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# **Crossing the Line**

**Establishing counselling training in hard to  
reach and marginalised communities**

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**Middlesex University and Metanoia Institute**

**Doctor in Psychotherapy by Public Works**

## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

This context statement is a reflexive audit of the process and development of the public works submitted to fulfil the requirements of the Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Public Works (D.Psych). The Public Works submitted include transcultural counselling trainings developed in hard to reach and marginalised communities. I consider projects established in Northern Ireland and Malta as background to the development of knowledge and experience that equipped me for the challenges of later projects. I focus predominantly on the ongoing training projects established in Karachi, Pakistan and with the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in London.

I provide a brief description of the history of the background and main projects. This is followed by an in-depth personal and critical reflection of the work, with a focus on the challenges and developmental learning that enabled the projects to succeed. Although all trainings took place in widely different contexts, several common themes emerged. These are considered in several discrete areas, including: understanding the general cultural context, working in a different political context, the impact and meaning of therapeutic exercises and theory in different cultural contexts, the impact of cultural contexts on group processes, my otherness in relation to group processes, and lastly, envy and destructive attacks.

The critical reflection is informed by insights from psychoanalytic relational theory, particularly from the British object relations school, where unconscious processes and dynamics provide a framework for understanding and analysis. The statement includes the outline of a model for developing transcultural counselling training. This model lays the foundation for a practice framework.

Finally, the statement outlines the impact of the public works. In addition to the learning generated, the work has established training and grown the profession of counselling in communities previously untouched. This has impacted not only the students who have undertaken the training, but also

the clients in marginalised and hard to reach communities, with whom the students and graduates work.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my advisor Dr. Christine Stevens, for the patient guidance, encouragement and advice she has provided throughout my time as her student. I am also profoundly grateful to Professor Simon du Plock for his enthusiasm about my work and the opportunity to take stock and truly think about my work. This process revealed to me a wealth of learning, and unthought known which will help me, and hopefully others to pursue similar work.

I share the credit of my work with Lynne Kaye, my CPPD 'co-parent' and partner in the wonderful, intrepid journeys we have taken into uncharted training contexts. Your insight, love and humour have kept me going and made all of this work possible.

I thank all of our students and graduates who have trusted and allowed us to 'cross the lines' into their worlds, and have stepped into ours. They have taught me as much as I have ever taught them, and their passion, talent and commitment motivates my work.

I also want to thank Adam, my husband for his love, support and enjoyment of my writing despite my tendency for Over Capitalisation.

Finally, I want to thank Jasmin and Jessica, my awesome daughters, who are my inspiration and my joy.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This context statement is a reflexive audit of the process and development of the presented public works. It begins by considering my background environment and the experiences that have influenced and shaped my engagement in this research. I then present my professional background and demonstrate how this contributed to my ongoing interest and subsequent works.

Following a descriptive outline of the background projects and professional works, I present a critical reflection of the challenges and subsequent learning. The learning generated from each project enabled me to approach further projects with greater understanding and insight. To illustrate, the learning gained from background projects in Northern Ireland and Malta helped me to understand the potential difficulties that could be encountered when organising professional counselling training in a different cultural context, and this knowledge was fundamental in establishing the resilience needed to undertake further projects.

Although all trainings took place in widely differing contexts, several themes emerged repeatedly and were common to each. These themes are considered in several discrete areas, including: understanding the general cultural context, working in a different political context, the impact and meaning of therapeutic exercises and theory in different cultural contexts, the impact of cultural context on group processes, my otherness in relation to group processes, envy and destructive attacks.

The critical reflection is informed by insights from psychoanalytic relational theory, particularly from the British object relations school, where unconscious processes and dynamics provide a framework for understanding and analysis.

The statement includes the outline of a model for developing transcultural counselling training. This model lays the foundation for a framework for practice.

Finally, the statement outlines the impact of the public works. In addition to the learning generated, the work has established training and grown the profession of counselling in communities previously untouched. This has impacted, not just the students who have undertaken the training, but clients in marginalised and hard to reach communities, with whom the students and graduates work.

Figure 1-1: Timeline of Professional Standing – Jennifer Sandelson

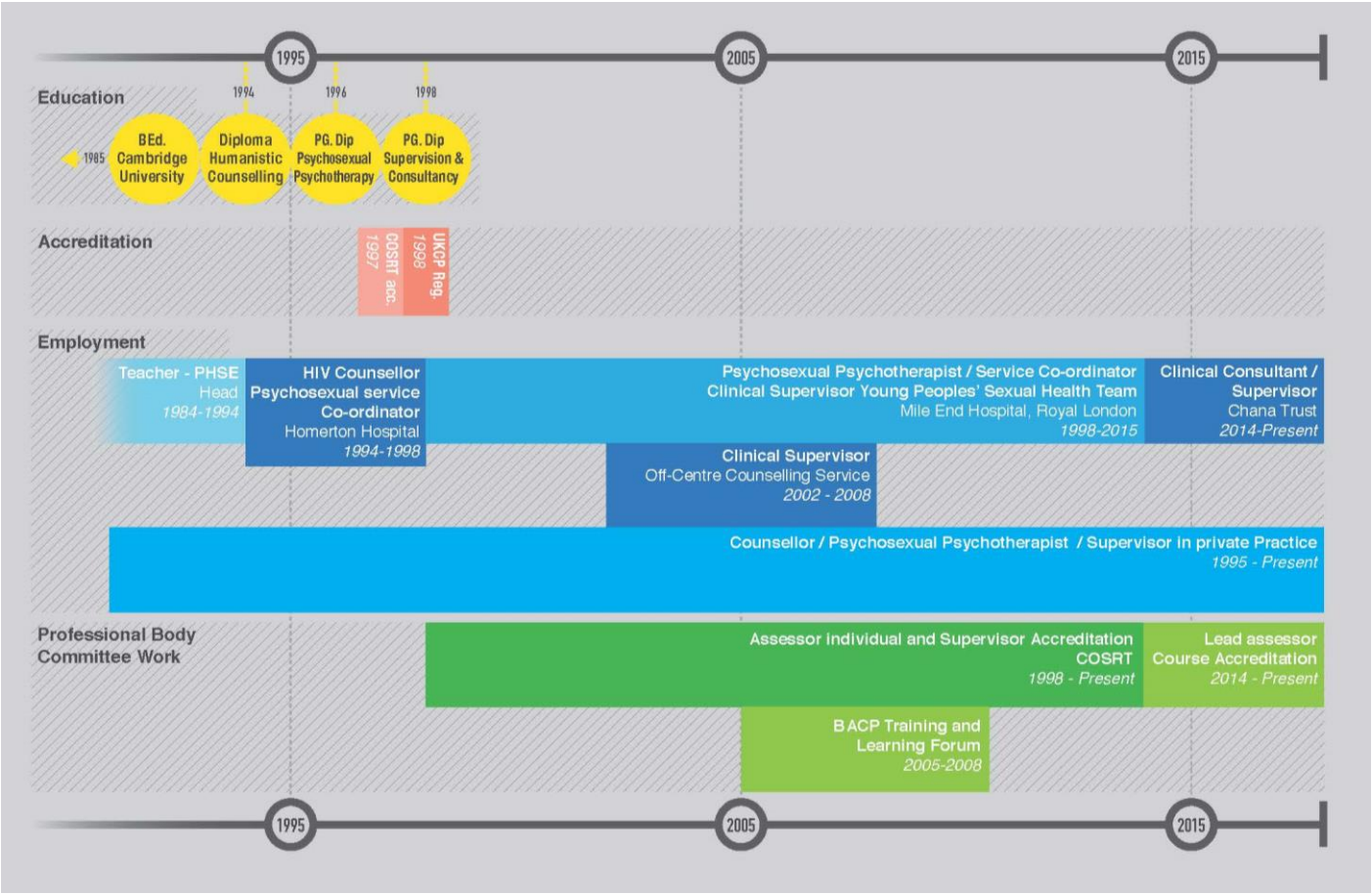
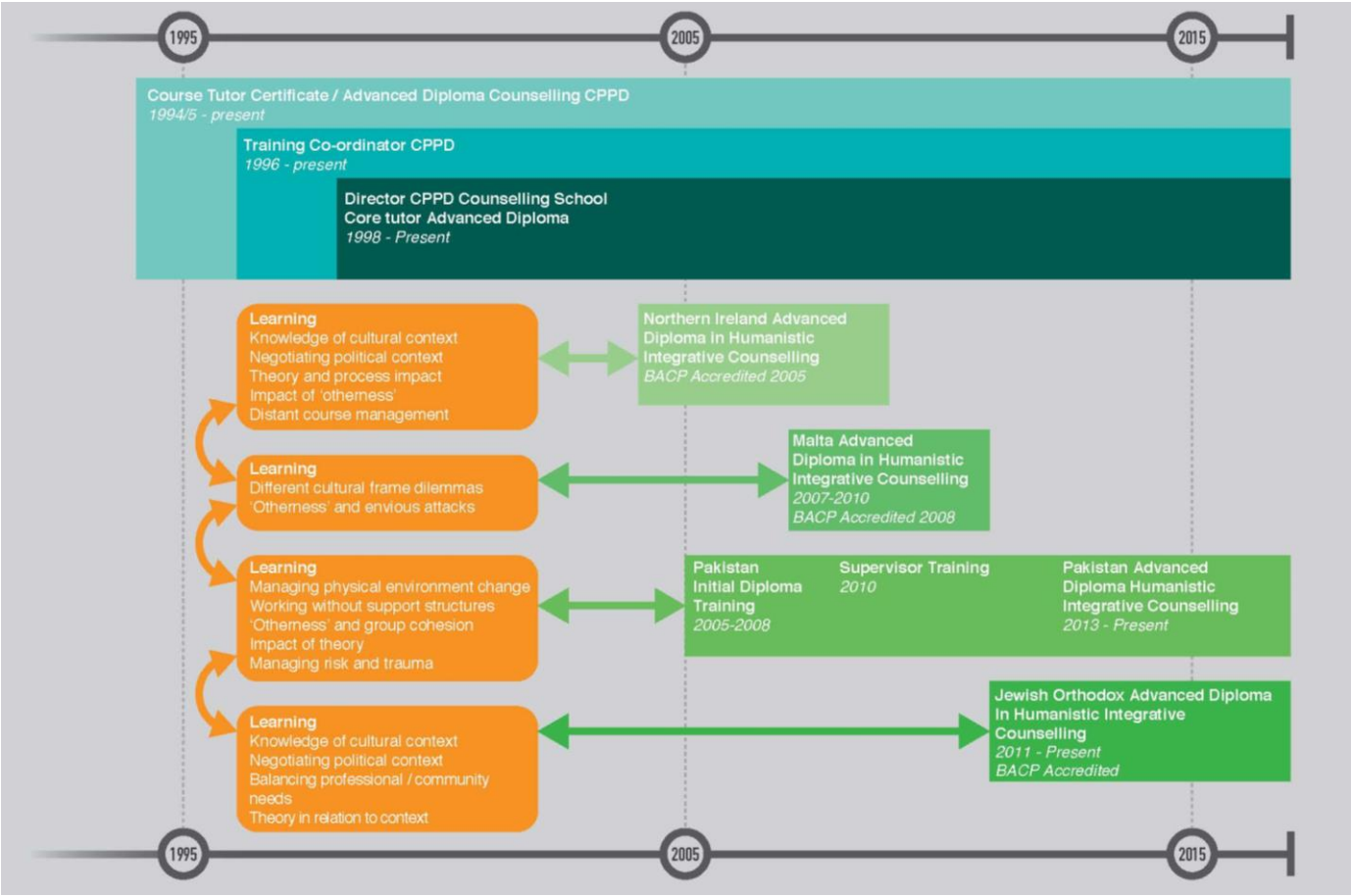


Figure 1-2: CPPD Training Work



## **1.1 Background Influences**

### **1.1.1 Personal Background**

The background experiences that have influenced and conditioned me to live as I do and pursue my interests are many and multi-layered. For this statement, I will focus on the influences most strongly related to the development and undertaking of the professional works herein. These influences have prompted me to engage in the fields of psychotherapy and education and also given me the skills and resilience to manage the work. I believe that human beings are largely the products of their social and psychological environments, thus my influences range from the larger political and cultural context into which I was born and lived, to the smaller impact of my own interpersonal social, educational and familial dynamics. Many of these social and personal motivators operate in a largely unconscious way, although the “repeating motifs” (Bager-Charleston, 2010) throughout my life and work can give insight into what Bateman and Holmes consider the “reservoir of latent meaning” (1999:9).

I grew up in the East Midlands city of Leicester in the 1960s and 1970s. My parents were both teachers and active left-wing politicians. Much of their (and my) free time revolved around political campaigning and Labour Party events. Leafleting and canvassing was a family activity, to the extent that by the age of 5 in the 1966 general election I knew the script so well that I remember being upset that I was not allowed to knock on doors on my own. It was the largest part of my cultural identity and shaped my moral and ethical education. Socialist ideals of equality and justice were virtues so important they were to be defended, and if necessary, fought for. These ideals influenced where I chose to work and live, as well as the populations that I chose to work with.

Political issues were not just discussed, they were actively engaged in and carried a highly charged emotional intensity, often driven by paranoid schizoid (Klein, 1946) rhetoric; this as a child, often left me searching to make sense of and find solutions to damaging social and political structures. I

clearly remember as a 7-year-old going on a National Union of Teachers march with my mother, struggling to understand how it could be possible that women were paid less for the same work as men. Without a wider contextual understanding, the world felt illogical and less safe.

At times this lack of safety felt heightened. The 1970s was a time of significant population change in Leicester; between 1968 and 1978 the city received more than 20,000 displaced East African Asians. As a child, my initial response was curiosity; the new children at school ate different food, and the boys grew their hair long, which they wore in a bun. The novelty faded and they became classmates with their own identities, until the political climate in the city began to change. The National Front, exploiting fears over immigration, established a headquarters in the city and began a campaign of agitation. When my father stood for parliament in 1970 he campaigned forcefully against them, which led to a series of death threats against him, and he remained defiant. This created an ambivalence in me; a fascination about the meaning and impact of otherness, as well as a drive to understand it and therefore create safety. It also demonstrated the lengths to which one 'should' go to fight for equality and against discrimination. A demonstration that conditioned me later to minimise risks to my personal safety in Pakistan and to continue to fight against powerful structures within the Haredi community.

My drive to understand 'otherness' can also be sourced in my experiences of potential class alienation at primary school. Altman, reflecting on the work of French sociologist Bourdieu (1984), discusses how:

"the social class structure of society is reflected and reinforced on the psychic level as people are socialized to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in environments that are consonant or dissonant with their social class structure" (Altman, 2010:89).

Coming from a middle-class environment into a school in the middle of the largest and most disadvantaged council estate in the city was challenging. The vast majority of the children were from the estate, and a significant

number of children were troubled and under the care of the local authority. I felt uncomfortable and alienated from most of the children and also aware of my potential to be bullied. To reduce this, I had to become more like 'them', and to do that I had to understand and make sense of the differences. I learnt to change my identity enough to belong. Apart from learning invaluable skills in attunement and relationship building, this also expanded my world view and confidence to cross cultural divides. It also increased my enjoyment of being in a school where I felt academically unchallenged. I spent my time testing my personal power and pushing the boundaries of authority. Entering another world expanded who I was and could be, where I could play with roles and not just observe how other people lived, but explore and become part of it. The cultural anthropologist Schweder, proposes a dialectical relationship between culture and an individual's psyche:

"Human beings starting at birth (and perhaps earlier) are highly motivated to seek meanings and resources out of a sociocultural environment that has been arranged to provide them with meanings and resources for them to use... every human being's subjectivity and mental life are altered by the process" (Schweder, 1991:74).

My ability to do this was partly derived through feelings of alienation, as well as the power of my class position. As Altman says:

"The social class system can be seen to establish categories in the context of a hierarchical social organization. The self-image or self esteem or lack thereof that attends one's social status depends, to a great degree, on the position of one's class in the social hierarchy. The hidden injuries of class, the low self-esteem and the self-contempt, are illuminated when one holds in view the powerlessness and the exploitation that attend lower class status" (Altman, 2010:91).

This became clear later; following my secondary grammar and comprehensive school education, where I was part of the majority, I experienced a new form of class alienation at Cambridge University. I was clearly from a lower social class, and to the clear majority, I did not have the 'right' accent, I had been state educated, and did not come from the south of

England. In my college year of 120, there were 4 other students who shared my background, and rather than trying to join the majority, we held onto each other. Our lower social status, and feelings of class inferiority, often fuelled by derisive comments and mocking kept us 'in our place'. Our 'place' was institutionalised, as our degrees included teaching practice elements, and the five of us were sent to state comprehensive schools, while the rest of the students did their practice in the private sector.

On a more personal level the meaning of my work and interests was also conditioned by the impact of my parents' experiences. My father was the only son of a miner, born in the year of the General Strike. My father's mother was a lower middle class daughter of a shop owner, and she was forced to marry three months prior to my father's birth. Thus, he straddled a class divide; he was the only child of a miner in the town who went to grammar school, and was told that he could never become a miner. In 1945, when he faced military conscription or working as a miner (as a protected profession), he was instructed to fight rather than to "go down the pits". In fact, he was conscripted into the intelligence corps and the army sent him to university. He grew up on the periphery, forming an allegiance with his mother through education, and father through his political activity.

My mother was born in a small mining town in south Wales. Her mother was a milliner, who was disappointed that her first child was a daughter. Her father had been adopted at birth and was said to have been the son of a Sioux Indian member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which toured the Welsh valleys at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Ashley 2014). Despite becoming a successful chemist, my grandfather was a shame-filled, aggressive man, who evacuated his own feelings of self-loathing into my mother, and also into me, on the rare occasion that I met him. He loudly and openly told me I was ugly and fat, and as a young child, I believed that I added to my mother's feelings of shame. He was also a very controlling man. It was a household where men were revered and prioritised, except in the field of education. Her younger brothers were largely ignored, but my mother's education was forcefully managed by her father, through grammar



school to University, where she was forced to study chemistry against her will. As one of the few women to graduate university in the early 1940s, particularly in the field of science, this gave her a sense of empowerment as a woman, as well as the means to move away from home. However, she retained her fragile self-esteem and a strong personal identification with inferiority in relation to her gender. Despite this being the antithesis of her political views, her behaviour towards herself, particularly when under stress, would often reveal this identification. She gave up work opportunities and positions of authority to prioritise my father; when my parents eventually divorced, at a time when both were prominent members of the city council and chairs of various committees, my mother resigned her seat because she felt that it was more rightfully my father's place than hers because he was a man.

Despite experiencing ambivalent messages about gender through my mother, I was aware that it was not a position that I was expected to emulate. I felt frustrated by her self-denigration, and in many ways, this strengthened my commitment against being limited by my gender. This was also driven by a wish not to denigrate myself and a belief that I did not deserve this, but also by an unconscious sense that if I fulfilled my potential, and helped other women to do the same, I could challenge and defy the sexism and shame that limited my mother, and could thereby help to repair my mother's damage. A similar process was true in relation to my mother's uncontained anxiety. As a mother, she was overly protective, and to her, the world was a dangerous and threatening place; she was too fearful to drive or swim, and did not travel abroad until she was 60, despite having the means to do so. This position was counterbalanced by my father who taught me to have confidence in all areas of life. Again, my frustration at my mother's self-restrictions strengthened my commitment to try and create feelings of safety for others, and to prove to them that the world could be safer than it seemed.

Bager-Charleston (2010) in her study of why therapists choose to be therapists, discusses the 'shadow side' of motivation of which Sussman states:

“an important determinant of the desire to practice psychotherapy involves the attempt to come to terms with one’s own psychological conflicts” (Sussman, 1992:235).

I believe that this is an aspect of most helping relationships, and relates as much to my parents’ drive to fight inequality through their political commitment, as my involvement with therapeutic work, particularly relating to disadvantage and marginalised communities. From an object relations perspective, this can also be considered as a constructive response to depressive guilt (Klein:1959):

“Caring feelings and actions in the Kleinian model arise, in the depressive position, from reparative impulses, the wish and need to make restitution for fantasised destruction in relation to a loved object” (Altmann, 2010:276).

Transferring these reparative impulses onto other recipients can be an attempt to vicariously repair damage, especially when this was believed to have been done to the original object. It can also be a way of managing disowned split-off aspects of the self. For example, I am not comfortable with my own vulnerability. This is partly because vulnerability was potentially dangerous within my family, and any vulnerability that I did feel as a child was largely unattended to. So, again as my parents demonstrated, attending to and helping other vulnerable people can vicariously partially satisfy my unmet needs.<sup>1</sup>

These formative experiences, including the cultural, social and psychological environment, shaped and influenced my choices through adult life. They provided me with an invaluable experiential education about politics and culture, which primed and equipped me for much of the work that I have pursued throughout my life. Concepts of justice and equality became instilled

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<sup>1</sup> With hindsight, I realised how my need to disown my feelings of vulnerability, as well as manage my mother’s uncontained anxiety, enabled me to expose myself to frightening and objectively dangerous situations. This was particularly the case in my work in Northern Ireland and Pakistan, where feelings of trauma were powerfully present throughout the community. I learnt over time how these feelings were powerfully embodied in me, often in a physical and somatic way, and it often took weeks before I could detoxify and re-gain equilibrium.

and remain as key values that underpin my work. Experiences of alienation have created a focus for me on the importance of human connection, and have led me to seek it out in different forms; my object relationship history through largely unconscious means also influence many aspects of my adult life. These values and influences have manifested in personal choices, such as where I live and my choice to convert to Judaism before marriage, as well as professional choices, including the populations with whom I have worked throughout my career. The values have also been a motivational force behind my work. They underpin the drive to provide equality of access to communities, where such access had been unavailable or had earlier failed. This equality of access has extended from the provision of counselling training to the provision, by our graduates, of counselling itself to communities where there has been little or no access to psychological or emotional support. My belief in the value of this has supported my ability to continue and persist in the face of challenge and sometimes enormous difficulty.

### **1.1.2 Professional Background**

My professional background began in the field of education. Teaching for me was associated with moments of connection through insight. My mother was in many ways an innate teacher, and this was an important form of feeding within our relationship, as she brought the world to me and explained it. Knowing and making sense of the world was important, fascinating and joyful. Following my first degree in Education from Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> I taught in the secondary state sector in Tower Hamlets, London for 10 years. During this time, I had my daughters; becoming a mother was a profound experience. The depths of my feelings for them, and my capacity to meet their needs, both surprised and changed me. I embarked upon my own personal therapy, and the insight and growth that I developed through it, changed the focus of my work.

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<sup>2</sup> Annex 1.1

I became less interested in subject teaching and more focused on the emotional support of the children and the development of the school Personal, Health and Social Educational Programme. This move towards pastoral work left me feeling ill-equipped to deal with some of the young peoples' responses and led me to train initially as a counsellor and subsequently as a psychosexual psychotherapist. Once qualified,<sup>3</sup> I left teaching and began working at Homerton Hospital NHS Trust as an antenatal HIV counsellor.

In 1993 HIV was a stigmatised infection, associated with marginalised communities. Apart from early trials of AZT (Zidovudine medication), an antiretroviral medication that could seemingly effectively reduce mother to baby transmission, a diagnosis of HIV infection was terminal, with an average life expectancy of 3 years if non-symptomatic. My role was to offer pre-test counselling to pregnant women and their partners, give the results and offer ongoing counselling to patients with a positive diagnosis. The role also involved training medical staff about HIV and infection control, many of whom were very anxious about the personal risk. The work was challenging on many levels. It was a highly-politicised area in which to work, which I enjoyed as it satisfied my political drive and earlier experiences. There was a government and health service push towards identifying all HIV positive patients, whilst there was a recognition from workers within the field that a diagnosis at that time could be detrimental to some clients; many women had suffered physical abuse, and been left by their husbands following a positive diagnosis. I found myself having to advocate on behalf of clients from diverse communities, who often found themselves at odds with proposed treatment regimes.

For example, when working with a young couple from Zaire, the husband was dying from AIDS and had been given a maximum life expectancy of just weeks. Two doctors were furious with the couple, because they were refusing to take their prescribed (palliative) medication, preferring instead to

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<sup>3</sup> Annex 1.2

drink 'holy water' that had been brought by a relative from home. The doctors wanted me to make them change their minds. These challenges taught me a great deal, including the importance of cultural frames and religious beliefs in managing and supporting distress, as well as managing opposing pressures. This was helped by understanding that the doctors' anger was largely driven by their own anxiety, arising through their professional powerlessness at that time in relation to the virus. The role also gave me experience of managing extremely difficult projective processes and working with trauma. Often, when giving a positive diagnosis, clients would emotionally disassociate, and the projective identification that I would experience was difficult to contain. Whilst the experience of building my capacity to manage these processes was invaluable for my later work, it did begin to feel overwhelming.

To counterbalance the negative associations of sex and death, I began to focus more on my psychosexual work. The Homerton Hospital was keen to develop its psychosexual work, and allowed me to coordinate the establishment of a psychosexual therapy service within the Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic. The clients provided me with the experience I needed to gain my personal accreditation with BASMT (British Association for Sexual and Marital Therapy) which later became COSRT<sup>4</sup> (College of Sexual and Relationship Therapy) and registration with UKCP (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy). This gave me the confidence to further develop and lead the Psychosexual Service at Mile End Hospital. The work was culturally challenging and fascinating. Most clients were first generation immigrants from Bangladesh, and I found myself having to rethink and adjust my treatment approaches. Many of the clients were orthodox Muslims, and as such, many of the traditional tools of sex therapy were not appropriate (such as masturbation programmes for the treatment of anorgasmia or premature ejaculation). I enjoyed the process of understanding and making sense of their worlds, and working collaboratively to find creative solutions in adjusting the treatment programme to suit cultural requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> Annex 1.3

Whilst working at Homerton Hospital, I began teaching counselling for CPPD (The Centre for Personal and Professional Development); first the Certificate programme and then the Diploma programme and I then realised how I had missed teaching. I found the moments of learning similar to the moments of insight within therapy, but in some ways more rewarding. I enjoyed the group context, and found that the personal development was powerful; I also enjoyed being part of the development of students' awareness of psychological processes and mechanisms. Politically it also felt more purposeful than individual therapy; what they were learning was going to impact not just themselves, but a significant number of others. I was appointed Head of Counselling Training, with responsibility for coordinating and writing course handbooks and University Validation documents, and at this point I could stop working as an HIV counsellor, and work part time for CPPD and Mile End Hospital.

In 1998, the previous CPPD Directors decided to sell the organisation to focus on the development of psychotherapy training, and I became joint owner and Director with Lynne Kaye. This was a difficult and rather coerced move. I had left full-time employment to take a teaching post, and I was aware that if I did not become a director, I might lose this job. Whereas I was qualified to teach and even head the training, directing an organisation and running a business was outside my experience; it also felt politically dissonant. Furthermore, it added another level of responsibility, and this often felt frightening, especially in the early days. From the outset, Lynne and I collaborated well, with distinct areas of strength. Lynne had previous business experience, and understood how to create and develop the infrastructure to support the organisation. She led the personal development, administrative and marketing, and I focused on academic courses and professional standards.

To some extent, elements of this distinction remain, although it has also developed over time, along with our professional interests. I still lead on professional standards, including managing accreditation issues and overseeing changes in course delivery, in line with changing BACP

regulatory frameworks. I also write course accreditation applications, and manage accreditation processes for our international courses. We are both core tutors and lead on different training years, in line with our own areas of interest. Lynne is passionate about creating an environment that supports all personal development aspects, which is a key foundation for students' training, and leads on the Certificate year. I enjoy the process of deepening self-awareness, as well as taking pleasure in being able to teach and apply complex theories; I lead on the Advanced Diploma year, and we jointly lead on the Diploma year, running parallel cohorts.

When Lynne and I took over CPPD it ran a two-year counsellor training programme with a rudimentary final year. It was clear to both of us that the training needed professional recognition, both from a business and training standards perspective, and the training was redesigned to meet higher professional standards and was accredited as a three-year course by BACP in 2000.<sup>5</sup> This was subsequently divided into a Certificate admission year, followed by a two-year Accredited training course in 2002, which allowed us to accept students who had completed external certificate trainings onto our two-year course. This work increased our student numbers significantly and over the years that growth continued, our student body in London has grown from a starting point of 46 to 210 today. Our continued involvement as core tutors has been essential in allowing us to remain responsive to student needs. Furthermore, our student body is culturally diverse, and reflects the changing population of inner London, where we are located. The course runs outside of working hours, and most students work full time to fund their training. This supports the diversity of the student group,<sup>6</sup> which reflects placement populations in which students complete 220 client hours required to qualify.

The work of inhabiting my position as director took time, and was naturally a gradual process. Acceptance of my personal and professional authority has developed alongside the organisation, and has been influenced by different

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<sup>5</sup> Annex 2

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 1

aspects of my professional work. This has included my committee membership and involvement with professional regulatory bodies; during the past 20 years I have been a member of BACP Training and Standards Forum,<sup>7</sup> and an Accreditation Assessor for COSRT (College for Sexual and Relationship Therapy). I am currently the lead Assessor for Accreditation for both COSRT and UKCP registered psychosexual training courses.<sup>8</sup> My confidence also increased through the success of CPPD and our students, as well as the innovative training projects that we have established. Our confidence in our organisation was further marked in 2011, when Lynne and I bought a building specifically to house our training.<sup>9</sup>

Working in a management team of two, allows us a degree of autonomy over the direction of the organisation. At the same time, it carries what can feel to be an awesome degree of responsibility. However, it has also given us the luxury of being able to respond to opportunities to develop innovative trainings. Respectively these have included: the development of professional counselling trainings in Northern Ireland and Malta, which were both the first in the province and internationally to be accredited by BACP, as well as the establishment of a full professional counselling training programme in Karachi, Pakistan, followed by our development of a bespoke counselling training for the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Community in London, which is also accredited by BACP.

## **1.2 The Public Works**

The public works I intend to submit are the training projects developed in different cultural contexts. I will consider the projects in Northern Ireland and Malta as a background in my development of knowledge and experience which equipped me for the challenges of later projects. I will focus predominantly on the ongoing training projects in Pakistan and with the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in London.

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<sup>7</sup> Annex 4

<sup>8</sup> Annex 5

<sup>9</sup> Annex 6



The works will be presented in two sections. I will provide a brief description of the history of the background and main projects. This is followed by an in-depth personal and critical reflection of the work with a focus on the challenges and developmental learning that enabled the projects to succeed.

### **1.3 Outline of the Background Projects**

#### **1.3.1 Northern Ireland**

Following the 1998 Peace Agreement in Northern Ireland, the British Government commissioned several reports, including the Social Services Inspectorate Report 'Living with the Trauma of the Troubles' (Fitzpatrick et al., 1998) and the Bloomfield Report 'We will Remember Them'. These outlined recommendations to offer support to the victims of violence arising from 'The Troubles'. One of the recommendations was that 'Trauma Advisory Panels' (TAPs) were established to provide a forum for all voluntary and statutory agencies working with victims, to identify needs and coordinate responses and services for the victims of violence. The TAPs recognised the need for an increase in the number of fully qualified counsellors. At the time, only 7% of counsellors in the province were trained to IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) or BACP accredited standards. Some courses had been established with the hope of being BACP accredited, but had all closed, largely due to local political and sectarian conflict.

