

**North East Arts Therapies Group  
9th Annual Conference**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
Middlethorpe Hall Hotel and Spa, York**

*Working Within and Across Boundaries*



**Conference Programme**

# **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**8.45-9.15am: Refreshments and Registration**

**9.15-9.30am: Welcome**

## **Session 1 – Interrelationships**

- **9.30-10.30am:** Amanda Strevett-Smith and Amy Pataki - *Experiencing PACE  
Therapeutic Parenting Through Creative Arts Therapy*
- **10.40-11.40am:** Martha Close and Vicky Elbourne - *Coping with Secondary Trauma:  
How Do We Keep Ourselves Safe?*
- **11.50am-12.50pm:** Charlie Moritz - *Texting ... But Not As You Have Known It!*

**1-2.30pm: Lunch**

## **Session 2 – Working Along and Between Boundaries**

- **2.30-3.30pm:** Clare Hunt and Sally Ainsworth - *Establishing and Maintaining Fluid  
Boundaries Within a Hospital Setting*
- **3.40-4.40pm:** Alice Nicholls - *Playing Along the Boundary of Life and Death: Music  
Therapy Interventions and Innovations in a Children's' Hospice*
- **4.50-5.30pm:** Reflections

## Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

9-9.30am: Refreshments

### Session 3 – Research

- **9.30-10.30am:** Professor Susan Hogan - *Going Global Partnerships - a Decolonised Curriculum*
- **10.40-11.10am:** Dr Jane Robb - *Working Across 'Artist [as] Practitioner [as] Researcher' Boundaries in Community Arts and Health Projects*
- **11.20am-12.20pm:** Deirdre McConnell - *Life and Art as Research: A Seven-Year Journey*

12.30-2pm: Lunch

### Session 4 – The Embodied Self

- **2-3pm:** Patricia Issitt - *Skin: The Boundary Between Ourselves and Our Environment, That Which Separates Us But Also Allows Us To Come Together*
- **3.10-4.10pm:** Susan Scarth - *Expressive Arts Therapies With a Dance Movement Psychotherapist: Colouring in the Nooks and Crannies of the Embodied Self*
- **4.20-5pm:** Reflections and Closure

## Summary of Presentations

- **Alice Nicholls - *Playing Along the Boundary of Life and Death: Music Therapy Interventions and Innovations in a Children's Hospice***

### **Summary**

*"The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague."* – Edgar Allen Poe

Death is the one certain boundary that we all cross; it is both a taboo subject and a total commonality. Arts therapists often have to tread carefully around the subject of death, especially when it concerns the death of a child. In this mixed presentation and workshop, Alice explores work and play in the context of music therapy in a children's hospice, including creative therapy with bereaved parents, working with anticipatory grief in family sessions, and the ethics of recording heartbeat music. This work explores how therapists hold the boundaries for clients in palliative care: for those facing death, for those who have died, and for those who they leave behind. *(Content warning for this session: discussion of terminal illness, sudden unexpected death, and bereavement)*

### **Bio**

**Alice Nicholls** (she/they) is a Music Therapist working in children's hospice care and adult neurorehabilitation. She has a particular interest in cross-modality working and innovative practice in the arts therapies, and has recently started new interventions in Heartbeat Music and Musical Hydrotherapy at Forget-Me-Not Children's Hospice. Additionally, as a queer and neurodivergent therapist, Alice leads training courses on ND-affirming approaches in Music Therapy to help reduce the stigma faced by disabled therapists. She is based in Leeds.

- **Amanda Strevett-Smith and Amy Pataki - *Experiencing PACE Therapeutic Parenting Through Creative Arts Therapy***

### **Summary**

An experiential exploration of how a drama therapist and art psychotherapist deliver PACE therapeutic parenting to groups of adoptive mums and special guardians. In this experiential workshop we will introduce PACE, Dan Hughes' approach to therapeutic parenting - a therapeutic model designed to help caregivers and professionals build strong, trusting relationships with children who have experienced trauma, attachment difficulties, or other emotional challenges. Utilising the core components of PACE - playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy - we will experientially demonstrate how we have adapted the manual for this therapeutic parenting approach to an art and drama therapy modality.

## **Bio**

**Amanda Strevett-Smith** is director of Turnways Therapies Ltd. After the last 20 years as a Dramatherapist in the sinking Titanic of the NHS, Amanda has seen many pages turned in the history of CAMHS, and she feels she has finally jumped ship rather than go down with it. Her aim now is to develop the practice and skills of her hugely talented team of Art Music Drama and Dance Movement Turnways Therapists and to continue to collaborate and work across modalities with LAAC and traumatised youngsters and adoptive parents. Amanda is seeking to create a body of work in the form of case studies and to develop new ways of working with trauma.

