

“Free to be Me”- Spirituality in CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and Mindful Self-Compassion

Presenters: Dr. Hilary Garraway and Dr. Sarah Egger

Dr Hilary Garraway is a principal clinical psychologist in Enfield Early Intervention in Psychosis team and has a private practice. Hilary is a BABCP accredited CBT therapist, trainer and supervisor. She has an interest in using creativity within therapy and has trained in person-centred art therapy and in creative and therapeutic writing. She is the Spirituality lead for the British Psychological Society and is Vice-Chair of National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum. Hilary has been developing a holistic approach to CBT which was published last year within the Clinical Psychology Forum journal.

“**Free to be me**” is a personal development course which Hilary has developed using holistic CBT and has been run in both the NHS and faith group settings. This approach to CBT places a person’s individual true self central to the psychological formulation and incorporates spirituality and the social, cultural and environmental context. This approach focuses more on a person’s strengths compared to the traditional, problem-focused CBT. A symbol of a tree is used to represent the person’s true self or spirit and as part of the therapy process the participant gradually labels different aspects of themselves using the tree image. This creates a visual representation of who they are as part of the work. Hilary has found that helping people to connect with their true self and values has helped them to progress in therapy.

Dr Sarah Egger MB,BS; FRCPsych, is a consultant psychiatrist in London. She is past Chair of the Spirituality Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum UK and the British Holistic Medical Association. She is a keen advocate of a values-based approach to healthcare -- one that embraces peace, love, positivity and compassion for the benefit of the self and others. She trained with Kristen Neff in Mindful Self-compassion in 2016.

Mindful Self-compassion - Those on a spiritual path can have the knowledge that our true nature is compassion and love but often we are in the habit of treating ourselves harshly. Self-compassion involves acting in a kind way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don’t like about yourself. Three key components of self-compassion are; self-kindness, a sense of common humanity and balanced mindful awareness. Kindness opens our hearts to suffering so we can give ourselves what we need. Common humanity opens us to our essential interrelatedness so that we know we aren’t alone. Mindfulness opens us to the present moment so we can accept our experience with greater ease. The emphasis is on building resources rather than addressing old wounds so that positive change occurs naturally as we develop the capacity to be with ourselves in a kinder, more compassionate way. Dr Egger will give us an introduction to Mindful Self-compassion and guide some experiential exercises.