In 2004 the training sub-group of TAP asked the BACP to help them address this deficit by establishing a professionally recognised counselling training. Government funding was secured and as the student group was to be equally Catholic and Protestant, it was felt that a training organisation from outside the province might avoid some of the difficulties that had earlier affected organisations associated with a particular sectarian allegiance. We had recently been through the course accreditation process and were known to BACP. Thanks to our direct governance structure, we could respond quickly to the BACP when they approached us to provide training. Following a meeting between the Head of Accreditation and the Head of the Derry TAP, I agreed to undertake the project and establish a bespoke training which was

fully funded by the government. The training became the first accredited by the BACP in Northern Ireland in 2005.<sup>10</sup> The project ran over four years and 60 students graduated,<sup>11</sup> quadrupling the number of professional counsellors in the province.

### **1.3.2 Malta**

In 2005 following a series of workshops in the UK, Lynne was asked to deliver the same programme for a CPD training organisation in Malta. These workshops were a great success, and several students then expressed the wish for full training in Integrative Counselling to be developed in Malta.<sup>12</sup> At the time the only counselling training available was a largely CBT course in school counselling, based at the University of Malta. Any students wishing to train in a different modality or to work with adults, needed to undertake their training abroad. The earlier experience of successfully establishing the Northern Ireland training gave us the confidence to begin the project. We understood some of the difficulties of running a course at a distance and in a culture of which we had little experience. We spent two years researching the existing counselling provision in Malta, whilst also developing awareness of the history, socio-political and cultural context.

We were aware of the difficulties of creating a solid management and supervisory structure needed to accommodate the complexity of running a programme at a distance, and knew that the support of local counsellors and supervisors was essential. The first cohort began in 2007 with Lynne and I as core tutors. The course then became the first international training to be accredited by BACP in 2009.

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<sup>10</sup> Annex 7

<sup>11</sup> Annex 8

<sup>12</sup> Annex 9

## 1.4 Outline of the Works

### 1.4.1 Pakistan

Figure 1-3: Karachi



In 2002 CPPD ran a one-year course in working with addictions facilitated in London by Lynne and a co-tutor. This was attended by a student who was establishing a drug addiction treatment facility in Karachi, Pakistan. Following the training the student invited CPPD to run several workshops. These led in turn to a programme of self-development workshops, followed by a basic 18-month training including elements of both the CPPD Certificate and Diploma years. At this time, there was no counselling in Pakistan, and mental health support was scarce and provided by limited psychiatric and psychology services.

There was no existing infrastructure for counselling or psychotherapy, such as existing qualified counsellors and supervisors, placements or services, and the scope for training was limited and far from what could meet professional standards in the UK. Nonetheless, several students undertook the training, which was run in one week blocks every six weeks for 18 months. Initially students were supervised by Lynne and her co-tutor, and the beginnings of a counselling infrastructure began to be established. We began by using a combination of allied professionals, including psychologists in Pakistan as well as practitioners in the UK.

In 2006 the supporting co-tutor decided to move to Karachi to establish their own practice and continue to run the course. Whilst this was initially helpful, it became increasingly difficult for Lynne and CPPD to manage the training. Whilst Lynne continued to facilitate the training at six weekly intervals, executive decisions by her co-tutor about course management started to cause difficulties for students. The co-tutor then established a business partnership with a current student, and aimed to develop a separate counselling training and drug treatment centre. Following further concerns we decided to withdraw our training. We supported students to complete their basic training, and graduate students were encouraged to study further, and some undertook post-graduate studies in Psychology.

In 2010 the relationship between the previous co-tutor and the student collapsed, and he left Pakistan. We decided to return, as we felt responsible for students who had completed a partial training, and were concerned by the standard of the training that was now being provided by the former student. We decided that if we were to return it was essential that we aim to create a full professional training course. We also recognised that to do this we needed to establish and consolidate the infrastructure. The first stage of this process was to complete the training for the students who had completed the introductory training and undertaken a Masters in Psychology.

In 2012 I taught a one-year Advanced Diploma in bi-monthly one week blocks. These students were supervised by Skype with UK-based trained supervisors. When we returned, the students demonstrated a great deal of experience of client work and were increasingly confident practitioners; on completion, some of the students undertook supervision training that we provided to prepare them to work as course supervisors for new students. At the same time, Lynne taught a new Certificate level training, and all ran in accordance with the UK training protocols. Placements were identified, and placement staff were developed, with the help of students who had completed their initial training with us. The first two-year professional training started in October 2013 with 28 students, and a small team of graduate supervisors provided the main bank of therapists for students.

In March 2015, I submitted an application for BACP course accreditation. Following a risk assessment, BACP refused to make a site visit because of the perceived danger for their assessors, and therefore could not progress the application. We tried to facilitate a visit by suggesting ways around their concerns with the support of the British Consul. In August 2015 BACP said they were more open to a visit, but complications then arose due to issues relating to the HPC register for non-UK residents; consequently, BACP needed to rethink the accreditation of foreign courses, and the matter remains unresolved.<sup>13</sup>

At present, we have 34 students on the Diploma and Advanced Diploma years and the third cohort is due to graduate in August 2017.<sup>14</sup>

#### **1.4.2 The Orthodox Jewish Community in London**

##### **Figure 1-4: Stamford Hill**

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<sup>13</sup> Annex 10

<sup>14</sup> Annex 3.2



The UK hosts Europe's largest Haredi (ultra-orthodox Jewish) community. Apart from Salford and Gateshead, the largest Orthodox communities live in Stamford Hill and North London. As our counselling training organisation is close to Stamford Hill, we have often trained individuals from these communities. Training within a secular group provides challenges for these students, including at a practical level, where they miss Saturday workshops and need to sit between group members of the same gender. Also, on an emotional level, they also have to negotiate the difficulties of working with material that sometimes contradicts Halachic (Jewish religious) laws.

In 2011, at the suggestion of one of our graduates, I was approached by a training coordinating organisation for the Haredi community; we were asked to offer our accredited training specifically for a group of orthodox students.<sup>15</sup> This group had completed a certificate level training with another organisation, who were not able to adjust their Diploma-level training to accommodate their specific needs. The first group of Haredi students graduated from our programme in 2013, and two further cohorts have since graduated. A forth cohort began the course in September 2016, and two further cohorts began in January 2017.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Annex 11

<sup>16</sup> Annex 3.3

## 1.5 The Challenges and Learning: Critical Reflection

My formative cultural, social and psychological environment created a drive in me to seek a 'fusion of horizons':

"Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of "*horizon*." The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point... A person who has no horizon is a man who does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have an horizon" means not being limited to what is nearby, but to being able to see beyond it." (Gadamer, 1997:302)

In my work as a psychotherapist and in my training work I have sought work that depends upon connection, and also widens the horizon of my world.

The projects have involved complex personal and professional challenges and learning for me. They have all involved working across different socio-cultural environments and, as Schweder proposes:

'every human being's subjectivity and mental life are altered through the process of seizing meanings and resources from some sociocultural environment and using them.' (Schweder, 1991:74)

Furthermore, reflexive consideration of the projects requires:

"an ability to notice our responses to the world around us, other people and events, and to use that knowledge to inform our actions, communications, and understanding." (Etherington, 2004:19)

Reflexive awareness has been an important tool in navigating, understanding and managing many aspects of the projects and involves observation and interpretation of possibilities, rather than absolute truths. As Alvesson and Sköldberg state:

“Empirical research in reflective mode starts from a sceptical approach to what appear at a superficial glance as unproblematic replicas of the way reality functions, while at the same time maintaining the belief that the study of suitable (well thought out) excerpts from this reality can provide an important basis for a generation of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes ‘truths’.” (2009:9).

Working as a psychotherapist and trainer relies upon:

“the dialectical process of trying to comprehend or understand the other, [through which] one’s own beliefs and assumptions are disclosed and may themselves become the object of interpretation.” (Qualley, 1997:61).

Examination of the co-created dynamics involves reflexivity, which is both part of the challenge and fascination of the work. Training within culturally diverse environments has exaggerated the need for this reflexive process, as my ‘otherness’ within the dialectic is more extreme. Training within this context is complex and challenging; reflective awareness and reflexive engagement, as well as understanding and meaning-making, has helped me to manage and make sense of the work within different cultural, social and political contexts. It has allowed me to identify and consider the different characteristics, responses and interpersonal dynamics of all the actors within the different contexts, and offer some interpretations for these differences.

My stance bridges introspective and intersubjective reflexivity. This approach considers the ‘other’ and my intersubjective relationship with it, to describe and make meaning from my experience. My reflection is informed by hermeneutics, emphasising the subjective, which recognises that: “we cannot separate ourselves from the meaning we gain: understanding always involves interpretations” (Finley & Ballinger, 2006:261).

How I position myself personally, theoretically and culturally is significant within the work and my subsequent examination. The aspects I have found interesting or challenging are informed by my own experience. I influence the work, its outcome and my understanding of it, and the time of undertaking the



work, many of these influences remain unconscious. As within my psychotherapeutic work, however, they need to be thought about and made conscious, to be more aware of my role and to deepen my understanding of the dynamics. As such, my work is informed by insights from psychoanalytic relational theory, particularly from the British object relations school, where unconscious processes and dynamics provide a framework to help me understand, manage and make sense of my experience; concepts such as transference, projective processes, attachment and 'othering' are all highly relevant, and have proved invaluable in framing the following reflections on the trainings.

## **Chapter 2    Understanding the general cultural context**

Running counselling training involves facilitating the personal and professional development of students. The type of knowledge needed to facilitate the professional development aspects of training is relatively straightforward. It involves, apart from teaching the necessary theory and supporting its translation into competent practice, researching the various local structures such as mental health facilities, and the general social and political context, to establish the necessary professional infrastructure. Gaining the type of knowledge necessary to facilitate students' personal development is more complex. It involves developing a level of understanding needed to make sense of the personal and inter-relational processes of students. In many ways, it mirrors the process of psychotherapeutic practice in a group setting. It is the difference between 'knowing' and 'knowing about' (Bion, 1962), which is a defence against connecting to another in a more emotionally deep and meaningful way. To do this, one needs to understand the impact of the cultural context, as well as its experience and specific meanings. As with a therapeutic encounter, this can be helped through the exploration of narrative and the experiential use of self. In the therapeutic setting, awareness of my countertransferential responses is essential in deepening my awareness of my client's lived experiences, and the same is true of working with students. Seeing projective processes, including projective identification (Klein, 1959), as a form of

affective communication (Casement, 1985) is invaluable in giving me a greater insight into the lived experience of students in different cultural contexts.

Working within other cultures also involves considering large group phenomena. Volkan's "large Group Psychology" uses a conceptual framework based upon psychoanalytic theory to examine social phenomena, particularly because of intercommunal conflicts. His ideas of "large Group Identity" (Volkan, 2002) widens the application of Psychoanalytic thinking to include: developmental internalisations and "deposited representations", which ensure and clarify group membership through notions of ethnicity (Volkan, 1996:258). Volkan refers to a "Large Group Tent", which contains and maintains cohesion, dictates values and defines what is 'other, on to whom the rejected "bad" aspects of the self-group can be projected (Kemp, 2014:187). This 'tent' is introjected as personal identity, and threats to its structure can be experienced as anxiety-provoking. Volkan's model is useful to consider as most of the training contexts have been in environments where there has been the experience of past or present intercommunal conflict, and the impact of the group "deposited representations" has been profound.

My own 'Large Group Tent' became clear to me when I started to work in Northern Ireland. Prior to beginning the work, I had thought that I was relatively well informed about the political and cultural history and context of the province. The Troubles framed by the civil rights march in Londonderry in October 1968, and the Good Friday agreement in April 1998, were a constant feature as I grew up. Despite this, the limits of my knowledge quickly became clear. Apart from an awareness of some violent attacks on the mainland, such as the Birmingham pub bombings, and events such as 'Bloody Sunday', I was exposed purely to the perspective of English news; I had little knowledge of the experience of those living within the province, and was also subject to British projections about the conflict. As Lucey states: "The Irish were left holding the projections. I think this was very evident in the discourse in Britain about Northern Ireland during 'the Troubles'. It was as if it was

Ireland's war not Britain's – 'Those uncivilised Irish people, warring over there'" (Lucey, 2014:88).

Similarly, the recent reporting following the Good Friday Agreement was suggestive of a solidly established peace, negotiated by the British, which would result in an instant state of security. The reality in 2004 was that the peace agreement felt tenuous at best, and the lack of trust in the process and between parties was ongoing and palpable.

Many defensive behaviours were developed to manage living in a civil war situation, and these were evident in my experience of the general environment. For example, people spoke in lowered voices in 'mixed' public spaces. My colleague and I quickly learned that in restaurants people would move away from us if they overheard our British accents. Parts of the city were 'no-go' areas for us, and certain times of the year, such as Guy Fawkes night and 'marching season', were considered unsafe for us. It was invaluable for us to have a point of contact who could make sense of what we could not, and to locate and explain it in terms of lived experience. We could not read cultural cues, and had to learn the meanings of behaviours and responses, and the possible reasons for them. It was also essential for us to learn to adapt our own behaviour and language from lowering our voices and keeping a low profile, to knowing whether to call the city we were training in Derry or Londonderry.

Apart from our main point of contact, we would often be given a different perspective of experience by others, most notably taxi drivers. During hour-long journeys to and from the airport they would always, on hearing our British accents, point out every place on the journey, and describe in detail where and how atrocities, whether by the British army or paramilitary groups, had taken place. This was troubling from many perspectives, but predominantly around my own biased assumption of knowledge and truth as well as my cultural blindness (Lucey, 2014) and my emergent sense of colonial guilt in belonging to the oppressive nation. This guilt was complex and often would be assuaged with thoughts of 'I'm not like them', but was

brought into sharp focus early one morning when travelling to the training venue. As we rounded a corner, two heavily armed British soldiers jumped in front of the car and one pointed his rifle through the window. They screamed at our driver asking where we were going and why, and then waved us on. Our driver was unmoved, this was normal, but for my colleague and I, it was deeply shocking, but what was more personally disturbing for me was my response as it was happening. My internal thoughts were 'but I'm British' and 'it's OK, when they hear my accent it will be fine'. As we drove on, the awareness of my internal allegiance with the soldier, and protection and power allotted to me by virtue of my nationality, felt shameful.

The challenge of needing to understand the impact of the cultural context was most acute within the training context, and at times this led to feelings of culture shock. I had always found this challenge fascinating, for example as a tourist, and had enjoyed it as part of my work as a psychotherapist when working transculturally with clients. I also enjoyed working with culturally mixed training groups, where the necessary learning to overcome the feelings of unfamiliarity is often shared gradually by participants with one another and the facilitator. However, the impact when establishing a therapy training group, where the group is from one culture and the trainer is not equipped with sufficient understanding, is profound. In a culturally mixed training group the group members do not assume knowledge and share meanings freely; in a culturally similar group this knowledge is assumed and therefore not shared. Thus, I experienced feelings of alienation and exclusion from awareness of some of the process; the group spoke a 'language' that I did not.

One very early experience of this, which I only understood later, took place during the first check-in exercise; students had been asked to say their name and one piece of personal information, but through this the group established the sectarian divide. This information was obvious when they stated their names, but for those whose names were ambiguous, they had given information such as the school they had attended or what side of the river they lived on. As the group was equally Catholic and Protestant, they wanted

to be clear about who they would feel safe to work with, at least initially. As facilitator, I was unaware of this process until it was discussed later in the training. Kapur (2004:54) discusses these sectarian markers as representative of the polarisation caused by experiences of violence and hatred:

“paranoia and suspicion are bound to form the leading edge of human relationships. Here you deduce the religion of the other by making an immediate judgement on first meeting them based on their names...as there are always exceptions, categorisation can also occur by how a person may pronounce the letter ‘h’, Protestants pronouncing the letter as ‘aitch’.”

Connolly and Healy (2003) describe how children absorb sectarian markers, noting that from the age of three to four they can understand and identify with their ‘own’ signs and symbols. This unconscious process means that to the outsider, markers are very difficult to recognise and decode.

Again, I needed a point of contact who understood the dominant culture, and this was vital in helping me decode and make sense of unfamiliar behaviours in the group. This was not always a straight forward process; it relied upon my using psychotherapeutic skills at times, using my own countertransference responses to help identify when I felt a lack of clarity. Powerful, disturbing and exaggerated projective countertransference responses were a feature of much of the work in Northern Ireland. As such, it was important that when I sensed that something was being communicated within the group that I could not understand, I could then explore these feelings with someone who understood the context and then see if they could be understood through reference to local meanings.

I therefore learnt that I held assumptions and misconceptions, which limited my understanding about the reality of lived experience for people living in Northern Ireland. As such, my ability to understand group and individual behaviour was also limited. I also learnt that this could lead to my feeling alienated and disempowered as the training facilitator. Whilst some of this difficulty could be alleviated with the help of a local point of contact, the

struggle continued throughout the training, and I needed to develop the capacity to manage and contain the feelings generated by not knowing, and maintain the curiosity to continue to want to know. This learning was invaluable for all the future training projects.

In Malta, the political, structural and cultural influence of the Catholic church was outside of my cultural understanding, and whilst our students were generally more comfortable with a secular way of life, they and I struggled with being subject to the influence of the Church. The impact of a religious cultural frame was, however, far more challenging when beginning to work with the Haredi Community, where understanding the general cultural context and its impact upon the training context necessitated a fuller understanding of the surrounding religious frame.

Decades earlier I had converted to Judaism within the progressive Reform movement prior to marriage. This gave me a basic understanding and knowledge of the main cultural and religious tenets of Jewish life, which was helpful as background knowledge. I understood many linguistic and cultural references as well as the meaning and importance of Halacha (adherence to Jewish Law); and much of the terminology and practices were also familiar to me. Although this knowledge facilitated some points of contact, my understanding of the experience of growing up and living within the Ultra-Orthodox community was extremely limited.

Working with this community involved an accelerated learning curve; as with the training in Northern Ireland, this was facilitated in different ways. Students would often clarify points of confusion, and there was an explicitly collaborative approach where students were asked to inform me about challenges to their religious adherence arising from the course. Other professionals from within the community also became invaluable advisers, both in terms of giving me general knowledge about the different and complex workings of the Haredi community, and in helping me make sense of unfamiliar group behaviour and interactions.

For example, it was clear that members of the group would go to great lengths to demonstrate to the rest of the group that they were very religious. They would express concerns at material being taught that could be considered 'suspect', although many of these concerns were voiced to each other rather than to me. This appeared to me to be more motivated by a need to appear 'frum' (religiously adherent) to peers, rather than an expression of genuine concern about the material. Initially I understood this to be a need to be accepted as respectable and part of the cultural group; however, as I have grown to know more about the structure and internal processes of the more orthodox groups within the Haredi community and the internal policing of religious behaviour, I have gained a deeper understanding of the behaviour. This 'policing' can involve, for example, parents of school children being encouraged to report other parents if they notice them being irreligious (wearing coloured nail polish, reading a non-Jewish book etc.). A report could lead to a summons and 'trial' by a religious committee at the school, as well as a threat of potential withdrawal of a school place if the parent continues in their perceived non-conformity. Understanding the severity of this internal policing helped me recognise and make sense of the fear behind the motivation of the group behaviour.

The internal policing and fear of societal collapse is a strong feature of the Haredi community. It reflects Volkan's observation of communities where trauma "has been deliberately inflicted upon a large group by a community" (Volkan, 1998:276) leading to feelings of loss and helplessness, as well as experience of "shame, humiliation and an inability to assert itself" together with inhibited mourning. He states that the transgenerational transmission of such affect can leave communities vulnerable to "time collapse", this can "lead to irrational and sadistic or masochistic decision making by the leadership of the large group" (ibid 1998:276) and in defending itself against the shame and humiliation of the trauma, identification with the oppressor.

Access to learning about the community has been, and continues to be, problematic. Mistrust of 'outsiders' is encouraged by community leaders to strengthen and maintain group cohesion. This mistrust means that the

outward sharing of information about the community is discouraged. Because of this I have chosen to become involved in the community in various professional ways, partly to increase personal trustworthiness to the community but also to maximise my understanding of critical cultural issues. I became a clinical supervisor and consultant for a prominent Jewish Orthodox charity, and also worked with many Orthodox clients within my practice; this has increased my understanding and supported the training. The strengthened professional network has also been invaluable in supporting me, particularly when I have faced implicit and explicit challenges from within the community.

The limitations of my presumed knowledge about working with the Jewish Community were mirrored in my work in Pakistan. My prior knowledge of Pakistan was based primarily upon my experience of living and working with British Pakistanis in the UK. Prior to 9/11 there was little media coverage about Pakistan, which may have influenced my perceptions and thoughts about working there. The ensuing 14 years have seen increasing anti-Pakistan sentiment and critical representation in the British media, which has been interesting, since much of the representations have run counter to my experience, and yet are often cited by friends and colleagues as a reason for their concerns about my working there. Whilst there are truths about the negative portrayals of Pakistan, there are many other truths that are missing in the rhetoric. The echoes of colonial discourse are clear, the purpose of which Bhabha argues is:

“to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types...in order to justify conquest and to justify systems of administration and instruction” (1991:70).

Whilst there may be politically strategic reasons to maintain this rhetoric, the use of such representations also serve to fulfil psychological processes. As Said remarks in *Culture and Imperialism*:

“All cultures tend to make representations of foreign cultures, the better to master or in some way to control them.” (1993:120)



This control can be external (in the case of colonisation), and internal where representations reflect the splits and projections employed to manage disowned parts of the self (Klein, 1946). Lowe, drawing on the work of Fanon (1967), considers the relationship between black and white people in both external and internal reality in terms of colonial object relations. He argues that:

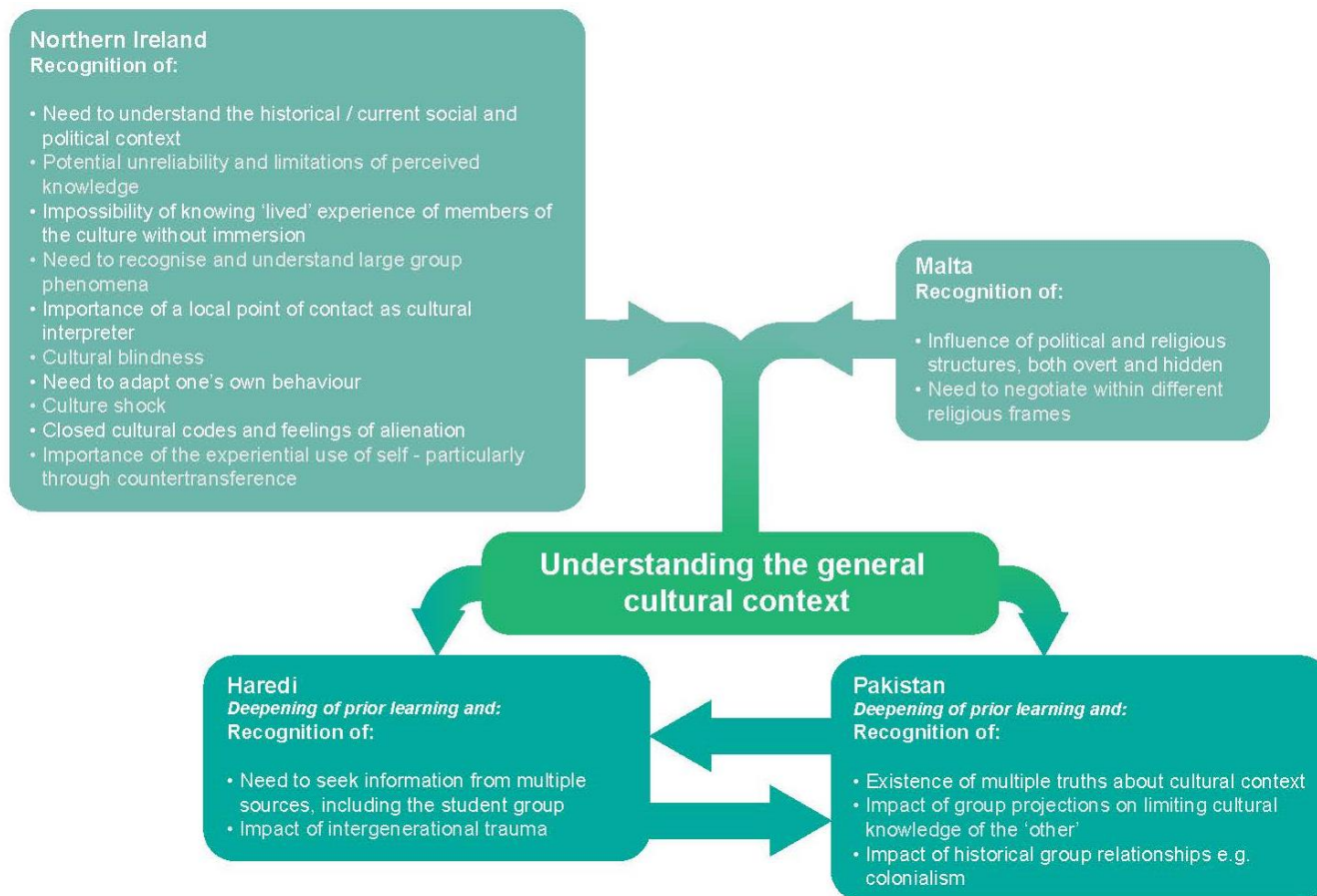
“...‘the black’ and ‘the white’ are both part objects, that form part of a destructive type of object relation inherited from the history of ...colonization and empire” (2008:21)

Awareness of these part-object representations is important, as they potentially contaminate my relationships with the people I work with in Pakistan. The current rhetoric includes ideas of Pakistan as a country of dangerous terrorists, and of Britain, as potential saviours (both discourses are amply illustrated in the case of Malala Yousafzai). In contrast to my work in Northern Ireland, much of the negative discourse has developed since my starting to work in Pakistan and, as such, has been less influential as it also has been at odds with perceived my experience of reality when working there.

In Pakistan, we predominantly work with the liberal elite, many of whom have been educated in the UK, USA or Canada, and are culturally familiar with me. Outside of my experience, however, was working in an environment with little protective infrastructure. Karachi is a mega-city with extreme divisions between rich and poor. Whereas in Northern Ireland I was often working with the fall out of a violent sectarian war, while in Karachi it has often felt like working on the cusp of one. Throughout the years of training in Karachi, the security situation and regional instability have been constant and challenging, and the impact of the threat of violence on myself and my students has been powerful. Knowing when, how and where it is safe is impossible for me as an outsider. Because the situation can change per local events, such as a political rally, I am totally reliant on the knowledge and protection of our local points of contact, which is also personally challenging.

As with the other projects, my local points of contact contextualise my experience of the prevailing socio-political culture and context and its impact on training groups. It has been invaluable to understand sectarian differences, and equally powerful class divisions, as well as religious and social frameworks, the impact of the remaining Feudal systems, the political and legal infrastructure, along with the socio-political and historical impact of colonialism and partition. More than that, in Karachi our local points of contact enabled us to be there by minimising the risk, and when we have been in potentially life threatening situations, they have negotiated and managed the threat.

**Figure 2-1: Understanding the general cultural context**



## **Chapter 3 Working in a different political context**

### **3.1 Negotiating the political landscape and adapting the training to satisfy the needs of the community and the profession**

As a counselling training organisation both our work and that of our students are subject to a professional conduct framework. This framework and code of implied practice is culturally situated. The values underpinning a frame are considered important within the culture that generates the framework, and may not be universally shared. This tension can play out within training, as well as within the community where the training is situated.

Counselling training takes place within a social and political context, and running a counselling training course involves negotiating the involvement and support of many organisations outside of the training. The most significant organisations are those that provide clinical placements for students. During the final two years of the course, students need to accrue 220 clinical client hours, which must take place within a clinical placement setting. Contracts are negotiated and established between the placement, student and CPPD,<sup>17</sup> and liaison continues throughout the training. In London, we have established strong working relationships with many placement providers. This enables our students to secure placements relatively easily, despite fierce competition. This was initially achieved by sourcing and establishing contact with agencies and working to establish effective relationships. It has been helped by the work of our students, many of whom are often employed by their placements upon qualification. Initiating training courses in other locations required this process to commence without any prior foundation.

In Northern Ireland, I was aware that this work would be needed, I was also aware of other possible difficulties. I understood that previous courses had folded due to difficult obstructions from funding bodies and placement providers, and many of these had been played out along sectarian lines.

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<sup>17</sup> Annex 13

Placements would only be offered to students who belonged to the same political and religious group. These were fiercely contested, and training would be petitioned and funding bodies attacked with allegations of sectarian bias. Kapur (2004:81) discusses the obstructions and difficulties experienced by professional agencies in delivering health and social welfare services in Northern Ireland. He observes that:

“the effect of sectarianism helped to enforce a collective silence about potentially dangerous political and social agendas”, and:  
“when a society is troubled, the very institutions that run society will mimic the same regressive features of the wider society”

This conflict was played out in various arenas within the community, including the course. Whilst it was believed that a training organisation outside of the province would be less susceptible to such attacks, I was unsure whether this would be the case, and knowledge of a potential threat was anxiety-provoking. I worked closely with the head of the Trauma Advisory Panel, as they were instrumental in helping me manage the situation. They provided me with necessary information about who were influential, and the best way to negotiate in how to work with us rather than against us. This was not an easy task and sometimes involved having to make difficult compromises. For example, I knew that the head of a placement provider had previously tried to establish counselling training which had failed. Following the closure of that course, counselling placement opportunities within the organisation were withdrawn, causing difficulty for other courses, which in turn also closed. I recognised that our course needed their support, both as a placement provider and because they had political influence in the counselling community at the time. As such, I asked them to be part of the training team. I was aware, on occasion, of a potential for them to undermine the course and I had to manage the results whilst keeping them allied to our organisation. This was a political decision, which was often frustrating and required a high level of diplomacy, but was necessary to keep them inside the course, and for our likely survival.

The learning for me in this process was invaluable for future projects. I learnt to consider the larger community, how to employ diplomatic sensitivity and how to creatively persevere towards our goals. This work often involved ethical dilemmas and required me to develop my capacity to manage ambivalence and tolerate acceptable compromise. It helped me develop my capacity for ethical decision making and practice, particularly in considering the practitioner and the local context. BACP (2015:4) acknowledges this in their 2015 Ethical Framework revision:

“Ethical principles are well suited to examining the justification for particular decisions and actions. However, reliance on principles alone may detract from the importance of the practitioner’s personal qualities and their ethical significance in the counselling or therapeutic relationship. The provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate services is also a fundamental ethical concern.”

In Malta, my ethical decision making was further tested as several dilemmas arose through the dominant religious context. The influence of the Catholic church created challenges for us and our students. I sometimes struggled with matching the needs of the students and their clients, the BACP Ethical Framework and the local religiously-informed framework. For example, we are committed to equality of opportunity and the avoidance of discrimination, and ethically bound to transparency and truth, but I faced the dilemma of supporting a student’s concealment of their sexuality on a placement application disclosure form. Had they stated their sexuality, they could have been refused a placement in any church organisation. Similarly, we had to support a student whose young client was removed from her care following a suspected disclosure of sexual abuse. During her disclosure, the child had drawn picture of a man with horns and a huge penis standing over her bed. This was taken by the school as evidence of the child’s possession and, as such, the preferred form of ‘treatment’ was for a priest to perform an exorcism on the child. When the student expressed concern about the school’s interpretation and the potential damage to the child, their placement was terminated.

