

Past Forum Events

Saturday 11 October 2025 - 10.00 to 12.30

Supporting Adolescent Development with Liz Fordham

In person in the Mary Allan Building Auditorium, Homerton College, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PH.

Liz is an alumna of our Child and Adolescent Psychotherapeutic Counselling Programme and is currently an EdD student nearing the end of her studies. Her current research is focused on the role that educators can play in supporting students as they navigate the developmental challenges brought about by puberty.

The focus of this presentation will be to discuss an alternative perspective on adolescent development, in which puberty is considered not just a stage, but in fact a point of rupture of the adolescent's sense of being a child and a 're-birth' into a 'new me'. The physical, neurobiological, behavioural, emotional and cognitive changes that take place to evidence this will be explained.

The implications in terms of the potential identity void that this 're-birth' creates and what this looks like in children's behaviour will also be discussed. Also at issue will be the vulnerability that this lack of identity affords the emerging adolescent, and the corresponding risks posed by social media/influencers/online chatrooms etc., as evidenced by the recent Netflix drama 'Adolescence'. Aspects of the early child development work of English psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott will be used to evidence ways in which we can work both in the counselling room and the classroom to better support our clients/pupils as they navigate this potentially difficult transition period.

This session will be of interest to counsellors, educators, service providers and researchers who are interested in working with and around adolescents as well as those with adolescent presentations.

Saturday 7th June 2025

Embodied Enabling: Sensory-Motor Integration Foundations for Children's Wellbeing

10am to 12.30pm

In person at the Donald McIntyre Building, 84 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 8PQ.

Many of the children we work with as therapists and educators present with difficulties that leave us wondering whether classroom intervention or therapeutic intervention might be best. Difficulties in emotional regulation, anxiety or being able to focus to learn can arise from a range of underlying starting points and to say too quickly 'it's an emotional issue' or 'it's a learning issue' can miss the embodied foundation of some difficulties that come from insufficiently integrated sensory experiences. Post Covid this may be a particular area of

difficulty for children due to reduced opportunity for physical engagement with the world and others before starting school.

Charlotte Davies will present her insights on motor-sensory integration as a foundation for therapists and educators to develop a way of working alongside each other to support children who are struggling to access learning. Her work helps us as therapists and educators think about how we can identify a child's needs in that overlapping area where both emotion and learning are impacted by the body, by looking at our children's global development in the areas of:

- Motor skills
- Sound processing skills
- Binocular vision and visual development
- Behaviour and self-regulation
- Cognitive skills

Charlotte will help us consider:

- What we can learn
- How we can remediate problems
- How we can support child development better on a timely basis If you are a therapist – please invite a teacher! If you are a teacher -please invite a therapist!

You can discover more about Charlotte's work here <https://www.fit-2-learn.com>

Thursday 27 February 2025 - 18.30 to 20.30.

Fully online

Embodied Play Practices for Healing Attachment Trauma with Dafna Lender.

Dafna is a Theraplay practitioner, trainer and supervisor who works alongside Peter Levine to present online training about Embodied Play Practices. In this Forum Dafna will introduce us to the fine detail of working with rhythm, touch, prosody, touch, movement, nurture and play to address the difficulties our clients bring due to distortions to attachment experiences. This session will relate to both work with children and adults and will support psychotherapeutic practitioners and educators to find ways to connect to those they are working with to set firm foundations for flourishing.

Saturday 19th October 2024 - 10.00 to 12.30

Researching embodied practices in psychotherapeutic counselling to deepen our connection with self and others

[Mary Allan Building Auditorium, Homerton College, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PH](#)

Course alumni Josie Bright and Georgia Riley will be presenting their Transforming Practice MEd dissertations.

Josie's research was titled **The Gaps Where the Gold Flows** and was a heuristic inquiry into embodied knowledge and the power of the unknown in psychotherapeutic counselling. In the assessment of her dissertation her assessors wrote:

"You offer significantly original, imaginative and innovative insights into, and perspectives upon, the matters addressed. I loved your discussion of authenticity and your engagement with a university ethics form. You are impressively resourceful in the way in which you take conventional processes and instead of kicking them out you move beyond them but internalise the useful parts of them."

Georgia's research was titled **The Good Enough Therapist** and was an autoethnographic exploration into accepting imperfection and integrating the mind and body through deliberate practice. Her assessors wrote:

"You engage the reader instantly with a frank and tender autoethnographic account which is precisely and consistently situated within the professional field of practice with informative and carefully chosen literature. You also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ethical principles relevant to your professional work. You strive to communicate your message in a way that unites educators and counsellors and develops a stronger understanding between them."

Both dissertations were awarded Distinctions.

This session will give both psychotherapeutic practitioners and educators (in the widest sense of that word) insights into how research that is congruent with the relational practice of therapy and education can deeply transform people; practitioners, children we work with, colleagues. You will leave inspired and reminded that what makes the difference in transforming the lives of the people we work with is the quality of the relationship we create with them.

