

NWRPA Newsletter July 2023

The Early Years of the NWRPA

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Summary by Frank Kelley

It was good to see Eileen Ainsworth at this seminar. We are both long standing members and joined the NWRPA around 1991 or 1992. At that time the Association was already around ten years old and so we have already passed our 40th birthday.

From the beginning the full name of our organisation was:

THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

The North West Regional refers to the North West Region of the NHS. The psychotherapy refers to a psychoanalytic psychotherapy which was heavily influenced by Freud and Klein.

We know the NWRPA as an informal and independent interest group. It was a very different organisation in those early days.

Here is a quote from the Constitution adopted in 1984.

The main aim is to encourage the development of services and training in psychotherapy in the North West Region of England, primarily but not exclusively within the National Health Service.

Most of the members were therapists working in NHS psychoanalytic psychotherapy services in Central and North Manchester, Salford, Preston and Lancaster. I experienced the later stages of the development of services. I joined an NHS mental health day hospital as a staff nurse in 1990. This had a small outpatient psychotherapy service. Three years later it was a dedicated therapy service and all the staff were trainee or qualified psychoanalytic psychotherapists.

In terms of training the initial group were trained personally by an NHS based Jungian Psychoanalyst. In turn they became the trainers of the next generation of psychoanalytic psychotherapists. This group founded a training body called the North West Institute of Dynamic Psychotherapy. The NWIDP became an accreditation body and members were registered psychotherapists with the UKCP (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy.) The Institute was initially part of the NHS and then became a self funding independence body.

Originally everything, all the service and training development was done through the NWRPA. Most members were employed in the North West NHS psychotherapy services.

Meetings were larger then, often with 20 or 30 people at a meeting.

It was a more formal organisation then, with a formal constitution and annual elections. Each monthly meeting began with a minuted discussion of business in which training and service developments were the dominant topics.

It also lived up to it's North West name. Meetings were held in Preston, Bolton and Manchester, in NHS buildings, rooms above pubs and Friends Meeting Houses.

More familiarly each month the business meeting was followed by a talk of psychodynamic interest. Most were given by our members. I do not have earlier records but in early 2000 we had Carole Pembroke on *Portrayal of Destructive Envy within Art Therapy*, Cath Roberts on *Memory* and Toni White on *Sandtray Therapy*.

The NWRPA had a settled form up to the creation of the NWIDP training course in the early 1990s.

Once this training and accreditation body had formed the NWRPA became purely an interest group and about half our members left to join The Institute. Membership grew again from this low point to a high of thirty five members in 2006.

The link between being a member of the NWRPA and being employed in NHS Psychotherapy Services weakened. We attracted therapists from a much more varied professional background, including therapists in private practice. At one meeting we mapped this and found that between us we practised thirteen different kinds of therapy.

We still opened with a business meeting but this half hour was purely about the running of the NWRPA.

There was a more informal atmosphere. In summer and winter we had social evenings and shared food. I also remember having enough German speakers at one meeting to carry out our business in German.

This new format served us well up to 2012.

However the NWIDP closed it's course, the generation of therapists who founded the NWRPA and the NWIDP were retiring. Also I think our identity as a psychodynamic psychotherapy interest group got a little too diffuse.

As 2012 approached an end we had meetings with four people attending. The future looked bleak.