

DCP UK Chair's update

Esther Cohen-Tovée



BPS and DCP Vision, Values & Strategic Plans

A PROCESS is commencing to develop a new BPS Strategic Plan, and members will have the opportunity to contribute to this. We will be taking a fresh look at our BPS Vision and Values to underpin the strategy, and we will be taking forward a parallel and inter-woven process for DCP. While many of our DCP strategic objectives have stood the test of time, they are due for a review and must include an explicit focus on equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.

Our current strategic objectives are:

1. To promote and develop the profession of clinical psychology
2. To promote the professional voice of clinical psychology
3. To provide support to our members and promote member networks
4. To strive to improve the wellbeing of the whole population through working with relevant systems and organisations
5. To support safe, effective, high quality provision of clinical psychology
6. To work in partnership with service users, carers, professional bodies, voluntary organisations and other key stakeholders
7. To promote and develop research and theory in relation to clinical psychology
8. To ensure effective and efficient functioning of the Executive and subsystems

In terms of our values, we currently include these in our statement of ethical principles, which are based on the 'Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists' and the principles of the Society's **Code of Ethics and Conduct**:

Principle 1: Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples

Principle 2: Competent caring for the wellbeing of persons and peoples

Principle 3: Integrity

Principle 4: Professional and scientific responsibilities to society

With an emphasis upon being:

- Accountable
- Evidence based
- Inclusive
- Open, honest and transparent

I am really concerned to hear that some of our members have been behaving in ways which are not respectful of each other, of people from other disciplines, or of BPS staff. This has also been impacting on service users and the public when it has occurred in the public domain (on social media). Respect and dignity are universal principles, applying to everyone in every situation. There will of course be times when there are differences of opinion or disagreements, and times when we experience disappointment or frustration. However whether face to face, by telephone, by video call, by email or on social media, respectful behaviour which recognises and upholds the dignity of the other person is always expected and required as part of our code of conduct, as well as in accordance with our ethical principles and values.

Launch & celebration event for *Understanding Depression*

This very powerful and moving online event took place on 9 October, just in advance of World Mental Health Day. Chaired by Amra Rao, it included both spoken and pre-recorded video formats to present the key themes of the document and to introduce a wide range of professional and lived experience perspectives. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to join Amra in welcoming participants to the event, and we were grateful to BPS President Hazel McLaughlin for joining us and giving some validating and encouraging closing comments.

We had a very large number of people in attendance at the event from across the UK and internationally; we were very pleased about the interest in the event and in the ideas we wanted to share.

The DCP has funded/part-funded a number of ‘Understanding’ documents of which *Understanding Depression* is the most recent. We hope these can have a real impact on peoples’ lives and also on how society understands mental health and wellbeing.

Understanding Depression offers a holistic approach and focuses our attention on what has happened and is happening to people in their lives and communities, which leads us to think about opportunities for community based prevention; aiming to build an ‘antidepressant society’ rather than over-reliance on antidepressant medication.

The very informative and moving programme will be available to view shortly, and included:

- A video providing an outline of *Understanding Depression* by the Editors: Gillian Bowden, Sue Holttum, Rashmi Shankar, Anne Cooke and Peter Kinderman
- A recorded session of an introduction to Indian Raga-based meditation with Sidrah Muntaha and Sue Holttum
- Contributions by EbE group (SODIT – Survivors Of Depression In Transition) with Steph de la Haye and Jill Wood
- Example of community psychology inspired work described in *Understanding Depression* and relevance during Covid pandemic: Psychologists and residents of Grenfell Tower with Fatima Umar, Ellis Hunte, Shannon Cullerton and Catherine Broadway.
- Relevance for mental health policy – thoughts from BPS Policy Director Kathryn Scott
- Poems expressing his lived experience by David Gilbert
- Dialogue with the BPS Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion – Nasreen Fazal-Short and Rachel Miller with Sue Holttum
- Panel Q&A including Prof Paul Gilbert and Jo Hemmingfield, EbE, followed by closing remarks from Hazel McLaughlin and Amra Rao.

The event and the publication of the document have given rise to a lot of comments, mostly positive but with some concerns being raised. We are developing a list of FAQs to go on the website to address as many as possible of the concerns, and we remain open to the possibility of revising the document in the future.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to all the contributors and editors, experts by experience and BPS staff who worked together to produce *Understanding Depression* and the celebratory online event on 9 October.