The religious and political framework left little room for negotiation. Being lesbian or gay precluded employment in religious schools and this could not be directly challenged at that time. I had to consider how to manage future disclosure of risk within different settings, including in relation to client safety. Working within these opposing tensions was deeply challenging, not least because it required me to take responsibility for contentious decisions. It also developed my capacity to use my personal authority to make such decisions, based upon a wider understanding of ethical decision making.

Whilst my experience taught me that working in different contexts created the need to negotiate the local political landscape, I believed that running training in London, albeit for a minority culture, would be less problematic. However, working within the Haredi community has involved similar dilemmas. Even within the UK, the community has its own religious pseudo-political structures. The need for religious adherence overrides all other professional frameworks for students, and as such, all work needs to be considered and cleared in relation to religious doctrine, or it would not be acceptable to students or sanctioned by religious leaders.

As with Malta, these religious doctrines are non-negotiable but the application of these doctrines appear more variable. For example, consultation with Rabbis forms part of many student's life and practice, and Rabbinical consent allows certain practices that might ordinarily be prohibited to be deemed acceptable in certain circumstances. This is particularly true around the health and welfare of people; within counselling, the need to talk about normally religiously inappropriate subjects can be allowed if it is important for the health and wellbeing of an individual. However, this negotiation remains relatively inaccessible to me. This has meant that negotiations have mostly been in the hands of students, and when trying to resolve a Rabbinical injunction against a part of the training, all negotiations had to be done by a therapist from within the community, who I had recruited onto our training team.

My prior experience of needing to resolve conflict when working across cultural contexts helped equip me to face this challenge. This was not the case, however, with several members of my team. Whilst I had expected conflicting demands from the community, I had not expected it from CPPD staff. The difficulties emerged initially when discussing the need for students to take material about the course and their work with clients to their Rabbis. I had explained the cultural imperative for Rabbinical consultation, and that there is little written to support halachic decision making about the field of psychotherapy, meaning that direct contact with Rabbis would be important for students. Spero (1986) detailed the lack of consensus in writing about Jewish law/ethics in relation to psychotherapy; unlike general medical practice, so that therapists would need to rely upon their own Rabbis for guidance.

Nonetheless, several of our course supervisors felt student consultation with Rabbis was unethical and some were reluctant to supervise students who chose to do so. It had been widely accepted by our staff team that working in different political environments (abroad) would mean that we would need to make adjustments; however, there was much more reluctance from a number of our staff to make adjustments when it was seen that the minority group were training within UK culture. There was a strong sense that they 'had to accept "our" way', and there was palpable frustration from some staff who felt that the Haredi students were having different or preferential treatment.

Some staff were certain that 'our rules' of practice had to be maintained and their positions, to me, felt rigid and idealised. Horne, writing about psychoanalysis in Britain in 2006, discusses the institutional idealised orthodoxy which can be attached to theory and practice, depending upon 'ideal internal objects', which: "often brings an accompanying reluctance to question ideas...and carries with it an assumption that what one is taught are "set" and "right" techniques and principles" (Horne, 2006:20).



When working within a familiar cultural framework, we can become accustomed to clear 'rules' of practice. I believe that this can restrict our ability to think about the meaning of such rules, viewing them as concrete absolutes, rather than as a guide to ethical practice. This can, in turn, hinder us from working with difference. Many writers have highlighted the:

"lack of interest in developing psychotherapy services that are more accessible and responsive to people from adverse social and cultural circumstances" (Lowe, 2014:13 and also see Altman, 2010; Bhugra & Bhuni, 1998).

Some have emphasised an unwillingness to recognise the impact of racial and cultural diversity within service provision (Kareem & Littlewood, 2000; Morgan, 1998; Young, 1994). This lack of recognition supports an inflexible approach that means that some clients' (and trainees') needs are not considered.

I think that this may be particularly relevant when working with a minority group within the majority culture, as there is often a presumed 'rightness' of the majority cultural framework. The belief in the rightness of the supervisors' positions created a difficult environment, as I struggled to negotiate and work collaboratively in balancing both community and professional needs. Brooks identifies the restriction of thinking that may be caused within a group who believes themselves to be right:

"maintaining their own sense of themselves as the group that is in the right is likely to get in the way of its members being able to think about themselves, others, and the very thing that they claim to be right about" (Brooks, 2014:39).

To address professional concerns, I worked with students to think about challenging issues, such as how client confidentiality could be maintained whilst consulting with their Rabbis. This involved thinking about client contracting, to include explicit disclosure (to their clients) of the purpose and nature of Rabbinical consultation. Once such issues were clarified and agreed by the Rabbis, the framework for practice could be established. The

supervisors felt their concerns had been addressed, and most were happy to accept and work within the framework.

Reflecting on the dynamics triggered within the staff team, there was a parallel process that reflected many of the dynamics of the community in relation to the outside world. I felt a strong pull towards a paranoid schizoid response, as I had to resist temptation driven by frustration, to split the staff team into those who were 'with me' and 'against me'. This dynamic repeatedly played out when working with the community. I was helped to contain my feelings and those of my students and staff by my experience of political conflict, as well as being able to consider paranoid schizoid thinking (Klein, 1946) and other unconscious processes.

I believe that many of the adjustments required to meet contrasting needs can be negotiated with creativity, and working with the Haredi community has demonstrated this many times. The needs of the community often feel contrary to the needs of the profession, and when these issues arise it is challenging for all parties. The initial step is for all of us to accept the challenge, and then work together to examine and resolve it. Working collaboratively to resolve conflicting needs should be a constructive process, in which students must play a part. By contrast, I believe an oppositional stance would have been destructive; enabling students to work with us to find solutions to meet our diverse needs empowered them to trust and feel confidence in us, as well as our collective work.

My ability to hold the complexity and be non-oppositional is the result of several factors. I grew up with an awareness of political processes including experiences of oppositional and consensual decision making. This taught me to value constructive negotiation and to consider the motivation behind opposition. My experience as a couple therapist and with the training in Northern Ireland developed this awareness further. I also recognise that I am comfortable with compromising aspects of myself to meet what I believe to be a greater need. My belief in equality of opportunity meant that I was

determined to work with and resolve issues of difference and I was confident that it could be done in a way which could ultimately satisfy all parties.

It also helped that students were very used to thinking about how religious law can be interpreted and applied in a non-dogmatic way. One example arose in how cross-gender working was negotiated. The first cohort I taught had come to us because the training organisation where they had earlier taken a certificate course did not allow them to progress unless they worked cross gender. I was aware that our training group was mixed, with a range of students from the more orthodox groups (Hassidic and Gur) as well as modern orthodox communities. Within the wider community, different groups adhere to a greater or lesser level of orthodoxy, and interpret and apply the same laws differently. For example, the belief that women should cover their hair in public is applied differently, according to the specific Haredi subgroup. In communities that consider themselves as modern orthodox, women often wear a Sheitel (wig worn as a religious head covering) over their hair, whereas in a more traditional Hassidic community, women might shave their own hair and wear a double hair covering of a Sheitel and a hat. This difference meant that the interpretation and application of religious laws of behaviour could be open to adjustment for some students; I felt that we could potentially work together to ensure that even if in the future, a graduate choose not to work cross gender, they could nevertheless demonstrate that they were able to do so.

There are clear directions about gender segregation within the community, and I also had to manage these as dynamic issues. Seating had to be arranged with men and women sitting separately, with a gap between the two groups. As it is forbidden in some parts of the community for married men and women to sit privately together in cross gender setting, this created difficulty when exercises required privacy when students were sharing personal information. I decided that initially we should allow students to work with their own gender and over time students found their own way to accommodate cross gender working.

The impact of the strict gender division in all practical work was lessened by insisting that feedback from exercises was done in the whole group setting. This enabled the students to hear each other speak. Many students (particularly men from more orthodox communities) expressed how this was novel for them. They said that they had previously only heard personal thoughts and feelings expressed by the opposite gender through parents, siblings and spouses. Some men said that they had never heard women express personal feelings, even though they were married, and they expressed surprise that women were not as 'foreign' as they had previously thought. As the students became comfortable with listening they began to discuss ways in which they could work together across gender. Some students consulted Rabbis, some of whom agreed that it would be permissible if they worked together in a room where they could be seen and 'potentially' overheard. This allowed some students to work freely with other group members. As the training qualifies students to work with anyone, I felt that it was important that those students who still felt unable to work cross gender completed an assessed and observed a session with one (actor) client of the opposite gender. They were happy to do this because as the session was observed by the tutor, it would be religiously acceptable.

Other practical adjustments were needed, such as changing the timetable to take account of the many Jewish holidays, and the timing of the training day to consider the needs of mothers on the course. Most women on the course typically have more than five young children, and will often have babies at some point during their training. For example, during a two-year training group, eight babies were born to the seven women attending the course. To allow them to attend modules taught over two days we established a crèche in our building.

In the most orthodox sections of the community, members are not allowed to use the internet. Phones (that are not internet enabled) are 'Kosher' and email is not used. We had to adjust our usual systems of administration by providing hard copy hand-outs for students who were unable to access them online. Furthermore, some students could not access information through

placement websites or professional organisations such as BACP. Many students could not easily access much information, however, students who did use the internet would support those who did not, and often shared useful information with their peers.

Much of the material presented to the group was also challenging to them. Certain topics, such as sexuality, are taboo. Early in the training of the first cohort, a group was shown the training video of Carl Rogers working with a client called Gloria. Some women were uncomfortable with her discussion of sex outside of marriage and walked out of the group. Over time, however, students felt able to think about their discomfort, and recognised the need to be able to discuss and work with uncomfortable topics. Eventually they could process and tolerate the most challenging aspects of the work, such as working with their own erotic countertransference.

Clearly, much of this work required me to accept and understand the students' world view and work with it. It would have been quite easy not to tolerate their initial refusal to hear someone discussing sex. However, I trusted that students could be helped to develop the capacity to tolerate and work with their taboo issues, and strove to be open in exploring how the growth could be facilitated in an acceptable way to them. Again, this process was negotiated with the students' active involvement, which meant allowing students to openly discuss what was being asked of them in relation to Halachic laws.

Halachic arguing became a common feature of the training, and often became a forum for the students to make sense of, and resolve their own ethical and religious dilemmas about the course and the work. Sometimes Rabbis would be consulted and the information gained would be fed back to the group. I was included in the discussions, and would be allowed to contribute up to a point. My input was useful in terms of being able to clarify why 'irreligious conduct' might be important to the work. For example, the idea of having sexual feelings towards someone other than one's spouse would be considered unacceptable from a religious point of view, but the

ability to experience erotic countertransference in a therapeutic setting could be essential to the work. If I could clarify the importance to the client, then 'irreligious conduct' could often be considered Halachically acceptable. Giving room for Halachic argument was also helpful to the students, for them to defend the course and work to their Rabbis and communities.

The complexities of negotiating the political context proved most difficult where strong existing structures are in place. This has been the case where religious frameworks have been seen to be at odds with my own ethical and cultural frameworks. In Pakistan, the majority of our students are from the more progressive Shia community, and the impact of religion is less influential when thinking about practice. The absence of a counselling infrastructure, including placements and other training courses, meant that rather than having to negotiate with existing services we had to help to create them. The lack of strong political structures and legal systems, coupled with sparse mental health services, also meant that agencies were often very happy to accommodate students for their clinical work.

Whilst the negotiation was often less conflictual, the size of the task was considerable in having to establish placements and educate the placement providers and professionals about counselling. This work was done mostly by our strong team of supervisors, and over time, taken further forwards by graduate students. These graduates in turn have established agencies and placement opportunities working with a range of clients, including street children and women survivors of acid burn attacks.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Annex 14.2

### 3.2 Working without support structures amidst political instability

Figure 3-1: Armed guard – CPPD training rooms, Karachi



My work in Northern Ireland exposed me to high levels of vicarious trauma. This was largely experienced through countertransference in response to the projective processes of students, as well as material presented in relation to 'the Troubles'. The impact of this was powerful and disturbing whilst working there, but relatively easy to contain and resolve on returning home. I believe that this was due to two reasons: the trauma experienced was vicarious and not generally ongoing, and there were strong support structures in place to support traumatised individuals. In Pakistan I am similarly exposed to vicarious trauma, but the supportive conditions that exist in Northern Ireland are not available. There are very few support structures and Karachi continues to be a dangerous and unstable environment.

The political instability in Pakistan causes many challenges, exacerbated by a lack of systems and structures designed to establish and maintain safety. FCO (2016:1) reports:

“There are high levels of violence in Karachi. The city is vulnerable to serious violent ethnic conflict between different communities. Criminal and political violence is also common including armed carjacking, robbery, kidnap and murder. Strikes called by various religious and political parties cripple the city and regularly produce violent civil unrest. It’s difficult to predict the safety of daily activity. You should carefully plan any travel within the city taking into account of all the threats. If you intend to move outside the more stable areas you should take advice from hosts or trusted contacts and be prepared to cancel or curtail your plans.”

The gradual rise in sectarian violence and terrorist activity continues to be a major issue for us and our students. Whilst our students are religiously mixed, the majority are from the elite Shia community, who have been increasingly targeted. In 2015, one of our ex-students was shot in a targeted attack by two gunmen while working with a patient in his clinic; luckily, he survived the attack. There are also a large number of armed ‘car-jackings’ which regularly take place across the city. Staff and the majority of students travel to and from the course with armed guards and we have guards at the training venue.<sup>19</sup> Over time this has become an accepted security feature (like wearing a seat belt), although sometimes it comes more powerfully into the training, such as when a student arrived late for the initial weekend session of the diploma training. She apologised and explained that she had just been robbed at gun-point whilst dropping her child off in care before coming to the course. Students demonstrated warm concern for her and her child, but there was little alarm at what had happened.

The experience of violence and the continual threat of violence, and the students’ management of it by denial and disassociation, is a feature of working in Karachi, as it was in Northern Ireland. There are differences between the two experiences, however, in that rather than being able to manage student trauma and remain interested, I often find myself employing the same strategies as the students. The CPPD armed guard storing his machine gun in the cupboard underneath our therapy book library has become normal; the fact that there is a ‘lock-in’ and we cannot stand in the

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<sup>19</sup> Annex 15



street during a break because a motorbike has driven past the building a few times is experienced as an inconvenience rather than a direct threat. My movement is restricted and controlled. There are areas of the city which are not safe for us, and I am driven everywhere with an armed guard in the front seat and move quickly from car to venue, entrusting my safety to others. These defensive strategies have become normal and are rarely noticeable except in retrospect.

The traumatic nature of the work in Pakistan is exaggerated by the lack of political infrastructure. There are high levels of trauma experienced in any politically volatile situation, and this is much more difficult to contain and manage when there are few structural mechanisms in place. Being used to working within clear and well-marked systems of 'what to do' and 'who to contact' in difficult or dangerous situations, creates a strong safety net. This is shored up through the belief that other agencies, professionals and networks will support the work that we are doing. Any removal of this 'safety net' would be profoundly challenging.

Pakistan's Mental Health services are relatively poor by UK standards. In a country of 180 million, there are 340 trained psychiatrists. The World Health Organisation 2009 report on mental health provision in Pakistan demonstrated the lack of psychiatric treatment facilities, with 3,700 outpatient facilities and 624 community based inpatient facilities throughout the whole country. There are no social services, and almost no child protection services; Pakistan only criminalised sexual assault against children last year (Dawn News, March 2016). Police and armed forces corruption, and the fear of it, means that the legal system is unreliable, and there is no regulation of professions. Thus when difficult situations arise, such as suicidal clients, this has to be managed without support mechanisms that are familiar in the UK, which inevitably increases the levels of trauma and can lead to particular ethical dilemmas.

I recently experienced one example of such a dilemma with an Advanced Diploma trainee who, whilst being highly competent, was very distressed in

the training group following an assessment session she had undertaken with a 16-year-old boy. Her placement is in a community organisation in a very impoverished and dangerous part of the city. The boy had been brought to the project by his mother who had helped to cut him down from an attempted suicide by hanging. The greatest difficulty for the student was how distressing she found the fear of her responsibility, given her knowledge that there was no one else who could give him any kind of emotional or psychological support. She was also distressed by the image of the welts around his neck and when he cried during the session. In the UK, a student would not be expected to work with a client in such a situation, but in Karachi, it was his only treatment option and had to be considered.

A lack of familiar structural systems can also lead to unexpected confusion. When stopping a student from practicing because of her inability to contain and work with difficult feelings in the group, she spoke of finding the same problem within her counselling practice. She said that she found one particular client difficult to work with, because she considered his material to be 'too dark'. In our discussion, we spoke about the need to develop the capacity to work with material that we consider 'dark', but I had to take back some of my assertions when she told me that his 'darkness' involved digging up corpses, taking them home and chatting to them before later dumping the bodies on waste ground across the city. One would assume that such an occurrence in London would have been shocking and extraordinary, and police and mental health services would have been contacted, amidst a media circus. In Karachi, there was a level of normalcy and no one else to refer the client to, although we did encourage her to stop working with the client.

A lack of support services can also lead to increased risk to personal safety. This became clear in 2015 when we had to ask a student to leave the course. They had become unwell, and had been threatening and harassing other students and their families for imagined misdemeanours and this resulted in

death threats being issued to my colleague.<sup>20</sup> In other circumstances this may be considered a symptom of illness, but in this case the student was related to a politically and financially powerful feudal family, who had the means and experience of settling 'insults' in such a way. Feudal families in Pakistan hold economic and political influence and often fulfil some of roles that the formal institutions are unable to. They also protect members from attack: "whether by dacoits, the police, the courts – your tribesman will get you out of jail, lie for you to the court, avenge you if necessary" (Lieven, 2011:18)

After a series of increasingly concerning texts from the student, including statements of: 'My family have buried lots of women alive' and: 'White women can be buried alive too', we recognised an alarming situation and had to take these threats seriously. We increased our personal security by wearing the full Burka to and from the training venues, as this was the point of the day we were most vulnerable. It was a very difficult situation, which was exacerbated by our lack of knowledge of the feudal system and an understanding of how to manage such a situation within the political/cultural context. Without a familiar police or security service or mental health service to support us, we had to rely on our point of contact to negotiate with the student's family in an appropriate way. The reliance on others for our personal safety decreased my sense of personal agency and control, which was both challenging and an extra risk factor for developing symptoms of acute stress. Again, at the time, I managed the situation with a level of denial as this was the only method to enable me to continue to manage and continue the training.

The impact of employing such strategies is often only felt when returning to safety. During a transition, I often experience denied reactions to stress and need to process them. I know that when I return from a training week, I often experience several symptoms of acute stress disorder, including feeling

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix 2

disconnected from my surroundings, increased arousal and anxiety, hypersensitivity to noise and a heightened startle reflex.

One example of such a reaction occurred when I attended a neighbour's party on November 5th, the day after returning from a particularly difficult Karachi trip. I noticed with some confusion that other guests were backing away from my conversation, when I was answering honestly their queries about Pakistan. I then went into the garden, and a sudden firework startled me to the extent that I felt panic and had to stop myself from crying but also wanted to leave immediately. The unconscious cause of panic became clear as I said "I was fine at the party, until the gun shots went off".

Over time I have learnt to manage the transition and processing of trauma. This involves increased personal and professional support including increased therapy and supervision. I recognise the potential for burnout and PTSD as a real risk, both from the experience of vicarious and ongoing trauma (Canfield, 2005; Herman, 1992). It is essential for me to keep this in mind and monitor my wellbeing both personally and through feedback from trusted individuals.

### **3.3 Working within a different physical environment**

The risk of developing burnout is increased by the very challenging physical environment of Pakistan. Managing heat, jet-lag and bouts of sickness is exhausting, particularly within a limited reliable infrastructure and an unreliable power source. After a while it becomes the background to the work, and is somewhat managed by denial and adrenalin, which is very often a feature of this work. This adrenalin accompanies my heightened awareness due to not being fully able to wholly interpret the risk involved in certain situations. For example, a gunshot from outside of the group room could a wedding celebration, but if accompanied by the sound of a motorbike, could evidence a target killing or terrorist attack. The students are acutely aware of the differences and my awareness is raised as theirs is; I am left working with a degree of hyper-vigilance, looking for various subtle markers of alarm, students flashing looks at each other to check if they have registered

something potentially dangerous, and all this remains largely unconscious. I have found that hyper-vigilance creates a state of alertness; in the short-term it can help to counteract exhaustion, but in the long-term tiredness is exacerbated.

I now recognise that the result of working in such a difficult situation has the potential to be emotionally and physically damaging. Self-care has to be integral to the work, and I now try to arrange the modules at the beginning of UK holiday periods to ensure I can take a break after the training. When this is not possible, limiting UK training and practice commitments can help to manage the impact of the work, alongside personally reliable supervisory and therapeutic support.

### **3.4 The difficulty of managing and containing a group from a distance**

The background projects in Northern Ireland and Malta were run on a monthly weekend basis. They helped me understand the difficulties of running a course from a distance, as well as the need for an increased infrastructure on the ground, such as supervisory support for students during our absence. In Pakistan, the course is run in six week blocks throughout the year, and the six week gaps increase the sense of absence and lack of support for students. Whilst email and Skype can be helpful during gaps, the lack of reliable power and internet leads to an unsatisfactory form of contact. The need for tutor/supervisor contact and feedback during absences can often be difficult to sustain, leading to increased mutual insecurity and anxiety.

The intensity of the work also impacts on return trips to the UK; it can often feel like working in two different worlds, which are difficult to manage when they encroach upon each other. For example, receiving emails from students in the UK while in Pakistan can feel invasive and vice versa. As a core tutor, I need to think about transitioning between contexts, as well as management issues for either group from a distance. Strong student support and administration systems need to be in place to support tutors to manage the

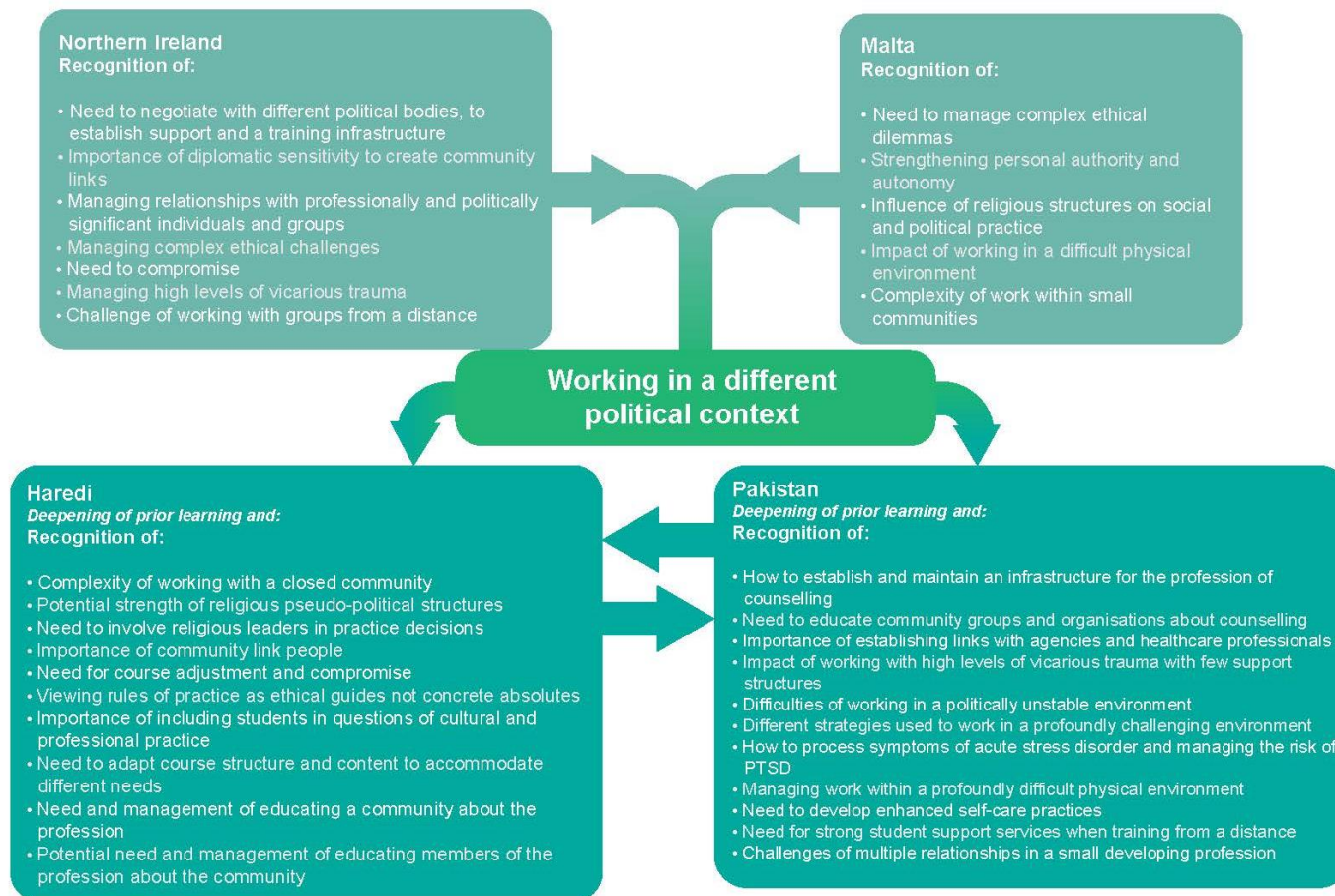
duality, and we have excellent course administrators in London and Karachi, who are key in supporting the work and our students.

### **3.5 The difficulty of working within small community groups**

Our experience of training in Malta helped prepare us for training groups from relatively small communities. The potential for co-existing and multiple relationships is high, both in terms of training relationships and client work. All the groups that we have trained have been from relatively small communities. In Karachi, most of our students are from a small elite Shia community and students will often know each other or family members. In Karachi, there are few qualified supervisors and therapists, and many of the course supervisors are also working with trainees (or their relatives) as clients. This means that extra care has to be taken during supervisor and staff meetings to maintain confidentiality.

Training the Haredi group involves various challenges. Whilst there is a vast pool of therapists in London, and our supervisors are from outside of the community, students from the smaller communities will have connections to other students and will know each other's family members. It is not uncommon for potential students to ask the name of other students before agreeing to undertake training. As some students choose not to tell their families that they are training, we are only able to give this information with their explicit consent. This also has implications for client work, as students will often have clients referred to them whose families, if not the clients themselves, are known. This means that rules of confidentiality must be made clear and explicit, particularly for a community where religiosity and non-disclosure of information is of paramount concern.

**Figure 3-2: Working in a different political context**



## **Chapter 4    The impact and meaning of therapeutic exercises and theory in different cultural contexts**

### **4.1      Therapeutic exercises**

Part of my fascination in working within different cultural contexts arises from the challenge of making sense of the impact of material and theory. In particular, differential impacts can give useful insight into the lived experience of people inhabiting other cultures.

Our course requires trainees to apply therapeutic theory to their own experience and subjective processes before doing so in relation to clients. This is a major source of personal development for the students, as Johns states:

“personal development – a consistent and continual striving for self and other awareness, knowledge understanding and acceptance – should be an essential and indeed pre-eminent element in counselling training at any level, in any theoretical orientation” (2002:3)

Within the training this is primarily conducted by using reflective experiential exercises, although some of these exercises do not easily translate from one culture to another. This can be difficult to predict and sometimes leads to unintentional responses. As an example, asking a group of trainees in Northern Ireland to wear a Niqab for a transcultural role-play was impossible for some students, because of the fear engendered by the association of face-covering with using a balaclava, a feature of paramilitary violence. Other exercises also engendered unexpected student responses, which needed to be understood per their own frame of reference. An ethical dilemma scenario involved a client breaking into a counsellor’s house and being found sitting in their kitchen;<sup>21</sup> In Northern Ireland this was not seen as an ethical dilemma but was felt to be a life-threatening situation, whereby all students ‘knew’ the

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix 3



counsellor must get out of the house and call the security services in case the client had a gun.

Another example has been repeated in showing the film “John at 17 Months: a young child’s response to 9 days in a residential nursery”. Following on from earlier work by Winnicott and Britton (1957), who researched the disturbance caused to young children by parental separation linked to evacuation, James and Joyce Robertson studied and filmed the profoundly negative reactions to early parental separation. The study argued there should be: “concern about the potential harm associated with early separation from the mother” (1971:313).

This film is shown to all students at the start of their final year, to focus students upon the influence of early parenting experience upon subsequent child development. The film usually elicits a mixed response from students in the secular groups in London, including upset and frustration with carers, but the response in each of the Haredi groups has consistently been different. In each of the cohorts, the women remained relatively unmoved, but the men found it traumatic, reacting with profound grief and weeping. They identified strongly with John and the loss of his mother. They were mostly from families where they were one of over eight children, and the film seemed to mirror an experience of profound loss. Indeed, Staetsky and Boyd, (2015) conducted a study for Jewish Policy Research arguing that the orthodox community had an overall birth rate of seven children per woman as opposed to a birth rate 1.93 across the UK. This was further suggested by their persistent need to be close to me as a tutor. If I leave the training room while they are doing an exercise, some men will often leave the room to find me to ask a question, although their questions will rarely be pressing or even relevant to the exercise.

With limited knowledge of the culture where I am teaching, I have often experienced similar and unexpected reactions to the material presented. This can happen in any training environment, where personal experience may be triggered; however, when consistent unexpected reactions occur, these

reactions can give increased insight into culturally determined issues. It can also help to make sense of other unfamiliar or confusing behaviour. The male Jewish Orthodox students' consistent response to the film and my unexpected absences, would indicate difficulties in early attachment (Bowlby, 1991) and individuation (Winnicott, 1971).

#### **4.2 Applying theory to culture**

Students are encouraged to apply theory to their own cultural references throughout the training. For example, when learning about splitting and projection, students will be asked to analyse and apply theory to current news events. The choice of culturally appropriate material, case studies and political examples needs consideration when teaching in a different cultural context. Whereas in the UK the references brought by students will usually be familiar to me, I may have no knowledge of examples brought in by students in different contexts.

To illustrate, in the Advanced year, students are asked to hold a two-sided debate utilising extreme positions to give them an experience of paranoid schizoid functioning. They are asked to reflect on their experiences of their own and opposing sides throughout the process. In Pakistan, I suggested various topics but many showed no interest and they felt that they would struggle to feel any passion for the suggested topics. Whereas in the UK the topic of vivisection often leads to heated and passionate debate, the students there said they did not feel anything about the topic, because they did not really care that much about animals and demonstrated a similar response to issue of legalising assisted suicide. They were more interested in extreme subjects that may also be enacted differently. In a current Advanced group in Karachi, the group decided to debate the topic 'Religion does more harm than good'. The topic was argued with heated passion from each side, and was ended suddenly by one student from the pro-religion side standing up, walking to the middle of the group and shouting *Allahu Akbar* whilst pretending to blow himself up. The group found this hilarious and hugely insightful in understanding paranoid schizoid functioning.

