley, Friedel, Ammon, Blazeovski, Bonney, et. al., 2010) was applied to semi structured interviews to build the research around differentiating question types, and to gain an accurate report of young participants views on engagement in a measurement task.

Ethical Procedures: Approval of the case study protocol was given by the Ethics Committee of the IICP. The participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to discontinue taking part in the research at any time. The purpose of the research and the setting was discussed along with issues of confidentiality. To ensure the anonymity of the clients they were allocated a numerical code along with choosing a pseudonym of their choice. All information and recorded sessions and interviews were locked away safely and will be destroyed as per the IIPC protocol. The participants were given a debriefing sheet following the interview and were advised of support systems available should they require such support.

Results: The coded thematic analysis and container schema metaphor showed differences in experiences of engagement. Individual cognitive processes within the task requirement led to the

identification of divergent, alternative (self identification) and convergent, traditional (developers intentions) whereby participants utilised perceptions, actions, reasons, and knowledge, elaborated within a (PARK) model to engage.

Conclusion: Young people support the use of measurements but the implementation requires a lot more care and dialogue in understanding individual consequential decision making process in scoring. Researchers and Therapists need to be aware of alternative factors that influence the choice of responses to measurement items, as they may not always provide an accurate true reflection within the selected choice.

12.00 – Paper

Hanne Oddli, Gina Di Malta and Mick Cooper

Client experiences of goal negotiation over the course of pluralistic therapy

Goal-related processes are fundamental to how positive or negative people feel (e.g. Little, Salmela-Aro, & Phillips, 2007; Steger, 2013). Yet, there is little research on the processes of working with goals. Pluralistic therapy offers a context where there is an emphasis on shared decision-making around goal setting (Cooper & McLeod, 2007). This study is an exploration of client experiences of goal sharing processes within a pluralistic therapy context. Participants were 25 clients undergoing a course of 24 sessions of pluralistic therapy. Semi-structured interviews aimed at eliciting client feedback and experiences of goal negotiation after their first four sessions of therapy. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and organised to reflect client experiences of helpful and unhelpful factors of working with goals. 17 out of the 25 interviews were audited by the second author, discrepancies in interpretations were discussed in a focus group. Analyses suggest that clients experienced 'goals work' as overall helpful as it brought focus, direction and a common ground in the developing therapeutic relationship. Challenges such as client uncertainty, a misleading focus, fear of failure and identification with problems were an indication that goal-oriented practice could be enhanced. A practitioner's approach to managing client expectations, offering compassion for the limitations of goals work, and prioritising a flexible structure was experienced as beneficial. The authors conclude that good goal-oriented practice includes a flexible structure and space for mutual dialogue to allow for the emergence of goal meanings.

12.30 – Paper

Sarah Cantwell

Talking about what might be helpful: summary of findings from the concrete practice of pluralistic therapy

Co-authors: Dr John Rae, Dr Jacqueline Hayes and Professor Mick Cooper

Pluralistic therapy recommends clients and therapists collaboratively discuss what therapeutic approaches and activities might be helpful for the client in achieving their goals. Descriptions of how clients and therapists talk about what might be helpful are usually derived from post-hoc reports of therapy sessions (e.g. McLeod, 2013). However, these descriptions may not be optimally informative about how such talk is actually achieved, since skilled practices can be organized at a level of interactional detail difficult for practitioners to remember and articulate (Hepburn et al., 2014). The current project therefore investigated the concrete, moment-by-moment practice used to talk about what might be helpful. 42 audio-recorded sessions were selected from a representative sample of 7 dyads who participated in the *Pluralistic Therapy for Depression* research study (Cooper et al., 2015). Conversation Analysis was used to identify key interactional practices for talking about what might be helpful. Findings from this study will be summarized, including different uses of questions, question designs and different ways in which therapists can respond to clients'

responses. Among the practical implications for pluralistic therapy is the continual need to balance between therapists mutually contributing ideas while being mindful of if, and when, to pursue uptake of these ideas from clients.

12.30 – Paper

Mick Cooper and John Norcross

The development of the C-NIP Preference Tool, and its use in clinical practice

Research on the relationship between client preferences and therapy outcomes provides strong support for the clinical assessment and empirical investigation of client preferences. Two recent meta-analyses demonstrated that clients who received a preferred therapy, as compared with clients who receive a non-preferred therapy, show significantly greater clinical outcomes and satisfaction, and significantly lower dropout rates at a ratio of almost one-to-two (Lindhiem, Bennett, Trentacosta, & McLear, 2014; Swift et al., 2011).

The Cooper-Norcross Inventory of Preferences (CNIP) is a clinical tool designed to help identify – and tailor practice to – client preferences. In this presentation, the process of developing the CNIP will be discussed, its psychometric properties, and related tools. The presentation will then go on to give a case example of the use of the measure in clinical work. Strengths and limitations of the tool will be discussed.

12.30 – Paper

Jayne Nairn and Felicity Snowsill

Digital interventions: creating a safe space for young people on-line

Cool2talk (www.cool2talk.org) is a website for young people in Tayside where they can ask health related questions and get answers anonymously. Cool2talk provides a safe place for young people, supporting them to make decisions about the issues they present and providing reassurance and information about local services.

The service has been running successfully for 10 years. Feedback is positive and the topic range and demographics of the young people using the site equitable across Tayside. Recently the service has been commissioned to the Western Isles, Dumfries & Galloway and Argyll & Bute where it has helped to deliver more choice for young people living in a rural setting.

Over the last 5 years the way that young people use technology has changed rapidly and there have been requests from young people for an on line chat facility. Young people receive anonymous support and answers to their questions in an instant messaging facility. Using the benefits of digital technology we have enhanced an already well used and credible service.

There is strong evidence that personalised digital interventions can influence behaviour and provide a source of recognised and useful support and information

One2one is an online counselling service, providing early intervention for adolescents in Tayside. It allows young people to discuss any issues in real time with a counsellor and explore their situation and feelings. Online counselling is a relatively recent developed branch of counselling. The service employs one counsellor to provide weekly slots on the One2one chat. Users register on the website and then start a live chat session with the counsellor.

The aim of the 121 service is to provide young people using the cool2talk website with a facility for on line chat. This gives young people the chance to have an exchange with a worker, giving more chance to reflect on the issues presenting. To provide young people with an accessible, anonymous and non judgemental on line service with a choice of access.

Young people can make a positive informed choice about using the service, rather than by referral, meaning that they are more open to the options and support provided. On line services are demanded, where the young people are in control and agents of their own change. They receive an immediate response to the way they are feeling in real time.

The presentation will look at the context of what digital interventions can provide for young people, and look specifically at the 121 online counselling service, with a focus on case studies and evaluation.