APPTS Annual Forum

APPTS – the Accreditation Programme for Psychological Therapies Services – is a partnership accreditation scheme between BPS and the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Centre for Quality Improvement. I am the BPS Co-Chair of APPTS, and DCP London branch Chair Lorna Farquharson (with a different ‘hat’ on) is the RCPsych Co-chair. Services who are members of APPTS receive free places to attend the annual APPTS CPD Forum, however places are also available to others for a fee of £55 [click here to book](#).

This year's Forum is on 11 November, and will be co-chaired by Lorna and BPS EbE APPTS representative, Gail Thornton. More information about APPTS can be found at www.appts.org.uk

DCP 2021 Annual Conference

The DCP Conference will be held online over two days on 2–3 March 2021, incorporating our AGM on 2 March. We are excited about this opportunity to make the annual conference more accessible to members (and others) wherever you live or work in the UK, and indeed internationally. We are able to learn from BPS and DCP experiences over recent months of putting on webinars and conferences online, and we will ensure plenty of breaks in the programme to avoid Zoom-fatigue! Please save the dates and we will be sharing more information about the programme shortly.

National Assessors update and call out

The BPS in collaboration with the ACP-UK is about to relaunch the National Assessor scheme with revised guidance and processes. National Assessors are individuals appointed to assist employers in the appointment of Consultant Psychologists (Band 8c and above). There will shortly be a call for new National Assessors to come forward, and we hope for a good response from eligible members; this is an important role for governance within our profession and it is also a rewarding role and an opportunity to learn from other NAs and from colleagues in different services across the UK. Anybody interested is invited to email the chair of the DCP Workforce and Training subcommittee Tony Lavender at Tony.lavender@canterbury.ac.uk

Psychological Professions Week Conference

The National Psychological Professions Workforce Advisory group are excited to announce the first ever national #PsychologicalProfessionsWeek virtual conference, which is **free** and will run from 16–20 November 2020.

Psychological Professions Week, brought to you by the Psychological Professions Network England, will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions and regional showcase sessions, aligned to the findings of the national on line conversation #PsychologicalProfessionsIntoAction.

#PsychologicalProfessionsWeek will showcase innovation and inform next steps for psychological healthcare in England. Anyone interested in the future of the psychological professions is invited to participate. You can register for as many or as few of the sessions as you want.

For more information about the programme, and registrations please follow this link <https://fsmevents.com/ppn/>

The New Normal? Finding and building on the positive impacts

The New Normal? is a recently published 7-country report by *More in Common* – an international initiative set up in 2017 to unite divided societies. A survey of 14,000 people on the impacts of Covid-19 on trust, social cohesion, democracy and expectations for an uncertain future took place in June–July 2020 in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Poland. The report summarises the findings and also provides comparisons among the nations who participated. The UK research partner was YouGov.

The report is available at <https://www.moreincommon.com/newnormal/>

In our live [DCP Covid strategy](#) we have identified the importance of recognising the positive impacts and changes and building on these, as an important way in which we can support and help improve wellbeing for the whole population. This report shows that despite the depth of suffering and dislocation, and the horrific death toll across the world, Covid-19 has '*unleashed hopes for change in many societies. It has also made us more aware of our shared humanity, the value of strong local communities and the importance of our connection to nature.*'

It also notes that the choices and decisions we make over the coming months in our families, communities and nations will have long term consequences.

The key findings of the report include:

- The pandemic has created a new sense of togetherness, making us more aware of our shared humanity and of the living conditions of others.
- At the same time, many worry about their societies becoming more divided in the future.
- Many feel that Covid-19 has changed us into more caring societies.
- The disengaged or ‘Invisibles’ segments have felt more isolation, loneliness and lack of support throughout Covid-19.
- The pandemic has revived a spirit of localism, with greater pride in local communities.
- In countries hardest hit by the pandemic, people have hopes for profound change.
- The changes to our lives since the onset of the pandemic have re-connected people with nature, and re-awakened people to the way human activity affects the environment. This has translated into climate issues becoming more salient, reflected in broad support for policies like a Green Deal.
- People see economic recovery programmes as an opportunity to shift norms on climate, tax and wages.

For respondents from the UK, the three highest policy priorities emerging from the pandemic are the NHS, the economy, and protection of the environment.

We have an opportunity to make an impact through directing our efforts in partnership with people who use our services towards sustaining the positive changes and co-creating a better future.