The Haredi group, on the other hand, struggled to even choose a topic. Whilst, as a group, they would often argue passionately about the application of Jewish law to theory, they seemed confused and challenged when invited to choose a contemporary topic to debate two opposing sides. It seemed that they had little experience of debating political positions. They stated that such positions were not for them to decide, and they were either dictated to by religious books or Rabbis, such as who to vote for in political elections. The Haredi of Stamford Hill are as dependable an ethnic voting bloc as the Tammany Hall Irish in 19th-century New York (Brown, 2011). Whereas debating the application of a law is encouraged, this does not apply to debating or arguing general points of opinion. Consensus in a closed community is important and potentially vital for group cohesion and survival. Shilhav describes the feelings of threat and obligation experienced by the Haredi Jews in the wake of the Holocaust:

'The Haredi world have created a system of self-defense by constructing systems of supervision over the economic, cultural and religious behaviour of its population. Thus they are able to halt the erosion towards modernism and secularism, and to commemorate the communities which vanished by shaping an identical lifestyle to be assiduously preserved' (1989:52)

This construction therefore discourages individual opinion and some students felt uncomfortable in being asked to express their own view. However, once they were told that they did not have to agree with their presenting argument, so long as they could argue from that position, they felt free to express vehemently, and found it liberating and enjoyable. Some students were able to say that they had agreed with their presented arguments and disagreed with other group members once the exercise had ended. It was clear that although they held their own opinions, they were reluctant to be seen to hold or express them.

#### **4.3 Differential responses to theory**

Students' responses to theoretical exercises helps give insight into the lived experiences of their cultural context. They also highlight the differences

between their context and my own cultural experience. This is also true of their responses to theory, as well as learning and understanding outcomes.

Students often describe the understanding gained by the application of theory to their own life experience as changing the way they understand themselves and their world. It helps them to make sense and understand how they and others function. Depending on their life experience, different theories will resonate more or less strongly, and have a greater or lesser impact. In Northern Ireland, Kleinian theories of splitting and projection, and concepts of paranoid schizoid and depressive functioning, resonated profoundly with students. It helped them understand their own ways of managing their experience, and appreciate the impact of growing up in a conflict situation. Kapur emphasises that object relations theory offers an important stance:

“viewing some of the problematic individual, group and societal problems of Northern Ireland...Many of the social meanings and stereotypes that contribute to negative human relations in the context of the troubles...are often constructed from perceptions driven by anxiety, paranoid states, and collective failure to see ‘the good with the bad’ (Kapur, 2004:27-8).

Object relations theory helped them understand, appreciate and manage their client work with greater skill and ease, and the insight gained had a profound impact on their growth and client work.

This has been similar in Pakistan, where much of the theory had a meaningful impact on students and they welcomed the learning. For example, understanding splitting and paranoid schizoid functioning is often perceived as particularly helpful in making sense of their experience. They find such theory helpful in understanding potential mechanisms behind sectarian violence, and often explain how they find this insight comforting. Rather than fearing random and inexplicable terrorist attacks, they find it empowering to be able to make sense of them and understand the background processes. Similarly, as students work with victims of extreme

trauma, they find the concept of projective identification helps them contain their own difficult countertransference reactions.

In one example, a student was struggling with the feelings generated from working with female survivors of acid attacks. Following attacks, survivors are often blamed and shunned. They are seen as marked by shame, and are often used as an object for projection of shame for their families and communities. I visited a placement and was invited to do one-off therapy sessions with two clients. Despite many years of practice, I found working with these two women almost unbearable. Layers of shame, horror and pain were palpable in the countertransference. The student similarly struggled to contain the feelings generated when working with the client group. Understanding the possible projective processes involved in her (and my) experience helped her contain and manage her work with clients.

The Haredi groups' reactions to the psychoanalytic theory that they learn is noticeably different to the reactions of groups in other training contexts. In many ways they are more accepting of the theory, as much of the Kleinian theory, is described as feeling familiar to them. They often cite Talmudic (the Rabbinic teachings on the Torah) writing in describing similar theories and processes. Many writers have drawn parallels between the Talmud and Jewish mystical texts and psychoanalytic theory (Bettelheim, 1983; Berke, 1996; Cooper, 1996). For example, Cooper (1996) identifies the similarities between the Rabbinic concept of Yetzer Tov (good inclination) and Yetzer Hara (bad inclination) with the Freudian concepts of the ego and id, and the students often make similar connections.

The Haredi students also find much of the early developmental psychoanalytic theory easy to relate to their own experience. They are significantly more comfortable with Klein's descriptions and interpretations of babies' behaviour, for example. Whereas in secular groups, many students struggle to accept the idea of a spitting destructive baby, the women in the Jewish group all recognise the description. Other aspects of theory, however, have been repeatedly uncomfortable for the group. As mothers of many

children, often in very quick succession, they find much Winnicottian theory troubling, as well as the concept of a good enough mother (Winnicott, 1961).

By far the most impactful and disturbing material is Klein's theories of primitive defensive operations, including splitting, projection and the concept of positions. The Haredi groups find the theory insightful and meaningful, as they relate it to their own experiences of living within a closed community. The disturbance is felt as they recognise several aspects of how such mechanisms are encouraged and used within the community to maintain cohesiveness, but also to control the community. They understand the usefulness of engendering fear of 'the outside' and feel disturbed by this, particularly when they recognise that this fear may not be based on a realistic threat. The personal development that emerges because of the application of theory to their own experience will include moments of painful realisation for many students, who seem to recognise that their subjective perceptions of a happy childhood may have been idealised. The level of disturbance that is experienced by the Haredi group is far greater as it can impact upon their perception of their identity and their own close-knit community.

All advanced level students submit a paper at the end of the first term that reflects upon their experience of the impact of the theory learnt up to this point.<sup>22</sup> Whereas in other group settings, the theory and insight is received with interest and enthusiasm, within the Haredi groups their reflections very often speak of strong desire to somehow unlearn.

As a tutor, I find this wish to avoid what I have 'revealed' to them very challenging. My own learning and search for knowledge and understanding about people and the world is a large part of my enjoyment. Helping students to do the same is equally enjoyable, and presenting theory for students to explore and apply, which they find enlightening and helpful, is deeply satisfying. However, presenting theory which is perceived as unwanted and damaging is disturbing. I can feel as if I am corrupting and attacking the students and their values. These feelings parallel the communities' fear, and

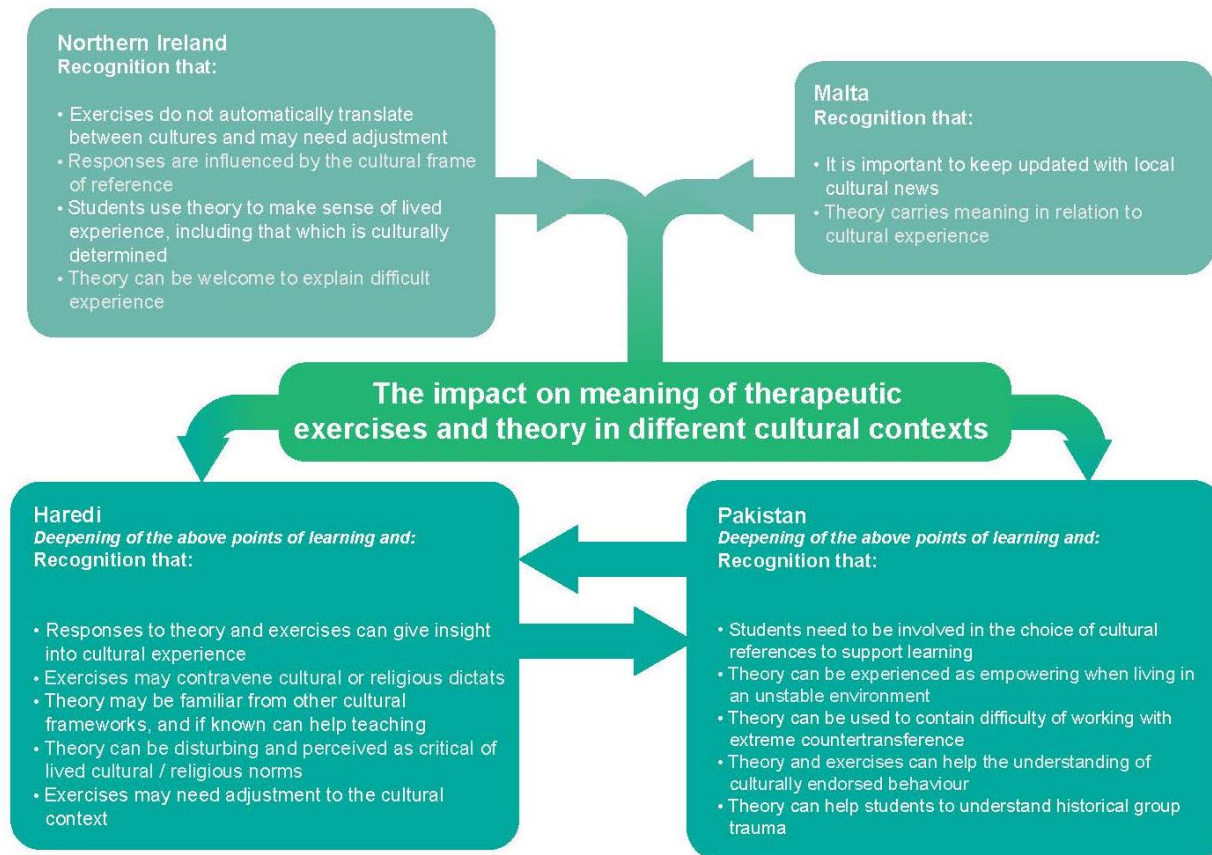
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<sup>22</sup> Annex 16

possibly the students' unconscious fears about the potential damage that can be done to them as students by undertaking secular training.

I experience these difficulties with each new cohort, even though I know that over time, students usually manage to integrate their knowledge with an understanding of why and how their communities have operated over many years. This is a similar process to the way that students can manage their difficult feelings about recognising, for example, that their mothers were not 'good enough', with new understanding about how these patterns have emerged through their community over many generations.

**Figure 4-1: The impact and meaning of therapeutic exercises and theory in different cultural contexts**





## **Chapter 5    The impact of cultural context on group processes**

The training group provides a forum for personal and professional development through the numerous processes that emerge between students. Payne states that experiential group activities during training “offer opportunities for reflection on interactions and other important learning of counsellor [therapist] skills and processes” (Payne, 2004:511). The personal development gained through group process participation is integral to a student’s development as a counsellor. It includes developing an awareness of regressive, primitive fantasies and archaic patterns of relating to others (Bion, 1959), as well as providing the space to identify and explore multiple personal development needs. Gibb (1964) identifies the need for the creation of a ‘felt’ sense of safety, for an experiential group to function effectively, and this can prove challenging for both students and facilitators.

In Northern Ireland, this was particularly challenging, as the group consisted of students from each side of the sectarian divide, and was not initially perceived as a safe space. From the very beginning the group was split, which was a life-long culturally and politically endorsed way of safely understanding and behaving in the world. Farren describes the historical context for the divided province:

“Northern Ireland was therefore from its inception deeply divided in virtually every aspect of communal life, its deep patterns of segregation most readily identifiable in terms of religious affiliation. In housing, education and employment, perhaps the three most important markers of inter-community division, separation was such that to ensure that for long social contact across any of these boundaries was minimal. Each community was endogamous, while the region’s political institutions, rather than providing meeting places in which conflict could be resolved, merely reinforced division at every level” (Farren & Mulvihill, 2000:17)

Psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan describes the process of splitting that often emerges because of political conflict and quotes Culberg-Weston (1997) and his observations following the war in the former Yugoslavia:

“[In Yugoslavia] we found a strong tendency towards splitting. Images were split into good/bad objects and into we/them categories. Almost everyone idealized their own ethnic group and demonized others” (Volkan, 1999:463).

This splitting within society was reflected within the training group. The groups were composed of 50:50 Catholic and Protestant trainees, and this challenged the students' ability to freely function in the group. Although some students were used to working outside of their own communities, the demands of experiential reflective work required them to reveal aspects of themselves and their lives that were deeply personal. In most training groups, this is difficult for students, but in a training group where you are 'sitting with your enemy' it is almost impossible. The students were not only concerned about protecting their own personal information, but were reluctant to share information that might show their community in a negative light. They were also concerned about implying the damaging impact of the other community and what this might do to the group. This meant that students had to initially be allowed to work with who they felt comfortable, and then were encouraged to work cross-community over time. As feedback from experiential exercises took place in front of all the students, the group became increasingly able to share information. This was partially because of the diminishing of projections that the students were carrying towards each other, as well as a recognition of the mutual damage that they had experienced whilst growing up in the midst of a sectarian war. Hearing other people's feedback enabled them to begin to see each other as a whole rather than part-objects, and over time relinquish their paranoid defensive positions when adopting a depressive view of themselves and each other (Klein: 1935,1946)

The resistance to group process was also reflected in a resistance to individual processing. The students, like many in the province, had developed strong defensive emotional splits to help them manage the

distress of living and growing up within a volatile war situation. The labelling of the extremely violent sectarian war “The Troubles” indicates the level of culturally endorsed splitting. Students and their clients would describe impossibly traumatic events with very little emotional connection or affect, and I often experienced the resulting projective identification as highly disturbing. Working with a high degree of trauma within a student group inevitably impacts the facilitator, and can make the management of group processes more difficult, particularly when suppression and splitting from distressing feelings is culturally endorsed. The experience of powerful countertransference responses and being unable to locate or make sense of the feelings increased the level of disturbance to me as group facilitator, and it took time and a great deal of ability to contain traumatic feelings, understand, process and manage them. Bion (1962) described the function of containment and its importance in enabling the move from paranoid schizoid functioning towards a depressive position. It was important that I had the capacity for ‘reverie’ (*ibid.*) – the ability to tolerate, empathise and think about the disturbing unmanageable group feelings for the group to develop and function. As Lowe (2014:24) states:

“The willingness to receive, empathize, and think about the person’s communication not only helps the container to understand the person’s communication but also enables the individual who is communicating to better tolerate his or her unbearable feelings”.

Over time, as students became able to tolerate their own feelings of distress and trust the group to be able to do the same, the impact on me lessened. It was important to recognise that the disturbing feelings that students held towards each other were not necessarily just the result of projection. The traumatic events that had happened to students were real and had involved people associated with other students in the group. Some of these conflicts were known to some or all members of the group, although a few were known to me. This added to the initial general silencing and stasis within the group, and it took time for members to begin to share what felt deeply frightening to all individuals.

One particularly powerful shift in the group occurred towards the end of the first year. One group member felt safe enough to reveal that she did not know how to be with a particular group member and had not felt able to speak to her. She explained to the group that this was because she knew that a relative of this group member had been part of a particularly traumatic incident involving the death of a close member of her own family. As she described what she knew of the incident, the explicit felt expression of grief, horror, rage, terror, guilt and shame within the group gave a voice to her feelings, which had previously been present, yet unmanageable and unspeakable. In a sense, her revelation had given a voice to all of the most extreme feelings that the group held in a projected form towards one another.

My work in Northern Ireland was helpful preparation for working with the Haredi groups. Although the students have not themselves grown up in a war situation, the majority have been subject to the impact of vicarious inherited trauma. As such they demonstrate many of the defensive structures that were present in the groups in Northern Ireland. Many of the Haredi students are second generation survivors of the Holocaust; some are the children of parents who emigrated from Europe during or after the war, which their own parents, aunts and uncles did not survive. Interestingly, through all the training with Haredi groups, despite focussing on the impact of intergenerational experience on parenting and psycho-emotional development, only one student ever mentioned the Holocaust. Nonetheless, I believe that its impact is evident within the students' behaviour and is reflected in their community and group processes.

Psychoanalytic theory prioritises internal processes over external reality, even though the external environment for many early theorists involved extreme threat. Kuriloff (2014) notes that many Jewish analysts, including Freud, were working in Europe at the time of the rise of Nazism and as such were forced into exile. He states:

“In many, many ways, the catastrophe of the Shoah simply fails, at least initially, to appear in the written record of psychoanalysis ... Could this silence represent a psychological response to trauma? Today’s popular notion of dissociation could be employed to explain how the cohort’s overwhelming experiences were jettisoned as too threatening to equilibrium.” (Kuriloff, 2014:1).

Whilst the omission may have arisen due to complex reasons, the inability or unwillingness to consider and discuss the impact of the Holocaust, as with the Haredi students, may imply significant unattended trauma.

Many writers have discussed the impact of trauma and the need to resolve and integrate the experience to restore psychic function. Samets (2015) argues that failure to resolve trauma by the person or people who initially experience it can lead to: “inherited trauma” which is then passed from generation to generation (Samets, 2015:35). Fromm (2012) describes different forms of intergenerational trauma:

“What human beings cannot contain of their experience - what has been traumatically overwhelming, unbearable, unthinkable - falls out of social discourse, but very often on to and into the next generation as an affective sensitivity or a chaotic urgency...as Freud suggested, what appears at first to be a person’s symptom might turn out to be a symbol; a symbol of an unconscious mission assigned to the next generation. The transmission of a trauma can be the transmission of task: for example, the task of repairing a parent or avenging a humiliation” (Fromm, 2012:16).

This inherited trauma and task of reparation is explicit in the Haredi dictat to recreate the communities extinguished by the Holocaust, both in form and population. Even without the transmission of explicit narratives, trauma and anxiety may be transmitted through generations. Kogan, in his 2012 study of the children of Holocaust survivors, states that trauma and anxiety:

“is transmitted to them through early, unconscious identifications which carry in their wake the parents’ perception of an everlasting, life-threatening inner and outer reality.” (Kogan, 2012:5)

Loewenberg’s observations from working with the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors noted that “we can see the anxieties and defences

associated with former traumas in the here and now". These included safety-seeking and risk avoidance, the wish to remain close to home and a "generalised pattern of distrust and insecurity", as well as a paranoid ideation of the risk of persecution: "There is a sensitivity and expectation of humiliation in group and conflict situations" (Loewenburg, 2012:57-58).

This pattern of distrust and insecurity is evident in the Haredi groups, as they seemed more reluctant than any other cohort to enter into a group process. There is an evident need to belong, and fear of exclusion is strong, particularly within sections of the community where members are encouraged to 'police' each other. This creates increased group anxiety and fear, which is directed towards other group members, as well as theory perceived as belonging to the 'outside world'. This is most obvious at the beginning of training, as students are not sure about the limits of group confidentiality, and who in the group has contacts that might know of them, creating great reluctance to share personal information or material.

There is an evidently a strong fear of judgement, particularly in terms of religious observance. Whilst the course admits a range of students from more modern to strictly orthodox, this fear applies to many students regardless of their position. This anxiety is increased by the fact that group members sometimes 'police' each other. For example, in one group there was an unmarried woman. Within her community, women are not supposed to know about sex until they are told about it by their 'bride teacher' the night before her wedding. During one group, sex was being discussed, and other (married) women in the group told the unmarried student that she could leave the group if she wished. It took strength for her to decide to stay. Small but significant gestures of defiance, which suggested the beginnings of the development of trust, allowed students to begin to relate to each other in less paranoid or defensive ways.

Over time students gained confidence and trust towards each other. Part of this growth involved group members allowing for personal difference, and recognising that their own differences will not alienate them from the

community group or the training group. By the end of training, students recognised that it was possible to be different to each other and still belong to the group. As this learning grew they became able to trust each other with increasingly difficult disclosures which would have been unthinkable at the beginning of the training, and remained so outside of the training.

The work in Pakistan involves elements of trauma similar to the work in Northern Ireland and with the Haredi groups. There are high levels of actual trauma, experienced by the student group and vicariously through their client work, and there is also intergenerational trauma. This intergenerational trauma is due to the continued instability of the country beginning with the process of Partition when the collapse of authority together with mass migration, famine and massacres, resulted in the forced movement of 20 million people (predominantly Hindus and Sikhs to India, and Muslims to Pakistan) and approximately 2 million deaths. The later Indo-Pakistani wars of 1965 and 1971 repeated much of the Partition trauma, and most students' parents were directly affected. As with the Haredi students' failure to mention the Holocaust, only one Pakistani student ever mentioned either Partition or the wars. When questioned about this the students agreed with one student who said: "We don't talk about the wars because it's still going on. Since 1947 the fighting hasn't stopped. We might not be fighting India right now in Karachi, but we are all fighting each other. We have so many enemies: different religions, different sects, political groups, castes, the police, dacoits, the list is endless. We could be shot, blown-up, or kidnapped anytime, so the ongoing 'war' is more significant than the past ones".

All students identify intergenerational trauma as an aspect of their own experience, and feel it manifests itself in many ways. Students all describe the need to split off feelings. The experience and expression of feelings is discouraged within families and, as with students in Northern Ireland, this is a coping mechanism for living in a volatile environment. They identify their enmeshed family relationships as one of the results of the repeated history, of being forced to flee conflict; this describes an unconscious need to keep

the family close and know what each other is doing. This enmeshment includes the need to be open and keep no secrets from one's own family.

This openness extends to the descriptive narrative that students give of their personal and their clients' experiences, and this is mirrored in the media in Pakistan, where the reporting of violence and atrocities is uncensored both visually and narratively. For example, when a bomb exploded in a local market, the pictures and descriptions of body parts in the papaya boxes were explicit, detailed and shocking to me. This reporting of the reality of violence is reflected within the students' discourse, and, as it is often devoid of affect since students are disconnected from their feelings, this creates a powerful projective impact. I recognise that over time I have become able to adapt to this exposure. Whereas I initially experienced such exposure as violent and disturbing, it now has less of an impact, through familiarity and my own disconnection from feelings. When in Pakistan my own narrative discourse alters and reflects the norm, and this process is most noticeable when I return from Pakistan and struggle to readjust to UK culture. For example, when re-telling experiences that I have had in Pakistan, I will sometimes fail to notice that what I am saying is disturbing to others, and can be slow to see that I need to moderate my descriptions.

This openness to the reality of trauma is also reflected within the student group and their ability and willingness to engage in group process. As such there is a stark difference in working with students in Pakistan. Students place great trust in the tutor, and take greater risks with their own personal material and process than in any other context I have worked. They show less concern about being judged by each other when they share personal material, and are open to engage in any activity suggested by tutors. Students have identified their willingness to process as being due to two things: first, students are used to feeling compelled not to keep secrets and share information within their families, and the group recreates this family dynamic; second, whilst there is an open sharing of information within families, there is very little experience of emotional acceptance and containment. When this is provided within the training environment, it is



experienced as new and an enormous relief for students. They are allowed and encouraged to have feelings, which are respected and managed. As a tutor this can be hugely rewarding, but also requires a strong ability to contain the emotional response to exercises, which may be much stronger than within other contexts.

The students' willingness to engage in process with little self-censorship and care-taking can be exciting and alluring for tutors, but without sufficient management, it can lead to difficulty. This was the case with one external, very experienced tutor, who was supposed to be facilitating a two-day CBT workshop. Noticing an undercurrent in the group, the tutor decided to engage the group in some process work to see if it could be drawn out. The tutor had not considered that they had insufficient information about the background of the group, and had little understanding of the potential for group work to be different in this unfamiliar cultural context. The group responded quickly to prompts, and became an encounter group, which became very difficult to contain. By the end of the weekend workshop, the group remained very disturbed and split and had been taught nothing about CBT. This dynamic needs to be considered and explained to visiting tutors.

Although the groups in Karachi have members from different Muslim sects, this does not play out in terms of splits within the group, whereas the class divide is a more salient feature. The clear majority of the group are from the elite or middle classes, and their fluency in English and higher degree (foreign) education gives them an open confidence in their engagement with me and the course material. The minority lower class members, on the other hand, struggle to make themselves heard and are more tentative in choosing partners to work with, often waiting to be chosen. Their reticence appears to be based upon feelings of inferiority rather than lack of trust. This dynamic can be traced from the time of the Mughal Empire, through British colonial rule and the post-colonial era, where the class system entrenched a dominant organised structure in India and Pakistan (Rahman, 2012). Social and working divisions between classes are distinct and extreme; privilege is blatant and unapologetic, and the power inherent within it remains

unchallenged. Elias (1994) recognises the importance of considering class within psychotherapeutic dynamics, and Layton (2004) identifies the various anxieties for working and middle-class people created by internalisations of class relations.

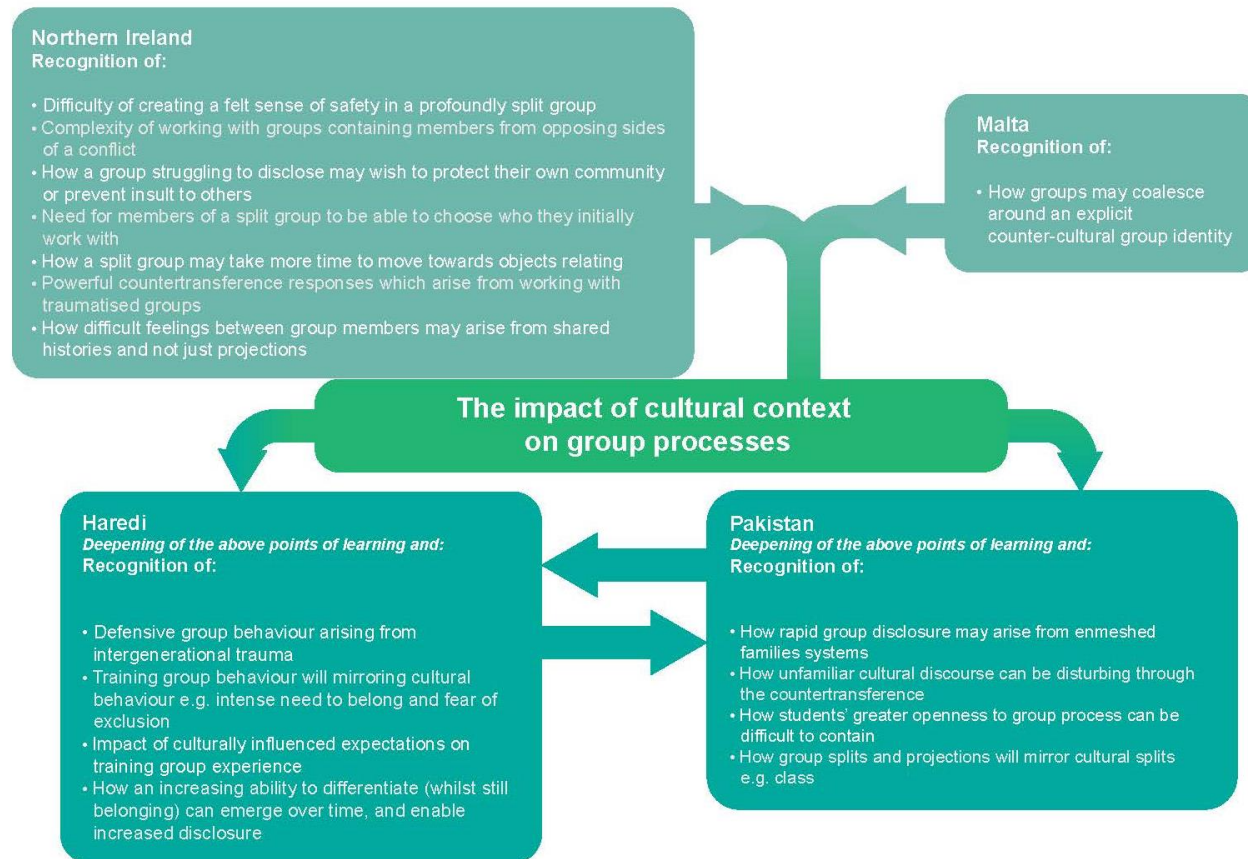
I recognise that for me, the issue of class is a significant and emotive area; my political upbringing sensitised me to issues of class inequality. Whilst during my early life I was able to negotiate class difference, my experience of alienation in being part of an inferior minority at Cambridge was emotionally challenging and distressing. I therefore find the distinct class division dynamic in Pakistan problematic. This is particularly true when it manifests within the group, for example when students from the 'lower' classes act with deference to other group members. I found it upsetting to hear one student from the working class describe her gratitude and joy that a student from the elite class had telephoned her at home. Because of the phone call, her family had placed her at the head of the table and informed her neighbours, who as a result, then began treating her with greater respect.

Despite the class division within groups, with encouragement the students silenced by their class position become equally open and responsive to group process. This openness allows students to recognise similarities in their lived experiences and identify with each other more closely. As with the other training groups, the sharing of experiences over time minimises the divisions within the group. Whilst outside of the group setting, students from different classes would not mix, within the group the sharing of one's personal process helps students to resolve many of their transference projections based on their class positions, allowing them to increasingly function as a collaborative learning group. Working class students become more able to interact on an equal basis to higher class colleagues and vice versa, and this process is essential as many of the students work across class boundaries. Ryan (2014) emphasises the significance of internalised class experience and its impact upon relational psychotherapeutic practice, particularly for therapists working across classes. She investigated how:

“Class and class difference can enter into and contribute to the structuring of the transference-countertransference matrix and how it is perceived.” (Ryan, 2014:127)

Whilst her research was limited to the UK, the significance of class difference within Pakistan society means that consideration and the working through of class-based transference is essential, particularly in Karachi. Without this experience the potential for class-related anxieties and the limiting of students' work is significant, and could create what Sennett (2003) identifies as a disturbance to 'true mutuality'; this occurs when crossing the boundary of inequality results in silence, caution and fear of offending.

**Figure 5-1: The impact of cultural context on group processes**



## Chapter 6    ‘Otherness’ in relation to group processes

The facilitation of a training group requires a good understanding of both individual and whole group projections. Through being able to recognise these representations within a group, I am better able to manage group process and facilitate learning and personal development. Seen from an object relations perspective, the understanding of group behaviour lies in understanding an individual’s psychology. Indeed:

“A group...consists of individuals in relationship to one another, and therefore the understanding of personality is the foundation for understanding the social life” (Klein, 1959:247).

Winnicott recognised this similarly, despite emphasising the importance of environmental influences on individual psychology:

“Cultural influences are of course important, vitally important; but these cultural influences can themselves be studied as an overlap of innumerable personal patterns. In other words, the clue to social and group psychology is the psychology of the individual” (Winnicott, 1958:146).

Dalal, on the other hand, describes a post-Foulkesian approach to group analysis and argues the reverse:

“The clue to individual psychology is to be found in the nature of the group’... ‘the understanding of social life is the foundation for the understanding of personality” (Dalal, 1998:158).

I would argue that the focus on ‘individuals inside groups’ and ‘groups within individuals’ are equally important as concepts in understanding group dynamics. Foulkes (1973:230) had argued that “psychology is neither ‘individual’ nor ‘group’ except by abstraction” and throughout the different training contexts, the significance of both elements has been profound.

In the culturally mixed training groups in London, where I am culturally similar to the majority of the group, the significance of the individual (including the individual members' Object Relational history and dynamics) appears to be dominant. In working with culturally divided student groups, particularly where I am considered 'Other' to the whole (or a large part of the group), there is a greater emphasis on the importance of the 'groups inside individuals', which creates a powerful dynamic. Whilst many projections are still due to individual group members' object relations, the significance of the social unconscious seems clearer and more salient. This appears since, as an outsider, a group's socially structured dynamics are more conspicuous; it is also more visible since the cultural value of collectivism (Hofstede, 2001) is higher in post-conflict Northern Ireland, as well as the Haredi and Pakistani culture.

