

DCP UK Chair's update

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Black History Month and launch of our EDI & Anti-racism Task & Finish Group

I'M DELIGHTED to report that the first meeting of our **EDI & Anti-racism Task and Finish Group** takes place on 2 October. We are really excited about this initiative, which will draw together and build on the really good work of several different groups within DCP, and will also work with the BPS EDI Presidential Task force. Our co-chairs of the group are Alan Kessedjian and Shazma Thabusom; both very experienced, enthusiastic and energetic Consultant Clinical Psychologists who have lots of ideas for how we can further develop our EDI and anti-racism work and increase its impact. Shazma and Alan have been co-opted onto the EDI Presidential Taskforce, and will be joining the DCP Executive committee on a regular basis to ensure we have a joined-up approach. We were delighted to welcome them to our September Exec meeting and look forward to working together.

Although not planned to coincide with Black History Month, I hope that the launch of the task and finish group on 2 October is propitious timing. I also hope that we will all take the opportunities afforded by Black History Month to educate ourselves. A good place to start is <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/> where I have been reading, for example, about the experiences of Dzagbele Matilda Asante. Now almost 93 years old, Dzagbele Matilda Asante was born in 1927 in Accra in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). She came to England in 1947 and trained in London as a nurse and later as a midwife. She began her training before the launch of the NHS, and subsequently worked in the NHS for a number of years before returning to Ghana, where she became a senior public health practitioner. She experienced racism in her work as a nurse and is described as a 'bit of an activist'. Another inspirational woman who is featured is Dame Jocelyn Barrow, a race relations pioneer and the first black woman to be honoured as a Dame. Dame Jocelyn was one of the founders of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, and her work encompassed employment, broadcasting, politics, healthcare and housing. She was the first black woman to become a governor of the BBC and was a founder and Deputy Chair of the Broadcasting Standards Council. She died in April 2020 at the age of 90. While Dame Jocelyn was a well-known figure, there is much about her life and work that I did not know, and there are many more untold stories to be discovered and honoured as part of Black History Month.

Racial and social inequalities webinar and campaign launch

Our **racial and social inequalities in the time of Covid** workstream has been doing great work over recent weeks, and on 23 September convened a very impressive webinar and launched a campaign for action. DCP Chair Elect Roman Raczka spoke on behalf of the DCP Exec to express our full support for this initiative, which has been led by Amra Rao and Jo Hemmingfield. Roman said:

It is clear that across our society everyone has been affected, in different ways by the Coronavirus pandemic, but there is an inequity in the impact on certain individuals and groups of people. We need to tackle the socioeconomic and societal injustices that have led to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups being disproportionately affected by Covid-19.

*The DCP paper **Racial and social inequalities: Taking the conversations forward** has already had*

a positive impact, co-producing a change strategy to counter racial and social inequalities. It offers a really important understanding of the risks and impact of Covid-19 on pre-existing racial and social inequalities and structural racism, and provides us with an urgent call to action.

*The DCP Minorities group have also produced a really comprehensive resource paper **Considerations for people from minority groups in the Covid-19 pandemic** helping us to think about the special considerations that are required for those from minority identities with regards to the pandemic.*

As a DCP Executive, we condemn racial violence, discrimination and persistent structural racism that underpins wider society. We are committed to increasing diversity in the profession as well as in the DCP Executive and the various DCP committees.

We also need to consider the challenges that Psychologists from BAME backgrounds face, what can be learnt from their experiences and, very importantly, how we can work together in positive and constructive ways.

As Psychologists, we need to use our psychological knowledge to tackle the wider societal challenges and identify what we can do individually and collectively. Key to this is recognising the gaps in our understanding. So we need to listen and we need to talk to one another in order to learn and to take action.

We have set up a DCP task and finish group to move the Equality Diversity Inclusion and Anti-racism action plan forward with Alan Kessedjian and Shazma Thabusom as the Co-Chairs. The work of this group will be linked to the BPS EDI Presidential taskforce Chaired by Nasreen Fazal-Short and our DCP co-chairs will be co-opted onto the taskforce.

Today's webinar is another important step in our journey of learning together and pledging anti-racist action.'

Roman thanked the organisers and chairs of the event, Amra and Jo. He also commented on the very valuable opportunity for listening, learning and engaging with the very impressive range of speakers and presentations at the event, and the importance of reflecting on personal and collective actions.

