

development. Immersing into an area for exploring, individually, in small groups and as a whole group is a real benefit. There is more time and the opportunity of multiple positions to explore things from, which can present plenty of challenges. Feedback sessions – individually and with small peer groups are incorporated as a helpful space to reflect and learn.

The course promotes research and involves establishing small research project groups. This is a great opportunity to share different experiences of research, demystify some aspects and help it feel more accessible. Each project gets presented to the whole group.

After such a full-on day, how people use the space afterwards varies hugely with many taking long baths and early nights. I was strongly drawn to staying up late talking and thinking about what we'd experienced in the day and trying to make sense of some of the 'bumps'. It became a theme of not going to bed on the same day that I awoke, and

there seemed to be no difficulty in recruiting others to join me.

Some powerful experiences can occur on a residential and the group can be a strong activator and container. For me, I encountered a few things that took time to settle before I was able to get a better sense of what had happened, many aspects of which are unlikely to have been as enriching as they were without friends and peers in the cohort.

The training really tunes you into the subtleties of things, underlying aspects and the impact of experiences – exploring the simplicity and complexity of encounters. The focus throughout the training is connecting more with what has shaped us and how this informs who we are as therapists and how we integrate this to our practise. This approach is consolidated further by two periods of personal therapy, one to be CAT and the other can be something else, the latter option alone is enriching.

A frequent question that is asked is how does the psychotherapy training differ from practitioner training, and I come back to the same thing – it's more involving, more is asked and required of you. It's immersive: I was thinking more; feeling more; and trying to integrate all of the encounters. I undertook the training to become a better therapist and finished it feeling exactly that, I felt more integrated personally and as a therapist. I was more confident in my abilities to trust myself, others and in the process of a shared journey of understanding.

If you're considering IRRAPT, why not come along to one of the fundraising CPD events and workshops that'll be put on across the country by Hilary Beard and IRRAPT graduates. Keep checking the ACAT site.

<https://www.acat.me.uk/page/cat+psychotherapy+training>

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## ICATA View From The Floor

Mary-Clare Wilson-Verrall

Colleagues came from around the globe in June 2019 for a conference showcasing CAT's diversity and international growth. "*Bella Italia*" was the location, and the city of Ferrara in Emilia Romagna was hot, hot, hot. The temperature was unusually high and the atmosphere sultry, but the real heat came in the discussions: the sharing, the companionship and the soaring degrees of generosity of our hosts.

The theme of the ICATA conference 2019 was on *Exploring and integrating dialogues in CAT*. Everyone who

attended took the chance to maximise on dialogue and the all-round interactivity. It was a fertile ground for networking among international practitioners/therapists from fifteen countries, sharing contrasting experiences and ideas all underpinned with the familiarity of our shared CAT backgrounds. Also underpinned by a few days in the wonderful setting of Ferrara – sharing food and Prosecco!

The pre-conference workshop by Mikael Leiman, *Reformulation*

*on the fly: using Dialogical sequence analysis as a focusing tool in dialogue*, explored his supervisory technique of clinicians role-playing their clients. This then led to a very moving experience when a member of the audience came forward to talk about a live encounter in her life – choosing to draw on personal experience of loss and separation. Leiman gave voice to Bakhtin, exploring how important things come back in dialogue. "*The word wants to be heard*," he reminded us – noting that clients never start in unimportant places and that words have power.

Echoing this, the official conference opening involved a visit from author Ali Smith, whose novel *How to Be Both* is set in Ferrara. We heard extracts in English and Italian. These captured the dialogue of the character George, who is struggling to come to terms with the sudden death of her mother. Ali Smith spoke about the way grief “takes you apart and puts you back together again,” bringing the conversation perceptively around how narratives and our stories are not fixed: participation changes our stories when we are heard and understood by a witnessing other. How resonant for CAT people!

Steve Potter’s Saturday plenary *Why transference matters in CAT* gave a detailed review of what goes on dialogically in the transference. Reformulation was explained as a literal re-storying and re-wording - played out in the dialogues of the therapy room. Dialogue brings with it complex occurrences of that transference and through it we gained valuable insights into the specific CAT tools of this key topic.

Alison Jenaway and Carol Gregory presented an interactive and enjoyable workshop, drawing on ideas from Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy in CAT. What might this add to CAT practice? We practised on our own states of mind. We closed our eyes to see how we felt when focusing on our procedures. We had to get another part of ourselves to step back and ask questions: how did the first part

think it was helpful - and for how long had it been playing its role? It was an unusual undertaking and felt really empowering, helping continue the conference theme of dialogue with the self.

Our excellent hosts, the Italian Association of Cognitive Analytic Therapy, brought us a wealth of opportunities for dialogue about dialogue. There was an interesting poster exhibition. The conference also allowed for plenty more innovative approaches to CAT being undertaken by practitioners in different countries. Vicky Petratos (UK) offered a stimulating workshop introducing the *House of Self States (HOSS)*, [published in this current edition of *Reformulation – Ed.*] as a new creative mapping structure that develops how we can be with, and connect to, the unbridgeable parts of ourselves and others. In this model, the house is the containing structure and the housemates are Self States. When the isolated house mates begin to talk to each other from the different floors of the house then dialogue helps integration. We were tasked to apply this to a chosen fairy tale and all talked enthusiastically afterwards, keen to learn more and to use the tool ourselves.

A workshop delivered by Carlos Chiclana and Esther Gimeno (Spain) talked about integrating spirituality in CAT, enlightening us on the context of CAT in religiously active communities and also the difficulties in

integrating CAT with spirituality and religion. Can we improve CAT through a recognition of our clients’ and our own spirituality, religion and culture? As we discussed the pros and cons, we ended up considering as therapists whether our patients might struggle to bring what is spiritually important to them if we are less in touch with spirituality ourselves.

There were chances across the sessions and plenaries to talk through the essentials of CAT. One plenary on the final day got us to focus on the relative potential of different lengths of CAT sessions - as a single extended session, as 6-8 sessions, and long-term CAT, as well as the typical 16-24 session. We talked about what happens in the middle of therapy, such as learning to be with another, and helping discover another person’s self by using yourself.

These are just a few of the sessions I was lucky enough to attend - there were many others and I wished I could have gone to all of them. The warm generosity of our hosts included a delicious conference dinner with playful entertainments. I got to meet fellow colleagues from around the globe, got to know people better who I’ve worked or studied with, and got to enjoy dedicated time focused entirely on CAT... and the culinary marvels of Ferrara.

Mary-Clare Wilson-Verrall

## Call for Papers

**Deadline for submissions for consideration for Reformulation Summer 2020: 7th May 2020**

Articles or items for submission on any aspect of CAT (between 250 and 2,000 words) should be submitted electronically via ACAT to [reformulation@acat.me.uk](mailto:reformulation@acat.me.uk). Further guidance regarding submissions can be found at: <https://www.acat.me.uk/page/aims+and+scope+of+reformulation>