12.30 – Paper

Ifidon James Ohilebo

Socio-demographic variables predicting knowledge, attitude and practice of pluralistic counselling among secondary school counsellors in Nigeria

The study assessed socio-demographic variables predicting knowledge, attitude and practice of pluralistic counselling among secondary school counsellors in Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study employed correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 8000 secondary school counsellors in Nigeria. One thousand six hundred (1,600) respondents (counsellors) were sampled from across secondary schools in Nigeria using multi-stage stratified simple random sampling technique. A validated instrument titled “Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Pluralistic Counselling (KAPPCQ)” developed by the researcher was used to gather information from the respondents (secondary school counsellors). Data collected for the study were analyzed using logistic linear regression. The analysis showed that school-location, school-type, gender, age, level of education and experience significantly predicted knowledge, attitude and practice of pluralistic counselling among secondary school counsellors in Nigeria. Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made among others: the scope of counsellor education and training in Nigeria should be widened to incorporate pluralistic counselling and psychotherapy in order to increase knowledge, attitude and practice of pluralistic counselling among secondary school counsellors irrespective of school-location, school-type, gender, age, level of education and experience; and secondary school counsellors should be dynamic in their approach towards counselling in order to update their knowledge, attitude and practice of pluralistic counselling irrespective of their school-location, school-type, gender, age, level of education and experience.

14.00 – Workshop

Sondra Beres

Finishing well: counselling through end of life

The end of life transition can invoke grief, stress, anger, fear, confusion, and hopelessness in carers, family members (including children) and those who are dying. Counsellors can help ease this transition with compassion and creativity. In this one hour session, participants will learn about the normal expressions of grief from people across the lifespan from various cultural backgrounds, including grief, sadness, and anger experienced from loss of functioning and physical decline as well as grief from death. In addition, participants will learn three creative techniques for working with individuals and families in the end of life transition that will respectfully provide space for emotional expression and connection. This presentation is based on a collaboration between Motor Neurone Disease Association and the University of Northampton in which counsellors are trained to work with patients and families impacted by MND.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will learn about normal expressions of grief across the lifespan from infancy through late adulthood from multiple cultural backgrounds.
2. Participants will reflect on how grief and loss have impacted their own development and

approach to counselling practice.

3. Participants will learn three creative techniques which are appropriate for helping individuals and family members work through grief without relying on spoken language.
4. Participants will discuss how to use supervision to support their bereavement work with clients.

14.00 – Workshop

Andrew Reeves

The potency of pluralistic practice with clients at risk of suicide: exploring experience and enabling change

Working with suicide risk in counselling and psychotherapy raises challenges for trainee and qualified practitioners alike and there is a high likelihood that all practitioners, at some stage in their career, will encounter a client at risk of suicide. Typical policy and procedural expectations, developed by often-anxious institutions, increasingly direct practise in such ways that the autonomy of both the client and practitioner are undermined. An increasingly risk-averse discourse further marginalises the capacity of the client for keeping themselves safe, as practitioners are required to undertake tick-box approaches to assessing risk, rather than dialogic exploration of the phenomenological and existential process of suicidality.

This workshop challenges the traditional and accepted 'know-how' of working with suicide risk that assessment is primarily the task of the practitioner and instead, places greater emphasis on therapeutic exploration (Reeves, 2017), in a pluralistic frame, for working successfully with suicide risk. Additionally, the workshop will provide participants with a rare opportunity fully discuss and reflect on their practise with suicidal clients with the aim of creating the space in which a clearer pluralistic position may be taken.

Reeves, A. (2017). In a search for meaning: Challenging the accepted 'know-how' of working with suicide risk. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. 45(5): 606-9.

14.00 – Workshop

Sarah Cantwell

Managing practical dilemmas in talking about what might be therapeutically helpful in pluralistic therapy

Co-researchers: Dr John Rae, Dr Jacqueline Hayes and Professor Mick Cooper

This workshop uses transcripts of therapy sessions to explore a key practical aspect of pluralistic therapy, how clients and therapists collaboratively engage in discussions about what might be therapeutically helpful. The transcripts are taken from a doctoral research project which used Conversation Analysis to identify recurrent practices in 42 audio-recorded sessions of pluralistic therapy, across 7 client-therapist pairs. Using a version of the Conversation Analytic Role-Play Method (Stokoe, 2014), participants will be presented with transcribed examples of real interactions. These will be presented one at a time and in segments, so that participants can react to the interaction as it unfolds. Using small and larger group formats, participants will then be asked to reflect on the possible uses and consequences of these practices. At the end of the workshop, participants will have developed their understanding of the practical dilemmas that can arise when inviting clients to talk about what might be helpful and different ways in which these dilemmas can be overcome.

14.00 – Workshop

Mick Cooper

Working with goals in counselling and psychotherapy

Aims: The purpose of this workshop is to help participants reflect on their use of goals in counselling psychology practice, and to consider findings and new developments from the psychological and psychotherapeutic that may help them enhance goal-based work.

Format of the workshop

The workshop will combine input (and Q&A) on theory, research and practice developments; self- and clinical reflection; an experiential exercise; and a demonstration of practice.

Key elements of the workshop

1. Reflecting on your own goals in life (experiential exercise)
2. Goals and goal-related processes: What they are, types of goals, and their relationship to well-being and distress (input and Q&A)
3. Understanding clients in terms of their goals and goal-processes (reflection)
4. Working with goals in therapy (practice guidelines)
5. Using the Goals Form (demonstration and discussion)

How participants will participate

Participants will be invited to: reflect on their own goals in life, consider the goals and goal-related processes of their clients, discuss the use of a goal monitoring measure.

16.00 – Workshop

Walter Baxter

Case Formulation using a time-line map for short-term (6 session) work

The framework for collaborative pluralistic case formulation by McLeod and McLeod in *The Handbook of Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy* provides counsellors with a tool to support the forming a therapeutic counselling relationship by demonstrating a method for collaborating on a time-line map to establish goals and tasks. However, as described it takes up to three therapy sessions to complete. Unfortunately, three sessions is proportionately an inordinate amount of time for some types of counselling work. For many counsellors the reality of being paid for their work means agreeing to offer short-term counselling. Often as few as 4 to 6 sessions per client is all that they are contracted to offer. An additional framework for collaborative pluralistic case formulation is required to meet the specific needs this type of short-term work requires.

Gains: The workshop participants will be introduced to a method of pluralistic case formulation that fits with short-term work. They will each be given an opportunity to try out the method for themselves. The participants will be able to enrich their short-term practice by learning a way to offer their clients all the benefits of collaborating on a time-line map usually taking up to three sessions in a single session.

Aims: To demonstrate a method of case formulation that combines a therapeutic assessment, sharing a time-line map, agreeing goals and collaborating on a task list all in one 50 minute therapy session.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to use semi-structured questions to conduct a therapeutic assessment in one session.
- Learn how to use the client's answers to those questions to construct a time-line map.
- Learn how to use that time-line map to collaborate with clients on goals and tasks.
- Learn how to structure short-term counselling to manage client expectations and improve client outcomes.

