



Edition 2 2018/19

Institute Times

The Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy

MIP
Manchester
Institute for
Psychotherapy

Welcome to the second edition of the new Institute Times!

The forerunner to this new publication was the "Lifestream" magazine that MIP first published in 1994. It ran for eight editions and was hugely successful.

The Lifestream magazine contained many articles, poems, cartoons, all connected with the world of psychotherapy, counselling and personal growth. The articles ranged from academic articles to popularised articles and moving poems, cartoons etc. In fact, as I look through the past Lifestream magazine editions I can see that there are many moving articles of a personal nature, as well as articles from a theoretical standpoint. I am touched when I read these past contributions and especially when I remember the people who wrote them.

The first edition was over 20 years ago and many of the contributors have passed on to new pastures, and I personally have lost contact with many of these names, though I remember the connection and interaction I had with them at an emotional and heartfelt level.

They are the historical figures that make up the fabric of our Institute to what we are today. The Institute was called the Lifestream Centre from 1988 to 1993 until we changed the name in March 1993 to the Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy.

The name "Lifestream" has always held a place in my heart, as the name means to me that we are all involved in the "stream of life" which is continually changing and flowing within our very existence.

We will be publishing the magazine twice a year, September and March and the copy date will be four weeks before printing.

The last edition of the Institute Times was in 2016 and I had planned to do the second edition in 2017 though time seems to have flown!

We published 250 copies which were soon distributed and we had favourable comments in the feedback. Therefore, we decided this year to publish, though late in time, our second edition of the Institute Times.

As the publication evolves I will be publishing a directory of psychotherapy and counsellors so if any of you wish to be included in this directory please let me know at bob@mcpt.co.uk.

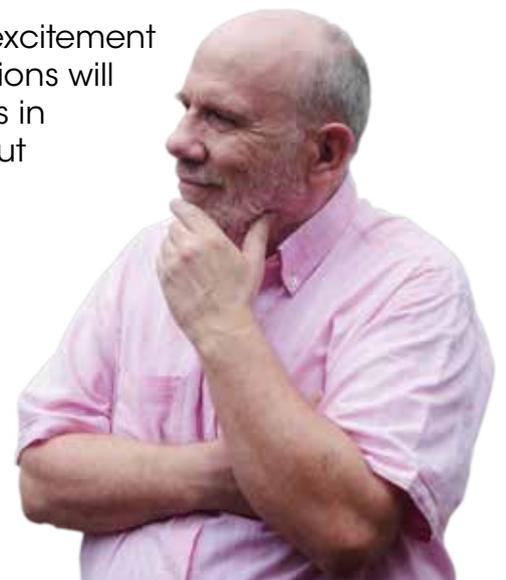
Also, from the next edition I will be taking advertisements for people who may wish to advertise their practice, trainings and any courses that they offer. Once again please contact us for prices, etc, to do with advertisements.

In conclusion, the publication of this edition has filled me with excitement and joy with regards to my imaginations of how future publications will evolve. Throughout the magazine you will see stories and events in people's lives that demonstrates change and growth throughout their therapeutic journeys.

MIP has a philosophy of integrative growth and change that hopefully will touch the hearts and minds of contributors and readers alike.

Bob Cooke

Bob Cooke
September 2018



Defence Mechanisms - by Cath Townley, 2017

When we were children we all had to find
Ways to protect ourselves from perceived unkind
Some of us fought with swords, we were rebels
Others were scared and withdrew from all troubles
The fighters amongst us would never be missed
We took on the world with our feet and our fists
And those who retreated became really small
And hid themselves away behind a wall
The world was too scary for them to face
And they trusted no-one in the human race.
They built their walls higher so they couldn't be seen
While the fighters had no boundaries, full of rage, they were mean
And despite that the two of them were not the same,
They both grew up with fear and shame
Not fitting in, scared of being left
Feeling abandoned and totally bereft
Into adulthood both of them grew
Reinforcing behaviours that each of them knew
Neither understanding why relationships failed
Why some over-adapted, while the others just bailed
Then with awareness they began to see how
Their defences were historic, not relevant to the here and now
They took down their walls and laid their swords on the ground
And let go of the patterns which had kept them bound
But under stress they revert back to the roles they once played
They get scared, or angry at having been betrayed
And this is the time they don't need to be condemned
For this is when both of them most need to mend
So when you feel unsafe and go into hiding
And don't understand why I come out fighting
Let's remember those children, that we once were
And the lengths we would go to, to feel secure
And rubber-banding to the past will slowly subside
As we learn to live harmoniously, side by side

Joy is the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright. Great delight. Keen pleasure. Elation. An expression or display of glad feeling. A state of happiness or felicity.

This is how I define joy today. What a laugh when I think of how far removed it is from my life a few years ago. Felicity was a girl's name and the only keen pleasure was smoking crack and that glad feeling was fleeting. I lived in fear, any confidence was noisy – a bravado covering a constant state of inner fear. That nothing would be alright. Fear of being found out, fear of not having enough money, fear of losing my 2 children, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of love, fear of life. The only thing I didn't fear was death. No, I did not know joy.

Yes, I could tell you lots about joylessness and despair. We all have our own personal rock bottoms, hells, nightmares, dark dungeons so I won't bore you with the details other than chronic drug addiction led to all sorts and devastated those around me.