**Amy Pataki** trained as an art psychotherapist through the Sheffield Northern Programme. With a BA in Animation, prior to becoming an art therapist she was a scenic artist for film, TV and animation. Through her training on the northern programme, Amy found herself drawn particularly to group therapy and systemic thinking. Amy feels incredibly fortunate and grateful to be working at Turnways Therapies, and with the incredible Amanda who founded the company, as the work aligns with her values in its systemic and creative approach to the work.

- **Charlie Moritz - *Texting ... But Not As You Have Known It!***

## **Summary**

A richly experiential hour in which we will explore linking the language of our inner imaginings to that of others; then playfully inhabiting the resulting, productive space outside and between us, before finally spending a little time in shared reflection and returning 'home'. (Not a ball of wool in sight this time. Well ... *maybe* no ball of wool ...)

## **Bio**

**Charlie Moritz** has taught in secondary, adult and higher education. He worked in radio and tv production for ten years. Charlie has also written and directed professionally for stage and screen. Following his own extensive immersion in personal development and therapy he trained as a dramatherapist at the Northern Trust for Dramatherapy (Manchester University) qualifying with distinction in 2005. Alongside his private practice, (recently laid to rest), much of his work has been with child, young and adult asylum seekers and refugees , including significant amounts of work with survivors of torture. He has also run many creative-expressive personal development courses in the UK and Spain. Since 2016 he has been running therapeutic storytelling groups for asylum seekers and refugees, firstly under the auspices of Freedom From Torture and since 2018 independently in the guise of Cat's Cradle CIC, a thriving group in central Manchester. Charlie is also a singer songwriter who derives much joy from creating and sharing the music he makes.

- **Clare Hunt and Sally Ainsworth - *Establishing and Maintaining Fluid Boundaries Within a Hospital Setting***

### **Summary**

As boundaries are constantly shifting, how easy is it to remain focused on the one constant within sessions, the child? In this session we will consider how shifting boundaries affect therapy in the context of a music therapist based within a school, based within a children's hospital.

### **Bio**

**Clare Hunt** qualified as a music therapist in 2001 and has worked in a variety of settings. She has worked in education for much of this time, as teacher, music teacher and music therapist and thus has necessarily spent a lot of time reflecting on where the boundaries sit within her work. This is particularly relevant in her current role as a music therapist based within a school, based within a children's hospital.

**Sally Ainsworth** trained as a music therapist with Nordoff & Robbins, qualifying in 2023. Since then she has worked in a variety of settings including schools, neuro rehab, day centres and hospitals. She has recently become self employed and is enjoying concentrating on bringing music therapy to her local community.

- **Deirdre McConnell - *Life and Art as Research: A Seven-Year Journey***

### **Summary**

Unpacking the ontology and epistemology of feminist research methodologies and partial perspectives is not only OK but authentic—it tells us about humanity in individuals and the world. As I approach the end of my PhD journey, my presentation reviews what it is to do this type of study in an arts therapy—the joys and challenges! In the workshop, I invite you, as a participant, to view a small part of your life as a researcher, validating the ability of all to be researchers. To do this, we will acknowledge the role of play in research and have a playful, thoughtful time. At the end, you will have a research memento to keep, give, or both.

### **Bio**

Deirdre McConnell is an artist, art therapist, clinical supervisor, and specialist visiting university lecturer, and in the final stages of my interdisciplinary PhD at Sheffield University. I worked with colleagues in a large Northern multi-modal arts therapies team engaged in systemic practice in education and am researching the phenomena of positive transformations that arts therapies bring about in children and young people's trajectories, especially children/young people excluded from school or at risk of school exclusion. The philosophical underpinning of my thesis draws on Henri Bergson's philosophy of Time, which is applied to Foucault's concept of heterotopia: time, space, and power relations, are central to the study.

- **Jane Robb - *Working Across 'Artist [as] Practitioner [as] Researcher' Boundaries in Community Arts and Health Projects***

### **Summary**

Evaluation of community arts and health projects is a growing field, but there is little detailed guidance on ethics in evaluation aimed specifically at practitioners. Nucleus Arts is a delivery partner for a current Arts Council England funded partnership project, delivering community arts sessions for local communities with high health inequalities. Here, we present our journey exploring approaches to ethics in evaluation. In our sessions, artists cross the boundary into practitioners in community health, and while conducting detailed evaluation, they can walk the boundary between research and evaluation. Therefore, we developed a set of ethical guidelines for arts practitioners.

### **Bio**

**Dr Jane Robb** is an artist and academic with over a decade of experience in the education sector, including as a qualified teacher and lecturer in outdoor education. She has expertise in delivering creative, embodied and environmentally focused experiences in different settings including outdoors and in the community.