Group analytic theory has latterly recognised the importance of the social matrix within group behaviour (Aron, 1996). The concept of the 'social unconscious' (Hopper, 2003; Weinburg, 2007) refers to the cultural structures that by and large remain outside of group members' awareness. This includes:

"anxieties, fantasies, defenses and object relations, as well as various aspects of socio-cultural-economic-political factors and forces, many of which are also co-constructed unconsciously by the members of particular groupings" (Weinburg, 2007:459).

Weinburg points out how the manifestation of the social unconscious are:

"especially prevalent in traumatized societies. The specific psychological processes of ethnic, national or religious groups are influenced by shared representations of historical events and the transgenerational transmissions of ancestors' trauma." (Weinburg, 2007:459).

The shared mental representations of heroes, ancestors and trauma heighten the sense of 'we-ness' (Volkan, 1998) and operate as defensive structures within group settings, including training groups. These defensive structures are evident in how groups relate to each other and 'outsiders'

including myself, where I am sometimes used to coalesce the whole or sections of the group.

Fairbairn stated that “the source of social disintegration on all groups is to be found in aggression” (1935:239), and that for a group to coalesce and function, this aggression needs to be projected outside of the group. This is done by the ‘activation of difference’; permitting the identification and use of an ‘other’ who can hold difference for the group, and the particular difference chosen will depend upon its function. As Dalal says:

“This is a Machiavellian idea, that alliances and groupings will be driven by the pragmatics of a situation, rather than because of any inherent significances in the differences themselves” (1998:198).

It seems evident through my experience that I held various functions and representations within different groups, and it is important to attend to the particular meanings.

In Northern Ireland, who and what I represented to the group members was initially unclear. Prior to starting the work, I felt concerned that I would probably be perceived as allied more closely to the Protestant members of the group, and wondered how this might affect the group dynamic. Certainly, my awareness of English colonial history in relation to the province made me feel uncomfortable to be English (in this context, I was considered English, rather than British). Whilst the group often tried to explicitly disassociate me from perpetrators of colonial violence, I would often experience feelings of guilt and responsibility when students recounted stories of British abuse. Part of this was fuelled by my ignorance of the levels of abuse prior to working in the province. As Lucey states:

“I think there is a big investment for British people not to look at the Irish experience, because it protects them from guilt and ultimately taking back what has been projected into the Irish” (2014:117).

Whilst it took time before the trauma experienced across the sectarian divide could be spoken about in the group, discussing the trauma of sexual abuse experienced at the hands of the British soldiers was more acceptable since all the women in the groups had experience of it, whatever side of the divide they were from. Any security checkpoint meant that as a girl or woman you could be groped, sexually assaulted and taunted. This was familiar to all the women and they discussed it with shrugging resignation. More extreme examples of abuse would however give room to anger and frustration from the female members. For example, one student spoke about how, as a child, a group of British soldiers had repeatedly humiliated and sexually assaulted her, her shame when recounting her experience was palpable, as were my own feelings of shame at my being English.

Whilst the group would often try to minimise my otherness, I was unable to read many cultural cues; I was in the position of a cultural minority. As group members had grown up in a politically volatile environment where the recognition of sectarian allegiance was paramount, cultural cues were embedded and exaggerated, although I was often unaware of them, and this risked my misinterpretation of group behaviour. I would experience feelings of alienation, which helped the group to feel more cohesive. Otherness could be located in me, and may have helped the group feel less divided in their shared understanding and recognition of meaning and experience. As I held the position of other, I could contain all the uncomfortable feelings of being 'other' in a potentially highly conflictual situation, including strong feelings of alienation and a fear of violent persecution. This was important in helping the group to integrate, but was disturbing and difficult for me.

In Pakistan, however, the students work hard to create in a tutor a strong feeling of being the desirable other. There is an invitation into the group, a wish to feed (literally) and be fed (metaphorically). This invitation into the group reduces my feeling of 'otherness', and creates a sense of a merger with the group. This is felt to the point where explicit references to my difference can be jarring; for example, when offered some spicy *bhel-puri*, one student exclaimed: "No, don't offer that! White people don't like it!".



The students' openness and trust that tutor input will be benevolent and beneficent inevitably leads to my feeling like a 'good mother', which makes it a pleasure to teach these groups. The elevated status can be enjoyed but can also result in quite strong feelings of discomfort, particularly when it becomes apparent that part of the dynamic involves a denigration of self.

The rhetoric about the stupidity of Pakistanis and the backwardness of Pakistan is disturbing, especially when coupled with quite evident internalised racism; combined with the elevated status offered to me as a tutor, it often leaves me with feelings of guilt. For example, when I told the group that we wished to begin a weekly training group run by Pakistani trainers, the students scoffed at the idea and told me that we would need to charge a great deal less for it, because no one would want to be taught by Pakistanis.

Many writers have considered the psychological consequences of colonialism and neo-colonialism, including Fanon (1967), Akbar (1984) and Said (2003). Timimi describes internalised racism as one aspect:

"Introjection of the centuries-old relation between whites as colonizers and blacks as colonized organizes...paranoid-schizoid splits. Projective identification into whites of superior desirable aspects of the self and into blacks of inferior undesirable aspects of the self occurs both externally and internally" (Timimi, 1996:183).

Although much of the denigration is accompanied by humour between students, my presence as an outsider who is the 'idealised other' feels awkward. This is exaggerated when the group involves me directly, for example when some students asked for their graduation group photograph to be photo-shopped and indeed 'whitened', because they all looked 'too Pakistani' and dark.

The confusing feelings generated by the dynamic of being a tutor in this situation can be difficult to manage. When and whether to challenge the behaviour is often difficult to judge, as it also is for individual students. Dalal, describes the relationship between the unconscious and racialisation, and

how subordination is internalised as natural not contingent, and that challenging such norms can result in marginalisation from the group (Dalal:2002,190-198).

There is also the potential for these dynamics to be acted out in a destructive way. As Timimi states:

“the part object relation of white as civilized, master, owner, occupier etc. and black as uncivilized, slave, owned, occupied, etc. became established. Whilst such a relationship can be maintained in social reality, an accompanying paranoid-schizoid phantasy can become organized in such a fashion. Put another way, the person who wishes to feel masterful, civilized, superior and in control of his object world, and despises feeling inferior, uncivilized and invaded, has a readily available projection route to get rid of such feelings: if he is able to identify with being white.”  
Timimi (1996:186)

Whereas in Northern Ireland, my ‘otherness’ to the group as a whole helped to minimise the divide within the group and increase cohesion, in Karachi the opposite seems to apply. There is a strong invitation to merge with the part of the group that wishes to identify with me, reducing my otherness in relation to them. This behaviour is demonstrated primarily by the students from the elite classes who are the majority population; this echoes the internalised racism, and increases the class divide within the group. This group of students exhibit their fluency in English, knowledge of the UK and British education and culture, which is actively expressed, demonstrated and celebrated within the group. This can leave the few students from the lower classes, who often find English more difficult and have little knowledge or experience of the UK, feeling alienated. This is often demonstrated by these students stating feelings of inferiority and difference within the group. In this respect, my ‘otherness’ in Karachi is used to strengthen the class divide, elevating the majority to the detriment of the minority, and decreasing overall cohesion. It is essential for me to recognise the potential for this split to create a functioning group for all members. This involves being aware of the pull towards merger and resistance towards it.

This group behaviour is a reflection of the behaviour in the wider society of Pakistan. As Foulkes states:

“the group, the community, is the ultimate primary unit of consideration, and the so-called inner processes in the individual are internalisations of the forces operating in the group to which it belongs” (1971:212).

Dalal adds:

“If this is to be accepted, then it must follow that the racist structures and dynamics within the larger social group will become internalized and part of the psychological world of each and every individual within that group...things in the mind - conscious and unconscious – have been blackened and whitened” (1997:210)

This ‘blackness and whiteness’ in post-colonial Pakistan is still defined by the socio-political signifiers of Britishness. Many post-colonial theorists have identified the continuation of colonial domination in certain areas within post-colonial societies through disciplines such as school syllabuses and language, and Spivak notes the dominance of this especially within elite sections of society, as elite nationalism mirrors the “cultural aspects of imperialism” (1988:245). Evidence of this plays out within the general course group dynamics and within the group members’ interactions with me as tutor.

The effect of the social unconscious and cultural group membership is equally, if not more, influential within the Haredi groups. Living within a strongly segregated or closed community emphasises the impact and influence of the group upon its members. It also exaggerates the sense of difference and feelings of otherness when working with the group as an outsider. In addition, working with the Haredi community involves working with a group where not belonging is feared, and the threat of being alienated from the group is used as a tool to control and monitor behaviour. Although the groups are not homogenous, with students from different sections of Haredi orthodoxy, the anxiety implicit in group formation means that members often employ strong early defence mechanisms such as splitting.

Following Kernberg: “the clearest manifestation of splitting is the division of external objects into ‘all good’ and ‘all bad’” (1984:16), in this case ‘all good’ is defined as ‘frum’ (religiously observant), and ‘all bad’ as other and secular. This means that group members will identify with and assert themselves as ‘frum’ and I will be used as a container for the secular. In this sense, as with the groups in Northern Ireland, my ‘otherness’ is used to increase group safety and cohesion.

This means that working with groups during the initial part of their training is often frustrating and difficult. Unlike training groups in Pakistan, the Haredi groups can feel reluctant, closed and withholding. Whilst they are reticent with each other, they are more resistant to the tutor, and I can often feel pushed away and rejected. They often display behaviours which imply that I, via the material that I am teaching, am potentially dangerous. For example, students will interrupt sessions to argue Halachic (according to Jewish law) acceptability of what is being taught between themselves, before sessions can continue. During this time, tutors will often be excluded until what has been suggested, has group consensus and approval. The anxiety is particularly clear when the group feels challenged to agree with a secular idea that may contradict religious teaching. This reflects Hurvich’s definition of annihilation anxiety as “A mental content reflecting concerns over survival, preservation of the self, and the capacity to function” (Hurvich, 1989:581).

The threat of merging is demonstrated by the group as a whole, and not just by individuals within the group. It is the survival and preservation of the group, which is threatened and defended, and this reflects the social unconsciousness of the cultural group to which the students belong. Krause discusses the parallel between the “self/other dynamic in intrapsychic and developmental processes and wider social, political and cultural identity / group processes” (2014:112) and quotes Benjamin’s observation:

“the question of recognition is...always the question of whether there will be peace or war, a struggle to triumph and annihilate or a negotiation of difference. The question – can a subject relate to another without assimilating the other into the self through identification – corresponds to the political question, can a community admit the Other without her / him having to already become the same?” (Benjamin, 1998:94)

Interestingly, this difference can impact more strongly on tutors who identify, and are identified as Jewish. Although I converted to Judaism, none of the groups have been aware of this, and even if they had, as a reform convert I would not be considered Halachicly Jewish. Other tutors, on the other hand, are Jewish and groups have known this. The groups and tutors often struggled with their position of otherness. Being Jewish but not observant would often be seen as potentially more contaminating and representative of what they were fearful of becoming. Non-orthodox Jewish tutors often found working with the group significantly more frustrating than non-Jewish trainers, for whom being ‘other’ was clear. These tutors struggled with being perceived as ‘other’ and therefore inferior, and with not being accepted and trusted, while others struggled with being perceived as similar in any way to the students, often expressing anger and disapproval towards their community and lifestyle.

Being able to tolerate being used by the group as the outsider and ‘other’ is important in allowing the group to manage the necessary move towards being different and together themselves to achieve ‘separated attachment’ (Orbach, 2009), where students can be autonomous and remain connected. Having experienced similar usage as ‘other’ in Northern Ireland, I felt prepared, as similar feelings of alienation and disempowerment emerged once again. The fear of outsiders is more extreme within the Haredi community and can be more challenging, particularly when I am perceived as dangerous, allied with my own wish for attachment and acceptance. As an outsider, however long I work with this group, I will not be fully accepted and allowed to know much of the reality of living within the community.

Recognition of the functional representation of my 'otherness' is important in helping me understand and manage group process. It also helps my facilitation of learning and personal development. Much of the meaning can be revealed through the transference dynamics and my experience of them in the countertransference.

"By permitting himself to be used as an object (Winnicott, 1965), The analyst is part of the process that facilitates the eventual cohesion of the analysand's sense of self, but in order for this procedure to work it is my view that the analyst must maximize his countertransference readiness, listening to the patient who is using him." (Bollas, 1987:211).

Referring to Giovacchini's (1979) concept of externalisation Bolas recognises that:

"What the analyst feels, imagines and thinks to himself while with the patient may at any one moment be a specific element of the patient's projectively-identified psychic life." (Bollas, 1987:202).

While Bollas refers to an individual in analysis, the process can also apply to group processes. He describes various object uses of the therapist within the transference, many of these uses can also be seen within the group setting, both through member interaction and in relation to the facilitator. Understanding the meaning of such usage in terms of unconscious intent and my response is fundamental in how I tolerate and manage its impact. He discusses several different transference states including:

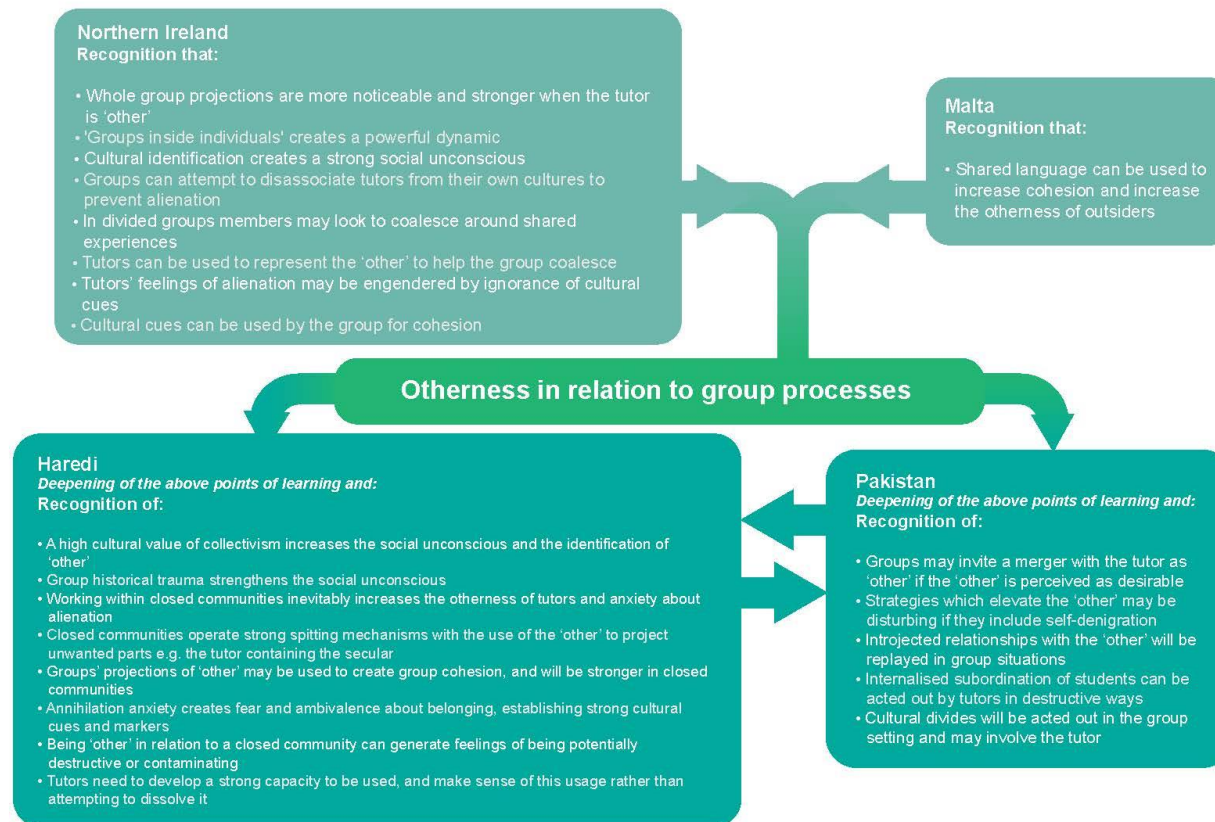
"Transfer of parts of the self into the analyst...by the function of projective identification...of unwanted...or valued parts of the self, A splitting of the ego that allows the good parts of the self to survive the bad parts of the self." (Bollas, 1987:244).

Similarly, Sandler describes:

"Transfer of life history...the unwavering and time-consuming unconscious effort to reconstruct the life lived within the family of origin by enacting different roles in the transference." (Sandler, 1976:67).

In Northern Ireland and with the Haredi group I recognised that my alienation as 'other', together with the location of difference in me, was used to enable the group to coalesce and manage their own fears of alienation. This insight helped me to contain my uncomfortable feelings and not try to 'dissolve' the difference. I believe that this was an essential part of group process, which gave group members the environment to allow them to develop the strength to tolerate their own difference and potential alienation, and eventually move to a place of separated attachment by the end of the course. Recognition of the projective processes in the Pakistan groups similarly gave me greater insight into the splits and internalised self-denigration of students, and helped clarify the idealisation directed towards (particularly British) tutors and the potential risks involved in this.

**Figure 6-1: 'Otherness' in relation to group processes**





## Chapter 7 'Otherness', envy and destructive attacks

We were invited to establish a course in Northern Ireland after several unsuccessful attempts to develop local trainings in the province. These trainings had failed mostly because of sectarian destructive attacks by various agencies and organisations. Kapur (2004) highlights the propensity for destructive object relationships within Northern Ireland because of 'the Troubles', resulting in predominantly paranoid schizoid functioning with features of destructive intent. Segal writes about how this leads to large group projective processes:

"Group function is often basically influenced and disrupted by psychotic phenomena. Freud said that we form groups for two reasons: one to "combat forces of nature"; and the other to bind "man's destructiveness to man". Groups typically deal with this by splitting, the group itself being idealised and held together by brotherly love, and collective love of the ideal, whilst destructiveness is directed out towards other groups." (Segal, 1995:194)

Rosenfeld (1987) identified the psychic organisation whereby individuals achieve a sense of cohesion through destructive actions defined as 'destructive narcissism':

"The destructive narcissistic parts of the self are...split off from the rest of the personality. The psychotic structure is like a delusional world or object, into which parts of the self tend to withdraw. It appears to be dominated by an omnipotent or omniscient, extremely ruthless part of the self, which creates the notion that within the delusional object there is complete painlessness and also the freedom to indulge in any sadistic activity. The whole structure is committed to narcissistic self-sufficiency and is strictly directed against any object-relatedness." (Rosenfeld, 1987:112)

Destructive narcissism and idealisation of destructive behaviour, Kapur holds, is behind many of the attacks upon these initiatives in Northern Ireland that seek to resolve or repair damage caused by 'the Troubles'.

It was believed that we, as an organisation from outside the province, would be protected from this dynamic. Whilst this was a legitimate hope it was also

unrealistic to expect that we would be exempt from the same destructive forces as the other training organisations. From the beginning of our training work in Northern Ireland we directly experienced ambivalence to our presence. Some of this came from people who had been involved in the previous unsuccessful trainings. I recognised that I needed to engage these colleagues as far as possible within our own training, to try and avert the same kind of outright attacks that other courses had experienced. Despite this, some proceeded to attack our training with the help of other agencies. We received some explicit objection to the training from some voluntary agencies who stated that, as an English organisation, our training would cater more for protestant over catholic students and agencies. They questioned the choice of the BACP as an accrediting organisation rather than the IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy). This again required diplomatic handling, including responding to their concerns and making greater links with IACP. Emotionally, it was uncomfortable being attacked and I was often aware of feeling provoked and needing to resist retaliation.

This was particularly powerful with one person whose destructive relationship towards the course may have been partly and understandably motivated by envy. The Kleinian model of envy is described by Joseph as aiming:

“at being as good as the object, but, when this is felt as impossible, it aims at spoiling the goodness of the object, to remove the source of the envious feelings.” (Joseph, 1986:40).

The conscious, recognisable feelings of envy including: “feelings of resentment at someone being ahead, doing better, and vague hostility, rivalry and competitiveness” (*ibid.*) are manifested in attacks that are:

“clearly associated with spoiling – spoiling being fundamental to envy. The envious person can spoil literally by mud-slinging, damaging, or hurting another person or his possessions; or he can spoil by psychological mud-slinging, hurting...or externally by criticism, mockery or provocation” (Joseph, 1989:183).

Rice and Kapur (2002) report that such phenomena is commonplace in Northern Ireland in private and public life, and identify a particular quality that they suggest mirrors their experiences of terrorism. They suggest that envious attacks are often planned, launched at targets and legitimised as 'putting people in their place'.

The attacks that we experienced were aimed at both the training and our students. Students were undermined within some placements by constant criticism and discouragement and some were attacked by their own family members. One particularly upsetting incident occurred on the day of graduation, when a student had their work, class photograph and certificate award torn up by family members. The attacks towards the course initially involved attempts at delegitimising the training, primarily by inferring sectarian bias and later by general undermining and trying to limit placement opportunities.

Envious attacks can often demoralise and weaken the confidence of the target, through the process of projective identification, as Kapur highlights:

"Generosity and creativity are attacked, perverted, and negatively transformed into actions aimed at destroying the confidence of others...their position often becomes unbearable as there is a tremendous pressure to act out negative feelings." (Kapur, 2004:42).

As the course was backed by and accredited by the BACP, I felt supported and able to withstand the undermining aimed at my work and the course. The attacks aimed at the students were more concerning and meant that diplomatic negotiation was hugely important. The course was in a strong position as it was fully funded by the British government. This meant that we had no difficulty recruiting full student cohorts and could select the strongest candidates who were thought the most able to resist attempts at undermining. However, once the government funding was removed, our position became much more vulnerable, and this was recognised and acted upon, and a rival training course was established. Despite trying to recruit

and continue the training, the strength of the wish to obstruct our success was overwhelming. As Kapur notes:

“Generating and sustaining good experiences in a paranoid schizoid world is extremely difficult” (Kapur, 2004:42)

Over time the challenge became too difficult, and we did not feel able to fight, and eventually withdrew the training. The disappointment at not being able to continue, having invested a great deal of emotional and physical work, was tempered by the fact that we had achieved what we had been asked and had established counselling training that was professionally accredited, through which 60 students graduated.

As with the training in Northern Ireland, it became clear shortly after beginning the first cohort in Malta that our presence and training might challenge an existing counselling course. This course, the Diploma in School Counselling run by the University of Malta, was at the time the only counselling training in the country and qualified graduates to practice as school counsellors. The university was therefore an important voice in the field of counselling. Members of the faculty had established the MACP and in 2007 when we began our training, the association had 48 members, almost all of whom had completed the school counselling training. The few exceptions to this had trained abroad.<sup>23</sup>

**Comment [Office1]:** This information is in the public domain

A couple of our students were completing their school counselling training, and had opted to matriculate on our course to be able to counsel adults as well as children. Whilst the students were confident in the training we were providing, they occasionally felt that they were being criticised for being disloyal to the university.

In 2008 the university also launched an adult counselling course, and in 2009, when our course had gained BACP accreditation, they established a four-year masters course. As we prepared to begin our second cohort, we

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<sup>23</sup> Annex 17

learnt that students who had completed our entry level certificate year had been approached by the university counselling course and offered incentivised places on their own training. We could not compete and subsequently withdrew.

Whilst this could be seen simply as trade rivalry, the need to 'spoil' our training, as with Northern Ireland, felt to me suggestive of a degree of envy. Our training had unwittingly undermined, not only the university's counselling training, but by gaining accreditation from BACP, had potentially impacted upon the (university managed) MACP.

The response to our training, I felt, carried a degree of a wish to annihilate it which later extended to our graduates and a move to dis-bar them from the profession. This can be considered in relation to Klein's theories about the connection between greed and envy:

"Where greed and envy are not excessive, even an ambitious person finds satisfaction in helping others to make their contribution" (Klein, 1946:135)

But where they are, people seen as trying to contribute to their field of expertise will be perceived as a threat:

"The rival is seen not only as someone who has robbed and deprived one of one's own position or goods, but also as the owner of valuable qualities which stir up envy and the wish to spoil them." (*ibid.*)

The difficulty in relation to our course continued even when we had withdrawn, when the MACP decided to increase the Maltese standards for practice for counselling, to now include a Masters qualification, and petitioned the government to this effect. This barred our graduates from practicing in Malta.

Fortunately, two of our graduates, one of whom was an employment lawyer, fought the proposed government ruling, citing European law.<sup>24</sup> We supported the students as far as we could from a distance, and after two further years and the convening of several government boards, equivalence was granted to our course, and the ruling was widened to include graduates of other trainings. This process was difficult and despite the successful outcome for our graduates, in retrospect I believe that some of the difficulties might have been avoided had we managed our training differently.

At the time, I was unaware of the links between the University of Malta and the MACP; I was also unclear about the status and connections between government and state organisations. Without this awareness, I was left with feelings of being randomly and unreasonably persecuted. With greater clarity about the context, the attacks would have been far more understandable and even manageable. My reluctance to seek understanding of the motivation behind the attacks must lie in part with my own process of splitting.

Viewing what we do in taking courses into other contexts as reactive ('they asked us to do it') rather than proactive, unconsciously protects me from accusations of hegemony and imperialism. My need not to see the echoes of colonialism within my own behaviour prevented me from seeing the provocation of firstly taking a course into a small country where all further education courses were provided by one training institute, and secondly the implications of securing a British professional stamp of approval, with no interest in an equivalent Maltese validation.

In Northern Ireland, our 'otherness' was used by local training organisations to create support for themselves by attacking us. In Malta, there were similar dynamics and my own splitting potentially exacerbated our 'otherness'. Thankfully our students could work with bodies to reach a satisfactory position or this could have been detrimental to our student graduates.

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<sup>24</sup> Annex 18

In Freud's theory of the 'narcissism of minor differences' he viewed two aspects of the instinct of aggression: first, where difference is seen to incite hatred, and second where difference is activated to evacuate endogenous aggression. Fairburn, on the other hand, views aggression as a force, not instinct, due to frustration. He views the 'activation of difference' as a technique with:

"a function of the current material conditions - and the politics arising from them. This is a Machiavellian idea, that alliances and groupings will be driven by the pragmatics of a situation, rather than because of any inherent significances in the differences themselves" (Dalal, 1998:198).

As such, the type and amount of difference specified and emphasised will depend upon its function and the need of the group.

Dalal also emphasises external difference and the illusion of internal similarity as a function of the maintenance of material, physical and psychological power, and stresses the need to increase these at times where identity is threatened. He cites an example of such socio-political power relations in the reaction of the psychoanalytic psychotherapies to the 'threat' of joining the all-inclusive body the UKCP:

"...their identity was threatened, so they split off to form a new body, the BCP. To be sure the 'rational' manifestation reason is couched in terms of standards...and the notion of identity. The hidden latent reason is to be found in the pragmatics of the situation, by which is meant the power relations. If you hold the high ground, then you have more access to the resources." (Dalal, 1998:204).

A similar process was operation in Malta.

In Pakistan, the threats to the training were different, although they also involved issues of envy, power and competition. The attack on our course came from within by a tutor who had moved to Pakistan and decided to begin a new training organisation with a current student, who was then undertaking his second year of training. The concern that we expressed about the ethics

of such behaviour began the general deterioration of our relationship, which ended when we acted to remove their responsibility as course tutor.

This action seemed to me to be experienced by the tutor as persecutory, as Klein identifies:

“if the leader suspects that he is an object of hate, all his antisocial attitudes are increased by this feeling. We find that the person who is unable to bear criticism because it touches at once on his persecutory anxiety is not only prey to suffering but also has difficulties in relation to other people and may even endanger the cause for which he is working.” (Klein, 1959:135).

This led to increasing difficulties, which meant that we had to temporarily withdraw from Karachi.

The then second-year student began working with the tutor to establish a treatment and counselling training centre. However, the formation of the new training group and working partnership was not straightforward. Fairburn's theories on groups lie in the belief that the:

“Major forces at work are attraction and repulsion (cf. libido and aggression)” (Fairburn, 1944:127-8)

Here, the struggle between the two will result in the ability for the group to coalesce or fragment. He adds:

“since group psychology ultimately reduces itself to the psychology of the individual in a group, it follows that the fruits of psychoanalytical research on the motivation of the individual must be relevant to the explanation of group phenomena” (Fairburn, 1936:246)

This includes the psychology of the group leader/s. Following our withdrawal, difficulties emerged between the tutor and student. Fairburn identifies that externalising the force of aggression within the ‘family’ group gives rise to the appearance of Oedipal conflict, and the difficulties that arose can be



considered in these terms. The relationship deteriorated to the point where the student ended the professional relationship, and the tutor left Pakistan.

The student later asked us to join him in running our training. We did not feel able to do this but we supported him as far as we could by finding practitioners in the UK who could spend time with him in Karachi, to support the development of his course. By the time we returned his training school had become successful, and he had opened further schools in Islamabad and Lahore. As there are only two counselling organisations in a city of 9 million, we are grateful that there is another source of CPD for our students and graduates.

At times I experienced competitive feelings in relation to his trainings; although difficult to resist, these are not helpful, not least because it prevents any pleasure in the achievements of our ex-student. He has managed to establish counselling training in three major cities in Pakistan, and raise the profile of the counselling profession in the country. I hope for a mutually beneficial link between our organisations, which will enrich the small, but growing community of counsellors in Pakistan.

Working within the Haredi community has also resulted in envious attacks, but because of the closed community, the need to forge links has been essential for the training to survive. From the outset, it was clear that our 'otherness' created potential opposition to the training from some members and religious leaders in the community. Volkan recognises that 'Large Group Tents' are held together by the projection of profound and unresolved conflict onto whoever is outside of the tent. As a secular training organisation with no Rabbinical approval, we are very much 'outside of the tent', and carry projections including inferiority, ungodliness and immorality. Such projections are made more fearful because of the previously described annihilation anxiety (Hurvich, 1989) and persecutory anxiety evident within the community. Similar processes can be seen to be at play in Lowe's description of white racism as a borderline phenomenon; he describes the avoidance of contact with the other because it:

“arouses immense anxiety and there is a fear of loss, or fragmentation or dissolution of self and identity” (Lowe, 2006:59).

This means that in addition to projections of disowned badness, there is also a perception that we wish to corrupt, contaminate and destroy the goodness of the community.

The organisation who asked us to provide the training worked with other outside training providers, and have a staff team that spans a range of levels of orthodoxy. As a recognised Haredi charitable organisation, they must minimise risk to the integrity of the community, as well as to their own organisation. The inevitable ambivalence arising when engaging with the ‘out group’ became clear as the course began and some of their concerns were explicitly expressed. They were particularly anxious about our course, as we were the only training organisation who they worked with that taught mixed gender groups; this was perceived as particularly risky, and open to criticism of indecency and irreligious practice.

Whilst some members of staff remained supportive of the training, others became increasingly concerned by the threat that we seemingly posed through challenging usual community behaviours. This created a potential for splitting and difficulties within their staff team. As Kemp identifies:

“As well as personal anxiety that may arise when challenging such norms, Group responses will come into play: marginalization, stigmatization, the identification of the critic with the rejected outgroup, and the employment of gossip to delegitimize criticism” (Kemp, 2014: 201)

The organisation felt that the involvement of a Rabbi might help to allay staff team fears, and increase the legitimacy of the training within the community. I held some initial meetings with this Rabbi and he said that he would offer his approval with the proviso that he taught a significant amount of the course. As he was an unqualified therapist with basic CBT training, I considered this inappropriate. As we were unable to gain Rabbinical support, the organisation decided that the course was too risky for them to continue to

host the training. However, they remained happy to be involved in promoting the course, and we were therefore able to continue to recruit and train Haredi students.