I wasn't born that way. I was loved (for the first year) then given away. An early childhood attempt to make sense of the suffering of separation is shame – there's something wrong with me. As I grew up that shame clouded the bundle of joy I had been – my SPIRIT (true joy is divine in its origin) diminishing as I took on negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours from my primary caregivers. Taking on roles, people, addictions – anything to soothe, anything to connect, anything to feel safe and secure. Our survival depends on it. Trauma (small t or big T) needs soothing. If we don't have anyone to support us and help us heal our acute childhood experiences (ACE) then we find our own ways to make it feel better. Addiction is a soothing, whatever the flavour of addiction is – food, fantasy, sex, stealing, substances, lying, busyness, shopping. Addiction strips away anything joyful. It creates a disconnect with self and others. So how to get connected?....

Replace fear with faith, a fundamental foundation of recovery from addiction. Having faith and the spiritual principles of honesty, open mindedness and willingness catapult us into what A.A. call the fourth dimension or the sunlight of the spirit. This is my experience. This is where I know joy is. Joy is in the daily appreciation of the tiny and tremendous, gratitude for the life lived.

Joy is in making the heart sing. Make a list and you may find snippets somewhere. My moments of joy this last month: belly laughter being daft with friends and colleagues, looking after and playing with rescued animals, running around with my Bedlington, Bowie, regular injections of music including a Patti Smith gig with my step parents and live Thai rendition of Oasis' "Stand By Me", goddess dancing in the Himalayas, protesting for a Free Tibet, white water rafting down the Ganges, drinking virgin pina colodas watching a Goan sunset with my brilliant witchy girlfriend, being coated in luminous bodypaint raving til dawn, sitting in wind and sunshine on Howarth moors, seeing my son laugh, remembering my daughter's "fuck that shit man" phrase, reading Wuthering Heights (again), eating delicious vegan food, tasting my first batch of homemade kombucha, swimming in a cold river with Bowie, sitting on a huge tree trunk in ancient woods, bat watching snuggled up with an old boyfriend, yelling - hands free - on the back of a bike, dancing with strangers, watching faces soften, smiles, sweetness, silliness, sassiness.

Children find one of four main ways to build their own emotional and spiritual resilience in childhood: creativity, nature, animals and sport. What are you doing today to build your resilience and bring you joy? What lit you up as a child will light you up today. Choice is yours. Choose joy.

Em Ferguson
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Something new & better this Ramadan - Yasmin Dewan

Some people believe knowledge is power, and indeed, it was only when Einstein declared, "Knowledge is limited, it is imagination that encircles the world", that many began to re-evaluate this original premise.

The genius, Einstein, also stated, "The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that first created them", which begs the question, "Given the scale of some of our global issues, where on earth do we begin?"

The answer lies in the unconscious mind, believe it or not, and in the unleashing of our intuition.

Millions of years ago, before humans developed the use of intellect, we possessed a survival instinct so powerful it enabled us to become the most successful species on the planet. As with all other creatures in the animal kingdom, we had a heightened sense of perception, a sixth sense, if you like, completely intangible, nothing to do with logic or facts, yet totally real, fail-safe in operation and proving vital to the success of our everyday lives.

With the passing of time and the development of human intellect, we have now gone so far the other way, we no longer seem to show faith in, or even value, anything other than the blatantly obvious, the totally factual, the perfectly visible and the efficiently logical. As sad as it is real, the power of our intuition has simply been lost through abject neglect and total lack of use over time.....yet this capacity is still available to us, today, if only we would choose to use it.

We do all, occasionally, manage to use it, albeit unwittingly and generally, when we do, we tend to write these moments of insight and genius off as mere coincidences or the odd stroke of luck, simply because we cannot explain them. Just imagine, though, what life might be like if we were able to tap into this treasure trove at any time and so live a very deliberate life instead of an accidental one.

Our unconscious mind creates everything in our life based on the messages and information we send it. Starting from as early as in the womb, into birth, through our childhood and teenage years, then into adulthood and beyond, we collect information like sponges and store it, filing it all away in our subconscious mind. How much of that collection or clutter, though, proves to be of real, purposeful use? Most of it just gets in the way of clear thinking.

90% of our mind is where the unconscious or subconscious lies: it regulates everything our body needs so it can function healthily, such as blood flow, heart action, lung capacity, liver function, cell reproduction and everything else that is completely outside of our awareness. This part of the mind, the right brain, is also the home of our imagination, where all our emotions, experiences, memories, actions and reactions can be found - our treasure trove of power and the part we are able to access whilst daydreaming or when asleep. The conscious mind is the bit we use whilst awake and what a good job it is, too, that we can leave those all-important bodily functions to their own devices or we would be totally exhausted having to consciously think through every action ourselves!

The other 10% is the home of our left brain - excellent at helping us make decisions, but riddled with tightly compact beta waves bombarding our brain, doing their utmost to keep us in condition, red-alert. Left brain allows us to work through things logically and maintain order and has generally been the approach taught to us in solving our problems. Our childhood conditioning and schooling, together with entering adulthood and the world of work, means we are highly adept at using our left brain. Its importance and reliance on language and facts cannot be underestimated, however, the left brain is limited and does not give us access to our imagination.