Bridging the ChASM: Creating Accessible Services using Minecraft

- Saturday 18 May 2024
- 10.00am - 12.30pm
- In-person at the Faculty of Education, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8PQ.
- **FREE** event but [Registration and booking required](#)



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About this event

This forum will introduce the potential of the popular video game, Minecraft, as a tool for creating engaging therapeutic services for children and their families. Through the examination of real-life case studies, the presenters will illustrate how counselling sessions conducted within Minecraft can be both engaging and therapeutic, thus shifting the focus from viewing children as "hard to reach" to taking responsibility for creating services that are more accessible.

During this forum, participants will have the opportunity to achieve the following learning outcomes: understanding the advantages of incorporating video games, such as Minecraft, in therapy for children and families; acquiring practical insights into integrating video games into their own practice or service (from discussing a child's gaming interests to potentially actively participating in a game with the child); and exploring a range of activities that can be implemented within videogames as therapeutic tools. No video gaming experience necessary!

This [Introductory film](#) explains more about the Bridging the ChASM project and the use of Minecraft in counselling. Further films and information are available on the [ChASM webpage](#).

Please note

THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL MINECRAFT PRODUCT OR EVENT. NOT APPROVED BY OR ASSOCIATED WITH MOJANG OR MICROSOFT.

Speakers

Ellie Finch

Ellie is a Child, Parent and Family Counsellor (registered with BACP and ACTO) and a Social Worker (registered with Social Work England). Ellie is also a Research Assistant within the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge working on a project that recently secured university funding to highlight the value of using videogames like Minecraft therapeutically.

She provides training and consultation to professionals and organisations on the therapeutic use of videogames and other digital tools. She has a BA (Hons) from the University of Cambridge, an MA in Social Work from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and University of East London (UEL) and a PGDip in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy (UEL).

Ellie wrote her MA thesis in 2011 on engaging children in online mental health services. Settings she has worked in include the NHS (CAMHS), social care, private practice, charities and schools.

More about Ellie Finch

- [Ellie Finch website](#)
- [Ellie Finch on LinkedIn](#)

Monique Beckett

Monique is a graduate of both the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapeutic Counselling program and the Transforming Practice MEd at the Faculty of Education. Monique is also a Research Assistant within the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge working on a project that recently secured university funding to highlight the value of using videogames like Minecraft therapeutically.

Monique is a (registered BACP and UKCP) Child and Adolescent Psychotherapeutic counsellor PGDip, and completed her MEd at the University of Cambridge titled: 'Using Minecraft to build psychotherapeutic relationships: heuristic inquiry into my psychotherapy practice with a latency age child'. In addition, Monique is engaged in supporting young people, particularly neurodivergent students, as a University of Cambridge Mentor, offering tailored assistance to foster their academic and personal growth.

Monique is involved in charity-based settings and schools as a deputy lead therapist and outreach therapist. Additionally, Monique has been involved with the Tetris project, where she researched the application of Tetris as a tool to aid families and young individuals in their journey of growth and development.

More about Monique Beckett

- [Monique Beckett on LinkedIn](#)

Monday 4 March 2024 - 18.30 to 20.00 - fully online

We are delighted to announce that Terry Marks-Tarlow will be speaking on how we access 'hard to reach' knowledge that we hold within ourselves. Terry will discuss the importance of intuition as the most complex perception and response available clinically. She will cover qualities and neurobiological origins of clinical intuition, as well as how clinicians can access their own unique style. Terry is the author of influential books such as *Clinical Intuition in Psychotherapy: The Neurobiology of Embodied Response and Play* and *Creativity in Psychotherapy* (with Marion Solomon and Dan Siegal). Her website can be found here <https://www.markstarlow.com>

10.00 to 12.30 on Saturday 4 November 2023

Reach Out to Me

We are delighted to welcome back authors who have contributed to the book *Using Art, Play, Metaphor and Symbol with Hard-to-Reach Young Clients: Reach Out To Me*. Edited by Aileen Webber, this book outlines the clinical practice of several practitioners who give accounts of how they engage with, and understand, the needs of the young people they work with.

Confirmed speakers are Amy McNerny who will open the Forum talking about her perspective entitled "Why Can't You Reach Me", followed by Carole Rawley on reaching a child overwhelmed by fear in lockdown, Sarah Attle on the role of imagery in creating awareness around moments of connection and change in therapy, Lucy Jayne talking about equine therapy in relation to connection and Jude Adcock on working with shame states. The Forum will conclude with a panel discussion to explore themes in reaching the 'hard-to-reach' child.

All the presenters are graduates of the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapeutic Counselling programme we run at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

This forum will be of interest to practitioners who are interested in working with children who may appear "hard to reach" in therapy, or in school or other settings.