- **Martha Close and Vicky Elbourne - *Coping with Secondary Trauma: How Do We Keep Ourselves Safe?***

### **Summary**

Our aim in this experiential workshop is to reflect together on the nature, complexity and challenge of our work in CAMHS and Adult Complex Emotional Needs in Hull and consider how we can support ourselves and each other. Drawing on our own caseloads, we will touch on the changing nature of our work and the issues we are dealing with including mental health, trauma, neuro-diversity, intergenerational and systemic problems and the complexities of life in 2025. We'll explore imposter syndrome – are we equipped to do this work? What else do we need?

### **Bio**

**Vicky Elbourne** - Since qualifying as a dramatherapist in 1992 at the University of Hertfordshire, Vicky has supported children, adults, families and colleagues in a variety of settings: CAMHs, schools, adult mental health, local authorities, charities, external agencies and in private practice. For the last 20 years, Vicky has been employed as a dramatherapist in CAMHs and private work. She currently works for Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust. Vicky continues to develop skills in family work, clinical supervision and can offer a variety of training. Vicky's role as a dramatherapist has changed over the years and she has become more aware of the different issues related to children, young people, in society today.

**Martha Close** worked as a drama teacher and theatre director for 25 years in the UK and overseas. She retrained as a dramatherapist, graduating from Roehampton University in 2019. She has worked in various settings including SEND and mainstream schools primary and secondary schools, tertiary education, services for refugees and asylum seekers, homes for looked-after-children and in private practice. Currently, Martha works as a dramatherapist with the Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and the Adult Complex Emotional Needs service.

- **Patricia Issitt - *Skin: The Boundary Between Ourselves and Our Environment, That Which Separates Us But Also Allows Us To Come Together***

### **Summary**

A somatic workshop exploring our container, boundaries and permeability through movement, assemblage and touch, through the theme of the 'skin', where skin is considered as both protective and permeable. This workshop is intended to refresh and resource, allowing us to take a step back and find replenishment through movement, companionship and imagination. We will work both individually and together with a partner, through play, creativity, rest and reflection - drawing, writing, musing... we will explore relationship and place both inside our skin and out.

### **Bio**

**Patricia Issitt** is a somatic movement educator and artist whose work is concerned with understanding identity, place and meaning through somatic exploration, art making and writing. My practice aims to be restorative and supports wellbeing through exploring inner space and the internal landscape. I am particularly interested in the play of active imagination and experiential anatomy in helping us feel at home in body.

- **Professor Susan Hogan - *Going Global Partnerships - a Decolonised Curriculum***

### **Summary**

Susan is the first academic at the University of Derby to secure a British Council Going Global (India) Award. The Going Global Partnerships programme promotes collaboration and innovation in teaching and learning and transnational education in higher education institutions between India and the UK. The University of Derby will be collaborating with independent arts-based charities and Adamas University, Kolkata. The Manahkshetra Foundation (art for social change) is our primary collaborator. In particular, we want to explore a decolonised curriculum and hope that there will be 'circular' learning with arts-based learning from India returning to the UK to enrich our own curriculum. This session will be part presentation and part interactive, sharing findings.



## **Bio**

**Professor Susan Hogan** (Ph.D., D.Litt.) is Professor of Arts & Health at the University of Derby and a Professorial Fellow of the Institute of Mental Health at the University of Nottingham and HCPC Registered Art Therapist. Her latest books are *Gender and Difference in the Arts Therapies – Inscribed on the Body* (2019); *Arts Therapies & Gender in International Arts Therapies Research* (2020); *The Maternal Tug: Ambivalence, Identity, and Agency* (2020); *Therapeutic Arts in Pregnancy, Birth and New Parenthood* (2020) and *Photography – Arts & Health Series* (2022).

- **Susan Scarth - *Expressive Arts Therapies With a Dance Movement Psychotherapist: Colouring in the Nooks and Crannies of the Embodied Self***

## **Summary**

My practice as a movement psychotherapist with adults presenting with PTSD has led me to work increasingly with the inner landscape of the body and the creative processes that emerge from this interiority. This workshop offers you, the participant, an immersive experience engaging your whole expressive self through the modalities of mark-making, poetry, and movement. I invite you to meet yourself at a deep body level through an Ibms themed movement warm-up, to take a meandering pathway around and between the nooks and crannies of your bodymind to meet your rich, creative self. You will work alone and in pairs as you map your inner journey and find ways to externalise the experience. I believe that from the experience of this multi-modal workshop you will gain the confidence to apply your creative methods to your continuing practice.

## **Bio**

**Susan Scarth** - As a child I imagined myself immersed in theatre, but instead completed a Social Sciences degree and a period in Social Work and Community Development in the north east – a very important education in life. I gained a Masters Degree in Dance Movement Therapy (Laban Centre London 1990,) with my key focus on Rudolf Laban's system of movement observation and analysis. I completed a Certificate in Movement Analysis (CMA) in (2008); Level 1 Trauma Training in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (2012); undertook several Body Mind Centring (BMI) modules; part 3 training in EMDR in 2024; and hold diplomas in Individual and Group Creative Supervision and Reflective Practice.