We are all asked to make a pledge as part of this campaign, and the workstream group are developing a pledge card and strapline 'Towards racial and social equality – Be part of the solution'. You can offer your comments and feedback on dcp-racial-social-disparities@bps.org.uk

DCP news

I am delighted to announce that Kalpita Kunde, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, takes up the role of **DCP England Chair** on 7 October. Kalpita has been co-opted into the role following a call for Statements of Interest, the full election process will commence prior to the next DCP AGM, which will be on 3 March 2021. We are very pleased to welcome Kalpita to the role of DCP England Chair and as a member of the DCP Executive committee and DCP Representative Assembly. We are also very grateful to Roman Raczka for continuing in the role until now. Roman was elected as DCP Chair Elect at the 2020 AGM in January, and will become DCP Chair at the 2021 AGM.

I am sorry to report that our **DCP Membership Services Director**, Sheelagh Rodgers, has tendered her resignation and her last day in her role will be 15 October. Sheelagh's work as Membership Services Director on supporting DCP membership, DCP annual conference and CPD has been a very important part of the work of the DCP Exec. Sheelagh has also been doing highly valued work on member wellbeing with Amra Rao during Covid, as well as supporting the Experts by Experience subcommittee, EbE events and framework development, and linking with

the minorities subcommittee and PTMF (Power Threat Meaning Framework) subcommittee. We are very grateful to Sheelagh for everything she has contributed in her role, and she will be very much missed.

The **DCP website pages** continue to be updated and are the best place to find the latest information on DCP Workforce and Training, Prequal group, Public Health and Prevention, and EDI. We also post any other DCP news on the webpages, and they contain all our Covid Resources and other information. The DCP Online Community is also gaining momentum as a place to share resources, ideas, raise questions and make links. The more that members use it, the more impactful it will be for us all. We are really pleased with the analytics data which show the opening and click through rate of our communications and resource documents.

Trainee Clinical Psychologists – welcoming and supporting the next generations

We are delighted by the increase in funded places across the four nations for the **2020 doctorate in clinical psychology intake**, and offer a very warm welcome to all the new trainees who have started their courses in September. Our trainees are having a largely virtual experience of training at the moment, and it has been good to hear how creative services have been in devising placement opportunities, working in partnership with the University training courses to make the best of a very difficult situation.

We were very pleased with the number of trainees (over 300) about to start courses who were able to participate in the webinar organised by the DCP Prequalification group this September, with support from the DCP Minorities sub-group and ACP-UK Director for trainees. The webinar provided new trainees with some understanding of what life would be like on courses in the pandemic. Feedback indicated that this provided valuable insights in what to expect. The webinar is still available on the BPS website for those who missed it. (<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional/starting-dclinpsy-training>).

We hope that if they are not already members, our new (and existing) trainees will choose to join the DCP, at the reduced cost of £16 – during training. As DCP members they will be able to benefit from the support of our well-established professional body, our excellent prequalification group, local branch networks, and may also wish to join one or more Faculties to pursue particular interest areas. Joining a DCP committee or task and finish group is a great way to develop professional networks and to gain additional experience and skills at any career stage. Our new leaflet about the benefits of DCP membership will be available soon.

Our **DCP Prequalification group** are holding a free webinar on preparing to apply for clinical psychology training on 7 October, 6–8pm <https://www.bps.org.uk/events/dclin-psychology-preparing-apply>. This event aims to support attendees with thinking about the application process as well as writing their applications, drawing on reflections from the speakers. Another resource to assist with applications, the Alternative Handbook, is close to completion and will be made available as soon as possible.

Our **DCP Minorities subcommittee** are also holding two free webinars on preparing to apply for clinical psychology training, with the first event taking place on 21 October 4–6.30pm <https://www.bps.org.uk/events/minorities-clinical-psychology-application-event>

The event aims to provide a safe space for those who would like to reflect on their minority status and provides the opportunity to hear from trainees that identify as having a minority status. The second event date is to be confirmed.