- Learn how to get clients to achieve practical results in their first session.
- Learn how to give clients a way to discuss their experience of counselling that helps circumvent the stigma of seeking support for a mental health problem.

16.00 – Workshop

Robin Higgins

World Café: deep dive dialogues about pluralism

Presenter: Robin Higgins, M.A. Counselling Psychology is a Canadian counsellor working at the University of Central Asia in Tajikistan. 90% of her counselling practice is with Muslim students and faculty from 12 different countries and she is continually learning how to bring a pluralistic and collaborative lens to exploring clients' journeys toward well-being.

“Diversity in society is a fact, but pluralism requires a deliberate choice to accommodate and value diversity.” The Global Centre for Pluralism, Ottawa, Canada.

Rationale: Conferences always offer new information, but often do not give participants opportunities to integrate new knowledge and learn from each other:

“The World Cafe is built on the assumption that ... people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges; that the answers we need are available to us; and that we are Wiser Together than we are alone.”

Gains: Participants will have an opportunity to experience an innovative group facilitation technique that can be used in classes, group therapy or strategic planning sessions. They will also have a chance to learn from each other about pluralistic influences, challenges and aspirations.

Aims: Workshop participants will have positive group experiences of meaningful dialogue in a World Café format that offers insight into the group's diverse perspectives and offers an opportunity to reflect on “next steps” in their personal and professional lives.

Learning Outcomes. Participants will:

1. Learn about and experience World Café as a facilitation technique.
2. Explore the pluralistic influences, challenges and successes in their counselling practices.
3. Reflect on “deeper wants” and use group support to strategize next steps.

Format: 20 min catalyst discussion including two videos that showcase innovative ways to bring forth meaningful dialogue: Dinner Basket Conversations about Substance Use, “What I Wish They Knew”.

16.00 – Workshop

Lynsey McMillan

A pluralistic approach to eating disorders

I have been working pluralistically with clients who have eating problems since 2009. My MSc dissertation, completed in 2011 was on psycho-educational interventions for disordered eating. Since then I have led groups and taught classes on disordered eating and contributed a chapter on working with eating problems to the Sage Handbook of Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. I have a private practice based in Montrose and around 40% of my client work is with people who present with weight, shape and eating issues. Within this client group are numerous complex issues such as childhood and relational trauma, sexual abuse, difficulties in adult relationship, shame and self-criticism, dissociation, poor emotion regulation, addiction and self-harm.

I propose to offer an interactive masterclass which would include collaborative discussions based on material from my chapter in the Pluralistic Handbook. I will briefly discuss key understandings of how eating problems can emerge. Touching on examples of psychobiological and genetic factors, emotional and psychological factors and sociological factors and inviting contributions from the group.

Then, in the spirit of showing 'Pluralism in Action' I will give a demonstration of a pluralistic approach to case formulation. Inviting participants to submit a fictionalised eating disordered client case, I will choose one example to work with. Then, using a timeline case formulation, I will show how these understandings can be applied in practice within a pluralistic framework to begin to form a collaborative relationship, come to an initial shared understanding of the presenting issues, explore possible therapeutic tasks and methods and convey hope for therapy and for recovery. Essential counsellor attributes for working with disordered eaters may also be mentioned and most certainly embodied.

Time for Q&A will be included as will handouts and references for further study.

16.00 – Workshop

Rebekah Moore

Peer research – the ultimate in participatory research?

This workshop will explore peer research, a research method where researchers share the same lived experience as the subjects of their research. This approach is particularly powerful when researching marginalized groups, such as injecting drug users.

The approach has a huge overlap with pluralism, in that is empowering, collaborative, involves power sharing and looking at multiple perspectives. The workshop will present learning from Scottish Drug Forum's peer research programme, and from other similar places, and through participative discussion explore with the audience the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and its applicability to pluralistic research. Ethical considerations will be also explored and debated. A peer researcher will present their experiences of being involved in a recent research project.

'Patient involvement' is an ever-growing criteria for funding – peer research is a method that does this in an empowering and collaborative way (and importantly, non-tokenistically!) and has been crucial to the success of funding bids, for example a recent NIHR grant for the newly formed drugs research network for Scotland.

Gains for participants

- Learn about a growing research method
- Explore strengths and weaknesses of the approach
- Gain understanding of appropriate applications of the approach
- Have discussions with fellow pluralists about the application of the approach
- Hear from a peer researcher about their recent experience
- Consider ethical considerations of the method
- Have opportunity to ask questions to people involved in this work

Learning Outcomes of the workshop

- Gain an understanding of peer research
- Be able to articulate the strengths and weaknesses of the approach
- Understand when the approach may and may not be suitable
- Explore the pluralistic potential for research using this method

16.00 – Workshop

Mike Moss

The gift we are thirsting for: a pluralistic perspective on the therapeutic relationship

In my work as a therapist I have begun to discover something more in the presence of being in the therapeutic encounter which if attended to, even in the smallest of ways, movement towards healing can be experienced as a direction towards growth. I have attempted to describe this as a 'directional presence' where the actualisation process of both client and therapist may be connected to an evolutionary flow which is beyond the personal and may offer direction towards healing. This something more may be where all therapies meet and may offer a deeper understanding of the essentials of the pluralistic approach towards helping.

The workshop will present 'dadirri' an indigenous Australian experience that is offered to the world by the Aboriginal elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmer-Bauman who describes dadirri as the process of being open to '...an inner deep listening, and quiet still awareness, which taps into the 'deep spring that is within us.' And claims that this is the gift we are all thirsting for. And there is the opportunity for healing if we approach our past, present and future in collaborative inquiry, trusting that the direction towards growth will be revealed by being in right relations with self, other and the earth.

The workshop will be interactive and experiential and offer an opportunity to explore some of the essential principles of pluralism within the framework of the humanistic approach to therapy and also what I am learning about 'dadirri'. Participants will be able to appreciate the therapeutic skills they already have and will be introduced to a new perspective on listening and being in relationship. And will be reminded that each individual client is unique in every relationship and that every session can offer something more if we are open to collaboration, and acknowledging that we are all experiencing the universal journey of being human together.

Mike Moss has over 30 years' experience working with Children and Families in Scotland. He has trained in Youth and Community Work, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Systemic Family Therapy, Integrative Therapy, Person Centred Therapy, Theta Healing and Clinical Supervision. He is currently employed full time as a counsellor by West Lothian Council working with young people up to the age of 25 years old. He regularly presents at conferences and has a small private practice in Edinburgh offering clinical supervision and training. He can be contacted at mike.moss@outlook.com

Articles published:

Moss, M. (2017). *'On becoming more, in the therapeutic relationship: an exploration of directional presence'*. COSCA Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland. (Spring issue 2017).

Moss, M. (2017). *'On becoming more, in the therapeutic relationship' Person Centred Quarterly'* (May 2017).

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Sunday 18 March 2018

9.30 – Keynote

Rolf Sundet

Pluralistic therapy and family therapy: A possible partnership?