The problem is that we face our most challenging times during our waking hours, when involved in business, family matters, relationship issues and the like. Very much left-brain driven, this is when our conscious mind is guiding the way, which is a real pity given we now know that we are only accessing around 10% of the mind here. Somehow, we must find a way to also access the other 90% at these times so that we achieve greater creativity and, ultimately, whole-brain thinking, in order to operate smarter, not harder, and, hence, find the powerful solutions we need.

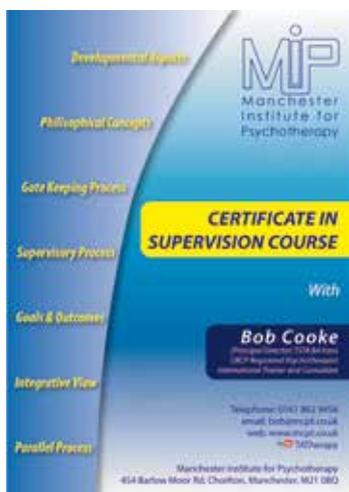
To access the unconscious, we need to tap into that imaginative, intuitive side, as opposed to the logical, systematic left brain. The messages you send to the former are essentially your thoughts, beliefs and actions – all stored away over years of time, neatly or otherwise, yet quite accessible, if we only knew how to reach into them and re-open the files. All our answers lie here.....and that is all your intuition is – that strange feeling you have when you can sense something is wrong, or when you know something is right – that’s because you have indeed experienced something like it before. You simply stored the earlier sensation away and forgot all about it! It’s just that now, experiencing something similar, you don’t know, or are unable to explain, where the hunch is coming from – but it is most definitely real, totally outside the realms of reason and logic, yet likely to be the very answer you are looking for!

The dictionary definition of intuition is “quick and ready insight”. It comes from the Latin word, “intueri” which means “to see within”. It is a way of knowing or sensing the truth without knowing how or why – it has no explanation – it just is. It is that lovely, blissful feeling we find during times of complete relaxation, when our right brain is fully engaged (usually on the edge of sleep and all seems perfect in our world) that our best ideas surface. Have you not found that all such gems come to us upon waking or when we are just about to fall asleep? If only it could always be like that! It most certainly can – this is what we call being in alpha state – completely free of concern and living totally purposeful lives – something our doctors need to start advocating instead of prescribing Prozac!

We all have intuition – we are all born with it. We used it as children, going on gut feel, but as we grew older, we were taught to reason and rationalise and, as our minds developed into adulthood, ironically, we lost touch with our greatest gift. We have since ignored it, cast it aside and have now completely forgotten how to use it! Is it any wonder then, that we can never find it when we need it most?

Just like any other under-used muscle, your intuition can be strengthened and exercised back into shape in just 28 days!and it is through rediscovering this amazing capacity that we can all reinvent ourselves, our teams, our communities, our organisations, even our world, if we are really serious about wanting to be, do and have something new and better – so go on, let’s see what you can find in yourself this Ramadan!

What’s on at MIP?

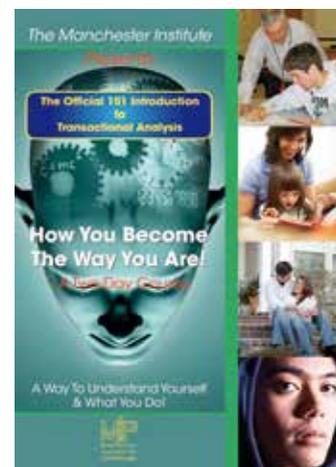


Certificate in Supervision

The word has many meanings. It means to oversee and holds some connotations of authority and a hierarchical form of learning. It is used in counselling and psychotherapy in the medical and nursing fields in social work and in aspects of teaching and general care of others. It implies a code of conduct and it carries an element of protection and safety in its overall application.

How You Become The Way You Are

Completion of this course gives you the Official 101 Certificate and is a pre-requisite to enrolment on the 4 year Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy Course.



What makes a Competent Psychotherapist?

Bob Cooke, TSTA

How does one develop a sense of professional identity?

As a trainer of Psychotherapists for the last decade I have often asked myself the above questions, indeed I have found myself often looking at whole process from novice to seasoned practitioner. I have felt like a pilot or helicopter rising above the "Maze" below and seeing the roots from beginning to end, a root which often has many twists and turns before the person works out their way through to the open land.

As a trainee myself in the middle 1980 I remember what it was like to enter into the "Maze" for the first time, to get lost and to go down many false trails before finding my way through to the day light.

Certainly, for me, it was a journey of many turns, frustrations, and excitements. It was a life changing journey, which saw many false dawns and dawning sunsets on the road to fulfilling my visions.

One thing which was figure for me, was that there was never one definitive "End" but a series of "Ends" and beginnings which has led me to where I am today, an experienced therapist, trainer, supervisor and overall director of a well respected Psychotherapy Institute.

Within the journey I have learnt to savour my triumphs and look forward to evolving challenges, frustrations and satisfactions that lie ahead. One truth, however, that I have learnt is the more of the journey that I travel down the less I seem to know!

So what make a competent therapist?

