

8TH INTERNATIONAL COMPLEX TRAUMA CONFERENCE

The Future of Trauma-Informed Practice

Saturday, 29 August 2026 | Live online programme: 09:30-15:30 UK time | Six 45-minute sessions

INCLUDED WITH YOUR BOOKING: 27 presentations in total - 6 live sessions plus 21 pre-recorded presentations. Recordings of all presentations, including the live sessions, will be available on demand for 10 months from 5 September 2026.

All timetable times are shown in UK time. Programme timings may be subject to minor operational adjustments.

SESSION	UK TIME	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
09:30-09:35 CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION			
1	09:35-10:20	Dr Chris Cooper <i>Assistant Professor in Community Wellbeing, Northumbria University United Kingdom</i>	Incorporating Understanding of the Neurocognitive Impacts of Trauma into Trauma-Informed Care
10:20-10:25 5-MINUTE BREAK			
2	10:25-11:10	Michael Guilding <i>Psychotherapist and Clinical Supervisor United Kingdom</i>	Fear in the Therapy Room: A Biological/Experiential Perspective on Trauma-Informed Practice
11:10-11:25 15-MINUTE BREAK			
3	11:25-12:10	Michaela Huber <i>Licensed Psychological Psychotherapist, MH Akademie Germany Local time 12:25-13:10</i>	Why Attachment-Oriented Care Is Essential for Trauma Survivors
12:10-12:15 5-MINUTE BREAK			
4	12:15-13:00	Dr Alessia Baretta <i>Psychologist and Co-founder, Somatic Competence® Yoga Italy Local time 13:15-14:00</i>	Reclaiming Embodiment Through Trauma-Informed Yoga: Somatic Competence® - Experiential Workshop
13:00-13:40 40-MINUTE LUNCH BREAK			
5	13:40-14:25	Dr Denise Michelle Brend <i>Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Université Laval Quebec, Canada Local time 08:40-09:25</i>	Structural Stigma as a Target for Trauma-Informed Organizations
14:25-14:30 5-MINUTE BREAK			
6	14:30-15:15	Malachi Gillihan <i>MA, PhD candidate; Trauma Specialist United States</i>	Rites of Healing: Applying Ritual Frameworks to CT and Sexual Trauma Recovery
15:15-15:30 CONFERENCE SUMMARY AND CLOSING			

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026**1**

Incorporating Understanding of the Neurocognitive Impacts of Trauma into Trauma-Informed Care

Presenter(s): Dr Chris Cooper, Professor Monique Lhussier, Dr Alex Kirton, Dr Tom Astley, Fleur Ridley and Charlotte Bilby

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Ninety per cent of people with experience of chronic homelessness (PEH) have a history of childhood trauma, with over half having experienced four or more adverse childhood experiences. When chronic or repeated trauma occurs in childhood, particularly where parental support is lacking, changes to brain structure and function can occur, affecting emotion processing and executive functioning. These changes can have significant effects across the life course, contributing to social exclusion - including difficulties in relationships, education, employment and contact with the criminal justice system - as well as poor health outcomes, including mental-health and substance-use difficulties.

The research also found that people experiencing homelessness continue to face neurocognitive difficulties in daily life, affecting their ability to care for themselves, manage a home, engage in social activities and work with support services. A lack of understanding of these challenges across systems may amount to hermeneutic injustice, with negative consequences for both people receiving services and those providing them. The presentation therefore proposes an amendment to trauma-informed practice guidance: services should recognise the neurocognitive impacts of trauma across the life course and consider creative-health approaches that promote cognitive development, self-expression and social engagement.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dr Chris Cooper is an Assistant Professor in Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University in the North East of England. With a background in psychology, her place-based research examines complex social issues affecting marginalised populations, particularly complex trauma and homelessness. Using realist research approaches that ask 'what works, for whom and in what circumstances?', Chris evaluates and develops interventions across different levels of systems to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026**2**

Fear in the Therapy Room: A Biological/Experiential Perspective on Trauma-Informed Practice

Presenter(s): Michael Guilding, Psychotherapist and Clinical Supervisor, United Kingdom

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Michael describes his 30-year journey as a therapist seeking to understand trauma and learn how best to work with it. He began with psychoanalytic theory and the psychodynamic search for meaning in confusion, before discovering EMDR, which strengthened his interest in the underlying science of trauma. At the same time, he became convinced of the importance of a person-centred approach and the containment provided by a trusting relationship, understood through attachment theory.

Attachment theory prompted a deep interest in the fear system as central to understanding trauma. This led him to writers who described how trauma is encoded in the body and developed ways of working directly with bodily experience. This transformed his practice and reinforced the importance of avoiding individualised, oversimplified and pathologising responses to complexity. He advocates integrating the different stages in the development of trauma-informed practice within a framework of effective community-based social support.

Key themes include the relationship between intensity and social support; the view that recovery is consolidated not only in the therapy room but in everyday life and community; contrasts between social responses to depression and bereavement; and the risk that an excessive focus on the individual becomes pathologising.

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026**3**

Why Attachment-Oriented Care Is Essential for Trauma Survivors

Presenter(s): Michaela Huber, Dipl.-Psych., Licensed Psychological Psychotherapist; MH Akademie; International Institute for Psychology LLC (IIfP); Trauma Institute Algarve

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Trauma survivors who have experienced chronic attachment trauma, abuse and neglect in early life do not simply lack coping skills - they lack the foundational experience of felt safety within a relationship. Where attachment has been organised around fear, helplessness or abuse, the therapeutic relationship itself becomes the first arena in which something different must be made possible. Respect, genuine regard, appreciation and the consistent offer of choice are not peripheral courtesies: they are primary clinical interventions. They directly reduce the fear of loss of control, the sense of being at another's mercy and the profound disorientation that complex trauma survivors carry into relational encounters.