Assistant Psychologists Guidance update

The importance of this guidance is highlighted by the number of enquiries we receive about it, and our ongoing concerns about inappropriate adverts, job descriptions and banding/salaries, as well as reports from people in assistant roles of being instructed to work outside their competen-

cies and/or without access to appropriate clinical supervision. The BPS Practice Board has set up a working group to revise the previous guidance, and DCP Prequal group co-chair Katie Knott is a member. We will provide a further update re. timescales for producing and consulting on the guidance as soon as possible.

News from Scotland from DCP S Chair Alison Robertson

We continue to communicate with about 422 members via *DCP-S Review* and also DCP S Chair's e-news, and are always happy to hear from any of you. We are hoping to move forward with some CPD webinars/zoom events soon now that we are clearer how this is costed and works. Suggestions welcome – informal networking sessions might even be welcomed by some. Members can of course now access all sorts of events much more easily, saving the planet whilst they do so. Alison McMullan, Vice Chair, really enjoyed her session with new trainees – and got really useful feedback from them. We are working closely with BPS S and two Clinical Psychologists contributed to **BPS S Interdisciplinary Covid** event this month.

The **DCP S AGM** takes place mid-November – look out for details and a call for new members.

DCP S continues to feed in to a range of professional issues including National Assessors arrangements (thanks to our workforce rep Judy Thomson, and Practice Board rep Joy Nesbit). It is hoped the BPS might endorse a **Scottish Government PBS Community of Practice** and we are working out how best to arrange that. Clinical forensic colleagues are concerned about a legal appeal which considered whether applied psychologists should provide expert opinion or evidence on 'medical' matters so we will work with Pagoda to contact the Scottish Law Commission, and we will work with BPS S to link with DFP-S. BPS S has developed a **manifesto for the Scottish election in 2021** which will be published shortly, and we are working with the Scottish Mental Health Partnership on national mental health remobilisation plans and their manifesto. The BPS framework for working with Experts by Experience is going to be really useful in progressing this aspect of our work in Scotland where there has been a gap for too long.

Ethics committee update

Helen Ellis-Caird, one of our DCP representatives on the BPS Ethics committee, joined the DCP Executive September committee meeting to update us on the current work of the committee. She reported that the 2020/2021 work plan is to cover the following priorities:

- Guidelines
- Equality and Inclusion
- Climate Crisis
- Human Rights
- Cyber Psychology
- Queries and advice on membership
- The Code of Conduct for Members acting on behalf of the BPS and the Member Conduct Rules are to be reviewed
- Ethical issues in relation to Covid-19

A short Ethics E-learning course is also being developed. It is intended that the course will be fully interactive and last around two hours. It will be available to members and non-members. See <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-33/june-2020/interactive-learning-ethics>

The Ethics committee has agreed to set up a Working Group on Human Rights jointly with the Practice Board, and to include representation from the Education and Training Board.

Prescribing rights for Psychologists

The BPS set up a group in 2018 to lead a process of considering and consulting on this question; the Prescribing Rights for Psychologists (PRFP) Task & Finish Group, which has been chaired by Consultant Clinical Psychologist Rebecca Courtney-Walker.

The PRFP task and finish group has consulted widely, including sessions at the BPS Annual conference, the DCP 2019 conference and the DCoP annual Conference. They have convened service user groups, prescribers groups, published several calls for stakeholder engagement in *The Psychologist* and online, published a position paper and asked for feedback, published an [explanatory animation](#) and asked for feedback, and conducted a YouGov poll.

I attended the session at the DCP 2019 conference, and was particularly struck by the Service User testimony concerning the benefits to their care, treatment and wellbeing that they felt could have resulted from their psychologist being able also to manage their medication issues. There was a particular focus on the wish to reduce or withdraw from prescribed medication, and the role a psychologist could play in supporting this if they had prescribing rights. In the USA, Clinical Psychologists have had prescribing rights for almost 30 years, and in the UK increasing numbers of service users detained under a section of the Mental Health Act have been able to benefit from having a Psychologist Approved Clinician as their Responsible Clinician (see e.g. Oates et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017). A very small number of Clinical Psychologists to date have followed the path to become Approved Clinicians however, and the fact that this opportunity is available has not changed the profession as a whole.