The concern about the training within the more orthodox sections of the community remained. Without the involvement of an overseeing Haredi organisation, the 'policing' was undertaken directly within the community. Throughout the training, I was unaware that some students were repeatedly summoned by their *Beth Din* (Rabbinical court) to account for the course and work that they were doing. Individually, they had to regularly justify what they were doing, and why, and prove to the Rabbis that the course was not contaminating their religiosity. For some women students, this involved going before the court with their husbands (and sometimes fathers), who also had to confirm their support of their wives and daughters undertaking the training. The projections that we had received were now levelled at the students, and they were at risk of becoming 'other' by association, as they needed to be kept in line by virtue of being a student on our course.

Elias sees this use of power as ever-present when there is a functional interdependence between people:

"function must be understood as a concept of relationship... people or groups that have functions for each other exercise constraint over each other." (Elias, 1978:78)

I felt concerned when the students told me that they had been subject to such scrutiny, and that I had been unaware of this and unable to support them. The students were nonetheless unfazed as they were used to the prospect of policing, and knew that they were pushing boundaries by doing the training. They also knew that being an organisation from outside of the community meant that we could not be helpful in this process. Our support would ally them with the 'out group' rather than the 'in group'. They recognised that having the space to rehearse an Halachic defence of the study and work that they were doing within the training was personally helpful. Kernberg describes such regressive group functioning as:

“A group involved in paranoid regression conforms to Bion’s ‘fight-flight basic assumption group’. It becomes hyper-alert and tense, as if there were some danger against which it would have to establish an aggressive defense. The group selects a leader with a strong paranoid potential, a hyper-sensitive, suspicious, aggressive and dominant person, ready to experience and define some slight or danger against which he and the rest of the group need to protect themselves and fight back” (Kernberg, 2003:685).

The perceived danger was within our training, which had the potential to corrupt members of the group and therefore the safety of the wider community.

“The members of the group, in turn, tend to divide between an ‘in group’ rallying around the group leader, and an ‘out group’ who are suspect and need to be fought off.” (*ibid.*)

The students’ constant summoning and questioning was used primarily to ensure their allegiance to the Rabbi and community rather than to ensure their wellbeing, which was the stated aim.

The criticisms from the wider community were also reflected for some students from their own family members. In some cases, this was severe, and general fears about family members being involved or being lost to the outside world were projected onto the course and training. In one case a student’s relationship with her aggressive and controlling father deteriorated further when he discovered that she was training with a non-orthodox organisation. His pre-existing fears of losing control of his daughter now had a clear target, which he attacked verbally throughout the training, and also physically as she was due to qualify, when he burnt her entire portfolio containing all of her evidence for qualification. His need for omnipotence and fear of a loss of control led to severe destructive attacks, which he defended on the grounds of protecting his daughter by maintaining her religiosity.

“In object relations terms, fierce loyalty to the strict internal object that demands obedience means that any act can be justified or morality is lost. Good and evil become mixed up as there is a rationalization that doing harm to others will bring good” (Kapur, 2004:76).

Kapur also highlights how attacks resulting from paranoid projections are often upheld and warranted:

“The legitimization of these attacks is to ‘put people in their place’. As noted by Brenman (1995) the justification for cruelty is a moralization of destructiveness in the belief that it is bringing justice and doing good” (Kapur, 2004:112).

Despite her upset, we could support the student to complete the training and qualify. I was left feeling concerned about the part we may have played in worsening the situation. My feelings were partly fuelled by identifying with the projections of being a corrupting influence upon members of the community. This could be evidence that our course destroys families and religiosity, and whilst I knew that this was not the truth, I felt uncomfortable nonetheless.

This was the same discomfort that I feel when students expressed feelings of wanting to ‘un-know’ course material; it occurs at times in the course when participants begin to see their way of living in a new light, and can experience a sense of disillusionment. Similar to the process of therapy, the acceptance of a less idealised relationship with their communities is worked through by the end of the course, and rather than wishing to leave, they have a clear appreciation of the benefits of living within their communities, also comprising an understanding and acceptance of inherent difficulties. Whilst I am clear that our course does not corrupt students, the experience of this particular student sharpened my awareness of the potential risks involved across the cohort. Furthermore, if they are already in an abusive or controlling relationship, choosing to do our secular training may be seen to be provocative, and may even lead to attacks with severe consequences, both for them and sometimes their young children. This is difficult and painful to acknowledge.

The difficulty of being a secular training organisation within a very orthodox religious community became more evident in the case of an ex-student who eventually decided to launch their own counselling training organisation. They appointed themselves course director and employed a trainer who

despite being highly experienced, was willing to create a course according to the ex-student's demands, including no requirement for therapy or personal development for trainees. We had concerns about this training which seemed to imply that it was an accredited training. This is particularly concerning, as the community has limited understanding of the profession of counselling and the standards of training and practice. There are in fact many unqualified therapists practicing within the community, who will often be selected on the basis of their perceived religiosity, rather than qualification or fitness to practice.

To separate ourselves from the ex-student's training organisation and highlight the greater professional standards of our programmes, we placed advertisements for student recruitment in Jewish newspapers and synagogue magazines, and stated that ours was the only BACP accredited counselling training being run specifically for the Haredi community.<sup>25</sup> I believe that this was seen as a provocation by the ex-student; who saw us threatening to constrain and undermine their power in the community.

Potentially, the threat experienced by our action could have exacerbated the existent hostility towards us as outsiders, best compared to Freud's notion of the narcissism of minor differences (Freud, 1921). Elias describes:

"The very existence of independent outsiders who share neither the fund of shared memories, nor, as it appears, the same norms of respectability as the established group, acts as an irritant; it is perceived by the latter as an attack against their own we-image and we-ideal" (Elias, 1976:161).

The possible internal perception of an attack was now being exaggerated by a fear of loss of power, and it was responded to with a counter-attack of stigmatisation.

Dalal points out that:

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<sup>25</sup> Appendix 4

“The rejection and stigmatization of the outsiders by the established is a kind of counter attack” (Dalal, 1998:123)

The ex-student set about stigmatising our training and organisation with the help of a small group of followers within the community. Clinically this is similar to the group organisation described by Rosenfeld:

“The destructive omnipotent way of living...and narcissistic organization not only increases the destructive narcissism, and the force related to it, but it has a defensive purpose to keep itself in power and so maintain the status quo” (Rosenfeld, 1987:111).

A small group of supporters subsequently disseminated destructive information about our training and organisation, primarily through gossip. Dalal defines gossip as: “the dissemination of ideology through the institutions of polarities” (*ibid.*), and this was used to denigrate our training and increase the level of perceived associated threat. The focus of the criticism was our ‘otherness’. Fairburn’s ‘activation of difference’ in this case was clearly determined by a function, and this was to maintain power and destroy any competition.

Elias and Scotson (1994) describe how the mechanisms of gossip streams and mills are used to effectively police the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, where the ‘minority of the worst’ is used to denigrate outsiders and the ‘minority of the best’ aggrandises insiders.

“This mechanism works by exploiting symmetrical logic, where the part is identical to the whole. Thus one bad apple means that the whole barrel is bad.” (Dalal, 1998:205).

He also describes how policing at the margins of identity is equally ferocious, and the most severe criticism was levelled at Lynne, whose Jewish identity was the most problematic to them. As an Halachically Jewish woman, her difference was potentially more tenuous, and thus more dangerous, leading to a greater need to create a division between her as ‘other’ to the community. As such, she was identified as being particularly corrupting and

immoral and was used to prove the accusation that our training and organisation was corrupting and unacceptable.

Elias and Scotson demonstrate that:

“Gossip is not an independent phenomenon. What is gossip worthy depends upon communal norms and beliefs and communal relationships” (Elias and Scotson, 1994:89).

Dalal (1998) identifies stigmatisation as only effective if it is backed up by a power structure. As such, the gossip was effective, and created great concern within the ex-student’s supporters (none of whom had any contact or experience of us except via hearsay), and one supporter was encouraged to go to his Rabbi to assert the need for action to address the risk posed by our training to the community. This Rabbi responded by convening a Rabbinical court hearing, which placed an injunction against our training, and published a notice against us in the most orthodox magazine in Stamford Hill, where we had advertised the previous week.<sup>26</sup> The injunction stated that it had come to the attention of the *Beth Din* (Rabbinical Court) that a counselling course was operating and falsely advertising itself as suitable for the Haredi community. It stated that the court had investigated the training and had found it to be totally unsuitable for any member of the community. Whilst it did not name us, it clearly indicated that members of the Haredi community should not associate themselves with our training.

This injunction created several concerns. We were now stigmatised within the orthodox community, which would have major implications for student recruitment. It also implied support for a course that we believed to be potentially damaging. Equally importantly, it stigmatised our graduates within the community as damaging and corrupt through association. Whilst the students who lived and worked outside of Stamford Hill were not concerned about the injunction or likely to be affected by it, it would impact upon those living and working inside. I felt outraged that we had been ‘tried and judged

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<sup>26</sup> Appendix 5



as dangerous' based upon hearsay, and that our entire training project could be stopped. I felt that our ex-student posed a potential risk to the community and that this was being projected onto us. I was however aware that this was not something that would be easily accepted by the Rabbis who had issued the injunction. The use of polarisation to reinforce ideology and evacuate badness to outside of the group shows:

"that which does not fit into the ideology, say, the existence of a corrupt member of the local council, is ignored by the gossip mills because they are blind to it" (Dalal, 1998:207).

Accepting the risk of the ex-student's course could be humiliating by highlighting the Rabbis' error of judgement.

I knew that it would be difficult, but felt determined to fight the injunction and for the continuance of the course. I felt confident that it was potentially possible to do so, having experienced the overturning of an injunction in Malta. I also felt self-assured that the stigmatisation that had been projected onto our training was misplaced. As Elias highlights:

"Attaching the value of 'lower human value' to another group is one of the weapons used in a power struggle by superior groups as a means of maintaining their social superiority. In that situation the social slur cast by a more powerful upon a less powerful group usually enters the self-image of the latter and, thus, weakens and disarms them" (Elias, 1994:216).

The injunction and stigma did not undermine my perceived position of power, confidence and belief in our training. As I began to try and address the situation, it quickly became clear that I had underestimated the difficulty, and how powerless I was rendered by being from outside of the community.

I wrote several letters, first to the signatory of the injunction and then to other members of the *Beth Din*, asking to meet with them to discuss any concerns about our training and how we as an organisation might address their

concerns.<sup>27</sup> I received no acknowledgement or reply. By this time, I had begun working within a high profile Haredi therapeutic organisation, and had developed many contacts with highly qualified orthodox therapists and therapeutic organisations within the community. Although many of these therapists voiced their concern about our ex-student's training, their advice about how to move forward was contradictory, and many believed that there was nothing that we could do. We were now seen as too contentious, and even threatening to organisations associating with us, and our support organisation therefore withdrew its endorsement of our training, and the orthodox synagogue magazines refused to carry our adverts.

The Rabbis' lack of response to my approaches demonstrated I would not be able to challenge the injunction alone. It also became clear that our students who were in their final year were active in challenging the injunction themselves. For these students, the injunction represented a process of accountability to the *Beth Din*, and they felt that while it had intensified scrutiny, they were confident that they could fight their corner. They believed that there was little that our organisation could do to support them, and that they had to prove their own legitimacy to the Rabbis and community. Whilst this reassured me that our graduates might not be harmed by the injunction, I still felt determined to fight for its removal.

My determination to fight against what appeared to be an impossible restriction was motivated by many factors. Some of this was based upon previous training experiences: the disappointment of having conceded projects in Northern Ireland and Malta, and the recognition that it may have been possible to continue, as well as the experience of displacement in Pakistan, and our subsequent return. Some of the motivation was more personal: my belief in, and need to fight injustice which was largely, I felt, levelled at me, my project, our training and organisation, and latterly our students. It also activated my sense of justice and drive to protect vulnerable

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<sup>27</sup> Annex 19

members of the community who I felt were potentially being encouraged to trust inadequately trained therapists.

The injunction and act of ignoring my attempts to address it seemed designed to undermine my power. The literal barrier to communication, embodied an 'emotional barrier' (Elias, 1976:222) which was:

"constructed to facilitate the maintenance of the division and so the retention of the power differential" (Dalal, 1998:124).

Although I did not feel professionally disempowered, at a personal level I reacted strongly to being ignored; this response was partly driven by gender. I was being silenced by a group of powerful men, who would not accept the opinions of our women students unless they were supported by men, and were endorsing and colluding with an overtly sexist and sexually invasive man. As Elias states:

"Powerful groups look upon themselves as 'better' people...with a specific virtue shared by all its members and lacked by others. What is more, in all these cases the 'superior' people may make the less powerful people feel that they lack virtue – that they are inferior in human terms" (Elias, 1994:216).

Whilst I felt comfortable with being viewed as irreligious, being perceived as having lower human value (Elias, 1976) partially due to my gender felt intolerable. At times this created retaliatory and destructive feelings within me, particularly towards the ex-student, although this can also be seen as an enactment of projective identification (Casement, 1985; Sandler, 1976).

Through understanding the process, I was able to make sense of my responses and direct them constructively. I recognised that my determination to ensure the continuation of the course was partially driven by my objection to being silenced and 'beaten'. In a similar process to Winnicott's (1971) reaction to externality, where a therapist needs to manage client attacks without collapse or retaliation, I also needed to respond thoughtfully. Whilst I was unable to challenge the injunction directly, I could act politically towards

its removal. To de-stigmatise CPPD, I agreed to be appointed to the advisory panel of a large Haredi charity, and began offering introduction to counselling courses to United Synagogue *rebbetzins* (wives of Rabbis).<sup>28</sup>

Whilst this was helpful in the wider Haredi community, it was clear that I would be unable to manage the impasse in Stamford Hill, and would need the help of someone from within the community who could act on our behalf. The graduate who had initiated the contact between the charitable training organisation and ourselves is a confident professional, who enjoys a high status within the orthodox community. Before I contacted him about the injunction, he had been separately concerned about the other training. He was aware that students from the certificate level of the course were working with very complex clients, and GPs in the community had referred several to him when students became unable to manage the work.

I was concerned that his association with us could potentially risk his own position within the community, despite this, he has been committed in helping us reinstate our training. We decided that the best way forward would be for him, as a respected therapist (and man) to negotiate with the *Beth Din* directly.<sup>29</sup> We agreed that the only way to make our training more Halachically acceptable would be for him to be actively involved in teaching, and it was with this in mind that he arranged to meet with the *Beth Din* in Stamford Hill.

During the meeting, he addressed the need for counselling training to have high professional standards, and highlighted his concern for vulnerable clients within the community. He explained the nature of our training, and his role as a core tutor on the Certificate. He explained that whilst he was not seeking Rabbinical approval, he was asking them to remove the injunction against the training and they agreed. Since then, we have run a successful advertising campaign, and have new Haredi all male and all female groups which started in January 2017. Whilst it is not ideal to segregate by gender, it

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<sup>28</sup> Annex 20

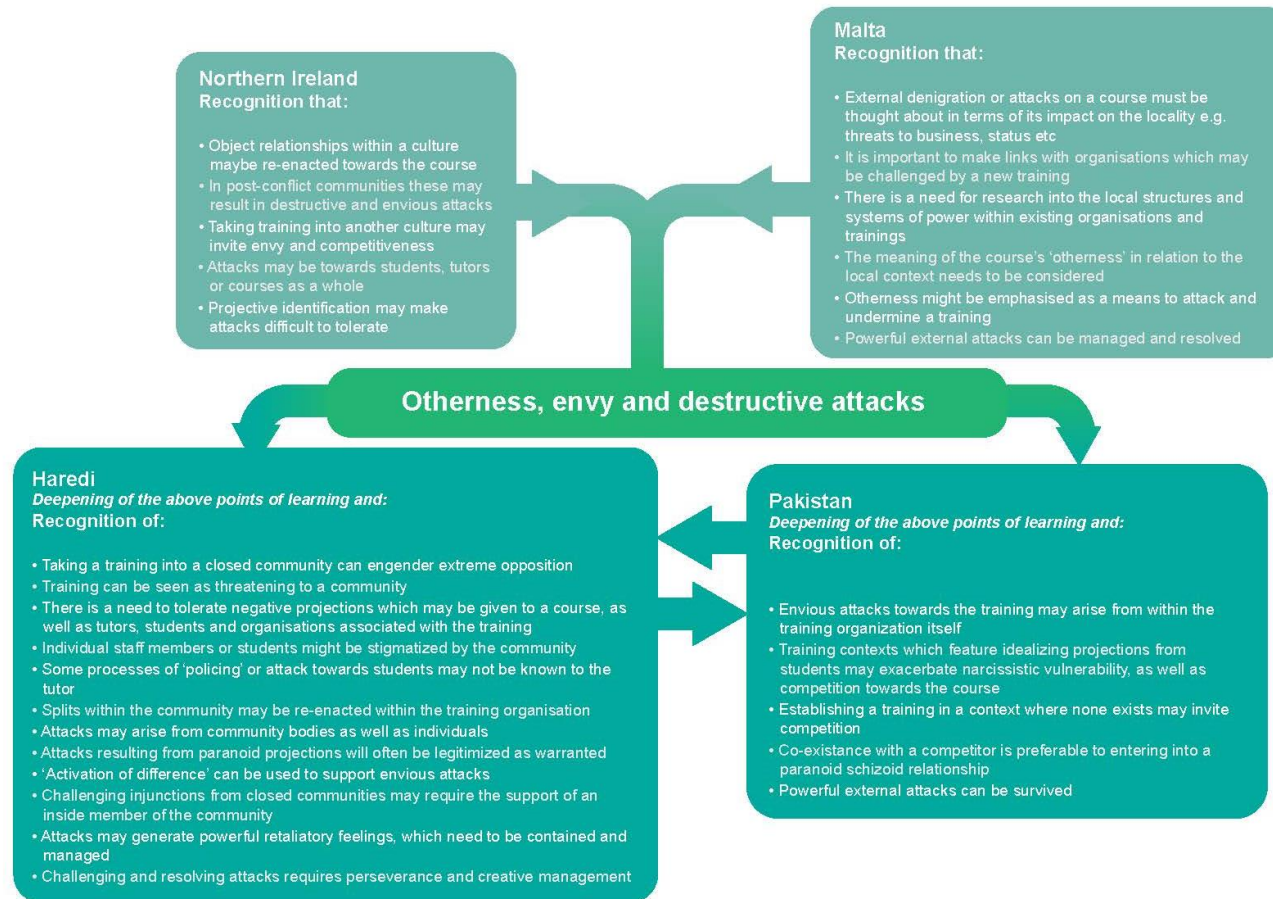
<sup>29</sup> Annex 21

appears to be a political necessity at present.<sup>30</sup> I believe there will be further difficulties ahead; nonetheless, I am hopeful that we will be successful in re-establishing and continuing the work that we have begun within the community.

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix 6

**Figure 7-1: 'Otherness', envy and destructive attacks**



## **Chapter 8    Application and Impact**

### **8.1      Towards a model for developing transcultural counselling training in hard to reach / marginalised communities**

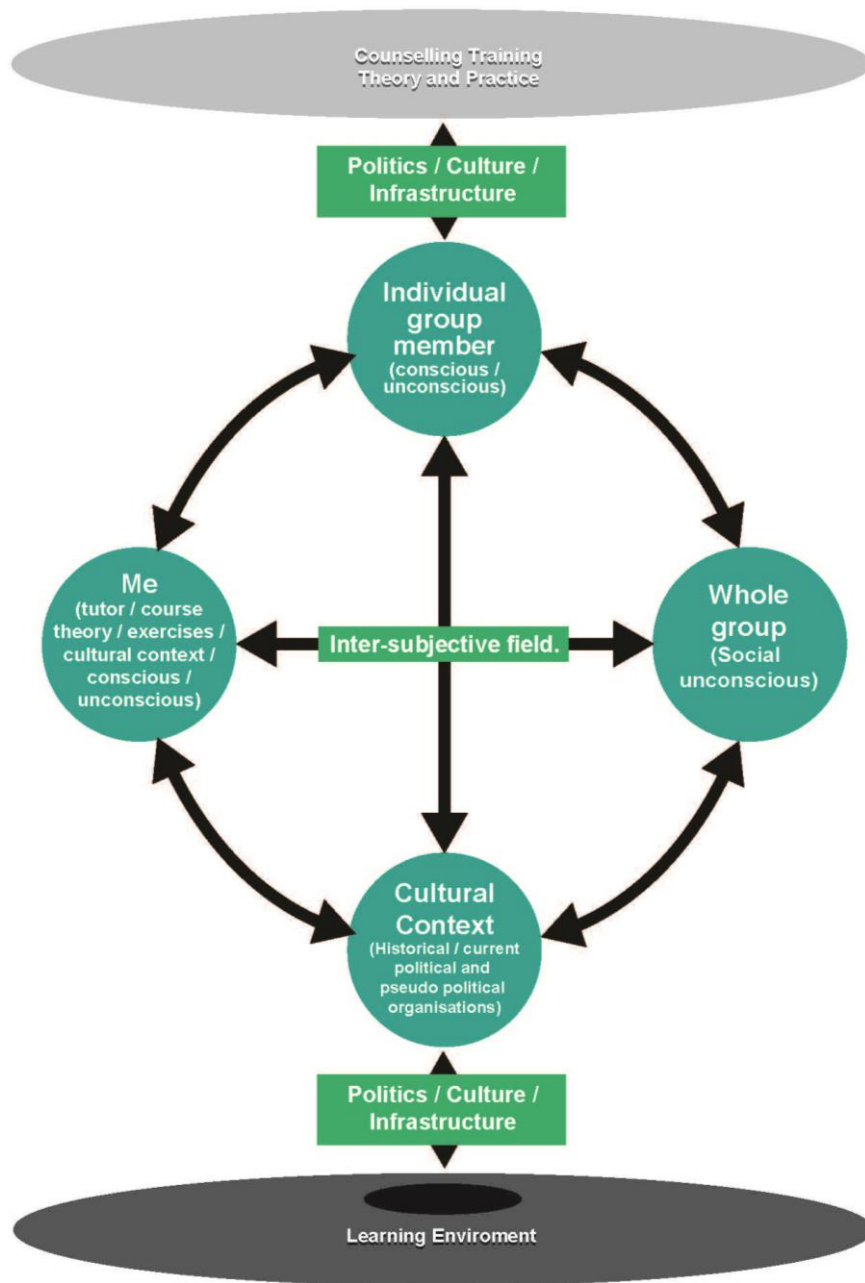
The process of undertaking this reflective audit has clarified the learning derived from delivering counselling training in challenging transcultural environments. Through recognising the processes common to working in the different settings, it is apparent how this learning could be useful to others planning or undertaking similar endeavours.

The model indicates the complexity and nature of processes involved in developing counselling training in transcultural environments. It describes the intercultural meeting interface involved when I, as facilitator, take a western counselling background into a learning community with a different ethnic, cultural and political framework.

The multi-layered interrelationships between individual group members, the group as a whole, the training context and myself as tutor need to be considered and understood by constant mutual reference. Valuable understanding can be gained through experiential interpretation of the intersubjective field, which can in turn, give meaning to the dynamics at play in the endeavour.

The model highlights the processes for engaging with the interaction so that the training can be acceptable to the learning community and become indigenous rather than an imposition. It is a 'work-in-progress' and lays the foundation for a framework for practice.

**Figure 8-1: Model for transcultural counselling**





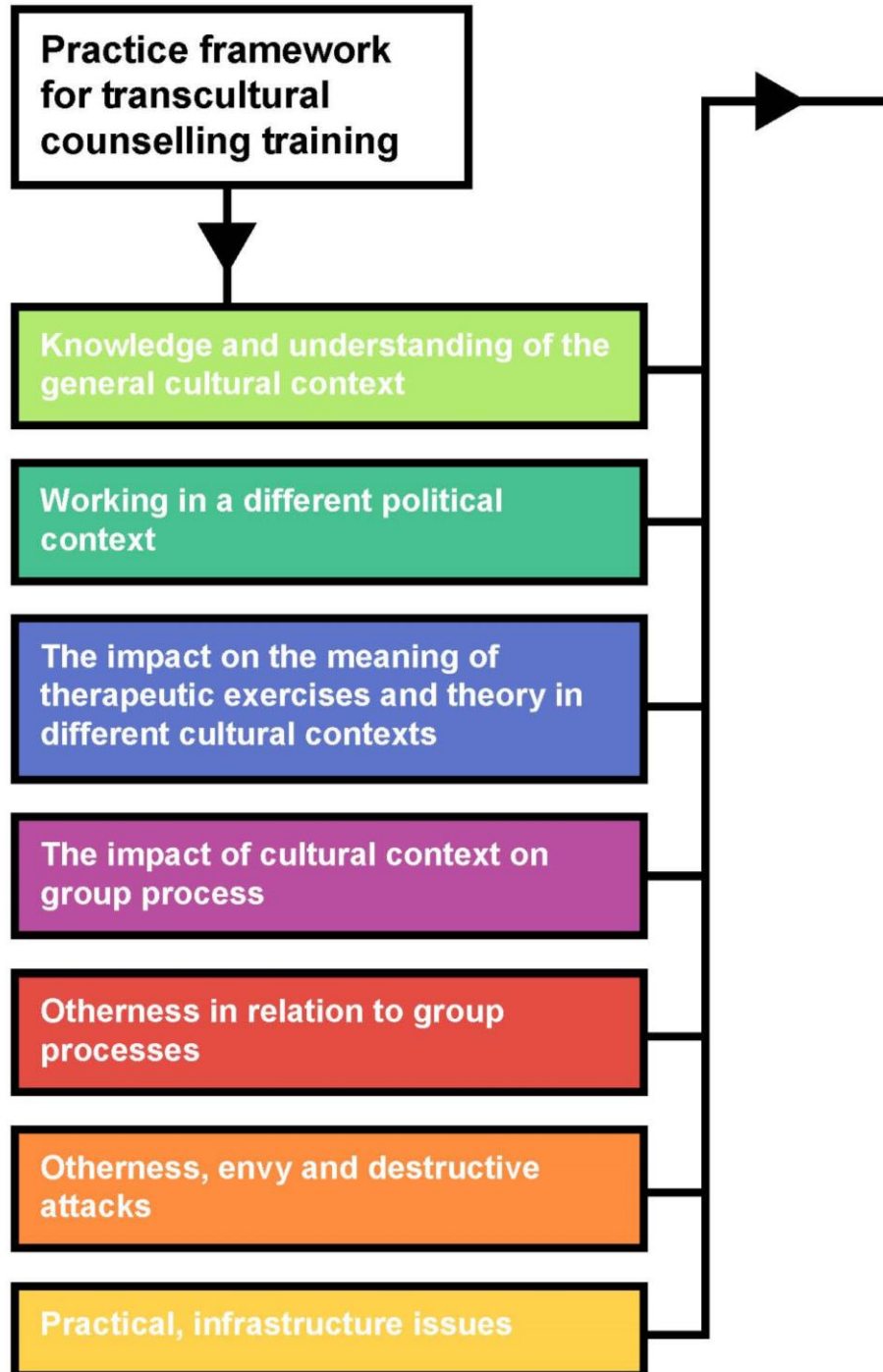
## **8.2 Towards a practice framework for transcultural counselling training**

Consistent themes have emerged through delivering counselling programmes in different transcultural learning environments. Recognition of these themes has created learning that can be useful for others engaged in similar projects.

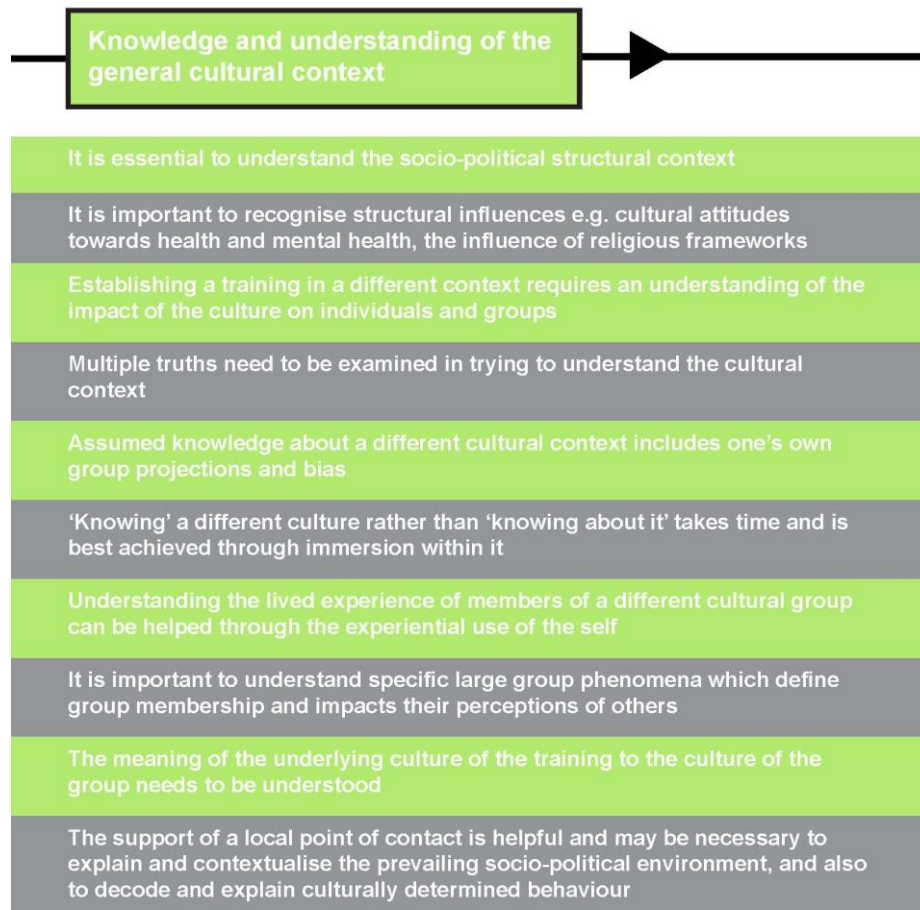
The framework provides a table of implications for practice, based upon the emerging themes. It indicates requirements that may be necessary to support the work. It highlights areas that may be important to recognise, and outlines a range of potential difficulties, challenges and management possibilities.

The framework is useful as a tool for thinking about and understanding the complexity of transcultural counselling training and can form the basis for a training curriculum in understanding the implications, challenges and management of transcultural training.