Drawing on more than four decades of clinical practice and training across social and healthcare systems, the presentation demonstrates why attachment-oriented care is not a supplementary framework but the indispensable spine of phase-oriented trauma treatment. Building and using a trusting bond between the professional and the patient is also an essential part of effective healthcare.

Modern trauma therapy begins and ends with stabilisation - through body-based affect co-regulation, the development of a Safe Place, distancing techniques for traumatic material, an inner 'Garden of Resources' and an inner Resource Team - and continues through careful, attachment-informed work with ego states and inner parts on the 'inner stage'. Each clinical step is sustainable only when embedded in a relationship characterised by safety, predictability and respect for the client's autonomy.

Central to this approach is work with perpetrator introjects: internalised mental perpetrator parts that bind survivors to abusers long after abuse has ended and may trigger self-hatred, self-injury or harm to others. Attachment-oriented care creates the relational conditions for this work without retraumatisation or the rejection of unwanted personality traits. The same principle applies to EMDR and other adaptations for complex dissociative trauma, and to transgenerational traumatisation.

Recovery is ultimately consolidated not within the therapy room but through the gradual restoration of safe participation in relationships, roles and everyday life, as reflected in the author's most recent work, *Zurück auf festem Boden* (Junfermann, May 2026). Therapy prepares. Life consolidates. Attachment-oriented care makes both possible.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Michaela Huber, Dipl.-Psych., is a Licensed Psychological Psychotherapist and one of Europe's foremost pioneers in complex trauma and dissociation. She founded the MH Akademie in 1986 and the German section of the ISSD in 1995, renamed DGTD e.V. in 2011, serving as President until 2021. In 1997 she received the ISSD Distinguished Achievement Award - the first woman and first non-American to do so.

She operates training institutes across Germany, Portugal, Estonia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and founded BAGbN in 2020, the largest German-language online trauma self-help community, with over 5,600 members.

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026**4**

Reclaiming Embodiment Through Trauma-Informed Yoga: Somatic Competence® Yoga - Experiential Workshop

Presenter(s): Dr Alessia Baretta, PhD, Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata, Milan, Italy

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Trauma-informed yoga embeds trauma literacy into yoga practice to provide a safe, supportive environment for people who have experienced stress or trauma, promoting self-agency, body-mind reconnection and emotional regulation. Somatic Competence® Yoga (SCY) is a trauma-informed yoga approach based on the clinical construct of Somatic Competence and has been developed since 2017 within the clinical context of Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata in Italy.

Participants will be guided through a gentle, non-performative somatic yoga practice that integrates somatic focusing: awareness of physical sensations and bodily signals. The workshop is intended for therapists interested in yoga or including somatic practices in clinical work, as well as somatic practitioners. Participants may practise on a yoga mat or chair.

Learning objectives are to understand trauma-informed yoga and SCY as a specific trauma-informed approach; experience an SCY practice guided by one of its founders; and reconnect with the body and breath while learning practical self-regulation techniques.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dr Alessia Baretta is a psychologist and co-founder of Somatic Competence® Yoga at Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata in Milan, Italy, and holds a PhD in Bioengineering. She is a certified yoga teacher trained in trauma-informed and somatic yoga approaches, including internationally recognised programmes such as Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga and Polyvagal Theory. She integrates neuroscience, somatic awareness and clinical insight, designing and leading practices and training that foster embodied awareness and relational safety through body-mind integration.

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026**5**

Structural Stigma as a Target for Trauma-Informed Organizations

Presenter(s): Dr Denise Michelle Brend, Social Worker, Psychotherapist and Associate Professor, Université Laval, Quebec, Canada

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Trauma-informed care calls for systemic transformation across all domains of an organization. Yet, in practice, most implementations remain confined to the level of direct service delivery, overlooking the broader institutional conditions that shape the experiences of those who work within, lead, and receive services from these systems. Although the well-being of all stakeholders has long been recognized as central to organizational functioning, developing a shared language that meaningfully includes everyone within complex systems has remained challenging. Drawing on emerging research on the embodied impacts of trauma and the articulation of racial trauma, this presentation proposes conceptual and practical pathways for broadening trauma-informed implementation.

Using findings from a recent study that identified structural stigma and examined its relationship with moral distress, secondary traumatic stress, and organizational prevention efforts, we explore how trauma operates not only interpersonally but structurally. By foregrounding the structural dimensions of trauma, we argue that organizations can move beyond individual-level interventions toward systemic change. The presentation highlights strategies for embedding trauma-informed principles into governance, supervision, and workplace protections, thereby positioning institutional contexts themselves as active sites of healing, accountability, and resilience

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Denise Michelle Brend, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Université Laval in Quebec, Canada. Her work focuses on trauma-informed practice in justice and child-welfare systems, with particular attention to people who have experienced complex and developmental trauma, including those involved in the criminal legal system. She collaborates with community organisations to strengthen staff wellbeing, organisational health and systemic prevention. Her research integrates trauma theory, moral distress, structural stigma and evidence-based pathways to wellbeing.

She is committed to advancing institutional practices that promote safety, accountability and healing across systems.

LIVE PRESENTATION - 29 AUGUST 2026

6

Rites of Healing: Applying Ritual Frameworks to CT and Sexual Trauma Recovery

Presenter(s): Malachi Gillihan, MA, PhD Candidate and Trauma Specialist, United States

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Male sexual victimization disrupts integration across mind, brain, and relationships. This disintegration causes many male survivors to experience Complex-PTSD. Current data suggests more than one billion men and boys have or will experience sexual victimization in their lifetime, yet a significant gap in research and treatment modalities specific to male survivors persists. My study evaluates a new group-based intervention conducted April-May 2025, applying the framework of a rite of passage to a facilitated group experience for male participants. 6-month QUAN data suggests reduced PTSD and C-PTSD symptoms. In addition, the new NPSS inventory indicates increased safety across social, relational, and bodily indexes.