In 2007 Mick Cooper and John McLeod gave us “A pluralistic framework for counselling and psychotherapy; Implications for research”. Here the basic principle of the pluralistic framework was stated: psychological difficulties may have multiple causes and there is unlikely to be one, “right” therapeutic method that will be appropriate in all situations. Central is the idea that different people are helped by different processes at different times. This framework operates as a meta-theory that makes it possible to utilise concepts, strategies and specific interventions from a range of therapeutic orientations. Structured around three domains (goals, tasks and methods), a wide range of therapeutic processes can be conceptualised, critically examined and empirically investigated. At the heart of this framework is a collaborative relationship between service users and therapists. Stating that their views was a reaction to the growing dogmatism within the field of psychotherapy and counselling; their aim was to create a flexible approach that was suited to meet the needs of the individual client.

The dogmatism that Cooper and McLeod point to is also recognizable within the field of family therapy. “Battles between schools of therapy” and competitions for finding the “best” or “winning” therapy approach for specific diagnostic groups are ailments that pervade family therapy just as much as in the field of individual counselling and psychotherapy. At the same time there exist strands of thinking and practicing within family therapy that are consistent with a pluralistic framework.

In this presentation I identify developments within family therapy that are in line with the pluralistic framework, and argue that a partnership between the pluralistic framework, and these strands within family therapy has the potential both to strengthen family therapy, and hopefully, also enrich the pluralistic framework. The presentation draws on examples from my therapeutic work with children and adolescents in Norway.

10.15 – Keynote

John McLeod

Getting closer to everyday life: using cultural resources in pluralistic therapy day

A pluralistic approach to therapy is built around a collaborative way of working that emphasises the value of the client’s ideas and experience in relation to what might be helpful. Almost always, a person will be able to identify activities in their everyday life – cultural resources – that have the potential to support them in addressing problems in living. This presentation explores the process of working with cultural resources from two perspectives. First, the therapeutic application of relevant theory and research is examined, focusing on concepts of social capital, psyCommons and conservation of resources. Second, examples are provided of creative ways in which pluralistic therapists have encouraged their clients to make use of a wide range of everyday activities. Implications for research, training and supervision are discussed.

11.30 – Paper

Lisa Campbell and Kate Smith

Therapy experiences of UK Armed Forces veterans treated for PTSD

Research into the mental health of Armed Forces veterans is abundant, but there is little qualitative research, particularly in their experiences of therapy, and if what they were offered was perceived as effective treatment.

There were three aims of the study: to find out if veterans perceived their therapy to be effective; if there were issues, such as substance misuse or complexity of needs that acted as a barrier to seeking help; finally, finding out what pluralistic counsellors can do to improve their work with this client group.

Participants (n=38) were asked questions via an online survey on what prompted engagement with therapeutic services, goals and preferences for therapy, difficulties accessing services and also if they perceived their therapy to be effective or ineffective. Ethical approval was provided by University of Abertay Dundee.

Using thematic analysis, two main themes were found: therapy effectiveness, which was affected by the changes noticed as a result of therapy and therapist skills and abilities. The second, therapy engagement, identified barriers to engagement including availability of therapy and fear of trusting others. Facilitators to engage with therapy were also identified including the participant's own motivation to engage in therapy.

Pluralistic practitioners can improve their work by focusing on the therapeutic relationship, being self-aware of capabilities and having knowledge on the wider effects of trauma. Change was a strong indicator to participants' perceptions of therapy effectiveness, and it is suggested that talking about the therapeutic process, using monitoring and evaluation measures and being open to feedback can help identify earlier if the therapy provided is of benefit to the client. These principles match the pluralistic approach to therapy.

11.30 – Paper

Marcella Finnerty and Cariona Kearns

Developing an organising framework for training in pluralistic counselling and psychotherapy: a pilot study

A core debate in the field of integrative psychotherapy, is how best to approach training including when it should be introduced to the student and what it should include. Two approaches to teaching all forms of integration (including a pluralistic approach) abound. One is to adopt in-depth training in a single-theory approach such as narrative therapy or in some combination of traditions, and then learn about pluralism at some further point in the process. Others who teach an integrative approach from the outset, advocate the education of students in the theories and methods of multiple orientations from the beginning of teaching. This views integrative pedagogy as promoting the critical skills necessary for integrative practice: flexibility, open-mindedness, creativity, awareness of the limitations of a single perspective, and sufficient resourcefulness to cope with future changes and challenges. It also suggests that teaching the principles of integration offer an organisation frame at the beginning of therapy which promotes the argument that psychotherapy integration forms a fundamental component of training. Others consider that, based on the assumption that we can only integrate what we know well, there is strong support for the notion that trainees master one approach before they begin to practice integration. IICP College consider that the ultimate goal is not for students to identify as having an integrative orientation, but rather for students to develop an integrative perspective, independent of the theoretical label they select. This concurs with the pluralistic approach as advocated by Cooper and McLeod (2011). A pluralistic perspective

maintains that no one system is a panacea for all psychological distress, but favours the use of a diversity of methods in addressing client needs. This pilot qualitative, IPA enquiry, looks at the influence of training in a pluralistic tradition on the lived experience and practice of (3) (4) post-graduate students on a Master's in Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme in IICP College, Dublin, Ireland. Findings from this pilot enquiry will inform pluralistic training methods utilised in IICP College in its undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes. They will also form the basis of a larger review into the development of a comprehensive and best-practice framework for the training of pluralistic counsellors and psychotherapists in a variety of contexts.

11.30 – Paper

Mark Pearson

A multiple intelligences contribution to pluralism: Enhancing choice with a focus on strengths

This paper presents the major themes that emerged from a qualitative study investigating the experiences of Australian counsellors as they introduced Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI), and corresponding interventions, into therapy with adult clients, three months after attending a MI training intervention. While research on the application of MI in the field of education has revealed many positive benefits, this study explored possible therapeutic benefits from the introduction of multiple intelligences in the work of counsellors. Responding to client preferences is at the heart of a pluralistic practice and can enhance outcomes. MI provides a practical way to match client preferences to therapeutic treatment, and commence the therapeutic relationship through conversations and activities that use client preferences and strengths. A MI approach to counselling is where counsellors are trained in the application of Gardner's theory of MI, and in ways to assess clients' MI profiles, and offer treatment choices informed by clients' MI preferences.

Upon approval from university ethics committee and completion of consent forms, semi-structured interviews with eight counsellor participants – pre- and post participation in an MI training intervention – were transcribed and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. This paper communicates the participants' experiences introducing the MI approach and their operations that it provides a flexible and strengths-based way of developing therapeutic work and alliances within the early stages of therapy. The major themes that reported included perceptions of enhanced therapeutic alliances, more effective professional work, experiences of increased confidence, positive client response to a strength-based approach, positive client responses to a multiple intelligences preference survey, and positive outcomes from the use of music. Implications for therapist education, and the value of further research on using a MI approach to pluralistic counselling are discussed. A MI approach to counselling is one way of responding to client complexity and supporting client choice and wellbeing, particularly as its use appears to enhance therapeutic connectedness and reconnect clients with cultural resource strengths.