There are many qualities I believe that make a successful Psychotherapist, however I believe the most important is surely that you have an awareness of yourself, and an insight into not only your positive qualities, but also the more dark sides of your personality.

It is the courageous and compassionate you that needs to visit these dark places with willingness for learning, change and acceptance if need be. The willingness to "meet" you and to integrate the many qualities of you will be of a prime importance in the understanding of the self. It is only then that you can really be able to guide other to where they need to go in the service of healing and growth.

We need the psychotherapist to develop a robustness which will mean that we can face not only our internal demons, but the ogres which are clients will present us with. We must also learn to deal with our puppet masters of the past, we will need to reach out, with help, to cut the strings that bind us and to really be in control of our own destinies.

Only if we achieve the above will we truly be able to help our clients, otherwise we will be like the signal man directing the tired passengers onto another familiar, well worn route on which they have so often travelled before!



One tip here in achieving the "Robustness" and strength you need is to dig deep into your reserves and trust the process. Something I personally found very hard to do within my own journey in fact it seemed like an impossibility for me to achieve mainly because I had not found the trust in myself.

Indeed it was only by learning that other people had trust in me that I really learnt and understood, perhaps for the first time, my own vulnerabilities and fragility. It was through others belief in me that I began to really believe in myself and to find my own courage to go where I needed to go.

Other essential qualities which makes the successful psychotherapist stand out from others is the quality to take risks and to persevere.

An example to illustrate this is the following story:

Once upon a time there were two men who lived on a barren, desolate, and Cold Island, they were the only humans on the island and consequently were lonely and very unhappy.

The two men spent most of their waking time looking out at the nearest island, across the sea. The island across the sea, seemed to them to be a "fun" island, because if they strain their eyes they could just about see the people on the island enjoying themselves and having fun.

The two men yearned to be on that island instead of their own cold, barren island. This seemed impossible to them as they could not swim and there were no boats on their island to enable them to cross the waters. So they seemed destined to live out their existence on their desolate island.

Then one day, to their amazement, they woke up to find that the water between the two islands had frozen over and they could see a route across to the other island. Hardly concealing their excitement they decided, cautiously, to make their way across to the other island where they could see people still enjoying themselves and having fun.

However about half way across the water the ice below them began to crack and they both fell into the freezing water, they managed to climb out exhausted, but safely onto the ice which just about held their weight.

Freezing and scared they debated with each other whether to go back or to continue across the ice to the "fun" island. One of the men decided to go back, as he was too scared to take the risk to attempt to get to the island. The other man decided to take the risk and with caution he began to make his way across the ice. He often fell into the freezing water, but managed to scramble out and mark the ice with a paint marker that he happened to have with him this way he managed to find his way safely across to the island of his dreams.

After making it to the island he was greeted by friendly faces and given lots of goodies, it was a wonderful feeling and after a while he had almost forgotten his miserable life on the other island across the ice. Occasionally though he would sit on the shores of his new island and look back over to the desolate island which used to be his home, he would think of his friend who had gone back and he thanked his lucky stars that he had somehow managed to find the courage and perseverance to have continued over the ice in the pursuit of his dreams.

This story illustrates the need for risk taking and perseverance in the pursuit of your own successes. To me these qualities will be needed to become a successful therapist.

Turning to look at how the trainee develops a sense of professional identity it is imperative to realise that if the trainee does not learn a sense of who they are, how can they ever really establish their own professional identity?

The trainee's professional role is shaped by many features within the process of training indeed over the period of training to be a psychotherapist we will need to be committed and motivated to achieve our goals as well as to be open to learn and debate. We will also need to learn the skills needed to give us a model and structure of how to be a therapist that we want to be, though most importantly we will need to allow ourselves to be truly truthful to ourselves within the whole process, and not to lose ourselves within the therapy models and techniques, that gives us a way into understanding the many facets of the human personality.

Certainly we should not forget that every new development in psychotherapy theory or methodologies will offer the practitioner a fresh way of attempting to communicate with the very people that we are trying to help and understand. Therefore it is the duty of every psychotherapist to utilise every new theory or model in the service of the client.

This for me is where the theory and the practice meets within the spaces and moments of the human encounter between the client and therapist.

Therapeutic Support

Yasmin Dewan

When I was asked to give a talk on the topic of Therapeutic Support at last year's Asylum Conference in June, I was immediately, and quite obviously, drawn to considering my role as a psychotherapist when compiling my notes. In particular, I thought about considering the specific benefits of my approach to therapy, focusing on client life issues and the co-creation of certain holistic solutions.

Invariably, though, as always seems to happen when asking my intuition for guidance, another more interesting answer came to me in respect to giving this talk.

During these globally trying times, maybe we need to look for support in another way? If we're not able to access external mental health resources directly, for whatever reason, perhaps the answer lies in each of us securing a very different type of support? One that works for us individually, in a more bespoke kind of way? After all, we are all very different, with very different needs.

Despite these different needs, however, we are, all of us, I'm afraid, set up to be emotionally dysfunctional. Guided by our role models – this includes what we learn from our parents and society in general – we are taught to repress and distort our own emotional process. We are trained from a very early age to be emotionally dishonest. My younger brother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia back in 1990, and I know, from personal experience, the lengths to which my own family members have gone, in an attempt to keep themselves safe, emotionally, and how this has manifested in various forms of illness.