6-month QUAL data suggests significant and sustained improvements in multiple life domains across the group. I will argue that this new treatment approach supports increased levels of integration in mind, brain, and relationships, reflected in improved health and wellbeing in these areas, as well as changes in PTSD and C-PTSD symptomatology. This framework provides a promising approach to recovery and healing for male survivors of sexual trauma, and may have applicability to other genders and forms of trauma as well. Audience: trauma/CT researchers, clinicians, survivors. Objectives: introduce a new treatment modality for CT and sexual trauma

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Malachi Gillihan is a trauma specialist, yogi, and spiritual counselor, integrating his lived experience with Complex-PTSD as a male survivor of sexual trauma with his PhD research in East-West approaches to trauma recovery, healing, and growth. Malachi has practiced and trained under teachers including Dr. Dan Siegel, Dr. Judith Herman, Judith Lasater, Sean Feit-Oakes, and Deb Dana. Based in Berkeley, CA, he maintains a small private practice primarily supporting clients with histories of CT and sexual trauma, as well as training healing professionals in approaches to trauma recovery.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**1**

Shame Containment Theory: Transforming Shame in Complex Trauma Recovery

Presenter(s): Lisa Etherson is a PhD researcher, as well as a psychosexual therapist, (the UK)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Shame Containment Theory offers a novel attachment-based model for understanding shame as a protective response to relational ruptures, particularly relevant in complex trauma where repeated attachment injuries foster deep-seated "contained shame", an internalized sense of unworthiness hidden to preserve connections. In complex trauma survivors, early misattunement from caregivers generates shame responses that evolve into limiting shame containment strategies, such as avoidance or compulsive behaviours, perpetuating cycles of shame. This workshop targets therapists and trauma professionals, exploring Shame Containment Theory's six components: attachment injuries, shame response, contained shame, shame containment strategies, uncontained shame and re-containment strategies.

Participants will learn to identify shame scripts in clients' trauma narratives and apply techniques to foster self-worth and relational repair, including repair to self. Shame Containment Theory enhances trauma-informed practice by reframing shame not as maladaptive but as a survival mechanism needing integration, promoting profound therapeutic change.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Lisa Etherson is a PhD researcher, as well as a psychosexual therapist, who has been in private practice for over a decade. As part of Lisa's PhD and clinical work, she has developed an innovative theory of shame called Shame Containment Theory. Although Lisa's research explored Shame Containment Theory from the perspective of men who identify as having compulsive sexual behaviour, Shame Containment Theory can be applied to all human experiences.

Her work as a psychosexual therapist and her PhD research has meant that she has developed a particular interest in how childhood experiences influence what we do as adults.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

2

The NeuroAffective Relational Model® (NARM®): A Heart-Based Approach to Healing Complex Trauma

Presenter(s): Maya Vaughan, Therapist and Relationship Coach, London, the UK

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

The NeuroAffective Relational Model® (NARM®) is an emerging, comprehensive framework for working with complex trauma. Drawing on psychodynamic, attachment, and somatic principles, NARM® supports clinicians in addressing the core disconnection from self and others that often underlies relational trauma. The model offers a non-pathologising perspective, rather than focusing on what went wrong, NARM identifies and works towards what clients want most in their lives. This presentation will introduce the central principles of NARM®, exploring how it weaves together contemporary neuroscience, embodied therapeutic practice and relational psychology within a moment-to-moment clinical approach.

Alongside a theoretical overview, participants will also be guided through a short experiential process to offer a felt sense of the model's heart-based and somatic orientation. NARM® invites both practitioners and clients into a deeper contact with aliveness and authenticity. This session will be most relevant to clinicians, educators, and researchers interested in integrative, relationally grounded, and experiential approaches to working with complex trauma.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Maya is a NARM® Therapist and Relationship Coach based in London, UK and the Founder & Director of the Trauma Training Institute UK (TTI UK). As a NARM® Master Practitioner, she integrates over 25 years of experience in holistic body therapy and trauma healing with extensive training in Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT). She is an Associate Member of the British Emotionally Focused Therapy Centre (BEFTC), the International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy (ICEEFT) and the Complementary Medical Association. Maya's expertise lies in developmental trauma and relationship dynamics.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**3**

Narrating the Invisible: Combat-Related PTSD, Fatherhood, and Trauma-Informed Cultural Mediation

Presenter(s): Prof. Yaakova Sacerdoti, Levinsky-Wingate Academic College, Israel.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

The events of October 7, 2023, and the ensuing Iron Swords War constitute a critical rupture in Israeli society's understanding of combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Long framed as an individual and often silenced condition, combat trauma has increasingly been recognized since October 7 as a widespread, relational, and systemic phenomenon with profound familial and intergenerational consequences. This presentation examines two interconnected developments: shifting societal attitudes toward combat-related PTSD in Israel and the unprecedented emergence of children's literature that centers fathers living with combat trauma. Focusing on picture books for early childhood (ages 4-7) published during the war, the paper analyzes how these texts translate invisible psychological injury into accessible emotional narratives for young children.

Using metaphor, visual language, and child-centered perspectives, these works challenge hegemonic ideals of masculinity and heroism, foreground vulnerability and emotional presence, and frame trauma as a shared family experience rather than an individual failure. The presentation is relevant to trauma-informed practice in education, mental health, and social services, highlighting children's literature as a cultural tool for early trauma awareness and prevention. The target audience includes trauma researchers, clinicians, educators, and policymakers. Learning objectives include understanding contemporary cultural shifts in trauma discourse, recognizing literary mediation as a form of trauma-informed practice, and identifying implications for supporting families affected by combat trauma.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Prof. Yaakova Sacerdoti is a Professor of Children's Literature and Dean of the Faculty of Multidisciplinary Studies at Levinsky-Wingate Academic College, Israel. She holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and has extensive experience in academic leadership and teacher education. She is the author of several scholarly books and numerous peer-reviewed articles on children's literature, focusing on trauma, memory, post-war narratives, ideology, and representations of vulnerability in early childhood texts. Her current research examines trauma-informed cultural mediation through literature for young children.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**4**

Acceptability and Feasibility of an Adapted Narrative Exposure Therapy protocol for adults with a mild intellectual disability

Presenter(s): Charlotte Farnsworth; Dr Thomas Schröder; Dr Stephanie Lane; Dr Helen Frain; Dr Jackson Lord, United Kingdom

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

People with intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience traumatic events than people without an intellectual disability. Despite this, there is a lack of research exploring the use of evidence-based therapies for treating post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) within this population, and having an intellectual disability often leads to people being excluded from research. Therefore, clinicians may struggle to understand how to treat people with an intellectual disability and PTSS, or be unaware of how to adapt therapy for this population. Narrative Exposure Therapy has been adapted for adults with an intellectual disability (Marlow et al., 2023). The current study assessed the acceptability and feasibility of this protocol in six adults with intellectual disabilities.

