



University of Essex

KEEPING IN TOUCH;

An interprofessional conference considering 'touch' in therapy.

14 June 2019

**University of Essex: Colchester Campus, Wivenhoe Park,
Colchester. CO4 3SQ**

[Reserve your place now.](#)

For all enquiries, please contact us: cpd@essex.ac.uk

14 JUNE

9.00 Registration and coffee

9.30 Welcome and chair
Lindsey Nicholls, University of Essex

9.40 "From body to mind: transits from sensory experience to thought in the therapeutic process"
Carolina Gibertoni, University of Milan
Being attentive to sensory experience can be part of a rediscovery of the body that forms a direct link to the mind, memory and thought processes. Today's talk will concentrate on the significance of touch in therapy.

10.25 "Touch and non-touch – promiximity as communication"
Penny Hodgkinson, University of Essex
Touch, its use, its role in the enactment of care and therapy; its potential as a tool for communication and experience are examined in this session. We will consider the 'life worlds' of people for whom touch may be one of their primary means of experience, including people with profound and multiple disabilities; touch as communication and sense-making for people with dementia and other progressive conditions. There will be a practical element to this session.

11.10 Comfort break and refreshments

11.30 "Therapeutic touch in critical care"
Vikki-Jo Scott, University of Essex
When the focus is on preserving life and this entails a plethora of high tech, invasive procedures and heavy sedation/ paralyzation, what's the point of therapeutic touch? How can it be achieved without causing more harm when life or death is so precarious? When is it appropriate to use touch when the person on the receiving end cannot give consent? Vikki-Jo will talk from her experience of working as a critical care nurse and her observations of the use of 'therapeutic touch' in this setting. The concept may seem to be alien to the whole 'raison d'etre' of critical care and the environment itself appears to discourage rather than encourage such an intervention. The potential benefits and risks of the use of touch in this context will be explored.



- 12.15 “Where are the symbols? Keeping in touch by playing together”
Julie Cunningham, University of Milan
This talk will examine the use of symbols and play in occupational therapy with the MOVI model. Symbolic play by child and therapist together is seen as an essential base for emotional growth and the development of thought processes.
- 13.00 Lunch
You are welcome to use our facilities on campus or bring your own lunch.
- 14.00 TBC
- 15.00 Workshops
The choice of workshops and sign up sheets will be at the registration desk.
- “Exploring the emotional landscapes of placement learning using creative writing”.
Joan Healey, Sheffield Hallam University
This will be an experiential workshop where we will try different creative writing techniques to reflect on placement or work experiences - as a student or practice educator. Joan will talk about her research and bring some examples of writing and poetry from students reflecting on their placement experiences. There will be no pressure to share work – you will control your writing and what happens to it.
 - “Learning to notice: how awareness can help us stay in touch with self and other”
Caroline Barratt, University of Essex
For those working in health and social care the quality of care or support delivered is hugely affected by the quality of the relationship between the care giver and receiver. In this workshop we explore how awareness is important for keeping in touch. Using different mindfulness practises, poetry and reflection we explore what gets in the way of us being present to ourselves and others. We then consider how developing awareness and the capacity to be present can help us stay in touch, even in the face of distress and distraction.
 - “Playing together with body and mind”
Julie Cunningham & Carolina Gibertoni, University of Milan
Julie and Carolina will discuss their experiences of working with persons of all ages and with both physical and emotional problems, and how the sensory experiences present in activity participation can lead straight to inner worlds of memory, emotions and thought processes. The workshop will explore the tactile world to reflect upon how the external corporal reality of touch can bring us to the inner world of the mind.
- 16.30 Plenary
- 16.45 Close.



Brief Biographies of Speakers

Carolina Gibertoni is an Italian occupational therapist with psychoanalytic training from the Tavistock Clinic, who has many years of experience with disturbed children and adolescents and their families. With Julie Cunningham she developed a model (MOVI) of occupational therapy with a psychoanalytic theory base. She teaches in the occupational therapy programme at the Università degli Studi di Milano and also conducts baby observations with the students of a private master course on occupational therapy and psychoanalytic thinking using the MOVI.

Julie Cunningham is an American occupational therapist with psychoanalytic training who has been living and working in Italy for 50 years with emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. With Carolina Gibertoni she developed the occupational therapy model (MOVI) at their Center Il Vivaio. She teaches in the occupational therapy programme at the Università degli Studi di Milano. Her theoretical interests are centred on the use of “doing” as part of the therapeutic relationship.

Penny Hodgkinson is a lecturer in the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Essex; by profession she is a Speech and Language Therapist. Currently her teaching portfolio spans interprofessional learning, research and evidence based practice, leadership, critical reflection, clinical and professional reasoning and decision making and professional development. A key interest is the use of narrative and writing in professional life – as a tool for reflection and a prism through which to understand the relationships in health and social care. Clinically Penny worked for many years with children and adults with learning disabilities, and with autism spectrum conditions; she is experienced in working with and interested in the experiences and of people using unconventional communication methods and how best professionals, as the ‘skilled’ communicators in these interactions, can better support these individuals. Penny studied at Oxford, City University and Goldsmith’s universities and is currently writing a narrative based around the life of a long stay institution and the people who lived and worked there.

Joan Healey is a senior lecturer in Occupational Therapy at Sheffield Hallam University. Her main interest is in the use of arts and creativity in health and wellbeing. She did an MA in Creative writing and has used it in teaching reflective practice and as a research tool for her EdD to explore how students manage the emotional aspects of placement. She is on the Board of a local Community Arts group and has done research projects on the use of creative writing and poetry in care homes for older people.

Vikki-Jo Scott is the Dean of School of Health & Social Care at the University of Essex. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and a Registered General Nurse, Practice Educator, and Specialist Practitioner with the NMC. She has a keen interest and extensive experience in designing, developing and delivering Continuing Professional Development programmes for people working in the Health & Social Care sector.