So much so, that 25+ years later, there is a metal plaque in the family home, taking pride of place in recognition of this, saying: This family knows how to put the fun in dysfunctional! Most families are indeed just that – quite dysfunctional – our job is to simply make the most of it!

Now this isn't about discounting the need for therapy – how could it be when it now represents my entire working life's purpose? No, what I'm talking about is finding a way for people to learn how to take greater personal responsibility for their own healing, by re-empowering ourselves so that we're not at the mercy of our doctors or the drug companies!

I am totally convinced that nearly all our life problems today stem from unmet needs during childhood – be it experiencing harrowing health, money misery or rotten relationships, they will all have their roots based and firmly entwined with the messages, or so-called injunctions, that were fed to us by our caretakers.

Modern civilisations – both eastern and western – are only one or two generations away from believing that children were property, which goes hand-in-hand with the other ridiculous notion that women are also property! I distinctly remember in my early years, while training to be an accountant, coming across the words, 'wife' and 'chattel' in the same sentence when it came to the administration of tax law and the legal aspects of drafting up a will!?! I still can't believe I even saw that!?!?

The idea that children have rights, when it comes to individuality and dignity, is relatively new in modern society. The predominant and underlying belief, as it has manifested in the treatment of children, has been that children are an extension of, and the tools to be used by, their parents. Is it any wonder then that children swallow whole whatever is fed to them while growing up?

Alice Miller's book, 'The Drama of the Gifted Child' displays a very telling insight into the basic beliefs that underlie some attitudes, when she talks of people, "stamping out a child's exuberance". In other words, you have to crush the child's spirit in order to control them!

Other idiom-like statements, such as "children should be seen and not heard" and "spare the rod and spoil the child", also do very little to help matters.

It is only in recent history that our society has even recognised child abuse as a crime instead of it being the inherent right of a parent!?! The concept of healthy parenting as a skill to be learned (and not just something that happens automatically simply because you've given birth!), is still very new in our society.

Any society that does not respect and honour individual human dignity is one that does not meet the essential needs of its members. Patriarchal systems that demean and degrade women and children are totally dysfunctional in their very essence.

The way we form core relationships with our own self, with life, and with other people, is based on the messages we take on board during our early years. Reactions we receive during childhood will either help or hinder our adult years. We have no training or initiation ceremonies, no fully approved programmes to help us let go of our old internal programming so that we can learn how to BE, to have a healthy relationship with ourselves before being able to have a fulfilling one with another. We build upon the foundation of the dysfunctional past and so experience the same in the future, and so the cultural hot potato is formed, passed on from one oblivious generation to the next, forever more, until and unless someone is brave enough in their attempt to break the cycle.

If we don't look to change then, as adults, we simply react to the programming of our childhood. To say that our childhood emotional wounds do not affect our adult lives, both personally and professionally, is ridiculous. To think that our early programming has no bearing on the support we're in search of today is denial to an extreme. Responding to the needs of our Inner Child lies at the very heart of therapeutic healing and support. When we react out of fear, insecurity and dysfunctional belief systems, it brings about all manner of distress, emotional heartache and mental upheaval. Just look at some of our world leaders today for the perfect example of Inner Child needs being ignored, now being left to go on the rampage!!

It is only through each of us taking responsibility for the care of our individual Inner Child, that we can learn to heal ourselves of any pain that we feel today, be it physical, mental or emotional. Learning to respect the little kid that lives inside each of us, to discover its desires and to love it unconditionally, so that the early wounds can be kissed better, must be seen as fundamental at both an individual and global level.

So, depending on how you wish to define Therapeutic Support, maybe in the absence of anything else being available 'out there', this internal resource is really all we do have when it comes to our own healing??

3 WAY CONNECTION - LOSING JUDGMENT AND SHAME

Paul Howarth

There are many things that the power of '3' relates to it seems. From the fact we are made from mind, body and spirit to the fact that a chair or camera can stand on its own with three legs as its support. The three musketeers, the three little pigs, the three stooges the list goes on and on. They create a dynamic force, a higher power, a greater than one.

From the day we are born we have an inbuilt programme to connect. Without connection we would not feed, we would not stay warm, we would not receive the emotional strokes necessary for personal growth and development.

It seems however that the western world has built a society of judgement and self-shame. We may be physically and mentally beaten into thinking we aren't enough. We aren't good enough, we aren't strong enough, we aren't achieving as much as the next person, we aren't as rich, we are too rich, im too ugly, im too short, I'm too tall - they seem to have a better life than me. So what do we do with this feeling of 'not enough'? well one way of dealing with it is to build up walls of judgement to protect ourselves from the preserved pain of 'not enough'. Judging others deflects from our internal conflict. Our minds perceive this as a weakness, so we bury it and suppress it, in the hope it will go away.