There are a number of psychologists who strongly support the proposal to take forward prescribing rights for psychologists, and there are a number who are vehemently opposed. The BPS Practice Board therefore decided to arrange a debate in which a greater level of mutual understanding of these positions could be reached. The debate was planned for 24 September, but unfortunately the format was changed shortly before the event due to the lack of availability of all participants in the preparatory stage, which included a pre-meeting with the BSL interpreter and the debate Chair Claudia Hammond. The session did however go ahead in a modified format, speakers included Dr Rebecca Courtney-Walker, former BPS President Professor Peter Kinderman, and Division of Counselling Psychology Chair Professor Christina Richards.

Issues impacting on leadership for those from minority groups

The Clinical Psychologists as Leaders Project (CPL) brings together a variety of workstreams aimed at supporting the leadership development of clinical psychologists across the career span. The two main components of CPL are:

- Leadership development through mentoring project – CPL - M
- Leadership training and support initiatives

To gain a better understanding of the issues impacting on leadership for those from minority groups, the mentoring steering group sent out a survey to DCP members. This was to consider the particular challenges clinical psychologists from BAME backgrounds might be facing in taking on leadership roles, whether the current scheme was meeting their needs and how they could be better supported.

We would like to highlight the preliminary analysis of the survey, which can be found here:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Member%20Networks/Faculties/Leadership/Minority%20Survey%20FINAL.docx%20%282%29.pdf>

45 people responded to the survey, 76 per cent were female, and respondents were spread across the career span including pre-qualification. Minority status was described as relating to ethnicity/recency of family migration to the UK, LGBTQ+, disability, socio-economic status,

gender, lived experience of mental health, religion, being a carer for a vulnerable person, and intersectionality of more than one of these was common.

The main leadership aspirations of the participants were: providing clinical leadership working strategically, and service development & research. The most commonly cited barriers were: lack of senior posts/development roles generally within the profession, lack of organisational support to develop, and discrimination. Suggestions for actions DCP could take included: mentoring, and 'reverse mentoring'; those in senior positions taking more responsibility for culture change; provision of leadership training, including dedicated training and leadership paths for minorities, and better organisation.

The results of the survey have been discussed by the Leadership & Management Faculty and the DCP Exec Committees. We are considering how we can develop action plans to address the barriers and implement pro-active initiatives, including further developing the existing mentorship scheme. Mentoring specific requests are being addressed by the steering group. Other aspects are to be incorporated in the DCP EDI and anti-racism strategy and action plan.

Member wellbeing during Covid and DCP Covid Strategy

Recognising the need for social and professional support, **Virtual Workplace Wellbeing Group Meetings** have been piloted as part of the DCP Executive response to the Covid crisis. This initiative has been led by DCP Exec members Amra Rao and Sheelagh Rodgers. The meetings were set up for members to provide an opportunity to talk in a supportive environment about the current situation. The primary task was to 'consider and reflect on your experiences, how you have been impacted by the current crisis, and what these new and difficult circumstances mean for you personally, socially and professionally'.

The themes which emerged from the meetings included burn out and exhaustion, grieving for the loss of loved ones, moral distress, racial and social inequalities, and the need to remain alert to Covid's economic and psychosocial impact. The need for reflection and for social and professional support was regarded as vital to manage the post-acute phase to allow steady recovery and renewal. This was seen as much needed to address societal ruptures and aftermaths across class, social and racial groups. The health and wellbeing of the individual and organisations were seen as interlinked and the need for reflective psychologically safe spaces was highlighted. A further theme was the issue of working from home and that boundaries were dissolving in both personal and professional ways.

Later in the series of meetings themes included awareness of own mortality and the enormity of the primitive threat around Covid, high workloads, long hours of working, isolation and exhaustion coming from online work, and concerns about the future implications of Covid. The final session was a review, in which the value of the sessions was emphasised by participants, and options for taking the initiative forward were considered. The options identified were:

1. Close the initiative with a summary report to be published.
2. Branches to explore the need to have local forums. This can provide an opportunity for different methodology, focus and structure.
3. Set out monthly nationwide wellbeing forum for the membership for the coming year. This is the option which had most support from the participants.

The initiative will need to be linked with the Covid strategy, wellbeing project & membership strategy.

The **DCP Covid strategy** going beyond the initial acute phase has been developed over the summer and has been published as a [live working document](#) on the DCP webpages. We have also been having conversations with Experts by Experience about developing a public facing

co-produced version of the strategy, and we need to incorporate the learning from the well-being sessions described above. Members' comments on the current version of the strategy are welcome.

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References

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