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11.30 – Paper

Susanne Thomson and Kat Stevens

Social capital and therapy: working with women on issues around abuse and trauma

In this presentation we will explore counselling practices within Inverclyde Women's Aid and Dundee's Women's Rape And Sexual Abuse Centre, and how working within a pluralistic counselling framework can aid the recovery from interpersonal trauma. This will be done giving a description of trauma and the impact that this has on people. We will then look working pluralistically within this context and expand on the different groups and resources that are available alongside counselling and how this can facilitate trauma recovery.

12.00 – Paper

Doreen Fleet

Developing a pluralistic and dialogical theoretical framework of a sand-tray intervention with adult clients

Co-authors: Dr Andrew Reeves, Dr Mani P DasGupta and Dr Amy Burton.

Aim/Purpose: Sand-tray therapy is commonly used with children and involves client-therapist interaction when selecting and arranging the objects in a sand-tray. Although there is some existing literature of using this approach with adults from a Jungian and Systemic approach, a gap exists from a pluralistic and dialogical perspective. The aim of this research is to investigate the therapeutic process of offering short-term sand-tray therapy to adults and answer the question of how the sand-tray functions as a therapeutic aid when taking a pluralistic and dialogical focus?

Design/Methodology: This is a qualitative multiple case study design where the researcher takes the dual role of counsellor-researcher. Six client-participants were recruited to have six sessions of sand-tray therapy, providing thirty-six hours of rich data for analysis. It is a grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) study, aiming to establish a pluralistic and dialogical theoretical model.

Results/Findings: The overall theoretical model is a work in progress as the researcher is currently in the writing-up stage. However, the pluralistic focus includes: goal setting; shared decision-making involving purposeful dialogue (Cooper & McLeod 2011; McLeod, 2018) throughout the therapeutic process; outcome measures (CORE-10); and qualitative feedback. The dialogical focus involves both inter-relational and intra-psychic elements (Hermans & Dimaggio 2004). Case examples from the study will be incorporated to illustrate the pluralistic and dialogical aspects of the therapeutic process.

In addition, two predominant mechanisms identified of Intra-phenomenological shift and Intera-phenomenological shift, which will form part of the final theoretical model, will be integrated into the discussion.

Research Limitations: The dual role with the researcher delivering the therapy is an on-going debate. Some researchers may see this as a limitation but the researcher adopted a role-fluency approach first identified by Gabriel and Casemore (2009), arguing that this approach offers a way of achieving data, which has the depth and detail contributing to theoretical understanding, which other approaches could not.

Conclusions: Sand-tray is not simply a therapeutic aid. Instead, it is far more integral to the therapeutic process than that and not just a tool to be used in addition to talking therapy interventions.

The pluralistic and dialogical focus is central to the process of change for the client, enabling them to 'stay with' and explore their pain through purposeful dialogue and intra-psychic processes.

Implications: This study offers a theoretical conceptual model for practitioners to draw on when working pluralistically, including a sand-tray approach, with adult clients. As such, it helps both inform therapeutic intervention itself, but additionally provides a framework for further research in this area.

12.00 – Paper

Michelle Nicholson

A pluralistic approach to practice: the UK's first counselling service for women affected by pregnancy sickness

Background: Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy is something that affects around 80% of pregnant women. Approximately 2% of women are diagnosed with Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG), an extreme and persistent form of pregnancy sickness. HG is associated with depression, anxiety and psychological distress. Poor mental health is the result of the suffering caused by HG, rather than being causal. 10% of pregnancies complicated by HG end in termination, in women who would not otherwise have chosen this. Prominent reasons cited include inability to care for self and family, and inadequate health care support.¹ Having been debilitated by HG in both of my own pregnancies, I chose the therapeutic value of emotional expression around pregnancy sickness as the focus of my postgraduate counselling research study in 2015.² Identifying a lack of specialist psychotherapeutic support options for women around HG, and feeling ethically compelled to reflect on how current modes of practice might be improved, my research findings led me to set up the UK's first counselling service for women affected by pregnancy sickness in 2016.

Analysis: My use of the pluralistic framework in counselling practice with a new client group is examined. Having analysed, through a pluralistic lens, my clinical notes of counselling sessions in the first 12 months of specialist private practice, a summary is presented of the therapeutic goals, tasks and methods identified, that are specific to clients affected by Hyperemesis Gravidarum.

Implications for pluralistic practice: Aspects of the pluralistic framework³ of most relevance to this new client group are outlined, including: openness to learning from clients and their preferences in HG counselling; using multiple sources of knowledge around distress, therapy and HG to inform practice; promoting clients' sense of agency in their management of HG symptoms and their use of counselling; enabling clients to acknowledge strengths, resources and gains as well as losses in their HG experience; flexibility and responsiveness in creating a bespoke approach for each individual client (whether currently suffering, in recovery from, or preparing for HG); and the value of highlighting client progress throughout the HG journey. In the absence of any evidence base or guidelines for counselling women affected by HG, the three pillars of pluralistic therapy (pluralism across orientations, clients and perspectives)³ have provided a useful rationale for development of a new specialist practice.

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12.00 – Paper

Maheen Saeed and Zoe Powell Martin

Becoming a counsellor: The student experience of a pluralistic training programme

There has been much research previously reflecting on the process of 'becoming a counsellor'. This paper aims to explore the learning specific to becoming a pluralistic counsellor. Two trainee counsellors use a collaborative autoethnographic methodology to reflect on their personal experiences of learning and developing during a pluralistic training program. Timelines, personal learning journals and one to one meetings are used to deconstruct and co-construct their experiences. Overall, this highlights memorable moments that have helped the trainees internalize the principals of pluralism. The implications of this will allow insight into the distinct learning essential for pluralistic trainees and provide a guide for both teachers and learners to the key areas and moments of development during the course.

12.00 – Paper

Kate Smith

Remembering a life: Autobiographical memory processes underlying narrative change and their implications for pluralistic therapy

Autobiographical memories comprise components of sensory, emotional, and narrative and over time change in accessibility. A major component of effective therapy is providing clients with the ability to narrate and rehearse autobiographical events, to process associated emotions, and in many cases find alternative ways of understanding events. On the recall of a memory these aspects may be reconfigured in relation to one another, and in relation to other memories within a life-story.

In a series of controlled experiments memories associated with the life-story narratives of depressed and non-depressed groups were differentially recalled, and results indicate a core process of autobiographical reconfiguration which could be caused by the telling, and retelling of events. This process may be flawed in people with depression.

This series of studies have important implications for cross-theoretical phenomena in counselling and psychotherapy, and supports alignment of therapeutic work to client narrative, rather than counsellor theoretical perspective.