The findings demonstrate that adults with intellectual disabilities can, and want to engage in research and psychological therapy, and that ID-NET can be used with this population. The research can outline ways of working with people with intellectual disabilities, and how to adapt therapy, and research design to help include them in future studies. The presentation aims to inspire future researchers to include people with intellectual disabilities in future research to increase access to evidence-based therapy and help reduce health inequalities in this population.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Charlotte Farnsworth is a trainee clinical psychologist on the Trent Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She is due to qualify in September 2026. She is affiliated to both the Universities of Nottingham and Lincoln where I am training, and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, where I am employed. She practises in the United Kingdom. Her interests include in areas of trauma (including complex trauma and PTSD), psychological therapy, and learning disabilities.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**5**

Embodied Ritual in Trauma Work: Action, Objects, and Belonging

Presenter(s): Colleen Thomas, a Certified Meditation and Mindfulness Teacher, San Francisco, USA

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

When people experience trauma or prolonged stress, they may turn inward, seeking answers through conversation or cognitive reframing. While these approaches have value, they can leave the body out of the healing process. Trauma lives in the body. It shows up as tension, as dysregulation, as a nervous system stuck in threat response. And yet, many trauma-informed interventions still rely primarily on talk. In my work as a ritual artist and mindfulness teacher, I've found that intentional physical action - doing something concrete with presence and purpose - can create shifts that words alone cannot. When someone enacts a symbolic gesture witnessed by others, something changes at a somatic level.

The body remembers what it feels like to have agency. This presentation will explore how three elements work together to support trauma healing: intentional physical action, tangible objects, and relational witness. I will share examples from one-to-one ritual work and remote audio practice, demonstrating trauma-informed design choices including offering choice, respecting the window of tolerance, and building resilience. Attendees will be invited into an experiential practice of embodied ritual. Learning objectives: Attendees will learn core principles of trauma-informed ritual design and experience a guided meditation demonstrating these practices firsthand.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Colleen Thomas is a ritual artist and independent audio producer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a Certified Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness Teacher through the work of David Treleaven and holds a Master's Degree in Creation Spirituality from Naropa University. In February 2022, her work shifted from providing one-to-one rite-of-passage design to creating trauma-sensitive meditations for individuals affected by war trauma in Ukraine and allies experiencing vicarious trauma around the world. She has since produced over 150 meditations integrating embodied ritual practice with trauma-informed principles.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**6**

From Fragmentation to Integration: Applying Lifespan Integration Therapy in Trauma-Informed Practice

Presenter(s): Lea Vajralila, Trainer, Consultant, and Certified Practitioner, BACP Senior Accredited therapist, (United Kingdom)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

This presentation addresses the foundations needed when working with implicit trauma memories and fragmented systems. Drawing on complex systems theory, it explores how repeatedly reading a person's timeline of memories can allow the system to update gently towards the best available version of itself in the present.

Using principles from Lifespan Integration Therapy, the presentation outlines how repeated timeline work may support neural coherence, increase affect regulation and facilitate integration without retraumatisation. It is designed for counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists working with attachment trauma, developmental trauma or clients whose systems become overwhelmed by traditional trauma-processing approaches.

Participants will learn the theoretical links between implicit memory and systems coherence; how Lifespan Integration structures therapeutic safety and pacing; and practical ways to incorporate LI-informed techniques into trauma-informed practice to support gentle, durable change.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

I am a UK-based Lifespan Integration (LI) Trainer, Consultant, and Certified Practitioner, and a BACP Senior Accredited therapist. I hold a PGDip in Traumatology, a Diploma in Supervision, and diplomas in Humanistic Counselling, CBT, and NLP & Hypnotherapy. My background includes group and 1-to-1 therapeutic work in residential rehab. I now specialise in Lifespan Integration Therapy, focusing on its capacity to address core trauma and activate clients' innate healing through attuned, regulated therapeutic presence.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**7**

On the Impossibility of Recognising One's Own Reflection in the Mirror in C-PTSD

Presenter(s): Kyd Shepherd, a clinical psychologist, France.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

In the last five years I have encountered and worked with patients that weren't able to recognise themselves in the mirror. This impossibility wasn't due to neurological damage to the brain, psychosis or intellectual disability but to complex trauma. This presentation is an attempt to understand the psychological significance of this inability.

I will start by explaining how our reflection in the mirror is the basis of our identity, then I will explore how C-PTSD impacts being thus creating a form of ontological uncertainty and how the individual might attempt to repair this phenomenon through intense identification, and finally we will explore how psychoanalytic treatment can potentially restore identity and the ability to recognise one's own reflection.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Kyd Shepherd is a clinical psychologist working in France. He works both in a medical-social institution and in a private practice. Over the years he has offered psychodynamic and existential psychotherapies for patients with Complex PTSD.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**8**

The Rewind Technique: An Evidence-Based Approach

Presenter(s): Dr David Muss, Originator of the Rewind Technique, United Kingdom

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Dr David Muss originated the Rewind Technique in 1991 and subsequently founded the International Association for Rewind Trauma Therapy. He has treated civilians and military personnel with PTSD for 33 years. The Rewind Technique, also known as "closure without disclosure", provides an 85% closure rate for individuals and groups of any size in two to three sessions. Dr Muss will briefly explain how it works, describe outcomes and present up-to-date results from a recently completed randomised controlled trial at Cardiff University.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dr Muss's interest in PTSD was prompted by his wife's near-death experience. Since 1988, he has worked to introduce this technique, publishing the UK's first PTSD self-help book, *The Trauma Trap*, in 1991. He worked for more than 30 years as Director of the PTSD Unit at the BMI Hospital in Birmingham. During this time, he published 'A New Technique for Treating PTSD' in the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* (1991). He retired in 2019.