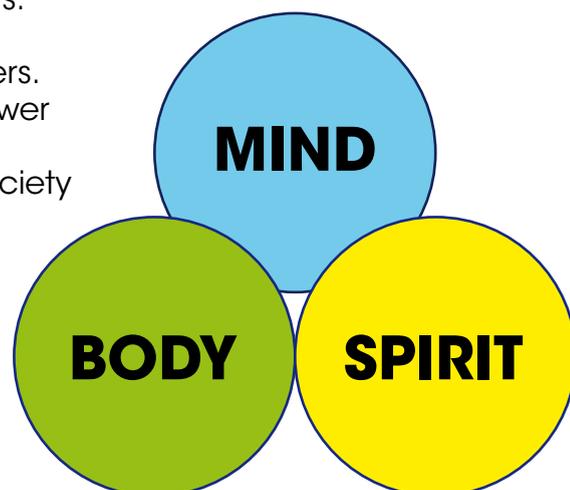
As the walls go up, the light gets less. This is the light to grow, to inspire and to fore fill a meaningful life. The majority of the western world arrive at adulthood subconsciously aware of the fact that we are addicted to the views of other people and that our self-worth and value is based on what we think other see in us. Our building walls of judgment produce internal shame which causes for more pain and more suffering.

We lose connection with ourselves and through that loss of connection lose touch with our fellows and the environment we occupy - the universe. We need to find a route back to connection. We need to pull down the walls of judgement and we need to be free from the pain. The clouds in the sky are born from the sky and they go back into the sky when they disappear. This is the same with the walls of judgement in our minds. We built them, and we can take them down. Removing even wall small brick in a wall of 1,000 can shed a small ray of light and that small ray of light can lighten the darkest room. All you need is honesty, an open mind and a willingness to believe that you are enough, and you have all the answers inside of you. When the walls come down the light comes in. If the walls of judgement produce shame, then the antidote is vulnerability and compassion. With these anything is possible. When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable we gain intimacy and this intimacy takes us back to our original source of connection. With intimacy we heal, we grow and we can build a new foundation. A new foundation built on integrity and respect and trust and kindness. We can have a clear intent to build a meaningful life of growth with ourselves and others.

Once we connect inside we then connect healthy with others. Through this connection we change lives, we become a power greater than ourselves and we make progress. Real human progress, the progress we were born to make before the society we grew up in of judgement and shame tarnished us.

When we connect with ourselves and others we connect with our environment, our source - the universe. The place where we are born from and we return to. We ignite the spirit within and we build a new foundation built not on judgement but on spirituality. This foundation is unshakable.

The only journey to take in life is to constantly develop the 3 connections we have available to us - Self, Others and the Universe and achievement is there for all.



How Depression Can Have an Impact on Your Life



Many people who are struggling with depression believe that this is one of the biggest challenges that life has thrown their way. This sentiment is very common and true, although many underestimate the impacts that depression can have on one's life.

Are you suffering from the depression? In the beginning, it may be difficult to tell that you are having this condition. The number of people suffering from depression is increasing at a rapid pace. Too many individuals feel that they have entered a vicious circle of sadness and desperation. No exit whatsoever appears on the horizon!

Dealing with depression is possible, as long as you know what causes this condition, how it affects your life and how it can be treated.

Are You Suffering from Depression?

Depression comes with a number of symptoms that you need to recognize if you are in doubt about it.

Do you feel tired and incapable of performing your daily and professional duties? If you are barely coping with your routine, you may be in need of professional assistance. This is one of the most common and most serious ways in which depression will affect your life.

The things that you used to do in the past for fun are no longer giving you pleasure. Your favorite hobby has suddenly turned bland and boring. A walk in the park appears to be a sad and lonely activity. Depression? Yes, it can be.

Depression is also going to affect your sex life by diminishing your libido and your interest in sex. It is also capable of changing the relations you have with loved ones and friends.

If you are suffering from depression, you may also experience insomnia, constant fatigue, anxiety and nervousness, lack of appetite or uncontrollable cravings, feelings of being useless, no interest in one's appearance, sense of guilt and poor concentration.

Depression and Your Relationships

As already mentioned, depression will affect the communication and the relationships with the people in your life. If the condition remains untreated, it may even prevent you from having a meaningful relationship and finding love.

The manner in which depression impacts your relationships is one of the most difficult problems to cope with.

People who are experiencing depression may have exceptional difficulties expressing their true feelings and appreciation for others. The same applies to being thankful and showing gratitude.

The reason for these communication problems hides in the fact that people suffering from depression usually lack self-esteem. They simply have problems loving themselves, which means that they are certainly going to make it impossible for others to love them.

Does any of this sound familiar? Depression can be the culprit for many intrapersonal problems you are experiencing. Combined with a feeling of sadness and loneliness, it can turn your life upside down.

Causes of Depression

Apart from the manner in which depression affects your life, you need to understand the main causes and reasons that will make you vulnerable and susceptible to this condition.

Depression has multiple causes. Psychological, biological and external factors will all have to be taken in consideration. Genetic predisposition is also going to increase the risk of suffering from depression.

A difficult childhood that is filled with painful experiences may often result in depression later on during life. The loss of a parent early on in life is a very common cause.

Taking specific medications or the intake of too many alcoholic beverages is also related to depression. Very often, however, the onset of depression is sudden, without being connected to a specific trigger.

Dealing with Depression and Getting Your Life Back

Your family and your friends are probably trying to cheer you up but all their efforts remain in vain. Even if they tell you that you should be happy and thankful for everything that you have, you will be incapable of changing unless depression gets treated.