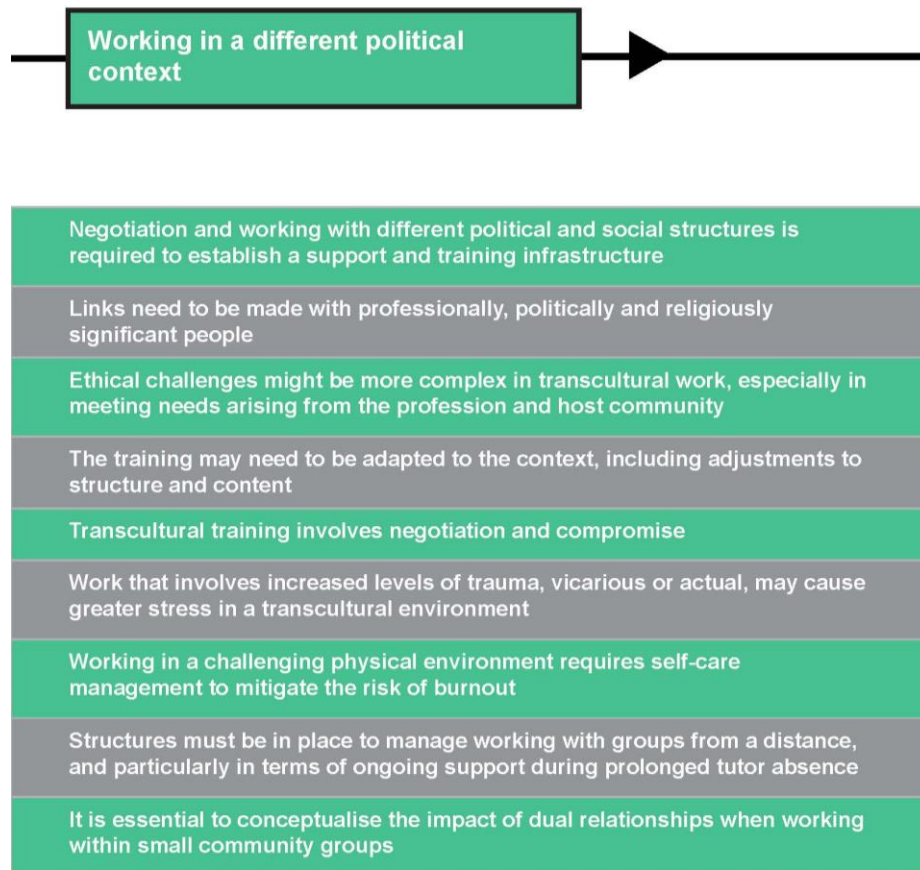
Figure 8-2: Practice framework for transcultural counselling training



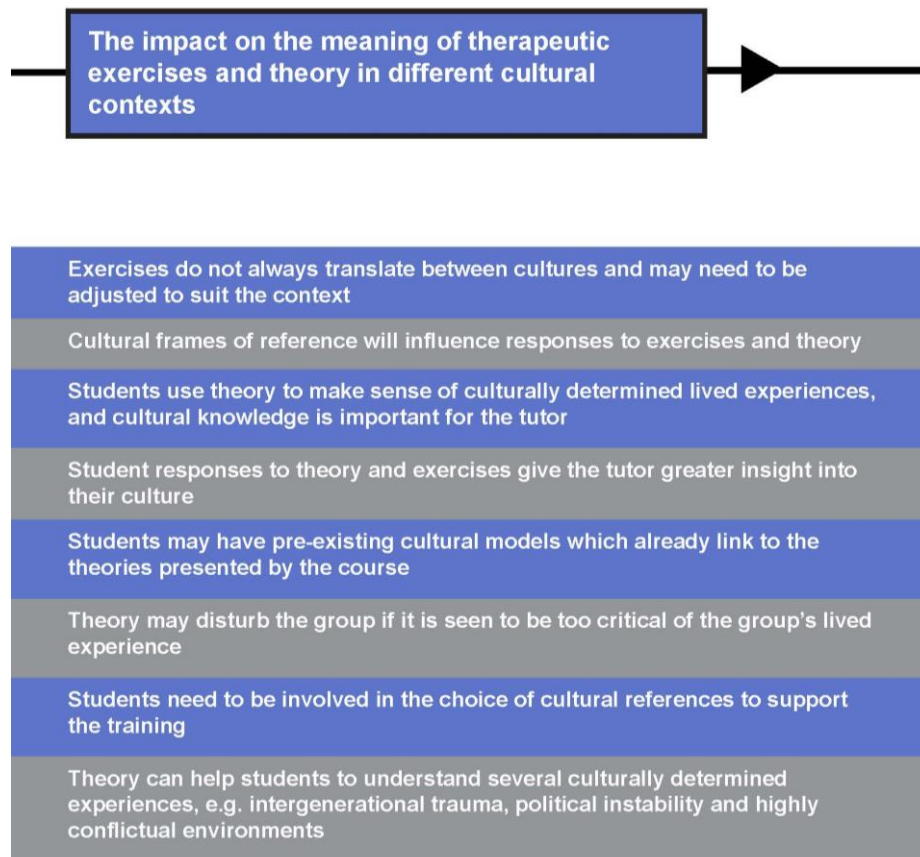
## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued



## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued



## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued



## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued

### The impact of cultural context on group process



Safety is more compromised in a culturally split group than a culturally mixed or homogeneous group

Groups from post-conflict communities may be silenced by the need to protect their own group and not to offend the other group

Divided groups may need to create safety by students initially choosing 'safe' partners to work with

Whole-object relating develops through participating in and witnessing feedback

It is important to consider the reality of the group's lived experience, and not assume that whole group behaviour is only the result of projection

Cultural experience is mirrored in group experience and behaviour

Powerful countertransference responses will arise in working with traumatised groups, particularly where there are strong defences

Self-disclosure will increase with increasing differentiation within groups from closed communities

Different narrative styles may initially be disturbing

Different emotional boundaries can be challenging and difficult to manage

Group splits and divides will often mirror those of the culture and its interface with the culture of the training

## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued





## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued

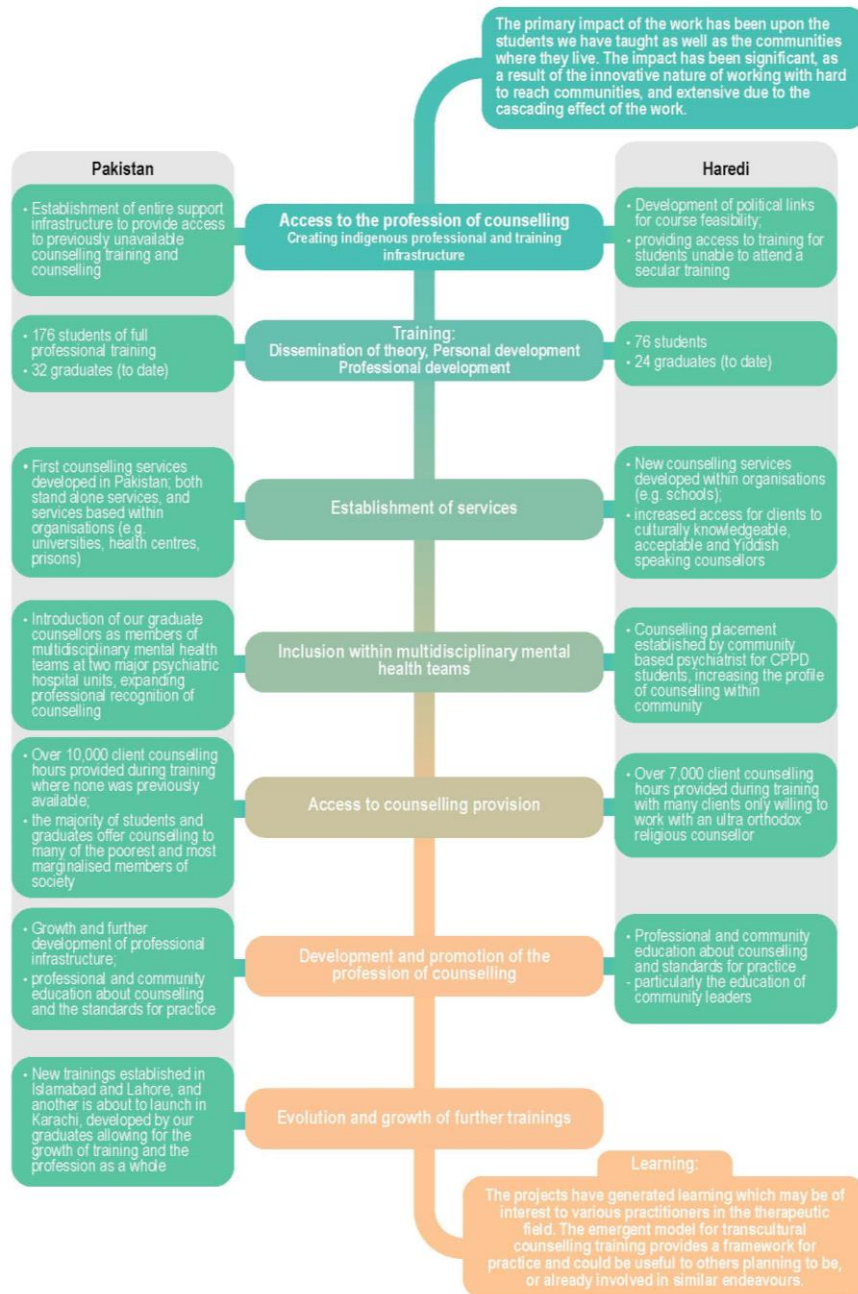




## Practice framework for transcultural counselling training continued

Entering a closed community can involve having to face extreme opposition
Counselling training can be perceived as a threat to the community or those related to students
Tutors, students and the organisation may receive negative projections and stigmatisation which needs to be tolerated
There are many forms of attack upon students which may not be known to the course
Attacks based on paranoid projections will be legitimised as warranted and supported by the activation of difference
Attacks may generate powerful retaliatory feelings which must be contained
Challenging attacks requires perseverance, creative management and support possibly from someone with access to the community

**Figure 8-3: Impact of the Works**



### 8.3 Impact of the Works

The counselling training has a direct impact upon the personal and professional development of the students,<sup>31</sup> as well as all clients seen by students and graduates.<sup>32</sup> Since becoming director of CPPD, over 500 students have graduated from our London centre, and at the point of graduation these students had undertaken some 110,000 client hours. Since graduating, the clear majority of students have gone on to work as counsellors in the private and public sector, and many have progressed into senior roles within the profession. Several ex-students are now placement and service managers, whilst others have established counselling services such as The Awareness Centre (<http://www.theawarenesscentre.com>) and The Grove (<http://www.counselling.org>). Many have undertaken further training in specialist areas, and are now training and supervising others.<sup>33</sup>

We have taken counselling training into areas where previously there was none, and I believe the impact of this has been great. We have established the profession of counselling in Pakistan,<sup>34</sup> trained students to a high professional standard and established an infrastructure for the further development of counselling. Whilst I recognise that in a country of 182 million, where a recently reported 50 million people are suffering from psychological difficulties (Khaleel Times, 2016), our impact is limited, however the work that our students and graduates are doing is already making a meaningful difference. Graduates have established services in schools and colleges, with one student developing the first university counselling service in Pakistan; others have become part of multidisciplinary teams in hospitals and health centres, and have developed their own NGOs, such as the Akhuwat & Kiran Foundation. Many of these projects have involved developing services in poor and marginalised communities, such as

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<sup>31</sup> Annex 22

<sup>32</sup> Appendix 8

<sup>33</sup> Annex 24.1

<sup>34</sup> Annex 23

working with acid burn victims and women prisoners, who have no other access to mental health care.<sup>35</sup>

At present, we remain the sole counselling training providers in Pakistan, alongside the training established by our former student. His training has developed and he has recently opened a new counselling school in Islamabad. He also runs a programme of CPD workshops, facilitated by guest tutors, which he is happy for our graduates to attend. This is a great asset for our students, as well as for the burgeoning counselling community in Pakistan. I believe that over time the counselling profession will continue to grow, and our graduates will be significant participants in this process.

With the training for Orthodox Jewish students, we have provided the opportunity for them to become professional counsellors. Many of the students that we trained in these groups would not have felt able to undertake training within a mixed secular group. Graduates have established new counselling services in Jewish high schools, colleges and community centres, which would not allow secular counsellors to work with their students and clients. They have joined statutory and voluntary multidisciplinary mental health teams and established their own practices. Within the wider Haredi community, students now offer specialist insight and support to other mental health professionals, as well as working directly with clients.<sup>36</sup>

Graduates who live and work within the most orthodox community in Stamford Hill are having to campaign and fight for acceptance and understanding of their work, as well as the broader profession of counselling. This involves them educating community groups and leaders through the complex procedures that they practiced on the course, thinking about theory and practice, and justifying this in terms of Halacha. The challenge of this cannot be underestimated in a community where contravening rules of acceptable levels of orthodoxy can result in permanent exclusion. The work we and our graduates continue to do is influencing the understanding of

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<sup>35</sup> Annex 24.2

<sup>36</sup> Annex 24.3

counselling within the community. It has also opened a debate about professional practice and increased awareness of the need to consult qualified practitioners.<sup>37</sup>

The works have established training and grown the profession of counselling in communities and areas that had not been open to the profession previously. I consider that the greatest achievement has been that we have trained groups of highly skilled, professional and committed counsellors, who are now further developing the profession of counselling in these hard-to-reach communities.<sup>38</sup> I am proud and often astounded by their pioneering work.<sup>39</sup>

This works have also resulted in a large amount of learning both personally and professionally. The single theme of the submitted works is that these are trainings that have been established across different cultural contexts. Whilst the training projects ran independently, the learning generated from the challenges and opportunities encountered in each enabled me to approach new projects with greater understanding and insight. The learning gained from background projects in Northern Ireland and Malta helped me understand the potential difficulties that could be encountered when organising a professional counselling training in a different cultural context, and this knowledge has been fundamental in establishing and supporting the resilience needed to undertake new projects in unfamiliar communities.

Although the trainings have taken place in widely differing contexts, several themes have emerged repeatedly and been common to each. I believe that identification and recognition of these themes helps with the development of conceptual understanding, which may be useful to other practitioners and organisations intending to develop counselling training within differing cultural contexts. I believe this understanding is important, as we live in a time where ideas can be accessed and apparently utilised with greater ease than ever

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<sup>37</sup> Annex 25 / Appendix 9

<sup>38</sup> Appendix 7

<sup>39</sup> Annex 25

before. The learning demonstrates that the cultural context must be considered and understood as far as possible when taking counselling training into diverse communities.

## **8.4 Dissemination and Post-Doctoral Impact**

### **8.4.1 Audiences**

The projects have generated learning that is directly applicable to audiences. It is relevant to counsellors planning to take training into transcultural settings, as well as to those working in the field of transcultural counselling, and those with issues of diversity, accessibility and inclusion. In the wider therapeutic field, the findings may be of interest to group and attachment based therapists, as well as those working with client groups from communities that have experienced violence and conflict. Whilst the model largely focuses on working with groups that are culturally distinct and 'other' to the tutor, I also believe that the learning gives insight into some of the complexities of working with culturally diverse groups within a trainer's own culture.

### **8.4.2 Modes of dissemination**

Training programmes - I will develop a series of one day CPD events based on the model for transcultural counselling training education and practice framework for transcultural counselling training. This will be aimed at counselling trainers / educators and supervisors of counselling training students; these will be hosted at CPPD.

Conferences - I have approached the head of events at BACP, and will develop and coordinate a one or two-day training conference focusing on transcultural counselling training. This will be aimed primarily at staff involved in the delivery of BACP accredited courses.

I will present my findings to the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi following an invitation from the Head of Psychiatry, Dr. Murad Musa. I will

also pursue presenting aspects of the work to other professional conferences.

Publications – I believe that sections of the learning are adaptable for publication in professional journals, such as the British Journal of Guidance and Counselling as well as the BACP Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Journal.

I will further develop the model for transcultural counselling as a framework for practice and will collate my learning and model for practitioners. This will explore the necessary underpinnings for this type of work, highlight areas that may be important to recognise in specific contexts, and outline a range of potential difficulties, challenges and management possibilities. I recognise that citing experience and the use of case examples can make text accessible and interesting, but am also acutely aware of inherent difficulties of such an approach.

Writing about my experience involves complex ethical considerations, as with the other work I have undertaken, I will need to consider the potential impact of anything I write for publication on past, current and potential students, as well as their wider communities. I will seek the support and guidance of members of the communities who have helped me negotiate the complexity of the training work, within multi-faceted socio-cultural and politico-religious systems.

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## Appendices

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## **Annex**

### **List of supportive evidence**

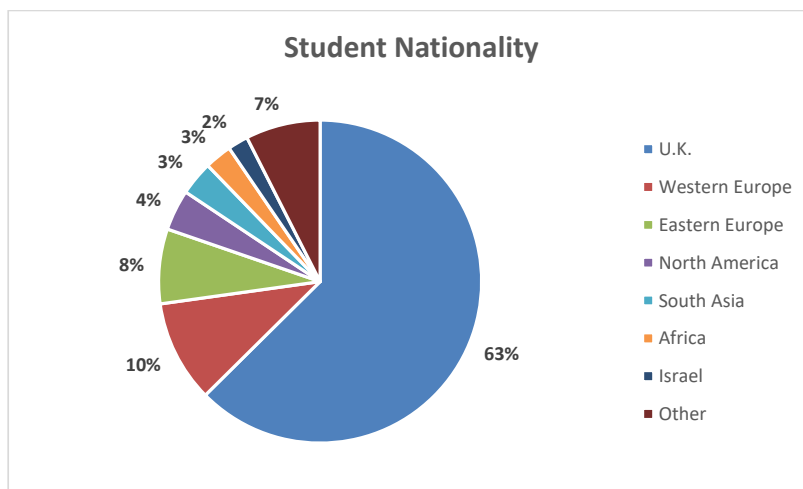
- 1 Qualification certificates
  - 1.1 Degree certificate
  - 1.2 Counselling / Psychotherapy certificates
  - 1.3 Accreditation certificate
- 2 BACP Accreditation documents
  - 2.1 CPPD London accreditation application
  - 2.2 CPPD London accreditation report and certificate
  - 2.3 Northern Ireland accreditation application
  - 2.4 Northern Ireland accreditation report and certificate
  - 2.5 Malta accreditation application
  - 2.6 Malta accreditation report and certificate
  - 2.7 Pakistan accreditation application
- 3 Course handbooks
  - 3.1 Current training handbook – London (secular group)
  - 3.2 Current training handbook – Pakistan
  - 3.3 Current training handbook – London (Haredi group)
- 4 Email from inaugural meeting of Training and Standards Committee
- 5 Confirmation COSRT Accreditation Committee
- 6 Photographs CPPD Training venue Hornsey
- 7 Correspondence between BACP Head of Professional Services, Head of Derry Trauma Advisory panel and CPPD
- 8 Graduation presentation correspondence - Northern Ireland
- 9 Correspondence regarding establishment of training in Malta
- 10 Correspondence between CPPD and BACP regarding accreditation of Pakistan training
- 11 Correspondence between CPPD and Jewish educational charity about establishing training for the Haredi community
- 12 Email confirming Consultant position for Chana
- 13 Placement / organisational / student contracts

- 14 Placement lists
  - 14.1 London (secular group) student placements
  - 14.2 Pakistan student placements
  - 14.3 London (Haredi group) student placements
- 15 Photographs CPPD Pakistan training venue
- 16 Sample end of term 1 (Advanced Diploma) reflective essays – (UK Secular / Haredi / Pakistan)
- 17 Timeline of development of counselling in Malta from MACP website
- 18 Correspondence between CPPD students and Maltese government ministers
- 19 Correspondence (unanswered) from CPPD to head of Stamford Hill Beth Din
- 20 Feedback from training for Rebbetzins
- 21 Correspondence of advice between ex-student and Rabbinical committee prior to him approaching the Stamford Hill Beth Din
- 22 Sample student feedback forms
- 23 Article funded by, and published in, BACP journal (International Edition) discussing CPPD Pakistan training
- 24 Graduate destination
  - 24.1 London (secular)
  - 24.2 Pakistan
  - 24.3 London (Haredi)
- 25 Press articles about new training in Orthodox Jewish press
- 26 Graduate photographs

## Appendix 1 Course breakdown (CPPD London) by ethnicity and Nationality

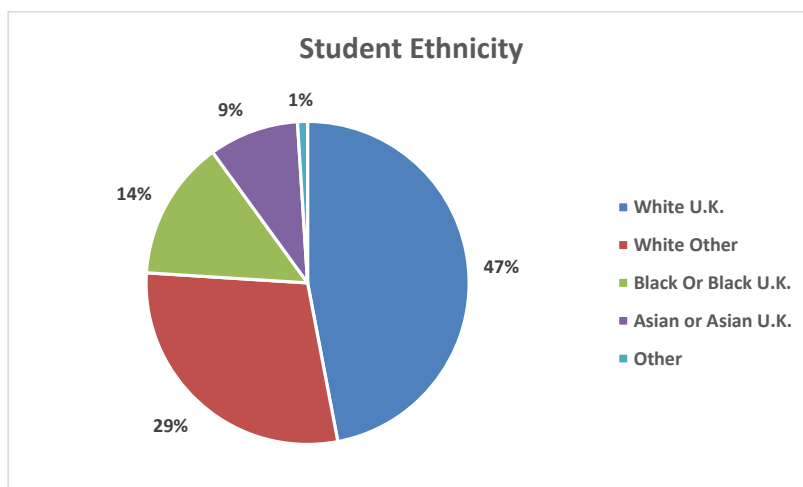
### Student Nationality

This graph shows the nationality of all current students at CPPD London.



### Student Ethnicity

This graph shows the ethnicity of all current students at CPPD London.



## **Appendix 2 Excerpts of emails issuing death threats**

**Sent:** 22 July 2015 11:46

**To:** L K

**Subject:** Re: Fwd: Hello

well! No all is not okay . I need to speak to you as I'm not pleased with the decision that XX can attend the class and I am being asked to gain my energy . Because I had made it very clear I will not attend the class with XX . I think this is a beet biased decision and lynee wants to meet me on Monday when she is back in Khi . Mr . XX I have a lot of respect for you and lynee . But lynee doesn't seem to understand that I can't have a meeting with XX as she is , sorry to say a low human being lying through her nose . I have always hated injustice and that is one of the reasons I took XXX's case to such a level that it was known to the world but unfortunately the family sold their sons blood . Anyway that's besides the point I have worked for Benazir. So it's not like I have not seen the bitter side of the world . All in all my point is that according to no law is this decision justified and I had mentioned it earlier that I can't create a drama because of the family I come from . I have a name and I am someone known to the Pakistani society . I would like a fake decision to be taken and I have asked my lawyers in UK to work things out for me . is this because I come from s political family ? I have stayed very calm and composed with cppd and very upset and angry at this entire scene . You see this is victimisation of coming from a feudal and political back ground from what I can gather . I will not take it. Hence no one is superior to anyone and I believe that I will get justice . Thanks regards

**Date:** 18 July 2015 10:24:03 BST

**To:** L K

**Subject:** Hello

lynee tje first thing in this relation is that you didn't even write two words . Rogers says pathy and I don't see it anywhere . Anyway ! I have had enough and let me inform you that my lawyer has been recovered all evidence .

I have also contacted the monitory Minster and everything in Pakistan comes under her.

I was waiting for two kind words but bacp ruined my wrote year and now the torrid I have been through by giving the narrative to XX is also also abuse . This has now gone to a much bigger and proper way . I'm Pakistan families like us burry is alive on small things . One of fathers friend Buried 7 Girls alive and when a woman MNA in the National Assembly said that she wanted to raise her voice against it and be said Do you want to be the eighth one . Anyway ! I feel a sense of betrayal from your side . I feel this isn't the Rogers way. No one has the right to

Talk about me and my family in public . Sorry o tried writing to you so many times but you didn't se to understand .

White women get burry alive to !

Resty lawyer shall speak to the members of

Bacp .

Best of luck .

### **Appendix 3 Ethical dilemma given for student discussion**

#### **Ethical dilemma 1**

J is a 34-year-old female client who you have been working with in your placement for 5 months. She has often challenged the boundaries of the counselling relationship (asking you to visit her outside of sessions etc).

After her usual session on Friday evening you realise that you cannot find your keys, and following a frustrating journey to pick up a spare set, and returning to the placement to pick up your car, you think no more about it. You assume that your keys will turn up at the placement as the security department probably has them.

On Monday evening, you return home on your own following dinner with a friend and find J sitting in your kitchen, happy to see you. She says that she thought that you could have a cup of tea together.

What do you do?

(This dilemma is based upon a real event experienced by a student on the London training)

**Appendix 4 Course advertisement placed in Haredi newspapers and magazines.**



**One year part-time Certificate in Humanistic Integrative Counselling**

**Beginning October 2015**  
19 days over the year, 9:30am – 3:30pm

Successful completion of the Certificate qualifies you to continue onto our two-year Advanced Diploma course.

**Two year part-time Advanced Diploma in Humanistic Integrative Counselling**

**Beginning September 2015,**  
9:30am-3:30pm

Advanced Diploma (year 1) 21 days over the year  
Advanced Diploma (year 2) 27 days over the year

*This course is Accredited by the BACP  
(British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy).*

*Graduates of this training will automatically be placed on the Professional Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, Accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care. This is the nationally recognised register for counsellors and psychotherapists in the UK.*

Please contact the office for information on how to apply  
mail@cppd.co.uk - www.cppd.co.uk - 020 83414843

**Appendix 5 Injunction published against CPPD training and the organisation by Stamford Hill Beth Din.**



Registered Charity No 249892

**וועד לכוּען טוהר המזנה** שע"י התאחדות קהלות החרדים

**Vaad Lema'an Toihar Hamachaneh**  
of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations

C/O 140 Stamford Hill, London N16 6QT  
Tel: 020 3322 6939 (24hr Answerphone)

12th June '15

בס"ד, יום ועש"ק פרשת שלח כ"ה סיון תשע"ה לפ"ק

## **מודעה נחוצה**

לאחרונה נתפרסמו מודעות ופירסומים על טרענינג קורס"ס להכשרה לקאונסילינג כאילו שהם מיועדים לתלמידים ותלמידות מהציבור החרדי ומראים עצמם כאילו הם מתנהלים ברוח התורה.

עשינו בירורים ומצאנו שיש מהם שמתנהלים נגד רוח התורה בין מצד התוכן שיש בהם דברי מינות רח"ל ושאר איסורים חמורים ובין מצד המלמדים שהם פורקי עול רח"ל.

ואין הדברים אמורים באלו שיש להם הסכמה מרבנים מוסמכים שליט"א.

ולחציבור הרחב אנו מבקשים אנו חוסו על נפשכם ועל נפשות ילדיכם ולפני שבוחרים בקאונסילינג מוסיב כל אחד לדרוש ולחקור היטב אצל מי למד ומה סידורו אם מתנהג ע"פ השקפת התורה.

וגם המוסדות לא ישלחו ולא ישתתפו פעולה עם אותם שמתחנכים ממקורות הזרים לרוחנו.

והעש"ת ירפא שברנו ולא נצטרך לשום קאונסילינג ונעזרם יונעם.



There have recently appeared adverts about Training courses for counselling, which are portrayed as being exclusively for Jewish Orthodox students. The implication is that they are suitable for members of our community and that they are in accordance with the spirit of the Torah.

We have investigated and found that there are some courses which are most definitely not consistent with the Torah; both, in their content which involve serious איסורים and because some trainers are פורקי עול רח"ל.

This, obviously, does not apply to those courses which are approved by רבנים מוסמכים שליט"א.

We urge the public to be vigilant and should anyone require the services of a counsellor, he or she must carefully investigate where and by whom this counsellor has trained and if the methods of this practitioner are in accordance to Daas Torah. Also the various schools, Chadorim and other institutions are urged to recommend and cooperate only with approved practitioners.



## Appendix 6 New advertisement for all-male training found in Haredi publications following Rabbinical consent.

# A MATTER OF LIVES

How three years of yours can affect countless others.

Being a BACP-registered counsellor in a frum environment, wasn't an option. Until now.

### The problem

The way it used to be and the way it is now.

A great listener, with wisdom far beyond his years, Mordechai S. had always had a knack with people. He dreamed of becoming a fully registered counsellor - but simply refused to compromise his values. Frustrated yet determined, he kept searching.

And then he met us. Imagine studying under two frum and fully qualified teachers who have years of experience, presenting their studies within the guidelines of Hashkafa and Halochah. Imagine a male-only classroom where individuals, passionate about helping others, meet to study the fascinating intricacies of the human mind. Imagine the job you've always wanted, the financial independence, and the confidence of having the best possible training while remaining a frum Jew. Meet us and discover your lifetime calling.

### The solution:

The course that produces successful professionals.

Now in a frum environment, a three year course whose students have gone on to work in GP Surgeries, NHS hospitals, schools, Universities, addiction agencies and in Private practice.

### Determination

What it takes to qualify.

In order to qualify as a BACP Accredited Humanistic Integrative Counsellor, all three years must be completed. You will begin with the Certificate year and then progress onto the Diploma, followed by the Advanced Diploma, after which you will be able to gain automatic entry on the BACP register of counsellors.

### Where it begins

The Certificate year.

The Certificate in Humanistic Integrative Counselling is a one-year part-time course, spanning three terms, running on Mondays from 6pm-9:30pm. The course begins on 20th November 2016, with a full Sunday programme at the beginning of each term.

This is the introductory year, which upon completion will enable you to progress onto the BACP accredited Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses.

As a student, you will be introduced to the Humanistic Integrative approach based upon the Five Relationship Model. We will examine Humanistic theories from the Person-Centred approach. This will teach how to put your personal feelings aside and work with clients in a professional manner.

### A lifetime of achievement

Two years of intense study to help you reach your goal.

Diploma year.

The Diploma is the first year of the two-year BACP Accredited Course.

The Diploma is a one-year part time course. In this year you will gain a deeper understanding of what you were taught as well as real life experience.

Trainees will be introduced to the concepts and principles underpinning advanced counselling skills, together with clinical issues such as assessment, contracts, boundaries and managing referrals.



In addition to course contact time, you will attend a monthly three-hour supervision group and a one-hour individual supervision session. You will also be expected to complete a minimum of 120 client contact hours over the year.

Applicants for the Diploma in Humanistic Integrative Counselling must provide evidence of

- Certificate level or equivalent comprising of at least 120 hours of training.

### Advanced Diploma year:

The Advanced Diploma is the second year of the two-year BACP Accredited Course.

The Advanced Diploma aims to deepen trainees even further in their understanding of Humanistic Integrative Counselling and its application to counselling practice. The course is an advanced practitioner training and assumes that trainees have a solid foundation in the Humanistic Integrative model, and an ability to apply skills from this approach within the counselling setting. On completion of the course, students qualifying for the Advanced Diploma will have met the training criteria in respect of individual accreditation with the BACP.

