

## NWRPA Friday Seminars

January 2017

**NB The NWRPA does not meet in January.**

**"It's gone... what it is..."**

**Amanda Onwuemene**

**Friday 10 February 2017**

**6.30pm-8.30pm, free to members, £7.50 to non-members**

In this workshop Amanda invites us to pay attention to the power of language in the therapy room. Amanda Onwuemene is an integrative psychotherapist and clinical supervisor, and manages Psychotherapy and Counselling North West, a psychotherapy service based in Liverpool and Manchester.

See [http:// www.pcnw.co.uk](http://www.pcnw.co.uk)

**Binge Eating: on the other side of the pleasure principle**

**Paul Melia**

**Friday 10 March 2017**

**Zen and the Art of Gestalt Therapy**

**Rodney Hill**

**Friday 7 April 2017**

**NB Because of the Easter Holidays the April Seminar is one week earlier than usual.**

**Venue:**

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

A map of our venue and more information about the Association is available on our website at:  
[www.nwrpa.org.uk](http://www.nwrpa.org.uk)

## *2017* **Renew your NWRPA membership**

We begin a new membership year in January 2017. We hope you have enjoyed the seminars in 2016 and want to renew your membership.

Membership of the NWRPA is £25 a year - or £20 if you are a student, unwaged or retired - which represents a generous saving of 66% on the cost of the ten seminars we will have in 2017.

To renew please send a cheque made out to the NWRPA. Our postal, email and website addresses are at the end of this newsletter. If you would prefer to pay online please email Frank Kelley for details of our online bank account.

If you are not a member and want to join there is information on how to do this on our website. Membership of NWRPA is open to qualified and trainee psychotherapists and counsellors, to members of related professions and to individuals who have a longstanding interest in psychotherapy and counselling. To apply for membership you will need to live or work in the North West of England and subscribe to a professional code of ethics that is recognised by the Association.

### **CPD certificates**

If you would like a CPD certificate for the NWRPA seminars you attend email Frank Kelley at  
[nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com](mailto:nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com)

## NWRPA Friday Evening Seminars

### 3 Words in Therapy

Friday 9 December 2016

In this popular format three therapists each speak for 15-20 minutes each on a word of their choosing from the world of psychotherapy and counselling. Each Word is followed by time for questions and discussion. This evening's seminar engaged our interest and raised our spirits on a gloomy December evening.

#### **Marjina Mahmood on Silence**

Marjina has a BSc and PG dip in counselling and psychotherapy, is a registered member of BACP, has worked in the mental health sector for five years - for the last three years as a counsellor with voluntary organisations and BUPA - and manages a private practice, see [www.mkprofessionalcounselling.co.uk](http://www.mkprofessionalcounselling.co.uk)

Silence can be seen as peaceful and can also be uncomfortable. How much can we communicate with silence and how powerful can it be?

Without saying anything Marjina began her Word in silence. While silences can be uncomfortable this felt peaceful. I think this was because of the way Marjina used silence and because our audience of therapists are used to trusting silence.

In his book *One Square Inch of Silence* John Grossman writes *Silence is not the absence of something but the presence of everything.*

Silence speaks when words cannot. We can communicate with silence and its power.

- I'm not speaking to you
- The contentment of silence
- Awkwardness
- Respect and thoughtfulness
- Disconfirming

(See Wood & Wood 2012)

Silence can help when talking is a distraction from deeper thoughts and feelings, when words feel blocked and cannot be described (*Long Term Psychotherapy* Glen O. Gabbard 2004.) It communicates important information from both client and therapist. It can communicate safety and containment or, if not communicated well, be experienced as distance, disinterest and disengagement.

We ended, as we began, with Marjina fostering a literal and fruitful *two minute silence* with all its metaphorical resonances.

See more at: <http://personal-authenticity-project.com/silence-being#sthash.IJzYWwHr.dpuf>

#### **Kit Leaver on Mothers**

Kit is a counsellor and Stepped Care Therapist, a mother and probably both maddening and a mate. She spoke on the topic *Mothers: can't live with them, can't live without them; Madonna, maddening and mate.* She spoke in a very engaging way, emphasised by attending this seminar with her daughter.

As with this talk many clients bring their mother's into the room. Kit fostered a deep and detailed conversation about mothers as loved ones, goddesses, monsters, witches, best friends, like nobody else and like nobody we want to be like.

We can lose the person in the role of mother. The Madonna is under pressure to be perfect. This pressure can lead to a great capacity to mess things up.

We live with the ghost of mum's voice.

For Bowlby the infant and young person should experience a warm and continuous relationship with Mother. But mother has all the normal flaws and so the child needs Winnicott's *good enough mother* who is able to help her child to develop the capacity for what TA refers to as a parental ego state. The good enough mother is one who can care for herself because of this reduced pressure to be a perfect carer.

We see clients who pine for what their mothers did not give them or, if they have lost their mother, never will do. Dan Segal in *The Attuned Therapist* talks about providing the client with what was missing from

## 3 Words in Therapy

their parents. A way of reframing this is using the core conditions of person centred work. However empathy here can slip into identifying with a client as a victim of a monstrous mother.

If you can make sense of your life story you can change. I made this last note in the seminar but cannot remember how it connected with the rest of the conversation. However it is an example of all the other nuggets that emerged from the creative atmosphere promoted by Kit.

### Jim Davis on Curiosity

Jim is a gestalt, bodywork, transactional analysis, and relational psychoanalysis influenced psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer, interested in the use of the therapeutic relationship. He had intended to foster a discussion and so ably kept the creative and communal nature of the evening going. This was so involving and enjoyable that it was hard to close the evening.

His theme was how curiosity is a fundamental ingredient of aliveness and intimacy, and therefore so is the client's curiosity in their therapist - how they impact their therapist and in their therapist's attitude to them.

Curiosity is curiosity about a relationship. The therapists and clients curiosity about the client and therapist. It is the clients interest in this relationship that is most often overlooked.

Jim's thoughts were based round his therapeutic work and, as is our custom, I have omitted any confidential material from this newsletter.

For us our clients curiosity can feel ruthless, exposing, embarrassing and angry. At these times the therapist has a literal or metaphorical experience of being stared at. This ruthlessness is a normal and natural characteristic of children aged around the age of three or four. We can irrationally experience our clients curiosity in a persecutory way. As it is useful in these situations he remembers a colleague saying *They are just interested in you Jim*.

This discussion reminded someone of an idea of Christopher Bollas that curiosity is the foundation of human wisdom.

My last note from this evening is that *there are two curious people in the room*. In a tribute to the skilled way Jim allowed the conversation to flow I would like to amend this to say that there were a dozen energetically curious people in this seminar room. This also seems an apt metaphor for this whole year of NWRPA Friday Seminars which I have enjoyed immensely.

Contact the Association:

Frank Kelley  
Secretary NWRPA  
159 Garners Lane  
Stockport  
SK3 8QW

Phone: 0161 432 8653

Email: [nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com](mailto:nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com)

Website: [www.nwrpa.org.uk](http://www.nwrpa.org.uk)

(NB this is a mailing address only)