Do everything possible to reduce stress in your life. If possible, have someone else to deal with the tasks that you are currently finding yourself incapable of handling.

Divide large tasks into smaller, easier to achieve assignments. Breaking a project into specific steps will help you handle it and regain your confidence.

Physical exercise is just as efficient. Working out will help you focus on your body and forget for a little while about the problems you are experiencing. In addition, exercise leads to the production of endorphin – the so-called happiness hormone.

In specific instances, you need to seek the attention and help of a professional. Psychotherapy and medical assistance will be needed if you feel incapable of implementing the already mentioned depression management tips. If depression lasts for more than two weeks, if you feel incapable of finding happiness in your life and if it affects your work and lifestyle, you should immediately seek the attention of a professional.



Graduates from MIP August 2018

This is a picture of our wonderful new graduates who are celebrating with great festivities their successful completion of their four year Psychotherapy training in Transactional Analysis from an Integrative Perspective.

They have of course become the new MIP graduates from July 2018 and are now part of a comprehensive graduate body of the Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy.

The photo of the new graduates was taken outside the front of the Institute on a wonderful summers day, which of course is quite unusual since we live in Manchester!

Bob Cooke

I have been working with adult survivors of sexual abuse for many years now within my psychotherapy practice. Throughout this time I have been privileged to be a part of many remarkable journeys, remarkable in the determination and spirit of the people dedicated to recovery. The victims of sexual abuse have suffered the fundamental indignities to their spirit, psyche, emotions and body: They have suffered the deepest of injuries. This article is first and foremost a testimony to them, secondly a description and plan on how to work adult survivors of sexual abuse which I hope may give useful suggestions for others that may be embarking on a similar journey.

Firstly, I never cease to be amazed at the strength of will and courage of my clients and I feel privileged that they have chosen me to witness their path, and it is in this context that I hope my ideas will be a source of hope and give others practical suggestions for their own particular journey. The effect on people's lives who have been sexually abused are many and far reaching, typically they may show some of the following symptoms.

Anxiety and panic attacks

Panic attacks can make feel as if they are going to faint or cannot breathe. They may feel as if their world is going to collapse and they often have no logical reason for their attacks.

Flashbacks

There are situations that may arise when something in the present may evoke a memory of the past and it is as if the person has 'rubber banded' back to the experience of the past.

Relationships and trust

This is a particularly difficult area for adult survivors of sexual abuse as most will find it hard to trust from the heart. Also they may find difficulties maintaining healthy and meaningful relationships. These issues are often what people present when they first attend for therapy, or indeed it is the major problem that they want to change in their lives.

Sexual problems

In the area of sexuality many consequences of abuse are reported. Individuals sometimes feel they can never have a sexual relationship again or at least may feel flawed in the area. Some become abusers themselves, playing out their early hurts and traumas on others.

Poor self-image

Self-image is often very low, as they may believe that there is something wrong with themselves and could often report feeling dirty. Unlovable and worthless. They may sometimes hurt themselves and even believe that they do not have the right to exist.

Dissociation

Dissociation is one of the major defence systems that people who have been abused with use in the service of protection of their inner self. Dissociation is when the person moves psychologically away from the part of themselves so as not to feel the trauma and pain. In the present, this process, in its extreme, could become problematic for the individual in maintaining healthy relationships, and may hinder them in getting close to people and expressing their feelings. This is often why adult survivors of sexual abuse sometimes turn to alcohol and or substance abuse in an attempt to block out the emotional memories of the past in order not to feel in the present.

Mood swings and depression

Depression is a turning in on oneself, often associated with feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness. Depression is common in survivors of abuse, they can feel as if they were born in a depressed state and may feel that life is not worth living.

Rage and terror

Both these feelings are common in adult survivors of sexual abuse even if they are not in touch with these feelings. Rage in this sense is more likely to be turned inwards, in some cases self-mutilation may occur. Often the survivor may feel intense terror and see the world as a scary place.

Grief

Grief often internally held in is primarily about the loss of a childhood spoiled forever. This can be overwhelming and the person may feel that they could cry forever. It is a deep reaching sadness which is often held at a physical level as well as an emotional one.

Stages within the journey to recovery

In working with adult survivors the therapist needs to come from a caring, non-threatening and a non-damaging position right from the start of therapy. This type of relationship will go a long way towards 'normalising' the client's reality.

I see seven distinct stages in the process when working alongside survivors: Establishing a trusting

1. working alliance
2. Retrieval of memory work and exploring the past
3. The emergency phase (flooded feelings)
4. Grieving and letting go
5. The Re-decision process
6. Reintegration of new ways of being in life
7. Endings and hello's, a celebration of victories.



It must be remembered that I do not necessarily see the seven stages as linear, the therapist and client may move in and out of each stage as the therapeutic relationship demands.

First Stage

The first stage, and perhaps the most important, is the establishment of the trusting relationship with client. This is crucial as the client needs to feel OK and validated by the therapist. It is in this initial stage where the client begins to tell their story, and it is the task of the therapist to listen to the experiences of the client. The therapist also needs, at this stage, to emphasise the protective structures for the client in promoting a safe supportive climate for therapy. This protection has to be internal and external. The therapist's task is to facilitate the person in protecting themselves from their internal ogres and demons. The therapist may do this by giving permissions to the client and allowing them, perhaps for the first time, to be themselves in a powerful way. This process takes time as they may have lost sight of their real self. It is only in a protected, safe place that the client will feel that they can, bit by bit, allow themselves to experience fully what it is like to be in touch with their real self. The therapist also has to protect the client in the current environment (real or imagined) by establishing a safe therapeutic environment. It is only then that the client will feel free enough to progress on the path of healing.