He continues to provide training through workshops and webinars at the International Association for Rewind Trauma Therapy (IARTT), which he founded. Practitioners listed on the IARTT website have agreed to treat veterans free of charge.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

9

Insights into Therapists' Decision-Making in an Adult Complex Trauma Context: When Are Clients 'Ready' for Trauma-Focused Therapy?

Presenter(s): Darcie Crawford, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of Hull; Dr Hannah Goring, Clinical Psychologist, United Kingdom

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

The current study explored how therapists experience and assess a client's "readiness" to engage in trauma processing within trauma-focused therapies, specifically Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT). The study focused on therapists working with adults who have experienced complex trauma, where clinical guidance often advocates a phased approach to intervention and where heightened levels of client suicidality and therapist anxiety may influence clinical decision making. The research sought to understand how therapists make these complex judgements in practice. Eight UK-based trauma therapists participated in semi-structured interviews, and data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Four themes were developed: (1) The System: It's Not Just Me Making This Decision; (2) The Importance of Professional Identity; (3) Working with Complex Trauma Is Inherently Relational; and (4) The Therapist's Inner World. Findings suggest that decisions regarding readiness are shaped by multiple interacting factors, expanding the construct of "readiness" to one that includes systemic influences, the therapeutic relationship, professional identity, risk management, and therapists' own emotional responses. Assessing readiness emerged as a nuanced and challenging process. Implications for trauma-informed practice are discussed, with particular relevance for clinicians working with complex trauma and those who use EMDR and TF-CBT.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Darcie Crawford is a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with the University of Hull, United Kingdom. The current project comprises part of her doctoral thesis as part of this programme. Darcie has strong interests in both practice and research in trauma-focused therapies and complex trauma. Dr Hannah Goring is a Clinical Psychologist with over 16 years' experience of working in secondary care adult mental health services, predominantly with clients who had experienced complex trauma. She is a CAT Practitioner and also trained in EMDR.

She currently works in private practice, as well as being a cohort tutor on the Catalyse CAT Practitioner course and a clinical tutor on Clinical Psychology Doctorate Programme at Hull University. Her research interests include trauma, CAT, the therapeutic relationship and adult mental health in general.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**10**

Loneliness, Memory, and Trauma

Presenter(s): Professor Flavio Williges, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil; Dr Robert Anthony Davies, University of York, United Kingdom

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Loneliness is seen as a form of emotional suffering arising from the absence of meaningful social engagement and interpersonal connection (e.g., emotional intimacy, sociability). This view rightly highlights important interpersonal dimensions of loneliness, but overlooks deeper and structurally disruptive forms of loneliness. We examine loneliness in trauma - particularly interpersonal trauma - drawing attention to two well-documented consequences of trauma: (i) the collapse of basic trust; (ii) the experience of intrusive memory symptoms. We argue that the fracturing of trust in post-traumatic loneliness is related to distressing memory experiences with distinctive characteristics. These include the disruption of recognitional capacities, which leads to misattributions of sources of danger or threat (Davies, forthcoming).

Persistent misrecognitions impair the formation and maintenance of close relationships in two ways: it becomes difficult to establish new trust, and existing trust is easily "broken". This undermines the ability to form meaningful relationships and frustrates attempts to establish "new" trust. It is thus a painful and distinctively resilient form of loneliness. We take this conclusion to be clinically relevant.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Professor Flavio Williges is Professor of Philosophy at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, whose research focuses on emotions and issues related to the moral self. He is a member of the Brazilian Society of Analytic Philosophy and was recently a visiting professor at the University of York.

Dr Robert Anthony Davies is a Research Associate and Associate Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of York. His research focuses on memory and self-knowledge, with a particular focus on trauma and intrusive memories. He is currently the Secretary of the Philosophy of Memory Organization.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**11**

Trauma-Informed Practice in Educational Settings: What It Is, What It Isn't, and How to Make It Work

Presenter(s): Speaker: Dzmitry Karpuk, MSc, UKCP Registered Family and Systemic Psychotherapist, AFT, MBPsS. Interviewer/Moderator: Auður Ósk Guðmundsdóttir, MSc, MSW, UKCP Registered Family and Systemic Psychotherapist, AFT, Iceland.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

An interview-style discussion on trauma-informed practice in schools that keeps professional roles clear and workloads realistic. The presentation clarifies what trauma-informed practice is - and common misconceptions about it - explores pupil-in-family working, and focuses on practical implementation through predictable routines, consistent boundaries, partnership with parents, simple response protocols for escalation and shutdown, and reflective practice to reduce vicarious impact and staff burnout.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dzmitry Karpuk is a UKCP-registered Family and Systemic Psychotherapist with around 35 years' experience of therapeutic work in complex trauma recovery, including the last 20 years in Leeds, York and Harrogate. He is also registered with the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT) and is a Graduate Member of the British Psychological Society (MBPsS). Dzmitry is recognised for delivering trauma-related training nationally and internationally and is the Founder of the Complex Trauma Therapists' Network UK (CTTN).

