

25th Annual ACAT Conference 2019 "Integrating Trauma Developments into CAT"

A hugely successful, and oversubscribed, ACAT Conference set out to challenge the CAT community into thinking about how we integrate the more recent developments within the field of trauma into our thinking and practice. With the heightened understanding and recognition of trauma and the need for support, interventions and services to enable a narrative that articulates this experience, impact and recovery, it was timely that ACAT held a national conference focusing specifically on this theme. Expertly choreographed and delivered by organisers Clive Turpin, Andrea Daykin, Mandy Wildman, with invaluable support from the ACAT staff team, the 25th national conference served up a treat of a day – a day for exploration and reflection.

The *Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF)* presented by

one of its leading exponents, Lucy Johnstone, was a powerful start to the day. Developed by clinicians and service user campaigners, and being strongly endorsed by the British Psychological Society, the model looks to offer a radically new perspective on why people experience mental distress – a model that purposefully positions itself as an alternative to the more traditional models based on psychiatric diagnosis.

"Signs and symptoms" in this framework tries to understand how we make sense of these difficult experiences and how messages from wider society can increase our feelings of shame, self-blame, isolation, fear and guilt.

Not surprisingly, the PTMF presents its own perceptions and interpretations of power and potential threat to reckon with. There was much excitement,

possibly even relief, that here was a model that spoke to the "trans-diagnostic" world of the CAT therapist, but in the later sections of the day, in reflective groups set aside to reflect on some of the presentations and discussions, the mood may have been less embracing, and more curious in searching for reflective tolerance – of standing in the spaces to embrace and welcome clinicians from both camps. It was very welcome as a reminder that the CAT thinking is open and tolerant and willingly receptive to hear clinicians from all camps and listen to them through its dialogic ears.

Other speakers on the day helped reinforce the core aims and objectives of the day, sharing understandings about trauma that often are underplayed or dismissed. Joy Schaverien, a Jungian Analyst spoke about *'Boarding School Syndrome: The Psychological Trauma*

The Aims and Scope of Reformulation

Reformulation is committed to upholding a broadly based view of the Cognitive Analytic approach and developments within CAT.

Reformulation considers articles on CAT practice and theory, as well as debates, letters, poems, book reviews, art works and adverts relevant to CAT. Contributions from people who are in or who have had CAT are particularly welcome.

Views expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the personal views of the editors or ACAT.

Editors encourage exchange and debate between differing points of view and for this reason invite readers to respond to articles by writing letters to the Editors with a view to publication.

Submission

Articles should be submitted electronically via ACAT to reformulation@acat.me.uk. Articles are only accepted at the discretion of the editors. The Editors cannot guarantee that a manuscript accepted for publication will be published in any particular issue of the Journal.

Articles should be between 250 and 2500 words.

of 'Privileged Children.' and helped us all think carefully about whether we take notice when clients might talk about their early experiences of separation and loss brought about through the boarding school system. She asks us to consider whether our own prejudices might influence our offer of support, as we might fail to acknowledge trauma, blinded by our own perceptions of privilege, whilst providing a perspective of the privileged and powerful in our society, and a consideration of how their earlier experiences may currently influence decisions in parliamentary corridors. These reflections through a CAT informed lens, see how societal reciprocal role procedures come to perpetuate quiet trauma of the inner world. Such analytic insights invite us to be more with our clients' early experiences.

Tim Sheard helped us connect mind and body. In his talk *'Moving CAT beyond its identification with the observing eye: Does working with*

developmental trauma confront us with a need to integrate embodiment into CAT?', Tim brought to life the need for us to be thinking about what might be going on in the space between and within – and how this can be, and needs to be, noticed physically; so often the only means of communication within the context of trauma.

Lastly Rhona Brown brought us something of the bigger picture. *'Traversing together or falling apart: remaining 'alongside' in CAT in a troubled world'* was a talk that gave the permission that might have been missing earlier in the day – permission for things to be "unfinalized". In a presentation filled with questions about how we see the self and the other, and our capacity for marginalising the outsider, this came across as a very honest way of ending the day – an embracing of curiosity.

Considerable numbers in attendance generated a quorate for the AGM, making it possible

for our chair, Alison Jenaway, to work her way swiftly and efficiently through the agenda of nominations of officers, reports and further motions to ensure robust participation and an active involvement of the membership. Gone is our motto *"Understanding leads to Change."* Can you think of a better one? Answers on a postcard!

The day wrapped up with reflective groups *"to get deeper into questions, thoughts, feelings and issues that arise from presentations"* and the pensive plenary leaving us food for further thought.

And we end with a huge heartfelt thanks to the conference organisers for delivering a fascinating conference, and one that might really support the CAT community in thinking about where we position ourselves and our practice in these interesting times.

Authors wishing to submit an article of particular theoretical or research interest longer than this maximum of 2500 words are advised to contact the editors to discuss the proposed topic beforehand.

The editors are happy to provide more detailed guidance in this situation. Letters and book reviews should not normally exceed 1000 words. If substantial clinical material is used, it should be fully anonymised and signed consent forms must be submitted with the article which demonstrate that the client (or their proxy, in the case of someone too impaired to give informed consent) from whom the material is drawn, has read and agreed the article.

All material submitted to the journal will be assessed. Submissions will go out to peer review by two reviewers from the editorial board. These reviewers will either be an expert in that particular field or unfamiliar with that particular field so able to highlight how accessible the content is. The reviewers will submit their opinion to the editors and where appropriate, liaise with the authors about any changes. The editors retain the responsibility whether to accept or reject the final state of the article. Editors also reserve the right to cut the length of articles.

If you would like to talk through your ideas, please email the editors: reformulation@acat.me.uk