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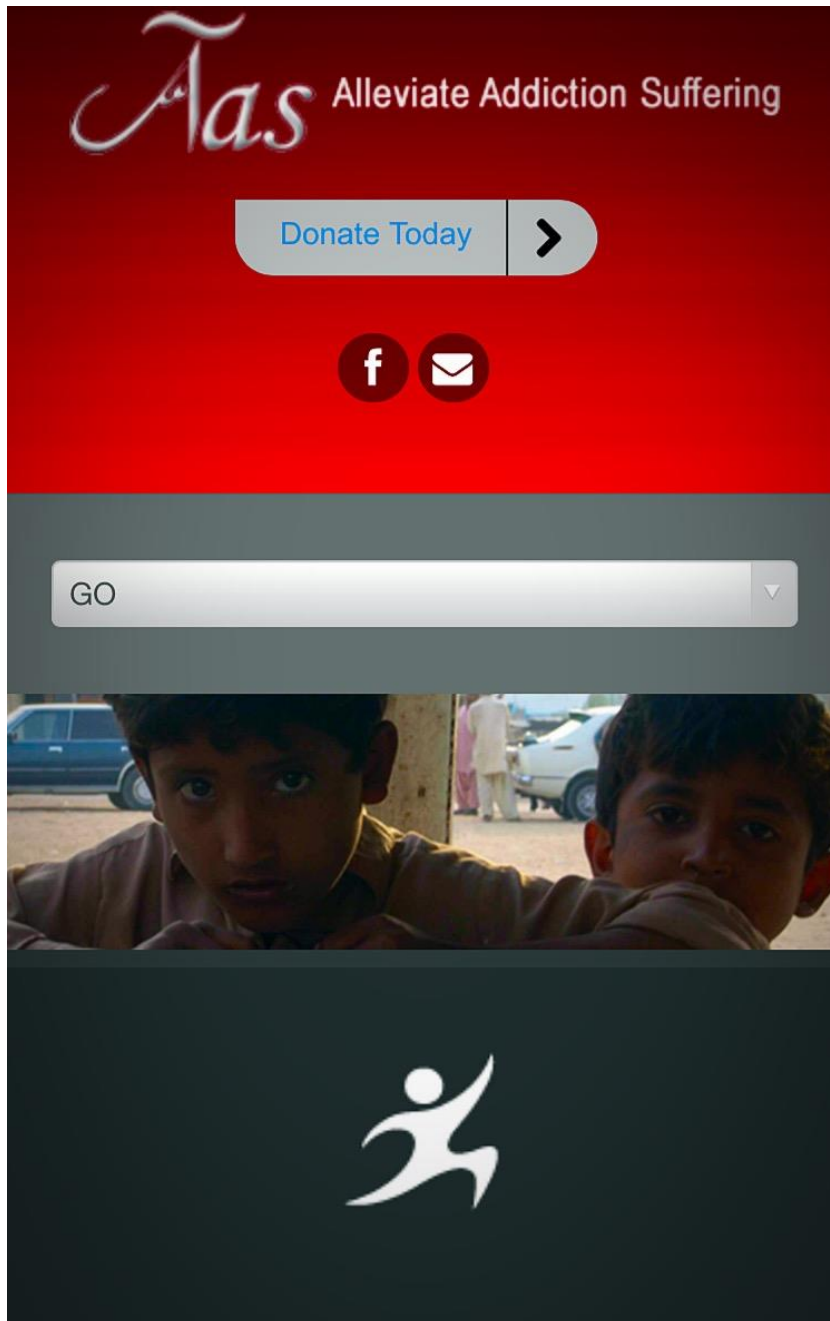
For further information and to apply, please contact Isi at CPPD on 020 8341 4843 or email [mail@cppd.co.uk](mailto:mail@cppd.co.uk)

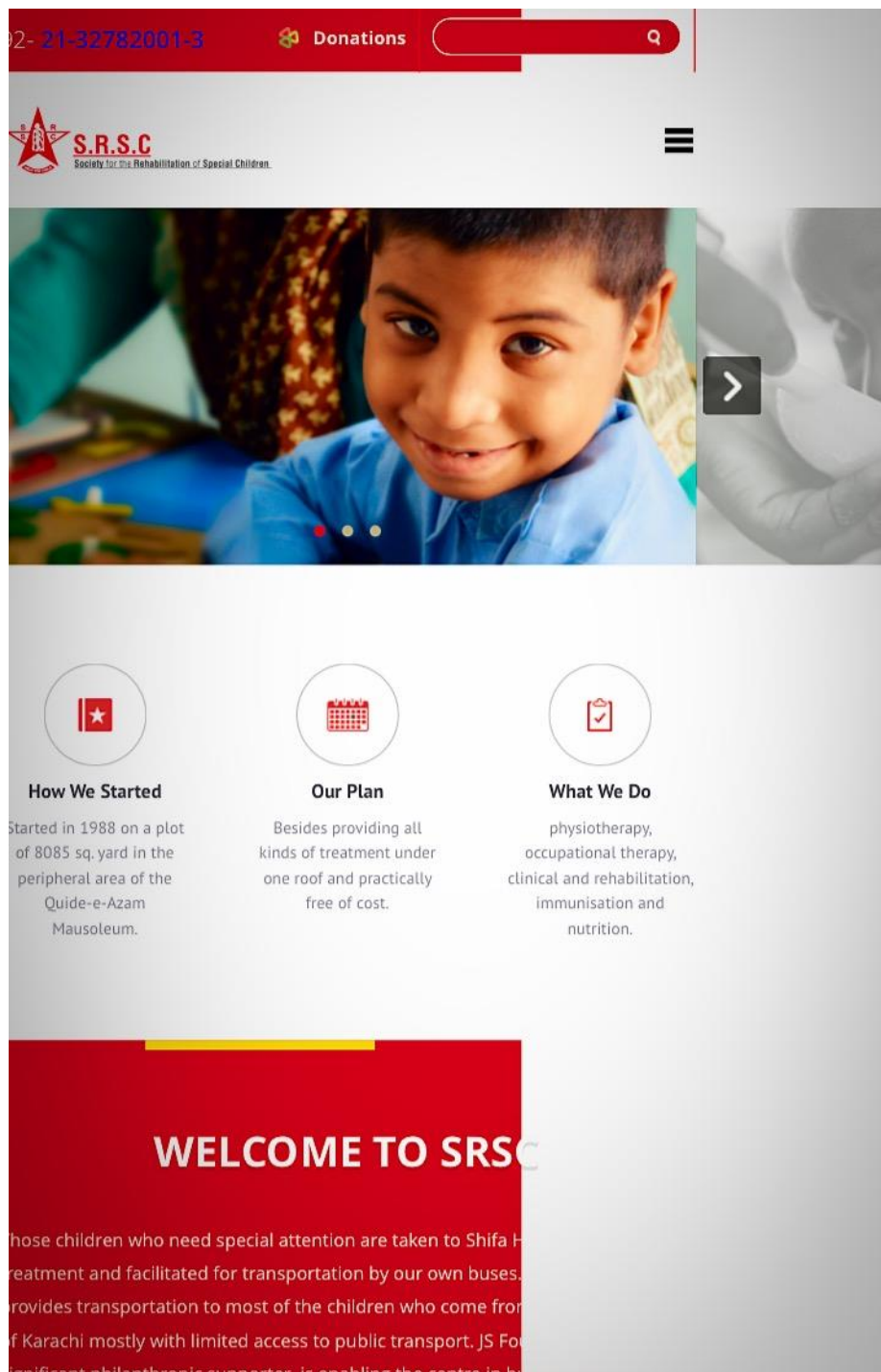


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Appendix 7 Sample student placements / graduate agencies










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### Victims


**Disclaimer:**  
The Case Studies are based on details as narrated by the acid burn survivors. As such Depilex Smileagain Foundation is not accountable for the credibility of the incidents



Afsa Shahid:



Deeba Adeel:




Asim Aslam:

### Afsa Shahid:

Afsa Shahid is a 17 years old girl who belongs to Daska Sialkot. She was 7 years old when she was burned. In March of 2006 her family was having a barbeque at her home. Afsa was standing near the coils when her mother threw some spirit on the coils to burn them. Meanwhile spirit bottle caught fire and exploded. The fire rapidly caught on to Afsa and her face, arms, neck, belly, and left hand were burned severely. For her initial treatment Afsa went to a private clinic and following the initial treatment she went to the MYO hospital in Lahore. Afsa has not undergone any surgery. She registered with DSF in March 2016. Afsa belongs to a poor family. She needs multiple surgeries to recover completely.

### Media Video



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## What we offer for children...

At Bikur Cholim we provide a comprehensive range of services to help the families, siblings and children and young people who may be ill or disabled.

[Read more](#)

*Bikur Cholim's mission is to relieve the effects of sickness, poor physical and mental health and old age, for people of the Orthodox Jewish community in North London by assisting with the provision of support, facilities and services.*

### About us

### How we help

### How you can help

Established in 1979 in response to a local tragedy, Bikur Cholim was founded to ensure that no person would have to battle the challenges of illness and disability on their own.

More than three decades since we were first established, our commitment to this ideal remains as principal as ever. Although there is not much that can be done to prevent illness, there is a lot that can be done to reduce the pain that accompanies it. Bikur Cholim's longstanding trademarks of person centred services and attitudes of respect, dignity and sensitivity and our unstinting commitment to confidentiality have enabled us to meet the individual needs of each of our service users.

We recognise that we owe our achievements to the ongoing support and hard work of our trustees and staff team, and are immeasurably grateful to our donors and funders for their generosity.

**Annual Review & Accounts 2013**

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### News

#### Rosh Hashana Packages

Bikur Cholim have distributed Rosh Hashanah packages to our elderly and lonely service users. These...

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## Services

### Counselling Services

- Art & Play Therapy
- Bereavement Counselling
- Brief Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Eclectic Therapy
- Family (Systemic) Therapy
- Gestalt Therapy
- Group Therapy (closed groups)
- Humanistic/Person or Client Centred Therapy
- Holocaust counselling
- Hypnotherapy
- Integrative Therapy
- Music Therapy

## **Appendix 8 Sample graduate statements of impact**

### **CPPD London – Jewish orthodox course**

#### **Statement regarding the counselling courses for orthodox Jews CPPD**

January 2017 saw the launch at CPPD Counselling School of the first-ever professional counselling training course for men delivered by strictly orthodox, fully-trained and professionally-qualified tutors. 14 strictly orthodox (chareidi) men from North and North West London have embarked on a Certificate in Humanistic Integrative Counselling course. Approved by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) this is the first year of a 3-year course which, if completed successfully, would lead to an Advanced Diploma in Humanistic Integrative Counselling, and a qualification to practice as a counsellor, fully recognised and accredited by BACP.

Mr Chaim Kantor MA and Mr Jonathan Rabson MSc, both qualified child/adult and family therapists respectively, are jointly responsible for delivering the course and supporting the students through their Certificate year in a training environment that suits the requirements of a chareidi group, and a timetable which, unlike most other courses, is conveniently timed around the (sometimes challenging) Jewish calendar.

This course is the brainchild of CPPD's Co-Director, Ms Jenny Sandelson who was the first to identify the training need in the orthodox community and has created courses at CPPD dedicated for strictly orthodox women - and now men - in the community. Her oversight has ensured that professional standards are upheld, while the religious requirements of the students are fully accommodated.

Given the lack of properly-trained psychotherapists, the Rabbis and community leaders over the years have urged the setting up a professional training course for the strictly orthodox community, without compromising the orthodox environment that the community requires, so this is truly a ground-breaking initiative.

This training initiative has attracted men in the orthodox community who wish to develop their personal skills and become better teachers or mentors for our youth, as well as those who wish to consider a potential career in counselling or psychotherapy with children, young people or adults. In the longer term, Jenny Sandelson's vision will contribute positively to the emotional well-being of children and adults in the chareidi community.

Jenny Sandelson has been insistent that a professional counselling training course cannot be rushed or condensed into a matter of months. She recognised that there are simply no short-cuts to becoming a well-trained counsellor. Anything less than 3 years short-changes the students, unfairly



expecting minimally-trained practitioners to deal with the complex mental health needs of their clients. CPPD students on this course will graduate in 3 years with many hours of counselling experience, successful clinical placements, and a sound academic grounding.

CPPD's philosophy to training, as envisioned by Jenny Sandelson, includes a rigorous training course which is designed to stretch and challenge the students, introducing them first and foremost to *themselves*, and in parallel training them with practical counselling skills that prepare them to face and support the wide range of presenting issues that the clients bring.

As the chareidi community expands, and community leaders are more willing to recognise the benefit of therapy to the emotional health needs of young people and adults, more professionally-trained clinicians will be required to support these services.

Jenny Sandelson and CPPD can take much credit for a range of culturally-sensitive initiatives that are helping to create the next generation counsellors and therapists in this hard-to-reach faith community.

**Chaim Kantor MA, Child & Adult Psychotherapist**

**Jonathan Rabson PGCE MSc, Family & Systemic Psychotherapist**

The training I did at CPPD led me on a profound emotional journey. I learnt about my inner world which helps me understand my clients' story in depth. To give you just a glimpse:

Unconscious processes were causing me to behave a certain way with parental figures- such as idealisation and splitting- the good breast/bad breast concept.

This and other ideas help me understand the transference I experience from my young clients.

I discovered why I behave a certain way in a group. The understanding helped me manage and alleviate my own painful emotions as well as inform my group work with teens - I'm able to talk through group dynamics with them as a result of my experience.

I work with my clients psychodynamically. The understanding I gained in my third year of training has given me the capacity to work on this level.

The reason why I needed a specifically Jewish Orthodox group was because I felt more secure in what I'm doing being that other women from the

community were doing the same. I would've been self-doubting had I been with 'others'. It would've felt wrong and unorthodox to be studying.

This is besides for not having to feel misunderstood or self conscious about my culture.

Most important though was having a place to think about and discuss cultural issues and emotional problems in the context of our families and lifestyle.

I gained much knowledge and felt secure and contained in this setting.

For people from the community who ask me about my training, it's always reassuring that I trained with an Orthodox Jewish group. It makes the training seem less from the secular world.

### **Chaya Kuflik**

My training at the CPPD has had a profound impact on my personal and professional development. As part of the Jewish orthodox community I was looking to train within it, but hoped to maintain high standards professionally and ethically, both of which I encountered at the training.

My experience, facilitated by Jenny, was one of support, holding, and believe in me, and left a profound mark on who I have become as a person and a counsellor.

The course provided me with a template upon which I can reflect as I meet clients from similar or different backgrounds, and allowed me to connect to the different parts of myself, as well as to the different parts of society that all share the human experience regardless of race, colour and religion.

### **Malki Teitelbaum**

Doing the advanced diploma course in humanistic integrative counselling with Jenny as the tutor in an orthodox group, has had a profound impact on me. She built upon what we had learned in the diploma course and helped us transition into professional counsellors with lots of new skills. The knowledge and skills she imparted has helped me tremendously in my work with clients. It was really important for me to do the training in a group of orthodox women. This helped me feel safe and helped me explore issues specific to my community with other like minded people.

### **Gitty Deutsch**

## **CPPD Pakistan**

In March 2013 when i entered the CPPD training room for the Cetificate in Humanistic counseling , i had no idea what i was going into or going for? I didnt knew what is counseling ? what will be the training about ? how will it benefit me ? what is group process? I just came as my psychiatrist referred this course to me . I was going through a turmoil in my life , being a mother of five month old son ,kicked out of the home by my husband and in laws, i was living with my parents home and on anti depressents . Although i was emotionally , financially , socially supported by my parents and family i was shattered after around two years of living in an emotionally abusive reltionship.

Cetificate in humanistic integrative counseling , group process , phychoeducation helped me make sense of what was going on , bought awareness , it also helped me make sense of my personal therapy . I was able to allow myself to grieve about my relationship and regain my self esteem and started to let go of the blame that was projected on me in my marriage . apart from all this i learned to set boundaries for myself and my son .

When i reflected back on my journey of self discovery and growth my thirst increased for self awareness , which led me into diploma in Humanistic integrative counseling . Inthis journey i learned about being a good enough mother. Training with CPPD empowered me , my transformation in these years have been phenomenal, it can be seen visually , felt and heard by people without me expressing it . From living an unlived life , tied with chains of abuse , rejection and shame CPPD helped me create a meaningful life for myself and my son .

Reflecting on my process and development and with encouragement of my tutor and suoervisor i was able to work with clients and was able to provide them with the benefit of the therapeutic relationship as in pakistan there is a dire need of it . This led me to take this as my career and move onto Advance diploma . When i see my clients progressing and dealing with their life strugglles in a better way with hope and resilience , it gives me a sense of fulfilment . The most important thing that i cherish while working with clients is that its not only that they benefit from the therapeutic alliance but its a space for healing anf growth for me too.

The three years journey was the best gift i gave myself , it helped me regain my sanity , health , joy and was able to live a conscious life I hope and pray that CPPD may remain a beautiful source of inspiration to the lives of people .

**Zainab Samad**

CPPD training was both experiential and therapeutic for me. Being a postgraduate student of clinical Psychology I was looking for something where I could experience what empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence looks and feels like. I was already familiar with these main concepts and other major psychological approaches but did not have enough opportunity to experience them first hand. By allowing groups to work together at CPPD and interact with each other while exploring different theories helped me, to grow and experience and become aware of attachments and my own inhibitions. As the training was three fold, in terms of that we were required to take our own therapy and simultaneously see clients under supervision and be a part of training as well which involved group process, this altogether really honed my learning and helped me grow. The trainings were very interactive and experiential. Seeing how our group grew with time and then took their learning with them to support and help other people, made me believe in the power of therapy and human connection. I really enjoyed and admire my trainers Jenny and Lynn who worked so beautifully with us and opened new avenues of learning and growing both personally and professionally. Thank you!

#### **Sobia Shah**

Jenny Sandelson was my tutor for the Diploma (2013-14), and Advanced Diploma (2014-15) in Humanistic Integrative Counselling.

Jenny had a calming influence on the group as a whole. She gave me insights that helped me see myself in a different light and greatly increased my understanding of self. She was always available to answer queries.

I learnt a lot from her facilitation of both individual and group process. Also from her giving of herself to her students wholeheartedly, yet always maintaining boundaries. I try to practice this in my client work as well. It was a privilege to have her as my tutor for 2 years.

#### **Shahla Khan**

My experience at CPPD was an exceptional and emotional experience from the start of the Diploma to the end of my Advance Diploma. It was my personal need to study again but I was really blessed as it was more rewarding than I could ever imagine. I also want to thank you, as without you this would never be possible. You made it all look so easy and enjoyable which gave me the confidence and courage I needed to go forward. This course has given me the skill to pursue a career which makes me feel amazing every day and also be part of the positive change in others. It's truly my passion and I am so grateful I was part of the CPPD training.

#### **Adilah Ahmed**

## Appendix 9 Press articles about new training in Orthodox Jewish press

Counselling course for Orthodox men is 'first-of-its-kind' | Jewish News

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017 / ADAR 16, 5777 / 9:43 PM

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# Counselling course for Orthodox men is 'first-of-its-kind'

A ground-breaking counselling scheme has been launched, specially tailored for men in the Charedi community

January 26, 2017, 3:43 pm | 1

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Orthodox Jews in Stamford Hill

group of 14 strictly Orthodox men in north London have

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BY JUSTIN COHEN |

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Benjamin Netanyahu

<http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/orthodox-counselling/> [14/03/2017 20:44:28]

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**A** begun a three-year counselling course delivered by other strictly Orthodox men, on what was described as a "first-of-its-kind" programme.

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Years of planning culminated in the launch this weekend of the ground-breaking course specifically tailored for men in the Charedi community, after an initial mixed programme led to the separation of learners into a women-only class last year.

Those behind the push say a need was identified for those already offering informal counselling in areas such as Stamford Hill to be formally trained and accredited, in order to deal with the more complex cases.

The learners have enrolled onto the Certificate in Humanistic Integrative Counselling course at CPPD Counselling School, which is approved by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

It is the first year of a three-year course, and uniquely, it includes built-in elements of Halachic discussion, alongside clinical placements, at the end of which the men will be qualified to practice as an accredited counsellor.

In the past, almost all counselling within the Charedi community has come from rabbis, or those without proper training, but there is now a growing need for a cohort of properly-trained male counsellors to deal with the more serious mental health issues that arise.


"Unfortunately there are examples of unqualified or poorly qualified counsellors and courses in the community, which may be partly due to the unavailability of appropriate accredited training," said CPPD director Jenny Sandelson. "Hopefully this will address this problem."


Three Orthodox groups have previously completed the training, she said, and they are now doing "impressive work within the community, including educating members about the need to work with fully qualified professionals".


The programme's two trainers – Chaim Kantor and Jonathan Rabson – are accredited psychotherapists known to the community. Kantor, who speaks Yiddish, emphasised that the three-year course was the only way to tackle the problems appropriately.


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"There are simply no short-cuts to becoming a well-trained counsellor," he said. "It short-changes the students, and it can be unfair to expect minimally-trained practitioners to deal with the complex mental health needs of their clients."

Kantor said the English-language programme was being run "in a training environment that suits the requirements of a Charedi group, in a timetable which, unlike most other courses, is conveniently timed around the Jewish calendar".

He added: "Given the lack of properly-trained psychotherapists, I have been encouraged by rabbis and community leaders over the years to set up a course without compromising the Orthodox environment that our community requires. It's a ground-breaking initiative."

Rabson, who also speaks Hebrew, said this communal backing, especially from rabbis, was crucial. "There may be some reticence or suspicion in the community about this profession," he said, "but there is now a growing recognition about the difference between what a trained counsellor can do, and what a rabbi can do."

All the learners were in their 20s and 30s, he said. "It will be challenging. All have had long-term yeshiva experience, and for many English is not their first language. Some are now teachers. Some have worked as Special Education Needs Coordinators, working with teens at-risk. Many are carers. One is a Governor at a school, who is getting some challenging cases brought to him, ranging from safeguarding issues to family discord, and he wants to be better prepared to deal with it. But the main thing is they all want to learn."

He added: "There are so many outstanding men in our community who wish to develop their personal skills and become better teachers or mentors for our youth, as well as those who wish to consider a potential career in counselling or psychotherapy with children, young people or adults."

He said a burgeoning Orthodox population, together with an increasing willingness to recognise the need for help, had brought with it an increased demand for counselling, so the course was crucial to secure a commensurate service provision.

"As the Charedi community expands, and we are more willing to recognise the benefit of therapy to the emotional health needs of our young people and adults, we are going to need more professionally-trained clinicians to support our services," said Rabson. "I am really proud to be part of an initiative that is helping to create the next generation of Charedi counsellors and therapists."

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# COMMUNITY

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Page 55 Helping Out in Shidduchim

Page 56 Hachnasos Sifrei Torah

Page 57 Hendon Addas' New Rav Inducted



The Hatzola North London fundraising event.

## Groundbreaking *Heimishe* Counselling Course Launches in North London

This week saw the launch in North London of the first-ever professional counselling training course for men delivered by *frum*, fully trained and professionally qualified tutors.

Fourteen *Heimishe* men from North and Northwest London attended CPFD Counselling School last weekend, where they embarked on their exciting learning journey toward their Certificate in Humanistic Integrative Counselling course. Approved by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) this is the first year of a three-year course which, if completed successfully, will lead to an Advanced

Diploma in Humanistic Integrative Counselling and a qualification to practice as a counsellor, fully recognised and accredited by BACP.

The course tutors for the certificate year are two of the *Heimishe*'s most respected therapists – Mr. Chaim Kantor MA, a child and adult psychotherapist, and Mr. Jonathan Rubson MSc, a family and couples psychotherapist, both pioneers in demonstrating that it is possible to be *frum* and *ehrlich* and still run a successful psychotherapy practice guided by *dass Torah*. Mr. Kantor and Mr. Rubson are jointly responsible for delivering the

*Continued on page 55*

## Gateshead Kollel Marks Rav Dessler's *Yahrtzeit* With *Shiur*

A large *tzibbur* gathered on Sunday evening to mark the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, *zt"l*, in the *beis medrash* of Gateshead Kollel. Rabbi Todros Miller, *shlita*, captivated the audience as he gave a deeper understanding of Rav Dessler's *gadlus* and the treasures he bequeathed *Klal Yisrael*, among the foremost of them the establishment of the *kollel* 75 years ago. Rabbi Miller drew on the knowledge he received firsthand from his father, Harav Mordechai Miller, *zt"l*, who was one of Rav Dessler's closest *talmidim*. He embellished it with the penetrating understanding of his rebbi, Harav Moshe

Shapiro, *zt"l*, who referred to Rav Dessler as *mori v'yabi* due to the close *kesher* he had with him while learning as a *bachur* in Ponevez.

Rabbi Miller expounded on the influence that Kelm had on Rav Dessler through his 18 uninterrupted years of learning there. The underpinning of development in Kelm was the *bitul ha'nechmus*, which was the tool that brought forth the *gadlus haadam* in the *talmidim*. A *passuk* in *Yehoshua* (14:15) describes Avraham Avinu as *haadam ha'gadol be'ne'ekivim*, and the *Pesikta* (7:5) explains that this was demonstrated by

*Continued on page 60*

If you would like to share any news or information, or would like us to report events from your neighborhood, please e-mail Local@Hamodia.co.uk



## LSJS Conference to 'Motivate, Innovate and Educate'

LSJS recently held its annual National Education Conference for Primary School Jewish Studies Teachers. Almost 200 educators attended a day that set out to provide motivation, innovation and education for those attending.

The day opened with a welcome from Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, who spoke of the vital role of teachers in our community. The other keynote speaker was Rabbi Steven Weil, senior managing director of the Orthodox Union in America, who emphasized the crucial impact of teachers as mentors and role models for the young members of our community.

Rabbi Weil also presented two of the 17 workshop sessions that were offered to delegates. These were taught by some of the best educators in the community, covering topics as wide-ranging as Sandra Teacher on "The Importance of Play," Rachel Creeger on "A Drama Toolkit for Kodesh Teachers," and Rabbi Dr. Raphael Zarum on "Using Ancient Objects to bring Jewish Studies to Life."

Rabbi Joseph Dweck presented, "Have we lost the big picture? Teaching Jewish Principles," while Rabbi David Lister spoke on "Diamond



Rabbi Steven Weil addressing the Teachers' Conference held last week at LSJS, Hendon.

**Davening: Putting Some Sparkle into Your Tefillah Teaching.**

Jewish Interactive was a partner with LSJS in the organisation of the conference, which showed some highlights from the "One Minute Wonders," which had been prepared beforehand. These short films give a novel teaching approach that teachers can use and that can be seen in one minute. The aim is to give busy teachers some great ideas in a short period of time. The conference was also the launch of a new Jewish Interactive resource, JICalendar which supports the teaching of the Jewish year.

The conference received very positive feedback. One teacher observed that it was "a day to revive one's inspirational batteries and remind oneself of the good we are doing as teachers," while another described it as, "Very stimulating and useful to provide a chance to reflect on how I teach."

Conference coordinator Esther Coleman was delighted with the positive feedback. "Good teachers are always looking for new ideas to help them become even better teachers. Our aim with the conference is to help everyone who attends find something they can use in the classroom the next day."

## L'Chaim Shevat Shidduch Meetings: A Celebration of Life

BLIMIE GREEN

L'Chaim Shidduch Organization calls upon women the world over to participate in its biannual Global Community Shevat Shidduch Event. Shidduch meetings will be taking place from Sunday, Jan. 29 through Sunday, Feb. 12 in various communities committed to assisting singles in their search for their bashert.

Shevat is the month when the hidden, yet vital, life-giving sap courses through the trees. This special month offers us the time to celebrate the numerous shidduchim which we have, *baruch Hashem*, facilitated in the recent past. It is also an opportunity to work towards building more *batim ne'emanim* of the future.

Up and down the Eastern Seaboard, to the Midwest and to cities as far as Seattle and Los Angeles on the west coast, our volunteers network on behalf of singles both within and outside their local communities.

Internationally, our representatives are enthusiastically arranging meetings and matches in cities including Brussels, London, Manchester, Zurich, as well as Yerushalayim, Beitar and Tzfas. L'Chaim volunteers share stories of shidduchim that are inspirational and often happily unexpected results of shidduch meetings.

One such account is of two women who met in the parking lot on their way into a shidduch meeting. Even before joining the meeting, they began discussing what was uppermost in their mind – their respective children. Unbeknownst to them, they had already set into motion the eventual happy marriage of the destined couple.

In another successful chain of events orchestrated as always by Hashem, a L'Chaim shidduch meeting originally scheduled for one venue had to be relocated to another site. The new hostess invited her mother to attend the meeting on behalf of her two single

daughters. When the hostess's mother realized that one of the attendees was lauding a young man from the Midwest, whom she previously had not considered, she decided to investigate further. The newly married couple is thrilled that she did so.

Success stories abound with couples of all ages and outlooks. The resourcefulness and devotion of our cadre of caring shidduchim worldwide add new meaning and *simchah* to the lives of never-married couples. L'Chaim also brings a sense of hope and renewal to those previously married.

Singles with occupations as varied as *kirus*, learning, nursing, engineering, dentistry, social work and many other fields are continuing in their contributions to the *khal* as they build their own *batim ne'emanim B'Yisrael*. In gratitude, these beneficiaries of L'Chaim's efforts do their share in promoting shidduchim in their communities.

L'Chaim encourages women to organize, host and attend local meetings. If you wish to organize a L'Chaim Shidduch Meeting, contact L'Chaim, preferably before Jan. 23. Provide the following information: Your name and/or group name, date, time and location of meeting, categories and ages to be presented, as well as your phone number, email address and/or your fax number. Email: [lichaim-shidduch@gmail.com](mailto:lichaim-shidduch@gmail.com) or call 845-323-9041 and leave a message.

Meetings can either be open to all ages and categories or can target specific ages and populations such as: yeshivish, learning only, learning/earning, chassidish/heimish, Modern Orthodox, second-time singles, etc. Information on "How to Set Up a Shidduch Meeting" is available via email or phone.

In a recent email to L'Chaim from an appreciative mother, she wrote, "kol hakodesh, nishet chayil at L'Chaim, for all of your hishtadlus. Our families will always have hakaras hatov for bringing such *simchah* into our lives."

## Heimische Counselling Course Launches in North London

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course and supporting the students through their certificate year in a training environment that suits the requirements of a heimische group, and a timetable which, unlike most other courses, is conveniently timed around the Yom Tov calendar.

Mr. Kantor said, "Given the lack of properly trained psychotherapists, I have been encouraged by Rabbimim and *askanim* over the years to set up a course without compromising the environment that our *gunseleim* require. I am really excited to be part of this groundbreaking initiative offering professional training to our *charedische olam*. I wish to pay tribute to CPPD's co-director Ms. Jenny Sandelson, who was the first to identify the need in our community and has moved mountains to make it happen. She has created courses at CPPD dedicated for *frum* women – and now men – in the *kehilah*, ensuring that professional standards are upheld, while the religious requirements of the students are fully accommodated."

Mr. Rabson added, "There are so many outstanding men in our *kehilah* who wish to develop their personal skills and become better *mechanechim* or mentors for our youth, as well as those who wish to consider a potential career in counselling or psychotherapy with children, young people or adults. I am really



Chaim Kantor (L) and Jonathan Rabson (R), course tutors at the counselling course.

looking forward to supporting our new cohort of students along their voyage of personal growth and self-discovery, contributing positively in due course to the emotional well-being of children and adults in our community and beyond."

As the tutors explain, a professional counselling training course cannot be rushed or condensed into a matter of months. "There are simply no shortcuts to becoming a well-trained counsellor," explains Mr. Kantor. "It shortchanges the students, and it can be unfair to expect minimally trained practitioners to deal with the complex mental health needs of their clients. Our students will graduate, *b'ezras Hashem*, in three years' time with many hours of counselling experience, successful clinical place-

ments, and a sound academic grounding."

Mr. Rabson agrees. "A rigorous training course of this standard is designed to stretch and challenge our students, introducing them first and foremost to themselves, and in parallel training them with practical counselling skills that prepare them to face and support the wide range of presenting issues that our clients bring. As our *kehilah* expands, and we are more willing to recognise the benefit of therapy to the emotional health needs of our young people and adults, we are going to need more professionally trained clinicians to support our services. I am really proud to be part of an initiative that is helping to create the next generation of *frum* counsellors and therapists."