NIHR/NHS – Opportunity to contribute to COVID-19 vaccine research

One pro-active thing many of us can do is to join the NHS Covid-19 Vaccine Research Registry. Their latest newsletter is calling for more volunteers:

‘With several more studies for potential vaccine candidates expected to start before the end of the year, UK researchers are calling for additional volunteers to sign up to take part in clinical studies. To better understand the effectiveness of vaccine candidates and help find one that works for as many people as possible, researchers are particularly looking to ensure study participants are representative of the whole of the UK population. We also know that people aged over 65, those with underlying health conditions and some ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by Covid-19. We need to make sure these communities are properly represented in our studies to be sure a vaccine has the best chance of working for everyone.’

Anyone interested in signing up to be contacted about taking part in approved UK coronavirus vaccine studies can register via www.nhs.uk/researchcontact

Advancing Mental Health Equalities Strategy (NHS England & Improvement)

NHSE/I published its first Advancing Mental Health Equalities Strategy on 16 October 2020 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/advancing-mental-health-equalities-strategy/> and it will be overseen by an Advancing Mental Health Equalities Taskforce chaired by Jacqui Dyer, NHSE/I Mental Health Equalities Advisor.

In this strategy document NHS E/I calls on all mental health services in England to take concrete steps to fight stigma and inequalities across the sector.

This strategy summarises the core actions needed to bridge the gaps for those communities which are faring worse than others in mental health services.

NHSE/I commits to continuing to work closely with service users, carers, health system leaders and other key stakeholders to deliver real and sustainable change.

Provider collaboratives are being established to understand their local inequalities issues and co-produce plans to address these. There should be opportunities for members working in these areas to contribute to this work, and DCP England branches could play a very helpful role in highlighting and supporting this work.

In addition, the Centre for Mental Health Equality Commission is expected to release its final report in November, so look out for that.

Black History Month: Remembering Nurses of the Windrush Generation

I would like to close this update, which I am writing towards the end of Black History Month, with a poem by Professor Laura Serrant which she has shared on www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk and which was shared in my NHS Trust's weekly Bulletin to all staff. Professor Serrant says: *this poem shines a light on the hardships, prejudice and challenges faced by the brave men and women like my parents who responded to the call from England to leave their island nations and rebuild 'The motherland' after WW2 – a sense of duty, of pride and responsibility which not only saved the NHS but changed the shape of Britain, themselves and their families forever.*

Remember, Britain.....you called.

YOU CALLEDAND WE CAME.

You called...and we came.

In ships bigger than anything we had seen,
dwarfing our islands and covering them
in the shadows of smoke and noise.

Crowded, excited voices filled the air,
traveling to the 'motherland'

– over weeks, over oceans that threatened to engulf us.

Driven by a wish, a call to save, to rebuild
and support efforts to establish 'health for all'
in the aftermath of war.

You called....and we came.

Women and men of position in our homelands;
nurses with a pride in the excellence of our care.

With experience of management, organisation
and a sense of duty.

We appeared.

Smiling and eager to work on the wards, communities and clinics
of this England.

You called....and we came.

Our big hearts, skilful hands and quick minds
encased in our skins – of a darker hue.
Which had shimmered and glowed
in our sunnier climes..

But now signified our difference
– our un-belonging.

Matrons became assistants

Nurses became like chambermaids.

All the while striving to fulfil our promise
– to succour, to serve, to care.
You called....and we came.
The blue of the sister's uniform
– seemed as far away from us as the moon.
Unreachable by our dark hands in this cold land.
But we were made of sterner stuff.
The hot sun, which once beat down on our ancestors,
when they too left their lands,
Shone within us.
Forging our hearts and minds
with the resistance of Ebony.
You called....and we came.
Rising like the Phoenix ,
from the heat of rejection.
We cared, we worked and we organised.
Until the quickness of our brains
and the excellence of our care
made it hard for you to contain us.
And slowly, so slowly,
the blue uniforms had dark and lighter bodies beneath them.
The professional care in our touch
was valued despite the strangeness of our speech
and the kinks in our hair.

You called....and we came.
A new millennium – new hopes spread across this land.
New populations, engaging and reflecting
the varied, diverse and vibrant nature of these shores.
Challenging and reflecting on leadership for health.
Moves to melt the 'snow' at the peaks of our profession.
Recognising the richness of our kaleidoscope nation.
Where compassion, courage and diversity are reflected
In our presence and our contribution:
Not only the hopes and dreams of our ancestors.
– Human values needed to truly lead change...and add value.
Remember... you called.
Remember... you called
YOU. Called.
Remember, it was us, who came.

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