His professional interests include supporting practitioners who work with traumatised and vulnerable clients, preventing burnout, and addressing secondary trauma. He regularly provides training and group supervision to clinicians and non-mental-health professionals.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**12**

What the Work Does to Us - and How We Stay in It

Presenter(s): Auður Ósk Guðmundsdóttir - Lecturer / Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Iceland; Family and Systemic Psychotherapist (UKCP / AFT Accredited); Mental Health Team / Systemic Psychotherapist, NHS Iceland. Arlette Kavanagh - Family and Systemic Psychotherapist (UKCP / AFT Accredited); Director, Calm Together Therapies Private Clinic.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Keywords: Vicarious Trauma | Practitioner Wellbeing | Compassion Fatigue | Reflective Practice | Vicarious Resilience

Trauma therapists spend their careers holding stories of adversity, loss, abuse and resilience, yet the impact of this work on practitioners themselves is often underexplored. This reflective conversation between trauma-informed practitioners explores vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout and vicarious resilience in everyday clinical practice.

Drawing on trauma theory, polyvagal-informed perspectives, systemic thinking and lived professional experience, the session examines how trauma work can shape therapists' worldviews, relationships, sense of safety and nervous-system functioning. It considers the emotional residue of therapeutic work, personal history, reflective practice, supervision, peer support and collective care.

The presentation concludes with a short, separately consented lived-experience conversation, *Beyond Talking Therapy: A Conversation About Safety, Trauma and the Body*. A former client, now training as a body-based therapist, reflects on how talking and body-based therapy complemented one another, how safety was created, and how recovery continued beyond the therapy room. This contribution illustrates vicarious resilience and the wider journey of recovery.

The session is aimed at counsellors, psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers, wellbeing practitioners and supervisors.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Arlette Kavanagh: UKCP Registered and Accredited (MSc, BSc, MBPsS). A systemic psychotherapist with 20 years' experience working with children and families across CAMHS, the NHS, Local Authority SEN, Educational Psychology and charitable organisations. She specialises in trauma work and treatment.

Auður Guðmundsdóttir: UKCP Registered and Accredited (MSc, MSW, BA). A systemic family psychotherapist with 20 years' experience in social work, child protection and family therapy. She is a Lecturer / Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work, University of Iceland, and specialises in trauma and its impact on individuals and families.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

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A social ecology of trauma and recovery part 1: embodying trauma

Presenter(s): Dr Andrew Harvey, physician, rheumatologist and rehabilitation specialist with a special interest in psychosomatic symptoms, medically unexplained distress, and the overlap between physical and psychological trauma-related suffering

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

This work adopts a broad definition of trauma, recognising its origins in threat, injury, illness, and social alienation. Its ecological perspective views adaptive responses as homeostatic - restoring balance following stress. Body and mind, representing the unique self, operate this repertoire inseparably - physical (pain/fatigue) and mental (anxiety/depression/grief) distress together push for disengagement, then physical-mental wellbeing motivates re-engagement. Allostasis, a contemporary iteration of the homeostasis concept, shows how trauma is embodied. Experience is cumulatively archived in a way that predicts and anticipates opportunity or threat when similar contexts are encountered in the future, immediately arousing body and mind in preparation.

Interoception - sensing the body - builds such arousal into feelings from which emotions are constructed, negatively motivating behaviour change for disengagement (safety and healing) then positively for re-engagement. Somatic arousal thereby underpins all trauma responses. A propaganda war between fear and hope determines any shift between adaptive and maladaptive pathways. For an individual stuck in disengagement during a maladaptive response, fear predicted from archived experience is the mechanism whether symptoms are primarily mental (threat) or physical (injury/illness). Complexity contributes to derailment onto a maladaptive pathway - reinforcing feedback may arise because our ecological "niches" differ from those of our evolutionary ancestors.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Andrew qualified in medicine in Sheffield, UK (1974), trained as a specialist physician in rheumatology and rehabilitation (Ontario, London, and Leeds), received his doctorate in 1989, subsequently establishing new consultant services in community-oriented disability medicine and rheumatology in The Wirral, Leeds, and Pontefract/Wakefield. He was awarded fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians in 1994. His interests include clinical education/training and multidisciplinary teamwork, serving as Medical Education Director 1999-2003 and Specialist Medicine Director 2008-2010 at Mid-Yorks NHS Trust.

His current project, based at Leeds Institute of Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Medicine explores the common ground shared between syndromes of maladaptive physical and mental distress.

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When Talking Is Not Enough: Two Practical Stabilisation Methods from F.A.S.T. - First Aid for Stress & Trauma

Presenter(s): Hans-Hermann Baertz, trainer, coach and trauma therapist; Director, EFT-Institute Berlin; trauma stabilisation specialist (Germany)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

When people are overwhelmed, anxious, dysregulated or shut down, talking alone may not be enough. This practical presentation introduces two body-based stabilisation methods from F.A.S.T. - First Aid for Stress & Trauma: a breathing-based practice and Self-Havening, a structured gentle touch-based method. Participants will experience both introductory exercises and consider how they may support safety and regulation during acute stress, overwhelm or shutdown. The session is relevant to mental-health professionals, support workers, healthcare staff, educators, crisis responders and wellbeing practitioners. It offers an understanding of why body-based stabilisation matters and direct experience of two practical methods from the wider F.A.S.T. approach.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Hans-Hermann Baertz is a Berlin-based trainer, coach and trauma therapist, Director of the EFT-Institute Berlin, and a specialist in psychological trauma and trauma stabilisation.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**15**

Biosuggestive Therapy: Understanding Its Therapeutic Mechanisms and Efficacy

Presenter(s): Dr. Alexander Strashny, psychiatrist, Director of the Institute of Biosuggestive Therapy (Ukraine)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Biosuggestive therapy is a method widely used in Ukraine for the correction and treatment of psychological and somatic disorders caused by stress. It is a short-term therapeutic approach applied in work with both civilian and military populations. Its effectiveness has been confirmed by more than 20 scientific studies. During the presentation, the speaker - the author of the method - will explain the philosophy and the therapeutic mechanisms through which this approach influences patients. The presentation will be valuable for researchers as well as practicing psychologists, who will have the opportunity to determine whether biosuggestive therapy is suitable for use in their own professional practice.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dr. Alexander Strashny received his education at Kyiv Medical University, the Ukrainian Institute of Advanced Medical Studies, the Vietnam National Institute of Traditional Oriental Medicine, the Tavistock Model of Group Dynamics (San Rafael, USA), and the Hungarian School of Alternative Medicine. He is the author of books published in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Ukraine, and other countries. Today, he leads the development of biosuggestive therapy as the Director of the Institute of Biosuggestive Therapy (Ukraine), where he continues to advance the method and promote its international recognition.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