Second Stage

The second stage for the client in this process is one where the individual will, with the help of the therapist, begin to explore their past. The therapist must remember when working within this stage that it takes great courage for the client to go back to what must have been a nightmare for them! To invite anyone back into their own personal nightmare must not be taken lightly. Indeed, there is a fine dividing line between re-experiencing their trauma and re-living it.

Re-experiencing the trauma can be seen as a positive experience for the client in the sense that though they may experience a flavour of their earlier abuse, this time it will be different because now with the therapist, they will have a protective, caring 'other' who will stand up for them in the services of the early child. Re-living the experience would mean a negative re-traumatisation for the client where the person repeats for themselves their early abuse, perhaps making the therapist the abuser in the process. This process may happen unconsciously without either the therapist or the client being aware of this until they are many sessions down the line. A recent example of this was when a therapist reported to me that he could not understand the anger that his client seemed to have towards him. After further discussion and supervision it seemed to him that the relationship had changed since he had done a "fine moving piece of work" with his client, (the client was recalling some early abuse by her father). The therapist was confused by his- client's anger especially as after this piece of therapy she had allowed him to 'hug' her for the first time. However it was this hug that the client, within the transference process, experienced as being a reinforcement of the earlier abuse, and consequently her maintaining of her not OK position in life.

It is in this early stage of explaining the person's past that the client may have 'flashbacks' and recall memories that she had 'forgotten' from her childhood. It is here that the protection structures may now have to be emphasised more and increased contact with the therapist may be needed, i.e. seeing the therapist twice a week, or options to join a psychotherapy group where the more experienced group member would be available during this time for providing a safe, protective place for the client to be.

Third Stage

During this process of exploring the past with the client, the client may move into what could be called the third stage emergency phase; this is where the person may be flooded with emotions. It is imperative that they are dealt with and worked through and that the client makes the connections with the past to the present and vice-versa.

In my experience rage and sadness are the most common feelings at the time, so the therapist must decide, for example to teach the client methods of releasing rage in a safe way, so that they can deal with them and move on instead of feeling stuck with the feeling. Rage, as any feeling can be a here and now feeling to what happened there and then.

Fourth Stage

After working through the feelings which have been connected to the past the client often feels a sense of grief for the part of their childhood which they never experienced which is the fourth stage, they need to be encouraged to feel their feelings in order that they can move on to a recovery instead of stagnation.

Fifth Stage

The fifth stage in the recovery process for the client is for them to become aware of the early decisions that they made about themselves and life in response to their abuse. The early decisions, although appropriate at the time, may be what is stopping them obtaining the healthy abilities or qualities that they may wish to acquire, want in the here and now.

Such early decision in response to the abuser or abusers may include:

1. I am unlovable
2. I am worthless
3. I am dirty
4. I am disgusting
5. I am not OK
6. I am responsibility for the abuse, it was all my fault
7. I am unlikable
8. I can never be in a healthy relationship - there is something wrong with me
9. The world is a very scary place and people are out to get me
10. It is better not to be in contact with people because they will hurt me
11. Eventually things will go wrong for me because I am a bad person
12. The only way to be intimate with someone is to have sex with them
13. I have no right to exist.

These early decisions need to be re-decided for the person to be more healthy. Remember that we cannot change the past but we can change our response to it. People can re-decide their early decisions, they can decide to be different and see themselves in a new light. It is important that these early decisions are made to counteract the old decisions and replace them. The therapist needs to invite the client back to the time when the old decisions were made and facilitate them, through therapy, to make a new and healthy decision.

Sixth Stage

After the re decision stage comes the sixth stage the reintegration stage. Here the client needs to learn how to integrate these new decisions into their life. This may be a difficult and scary time for them, changing a habit of a lifetime may be frightening and challenging, indeed, implementing new healthy ways of functioning will take time and practice, and will seem unfamiliar and uncomfortable at times.

During this time the person will need the support of their friends and it may be important to them to be in a therapy group to gain support as they try out new ways of being. One of the things that could be incorporated into the persons therapy at this stage could be to encourage the client to identify people who embody the healthy abilities or qualities that they may wish to acquire, and to be someone they admire, even if it is only for a short time, and noticing how this feels.

It must be noted here that this process is not a good idea for clients who use 'splitting' as a major defence system or clients with multiple personality disorder.

The final stage in the recovery is for the person to say good-bye to the hurts and indignities of the past and hello to their present and future. Within this process it is important for the therapist to have encouraged the person to celebrate their victories. Also the primary task for the therapist is one of checking that the client has moved from victimisation to a quality of life which is one of satisfaction and contentment. The emphasis is about completion and moving on, also about recognition of their own achievements. Finally, it is about new recognition that they are loveable and loved by others it is a time for reflection, for both the past and future, with the knowledge that they will always be welcome back to therapy if and when needed.



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