

NWRPA Friday Evening Seminars

Counselling: Love and Loss

Frank Kelley

Friday 8 April 2016 6.30pm-8.30pm

Cost £7.50 or free to members. This includes light refreshments

Our working life is spent absorbed in our clients experiences of loss. Throughout our working life we can also experience the actual, feared or desired loss of our counselling work. Frank has recently retired after working in the NHS as a psychodynamic counsellor. He will reflect on these themes and the loss of the work he loved.

Game Analysis

Amanda Onwuemene

Friday 13 May 2016

Cost £7.50 or free to members. This includes light refreshments

And later in the year with details to follow...

Friday 10 June 2016: Teresa Hampson speaks on Forgiveness.

Friday 8 July 2016: Three More Words in Therapy.

Friday 12 August 2016 The NWRPA does not meet in August.

They'll be plenty of time for questions and discussion, and light refreshments are available.

Each of these events represent **2 hours of continuing professional development.**

Venue:

The Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy
454 Barlow Moor Road
Chorlton,
Manchester M21 0BQ

Information about the Association is also available on our website at: www.nwrpa.org.uk

The NWRPA has a new postal address. Please send your mail to:

Frank Kelley, Secretary NWRPA

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Stockport

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NB The phone number is unchanged 0161 432 8653

**If you would like a CPD certificate for any of the NWRPA seminars
email Frank Kelley at nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com**

Renew your NWRPA membership for 2016

Be a member of the NWRPA for the calendar year 2016 for as little as £25 a year - or £20 if you are a student, unwaged or retired - which represents a generous saving of 66% on the cost of 10 seminars.

If you are already a member you can renew your membership by sending a cheque made out to "NWRPA" to the address at the end of this newsletter. If you would prefer to pay online please email Frank Kelley at nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com for our online bank details. You can also pay on the day at our seminars.

If you are not a member please join us. You can find out how to do this on our website at www.nwrpa.org.uk.

OCD: Heuristic Research and Poetic Re-Presentation

Kieran talked about his doctoral research in which he used Poetic Re-Presentation to understand how people who suffer from OCD (Obsessive - Compulsive Disorder) make sense of their experience. His view of OCD as a thousand little panic attacks a day came from this research. This discussion was underpinned by his research question: *What are we really treating when we use psychological therapies to help people with this condition?*

Kieran is a psychoanalytical and integrative psychotherapist who works in the NHS and in private practice. He has been interested in OCD for many years and his research also included his own experience of being obsessive. He spoke to us last year while still carrying out his PhD. Happily he is now qualified.

Kieran was able to clearly present his ideas while fostering a continuous group discussion, which is a skilled thing to do. The Association's custom is to omit client material from summaries of presentations which means missing the most moving part of this seminar from this summary.

OCD has always been hard to treat. A Freudian approach views OCD as a conflict between love and hate with the symptoms being the return of the repressed. When psychoanalysis was the only psychological therapy even prolonged analysis did not lead to any significant symptomatic change. For some time now the NICE guidelines only recommend treatment with medication or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy using exposure and response prevention. Outcomes here are still poor but better than any other approach. The CBT treatment can also address symptoms while overlooking the underlying loneliness, grief and panic.

The heuristic research method was developed from the 1960's onwards by **Clark E. Moustakas** (1923–2012) an American psychologist. Kieran particularly mentioned Moustakas's book *Heuristic research: Design, methodology and applications* Sage 1990. This is a qualitative and phenomenological approach where the researcher is not detached and objective but intentionally uses the self in a deeply personal way. He likened this approach to an ethnographic study. Kieran has suffered from OCD and so described himself as part of the indigenous community he was studying.

Past research into OCD has used a very positivist and medicalised approach which has led to research becoming one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous peoples' vocabulary. The heuristic method was the only method of research that made sense to Kieran. A heuristic approach would be useful in understanding the sufferers perspective. Hence his research question.

Kieran found his subjects by advertising in the Guardian. He had fifteen replies and nine people participated in the study. After gaining material from these interviews he then used the heuristic research stages of:

Immersion. The research question is lived in waking, sleeping and even dream states. This requires alertness, concentration and self-searching. This included the slow transcribing of all the interviews with all their emotional impact, particularly despair from the way the interviewees lives were wrecked by OCD.

Incubation. This involves a retreat from the intense, concentrated focus of immersion, allowing the expansion of knowledge to take place at a more subtle level. It also allowed him time to recharge after the difficult process of immersion.

Illumination. This involves a breakthrough, a process of awakening that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition.

To analyse his material from these interviews Kieran used the method of narrative analysis developed by the linguist William Labov. This shapes the material into a six stage structure.

- **The abstract:** a signpost, a short summarising statement before the narrative.
- **The orientation:** who, where and when.
- **The complicating action:** the core narrative, what happened then.
- **The resolution:** what finally happened. The outcome of the complicating action.
- **The evaluation:** makes the point and meaning of the narrative clear.
- **The coda:** the story ends and is summarised and we come back to the present.

OCD: Heuristic Research and Poetic Re-Presentation

In congruence with the heuristic method Kieran included his detailed self reflections, and his own biases, as part of his research. He also offered to share his transcripts with his interviewees. There is a principle in heuristic research that the researcher cannot be neutral and so he welcomed the comments and corrections of his interviewees. They were also welcome to disprove what he said. 'Truth' is a co-creation with his interviewees.

From his research he thinks that people diagnosed with OCD have considerable repressed anger. There is a conventional idea that OCD is linked to conflicts about shame but Kieran would like to add grief and anxiety. Hence his opening remarks about the nature of OCD as a thousand little panic attacks.

The poetic representation of his research transcripts was again personal for Kieran as he has a deep interest in poetry. His research findings were expressed as poems and he showed us some of these during the seminar. This evoked a deep and empathic response to this material from all of us in the way that poetry can.

And so we come to Kieran's use of Gee's model of poetic representation. There is a good account of this method in *That rare feeling*, Corrine Glesne 1997. The interview transcripts are changed into poems. This uses every line of the individual interview transcript and so retains virtually all of the interviewees words. The interviewee will see the transcript and can comment on this. Typically each individual transcript will be transformed into poems of around a hundred stanzas of four lines each. This shaping is done by Kieran. He will move words about and repeat them but retains the interviewee's own words and the order in which ideas occur in the transcripts.

Because he immersed himself in listening to these tapes and because the interviews were such an intense experience Kieran retains a physical sense and memory of his interviewees voices which is retained in these poems. Each poem is the tacit knowledge that emerges from the immersion in the research interviews and the transcripts. He identifies a theme for each poem. This identification is a subjective judgement by him. Some examples of themes are: OCD manifestation, family dynamics, negative self image, difficulties in intimate relationships, information processing problems and over responsibility.

We ended the seminar immersed in these intensely moving poems which gave an insight into the inner life of Kieran's interviewees and their lived struggle with their OCD. The spontaneity that Kieran fostered also meant we understood how he has used his self in a deeply personal way over the course of his heuristic research.

Contact the Association:

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