12.30 – Paper

Richard Craven

Pluralism as a framework for training and practice in mental health nursing

Background: In terms of identity Mental Health Nursing in the 21st Century is less at a crossroads and more on a roundabout. In a post-digital -some might say post change- global environment the authors/presenters call for further critical attention to be addressed to two fundamental areas.

First the origins and breadth of the profession: Developments can be marked in several ways including the recommendations of the 1986 Cumberlege Report in England or novel approaches to psychological and pharmacological treatment of mental health conditions or psychological distress. Equally they could be measured against substantive and unequivocal developments in collaborative approaches to MH Care evidenced through the work of many individuals and groups. What started as a substantively gendered, unskilled and ancillary role is now, at its best, a dynamic, collaborative, inclusive, reflective, compassionate and diverse one. Nevertheless, it can be argued that efforts to articulate the contemporary identity of mental health nursing, through research, textbook accounts and critical narrative, have failed to capture the distinctive attributes and contribution of mental health nursing as a professional specialism.

Second despite the ubiquity of claims for evidence-based care, the profession often appears to be driven by a combination of custom and practice, to the point of being largely defined by the gaps left by our arguably better defined inter-professional partners in psychology, medicine, social work and occupational therapy.

Based on pluralistic approaches to counselling, the authors propose an integrative theoretical framework which has the potential to underpin and inform mental health nursing practice into the 21st Century. Within the field of counselling, the concept of pluralism has been developed as a basis for a set of organising principles in which a structured process of collaboration, dialogue and shared decision-making between the client/service user and practitioner makes it possible to draw on the personal strengths and cultural resources of the client, through breaking down complex problems in living into a set of therapeutic tasks, each of which may be facilitated by different members of a multidisciplinary team. The paper concludes by briefly outlining the key skills and competencies associated with this way of working, and the types of practice-based research questions that are generated.

Richard Craven is a lecturer and programme lead for the undergraduate mental health nursing programme at Abertay. He is a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist and Motivational Interviewing Trainer with a longstanding interest in integrated approaches to health and social care. The presenters share a commitment to collaborative work with clients and patients and reject the dogma sometimes inherent in one-size –fits-all approaches. The success of pluralism in counselling education at Abertay has generated a critical collaboration on its application in mental health nursing.

12.30 – Paper

Patricia Joyce, Mick Cooper and Joel Vos **Helpfulness of feedback tools: a young persons' perspective**

Aim/Purpose: The use of feedback tools in therapy has proven to be an effective way of minimising client deterioration (Lambert & Shimokawa, 2011) and improving outcomes in young people (for instance Cooper, Stewart, Spark & Bunting, 2013). A feedback informed approach is a central tenet of the pluralistic framework (Cooper & McLeod, 2011) with the use of feedback tools recognised as a way to allow for dialogue with clients on their therapy needs. Although several systems have been developed to routinely monitor aspects of young people therapy (Kornør et al., 2015), little is known about how these systems are used by the young person in therapy. This paper gives opportunity to explore the helpfulness of the tools for young people participant's who took part in randomised control trial of pluralistic versus counselling as usual with young people presenting with issues of addiction.

Design/Methodology: As part of a larger, randomised control trial, participants were recruited from a young person-specific addiction counselling service in the North East of Scotland. Semi structured interviews were carried out with 27 pluralistic and 26 counselling as usual participants that gave opportunity to explore the helpfulness and acceptability of the forms used in the study. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data given through the rating of each tool was statistically analysed.

Results/Findings: All outcome and therapeutic tools used in the study were thought to be useful to some extent, the YP-CORE identified as the most helpful. The tools were perceived to be helpful in several areas, themes arising include; monitoring and reflecting on change, giving focus to sessions and as a means of communicating with the counsellor.

Research Limitations: The uneven responses from those who experienced a planned or unplanned ending may have led to more positive/less negative responses

Conclusions/Implications: The results from this study indicate the helpfulness for young people of feedback informed practices in their therapeutic interventions as a method not only to dialogue

with their counsellor but also to reflect on and notice change. It therefore maybe important that counsellors working with young people incorporate a feedback informed approach into their work.

12.30 – Paper

Dawn O'Brien

Client experience of helpful and hindering aspects of counselling for problematic anxiety

Objective: Anxiety represents one of the most frequently mentioned issues presented by clients who seek counselling and psychotherapy (Mental Health Reform, 2013). There exists a substantial amount of research into the effectiveness of different interventions for anxiety. Most of this research has been conducted within specific theoretical orientations. However, little is known about the ways in which clients and their therapists work together to combat anxiety, in the context of flexible integrative/pluralistic therapy that aims to be responsive to client preferences. The aim of this study was to explore client experiences of overcoming anxiety, in the context of receiving flexible integrative/pluralistic counselling.

Design: Semi-structured interviews were used to explore client experiences of what they found helpful and hindering in counselling for their problematic anxiety.

Methodology: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et.al.2009) was used to analysis interview transcripts from six participants who had received flexible integrative/pluralistic counselling.

Results: Four main themes emerged from the analysis: (1) the importance of the client's readiness and motivation to change. (2) The quality of the therapeutic alliance/alignment. (3)The importance of appropriate practical interventions/techniques, which helps the client manage their anxiety, allowing them to feel that they are in control of their anxiety, rather than their anxiety controlling them. (4) The finding that, no one intervention determines positive outcome rather it is a combination of strategies, specific to each individual that lead to clients overcoming their problematic anxiety.

Conclusion: The study highlighted what the participants found to be helpful and helpful and hindering in terms of counselling for anxiety. It would seem that, no one intervention determines positive outcome, but rather it is a combination of strategies, specific to each individual both inside and outside of counselling, that lead to clients overcoming their problematic anxiety.

12.30 – Paper

Grainne Ward

Art-making as an adjunct to pluralistic therapy – a case series study

Background: To date there has been no empirical studies conducted which explore the integration of art-therapy as an adjunct to talk therapy with Adult Children of Alcoholic ACOA clients.

Objective: This research project explored the helpfulness of an art-making adjunctive single-session intervention embedded within pluralistic counselling for (ACOA) clients. The four participants within this research study self-identified as ACOA's, and had experienced severe trauma as children.

Method: Qualitative and Quantitative data on the process and outcome of therapy were analysed using systematic team-based case study methodology.

Ethical Procedures: Approval of the research study protocol was given by the Ethics Committee of the IICP and the Hanly Centre. The clients were assured that their participation was voluntary and were free to discontinue taking part in the research at any time. The purpose of the research and the setting was discussed along with issues of confidentiality. To ensure the anonymity of clients, each client was allocated a numerical code along with choosing a pseudonym of their

choice. All computer files were password protected on my personal laptop. Likewise, all recorded sessions and interviews were locked away safely and will be destroyed as per the IIPC and Hanly Centre protocol. The clients were given a debriefing sheet following the interview and were advised of support systems available to them should they require such support e.g. Al-Anon groups.