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From Somatic Theory to Scalable Practice: Implementing Trauma-Informed Martial Arts for Community Resilience

Presenter(s): Amanda Magaud, Kwabena Owusu Acheampong and Dr Bebe Khadeeja (United Kingdom and Ghana)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Dao Resilia is developing a trauma-informed martial-arts model that translates Tai Chi and Kung Fu into a structured, community-based intervention for adults experiencing trauma, chronic stress and depression. The presentation introduces the planned pilot and explains how the team is building a certification-led framework that trains coaches in trauma-informed delivery, safeguarding and regulated teaching practice.

It examines the role of a multidisciplinary certification board, including psychiatric, psychological and Shaolin expertise, in adapting martial arts to support safety, pacing and emotional regulation rather than pushing participants beyond their limits. The presentation also outlines a mixed-methods research design using validated measures of depression, anxiety and trauma symptoms alongside participant feedback to assess feasibility, acceptability and preliminary efficacy.

The session is relevant to trauma-informed practitioners, clinicians, researchers, community organisations and programme designers interested in responsible delivery at scale. Its central learning objective is to show how governance, coach formation and research can help make community martial arts a credible trauma-informed intervention.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Amanda Magaud is CEO and Project and Research Lead at Dao Resilia. She holds a BA in International Relations from the University of Geneva and is completing an MSc in Global Mental Health at the University of Glasgow, where her dissertation examines intersections between martial arts and mental health for veterans.

Kwabena Owusu Acheampong, from Ghana, studies Global Health at the University of Glasgow. He is Country Director at the Youth Support for Good Leadership in Africa Foundation and Business and Finance Lead at Dao Resilia.

Dr Bebe Khadeeja is a public-health professional, author and researcher with a background in medicine and a Master of Public Health from Glasgow Caledonian University. Her work is informed by lived experience and focuses on women's health, trauma, migration and culturally sensitive approaches to healing and resilience.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**17**

A New Trauma-Informed Paradigm for New Forms of Trauma: Somatic Competence® Yoga in the Age of Digitally-Modified Traumatism

Presenter(s): Alessia Baretta, PhD, and Mark Morbe, Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata, Milan, Italy

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Social context and historical trauma influence the onset and development of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and complex trauma. In contemporary societies, relational instability and digitally mediated environments increase disembodiment, laying the grounds for new forms of trauma. This increases the need for embodied approaches to trauma recovery.

In response to these emerging needs, Somatic Competence® Yoga (SCY) was developed within the clinical context of the Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata as a trauma-informed yoga approach grounded in the Somatic Competence clinical construct, integrating contemporary trauma research, relational models and emerging studies on digitally-modified traumatism. Since 2018, SCY has been training trauma-informed yoga teachers.

Somatic Competence is defined as the ability to maintain an embodied mental state that monitors bodily sensations to regulate somato-emotional responses and manage stressors. SCY supports self-learning processes that foster embodied safety, agency and relational regulation. SCY conceptualises trauma-informed yoga as necessarily trauma-specific, culturally situated and gender-responsive, and integrates these dimensions within a coherent and clinically informed framework.

The presentation is intended for therapists interested in yoga or who include somatic practices in their clinical work, as well as somatic practitioners. Learning objectives are to understand trauma-informed yoga principles, the Somatic Competence construct and SCY as a specific approach, and the concept of digitally-modified traumatism.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Alessia Baretta is a psychologist, co-founder of Somatic Competence® Yoga at Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata, Italy, and holds a PhD in Bioengineering. She is a certified yoga teacher trained in trauma-informed and somatic yoga approaches. She integrates neuroscience, somatic awareness and clinical insight, leading practices that foster embodied awareness through body-mind integration.

Mark Morbe is a psychologist and psychotherapist and co-founder of Somatic Competence® Yoga at Istituto di Psicosomatica Integrata, Italy. He collaborates in the design and delivery of trauma-informed yoga training, combining clinical rigour with somatic practices. Under his guidance, Somatic Competence® Yoga translates theory and neuropsychological understanding of trauma into educational frameworks.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

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From Trauma-Informed to Complex Trauma-Competent Care: Why Neuroscience & Polyvagal Theory Must Reshape the Next Generation of Practice

Presenter(s): Julia M. Wedemeyer, MA, LPC (OH), NCC, CTP, ISTT, Owner & Private Practice Provider InnerVision Resources, LLC, USA

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, trauma-informed care has become widely adopted across clinical, educational, and organisational systems. While this shift has increased awareness and reduced overt harm, it has also created a ceiling: many practitioners and institutions remain trauma-aware without being complex trauma-competent. This presentation argues that the future of trauma-informed practice must move beyond principles-based frameworks toward neuroscience-grounded, nervous-system-specific clinical precision.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Julia M. Wedemeyer, MA, LPC (OH), NCC, CTP, ISTT, is a licensed professional counselor, trauma therapist, educator, and consultant based in the United States. She specialises in complex and developmental trauma, identity-based stress, and neuroscience- and Polyvagal-informed clinical practice. Julia provides training and consultation focused on nervous system capacity, ethical precision, and complex-trauma-competent care across diverse populations. In addition to her professional expertise, she is also a complex trauma survivor, and her lived experience informs her clinical work just as her clinical practice continues to inform her understanding of trauma and recovery.

