

# Guest Editorial



**Karen Bateson and Clare Whitworth**

## University of Leeds Counselling and Psychotherapy Student Research Conference

### Research Matters: The Importance of Exposure

A key part of our experience during our psychotherapy and counselling training has been the opportunity to attend the annual MA Psychotherapy and Counselling Conference at the University of Leeds, which takes place in June. In fact, this was the reason we chose to study here; no other institution in the area offered the opportunity to find out first-hand what students at both Masters and PhD level were investigating in the field, as well as those in teaching roles. We have been moved to tears by auto-ethnographic narratives focused on exploring the experience of being fat, fascinated by the demonstration of the importance of relational connections through the unfurling of a ball of wool and sometimes overwhelmed by the possibilities that being research-active could offer. We suspect that what begins as simple curiosity, the noticing of something, has the potential to lead to significant change at a personal, local and national level. As a counsellor/psychotherapist change is welcome; it is what we work for with our clients. In this work we use our curiosity, our capacity to notice, on a regular basis. Here, a selection of presenters from last year's conference have produced a series of articles stemming from their presentations. Their curiosity has led them to study topics that range from male eating disorders, cross-cultural and intergenerational trauma to reverie and somatic symptoms. There are similarities – emotion is triggered and reawakened (Delderfield and Kane), hidden in our bodies (Kane and Hill) and shared (McVey,

Delderfield, Kane and Hills). There are differences too – personal experience can be investigated directly through auto-ethnographic methodologies (Kane) and indirectly through empirical research (Delderfield, McVey and Hills). All involve exposure at some level.

Exposure can be hard to manage personally (Delderfield and Kane), but the potential for learning and growth are there - if we are brave enough to share. We hope that by including the research of current (Hills) and past students (McVey and Kane) here, others in our position may be willing to contribute their thoughts and be a part of the 'Student Pages' over coming issues. We have enjoyed our tenure as the student pages co-editors. No longer students, we hand over to our successors in the autumn. Submissions for the forthcoming student pages in *Self & Society* are very welcome on any topic. Please send your contributions, on any theme to us. 📧

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