Results/Analysis: The findings of this research study indicate that the use of an art-making adjunctive single-session intervention is a valuable method of accessing difficult memories for this cohort. Significant changes were noted following this intervention as the participants moved from a strong need for cognitive processing to help manage their problems to more deeply introspective emotional processing and goal reassessment. Other factors which contributed to these gains were the collaborative nature of the therapy, the therapeutic alliance, along with the use of symbolism and meaning making.

Conclusion: The findings of this research may be further developed in future research and help assimilate theory and inform best practice within this area of psychotherapy. Having an understanding of specific 'methods' such as the integration of art-therapy is an important agenda for research as this has significant implications for therapists in training generally, but particularly if they are being trained in specific areas of practice such as working with ACOAs. Additionally this is important when designing counselling programs that best fit the needs of these specific client groups.

14.00 – Paper

Patricia Joyce

A pilot randomised controlled trial of pluralistic counselling with young people who present with issues of addiction

Aim/Purpose: The pluralistic framework (Cooper & McLeod, 2011) is a relatively new approach that has shown acceptable outcomes when working with adult populations (Cooper et al., 2015). However, little research, to date, has explored its effectiveness with young people or those presenting with issues of addiction. The aim of this study was to pilot a trial of pluralistic practice, against treatment as usual, for young people with issues relating to addiction.

Design/Methodology: Participants were recruited from a young person-specific addiction counselling service in the North East of Scotland. A randomised controlled trial was conducted with 64 young people, who were allocated to either a pluralistic, or a counselling as usual, intervention. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to allow for methodological triangulation. YP-CORE and the SDQ were the primary outcome measures; with semi structured endpoint interviews allowing for a more detailed understanding of the young people's experience.

Results/Findings: The study was feasible to implement and no major ethical issues were identified. Recruitment rates were satisfactory. Preliminary outcome evidence indicated that there were no differences in outcomes between the pluralistic and counselling as usual groups. Qualitative evidence indicated that experiences of counselling were similar across the two conditions.

Research Limitations: As a small pilot study with a specific group of young people, the outcome findings from this study cannot be generalised. Additionally the similarities across the two conditions makes comparison between the two cohorts more problematic.

Conclusions/Implications (including implications to practice): It is feasible to trial a comparison of pluralistic counselling for young people with addictions against pastoral care as usual. However, in future studies, there is a need to differentiate more clearly between the interventions. Initial outcome evidence suggests that differences between the process and outcomes of these two interventions may be small. More research is needed on the particular clients for who a pluralistic approach may be more, or less, helpful.

14.00 – Paper

Grainne Ward

A case analysis of the facilitative processes associated with an art-therapy intervention in pluralistic counselling for an ACOA client

Background: This paper presents a systematic case-study analysis of an Adult Child of an Alcoholic (ACOA) client. The helpfulness of an art-making adjunctive single-session intervention embedded within pluralistic counselling for an ACOA client was explored.

Method: Qualitative and Quantitative data on the process and outcome of therapy were analyzed using systematic team-based case study methodology.

Ethical Procedures: Approval of the case study protocol was given by the Ethics Committee of the IICP. The client was assured that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to discontinue taking part in the research at any time. The purpose of the research and the setting was discussed along with issues of confidentiality. To ensure the anonymity of the clients they were allocated a numerical code along with choosing a pseudonym of their choice. The computer file was password protected on my personal laptop. Likewise, all recorded sessions and interviews were locked away safely and will be destroyed as per the IIPC protocol. The client was given a debriefing sheet following the interview and was advised of support systems available should they require such support e.g. Al-Anon groups.

Results/Analysis: A number of helpful processes associated with an art-making adjunctive single-session intervention were identified; significant gains were made in discovering an alternative way to access difficult memories and this facilitated meaning making. The client moved from a strong need for Cognitive Processing to help manage problems to more deeply introspective emotional processing and dialogue which in turn aided in goal reassessment. Other factors which contributed to these gains were the collaborative nature of the therapy, the therapeutic alliance, the client's cultural resources, along with the use of metaphor.

Conclusion: This case study endeavored to develop through collaboration an empirically grounded taxonomy of therapeutic tasks and methods which might be helpful to this cohort of clients. As these developed, it was possible to take each task and method in turn and identify the myriad of different client and therapist activities which might be undertaken to achieve each task. Having an understanding of specific 'methods' such as the integration of art-therapy is an important agenda for research as this has significant implications for therapists in training generally, but particularly if they are being trained in specific areas of practice such as working with ACOAs. Additionally this is important when designing counselling programs that best fit the needs of these specific client groups.

14.00 – Paper

Jill Whitfield

Personal development groups: A safer version of the outside world

Background: Personal Development groups form an integral part of Counsellor Training courses in Higher Education Institutes. Previous research has focussed on unstructured experiential groups but there has been little research carried out on semi-structured Personal Development Groups.

Aims: This study explored student experience of involvement in semi-structured Personal and Professional Development groups whilst undertaking a post-graduate diploma in Pluralistic Counselling.

Method: Semi Structured interviews were carried out with six former diploma students, now working as counsellors, about their experience of involvement in semi structured Personal and

Professional Development Groups during their training. The interviews were transcribed and analysed according to the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Ethical considerations: The two main ethical issues: maintaining confidentiality of participants and the possibility of participants re-visiting their PPD group experience causing distress were addressed. The School of Social and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Abertay gave ethical approval for this study.

Findings: The main finding was that the completion of learning tasks provided focus and acted as a catalyst for powerful learning experiences to take place in the group. The learning tasks encouraged everyone to contribute and also the semi-structured nature contributed to feeling safe in the PPD group. Other significant findings were the group process mirrored the counselling process, participants experienced changes including increasing self-awareness and the importance of organizational factors were identified.

Conclusion: These semi-structured Personal and Professional Development groups are compatible with a pluralistic approach to counsellor training. Potentially there may be application within other theoretical orientation counselling training programmes, particularly as the semi-structured nature contributes to providing a safe environment for personal development. This study has highlighted the need for further research.

14.30 – Paper

Hannah Ballingall

Counselling issues in access to higher education

The present research explored whether interventions are needed to improve access to higher education (H.E.) among people currently facing restrictions i.e. victims of bullying, people with mental health conditions etc. Scotland's participation rates in Higher Education (H.E.) are among the lowest in Europe, with only thirty-seven percent of school-leavers studying H.E. between 2016/17. Furthermore, previous research has found up to 19,640 young people between eleven to fifteen years of age regularly miss school because of bullying, having a severe impact on their learning, social development and mental wellbeing. Thematic analysis of one-hundred and fifty-five open questionnaires and twelve follow-up semi-structured interviews was carried out. A range of recurring themes and subthemes were identified including: lack of school support; bullying; health issues; and family issues. The findings revealed people overall agree that schools should implement mental health support for pupils e.g. counselling, develop better anti-bullying strategies, and have more equal treatment of pupils of all abilities with regards to school encouragement and motivation to do well. It was concluded that development of these interventions may improve access to H.E. in Scotland by creating more equal opportunities for those currently restricted from H.E. because of bullying, health conditions etc.