She is the owner of InnerVision Resources, LLC and develops professional training resources integrating trauma science, somatic approaches, and applied clinical practice, moving beyond trauma-informed awareness toward complex trauma-competent care.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**19**

Sustaining the Healers: Trauma-Informed Supervision for Traumatized Clinicians

Presenter(s): Kristen Muché, trauma specialist, psychotherapist, and Licensed Clinical Social Worker, USA

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

This presentation will explore the multitudinous role that clinical supervisors play in the lives and work of clinicians, specifically those who serve trauma survivors. Various factors that influence the customized approach toward each supervisee will be explored, such as generational tendencies, cultural nuances, learning styles, and personality types. Along with this, we will look at how to navigate vicarious trauma and identify signs of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, burnout, and trauma-based intrusions that clinicians often face, particularly those who value a relational, person-centered approach in client care.

Using an archetypal framework, this presentation will also explore various roles that clinicians may carry and identify with, so as to prompt a reflection on how our relationship with these roles impacts our ability to give ourselves permission to engage in our own healing practices, thereby increasing compassion toward our own boundaries and capacity to navigate through the changing landscape of client care and clinical supervision.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Kristen Muché is a trauma specialist, psychotherapist, and Licensed Clinical Social Worker. In her private practice, Muché provides psychotherapy for survivors of complex trauma, clinical supervision to associate clinicians gaining hours toward licensure, consultations with licensed clinicians, and trainings to organizations on both trauma and mental health-related topics. She also contracts with non-profits to provide group supervision to clinicians who work with high-acuity populations. Muché is also an adjunct professor in the School of Social Work at California State University Los Angeles and the Division of Criminal Justice at California State University Fullerton.

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**20**

Integration of DBR, EMDR and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy

Presenter(s): Dr Art O'Malley, Medical Doctor; Former NHS Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist; EMDR Europe Consultant; Head of Clinical Services, Northern Ireland

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

The presentation focuses on trauma-informed practice for a client affected by the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He experiences severe symptoms of complex PTSD and dissociation, has been unable to leave his home for many years, and has received a range of interventions aimed at alleviating these disabling symptoms. The target audience comprises clinicians working with complex trauma and dissociation. The main learning objective is to demonstrate how somatic approaches can be integrated with EMDR psychotherapy and Deep Brain Reorienting. The work also involves liaison with the wider health system, including consultant psychiatrists and neurologists, occupational therapists, primary care and community support workers.

The presentation will describe the Regional Trauma Network across Northern Ireland, designed as a world-leading response to PTSD and complex PTSD. A multidisciplinary case discussion involved the psychiatric lead for the RTN, the clinical lead for the Ely Centre, the clinical lead for the Regional Trauma Network service in the Southern Trust, and an outreach worker with an occupational therapy background who supported the client early in his presentation. The client was also referred to the community mental health team and the VSS portal.

The work aims to address the client's specific fears about leaving his home and entering the surrounding community. These fears relate to an event on 27 April 1997, which will be discussed during the presentation. The response to intensive trauma-focused therapy will be described, including Zoom and WhatsApp sessions based on Deep Brain Reorienting. Social supports, the wider family network and stabilisation strategies will also be discussed.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Dr O'Malley has practised as a medical doctor since 1990 and served as an NHS Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist from 2004 to 2015. Accredited as an EMDR Europe Consultant since 2008, he works with people experiencing PTSD and complex trauma across the lifespan. He has presented widely on trauma, neglect and the developing brain, attachment disorders, personality disorders, emotional dysregulation in ADHD, and ASD diagnosis and management.

He provides clinical EMDR supervision to clinical psychologists and psychotherapists working independently, within the NHS and within the Health Service Executive (HSE) in primary and secondary care. They are working towards accreditation as EMDR Practitioners and Consultants. His books include *The Art of Bart: Sensorimotor-Focused EMDR* and *Beyond the Art of Bart*.

The latter outlines clients' journeys towards recovery from trauma-based symptoms and will be launched shortly. Dr O'Malley is Head of Clinical Services at the Ely Centre in Northern Ireland, which is funded by the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS).

PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION - AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**21**

Birth Architecture Under War: A Trauma-Informed Framework for Nervous System, Relational and Systemic Support

Presenter(s): Svitlana Kresina, Clinical Psychologist (MSc), EMDR Therapist, Perinatal Mental Health Specialist, Researcher in Trauma-Informed Maternity Care (Ukraine)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Birth and pregnancy during war occur within an environment of prolonged, repeated, and unpredictable threat. This presentation introduces the Birth Architecture framework to explore how birth is shaped by three interconnected levels: Architecture (the body and nervous system), Landscape (the physical and relational context), and Culture (surrounding systems, practices, and power structures).

Drawing on trauma-informed, somatic, and perinatal perspectives, we explore how chronic threat influences autonomic regulation, sensory processing, pain, dissociative responses, bodily autonomy, decision-making, attachment, and co-regulation during childbirth. Particular attention is given to maintaining agency and informed consent when external safety cannot be guaranteed.

The presentation extends beyond individual regulation to a systemic perspective, examining the roles of partners, maternity teams, trauma therapists, peer-support communities, and interdisciplinary services in creating sustainable support networks. Participants will leave with practical tools for recognizing nervous-system overload and dissociation, supporting orientation and regulation, strengthening co-regulation, preserving choice and consent, and developing flexible, trauma-informed birth-support plans for people living under ongoing threat.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Svitlana Kresina is a Ukrainian perinatal and postnatal psychologist, professional doula and specialist working with women and families throughout pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. Her professional interests include trauma-informed maternity care, nervous-system regulation, perinatal trauma, birth-related psychological safety, loss, crisis intervention and support during prolonged threat. She leads psychosocial support initiatives for military families and works with peer-support and professional groups in Ukraine. She is also involved in developing family-centred birth environments and interdisciplinary approaches to reducing traumatic birth experiences.

Her work integrates psychological, somatic, relational and systemic perspectives on pregnancy and childbirth during war.