14.30 – Paper

Dorothy Ingram

A pluralistic approach to group counselling for young people

This paper draws on experiences in working with young people in Ireland, in both one-to-one and group counselling settings. The focus will be on how pluralistic principles and procedures can be adapted to meet the needs of this client population, in ways that facilitate active involvement of both clients and parents, with a particular emphasis on the use of creativity and playfulness to enable shared decision-making and goal-setting within groups.

14.30 – Paper

Siobhan Quinn

Making sense of the emotional impact of early parental loss with an adolescent girl presenting with suicidal ideation, self-harm and eating disorders

Background: The loss of a parent in childhood is a traumatic experience that can lead to psychological problems throughout the child's development into adolescence and adulthood, including dissociative symptoms, self-harm, suicidal ideation and eating disorders.

Methods: A pragmatic case study approach is used to provide an account of pluralistic therapy with an adolescent girl, aged 17 years, who presented with self-harm, suicidal thoughts, disordered eating behaviours and early childhood parental loss. Data was collected through qualitative and quantitative measures along with routine outcome monitoring procedures implemented at the organisation where the author was employed as a psychotherapist. A change interview was conducted with the client two months after therapy ended.

Ethical procedures: Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee at the Institute of Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy, Dublin. The client gave full permission for this case to be discussed in this study. The client was invited to read a copy of the case study and asked to make any necessary alterations to ensure accuracy and confidentiality.

Results: The information from the change interview pointed towards a substantial shift in the client by the end of therapy, in the direction of a life that was no longer dominated by self-harm, suicidal ideation and disordered eating behaviours. The client attributed these changes to various aspects of the pluralistic framework used in therapy rather than other factors. The client reported that the therapy outcome had been successful and a positive experience.

Conclusions: The findings of this case study are discussed in terms of the use of a pluralistic approach with adolescent clients who have experienced early parental loss.

15.00 – Paper

Catriona Kearns, Marcella Finnerty and John McLeod

Pluralistic group therapy for anxious children: a waiting list management strategy

Aim: The aim of this study was to evaluate a pilot pluralistic group therapy waiting list management strategy for anxious children. Two areas were examined: a) the groups efficacy as an approach for managing waiting lists for child therapy; and b) the impact of the group in terms of clinical outcomes.

Method: Data was gathered over an eighteen-month period. Clinical outcomes in terms of SDQ and CORS for children who attended the pilot groups were analysed using SPSS version 25. Rates of response in terms of waiting list management were determined based on parental desire for further therapy upon completion of the group. A follow-up change interview took place with one parent.

Results: 86% of children responded to group therapy and did not require further treatment. Clinical improvements were evident on the results of the SDQ and Child and Parent version of the CORS.

Conclusions: Results of the pilot indicate that Pluralistic Group Therapy for Anxious Children is a useful way to manage waiting lists for child therapy. Not all children responded to step one, therefore further research into the helpful and unhelpful aspects of the group is warranted.

15.00 – Paper

Sally Lumsdaine

Evaluating pluralistic training: what makes a good counselling course?

Background/Rationale: Ensuring that courses are fit for purpose and that students are ready for work when they graduate is of prime importance to universities. Preparing for this is partly about listening and responding to the current student voice and within Abertay University every effort is made to communicate in an effective way with students so that they can get the most from, and enjoy the student experience. However another important voice is that of graduates who can reflect on their time at university and help evidence the on-going impact of study.

In an effort to evaluate the counselling courses run at Abertay University a study was undertaken where students from previous postgraduate courses were surveyed. This study tracked student employment destinations and explored perceptions around employability and the wider benefits of studying the counselling curriculum.

Method: Student registry information, from 2000 onwards, was collected. From this, 420 graduates were emailed and invited to complete a survey relating to the relevance and benefit of aspects of the post-graduate curriculum. Participant response rate was approximately 50%. Using the data gathered from analysis of the 192 responses, the link between course content and benefits to employability in the field and beyond was explored.

Results: The results demonstrated the breadth and depth of employment undertaken following graduation. Just over 90% of respondents continued to use the skills and knowledge gained either by working as a counsellor or by using embedded counselling skills within their work. A high percentage of respondents (77.78%) believed that the course(s) studied enhanced employability with an even higher number (91.62%) feeling that studying counselling helped them in their working life in general. What was also evident was that graduates perceived that the course did more than help with employment as nearly 92% of respondents indicated that the skills and knowledge gained helped them in their day to day life.

Conclusion: The results of this analysis demonstrated the on-going benefits of studying counselling both in relation to the personal and professional lives' of graduates. The results will be discussed and explored in more depth within the presentation.

15.00 – Paper

Teresa McKenna

A pluralistic approach in the treatment of Bipolar Disorder: the case of Catherine

Background: The purpose of this case study is to show a successful use of the Pluralism approach with a bipolar disorder client who is currently non medicated and experiencing inter-mitten depression.

Methods: A pragmatic case design was applied based on appropriate reflexivity and reflecting on previous research of Bipolar disorder, and on theories and interventions proposed for effective action towards change for the client. The effectiveness of the approach being documented in this case study can be verified by replication of outcomes across similar bipolar disorder cases and this study provides sufficient data for clear causal explanations to be drawn as to how this approach has generated change.

Ethical Procedures: Approval of the case study protocol was given by the Ethics Committee of the IICP. The purpose of the research, voluntary participation and freedom to discontinue, confidentiality, anonymity were discussed and applied. All documentation and recordings were secured and will be destroyed as per the IIPC protocol. The client was given a debriefing sheet following the interview.

Results: Functioning, risk, wellbeing and problems were assessed throughout the study with CORE-OM, HAT and a change interview utilised to collaborate the data findings on reliable change and improvement. The case followed a Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design (HSCED) to

contrast the interpretations of the case in terms of whether the therapy was effective (affirmative) or not affective (septic) in regards to the clients view of change.

Discussion: This case study highlights that a pluralism practice with Bipolar Disorder clients is possible to successfully aid with stagnated functioning and bring awareness of interpersonal and communicative difficulties and to elevate self worth and confidence in abilities. In conceptualising this work through a Pluralistic approach it became clear that openness be maintained to incorporate theories and models to educate around the underlining bipolar symptoms. By emphasising the link between moods and stressful life events, and interpersonal difficulties this enabled developing better coping mechanisms. Developing a relationship that was authentic and healing was immensely important to the work in order to repair some of the damage that had developed through previous attachment patterns.

Conclusion: This case study may be of interest to inform practice for other counsellors/psychotherapists to showcase a credible and viable pluralism approach of working with bipolar clients to help find their way in functioning and managing life without medication.



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