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Centre for Developmental
and Complex Trauma

Part of St Andrew's Healthcare



MEETING THE TRAUMA NEEDS
OF AUTISTIC ADULTS

DELEGATE PACK

ONLINE 5th December 2024





CONTENTS

PAGE

Welcome	3
Housekeeping: Important information about the Conference	4
Full conference programme	5-6
Webinar chairs & speakers biographies	7-16
Academic courses in Trauma	
MSC Practitioner in Psychological Trauma	17
Post Graduate Diploma in Complex Trauma	18
Other events	
Moral Injury Special Interest Group	19
Advancing Trauma & 'PD' Needs Special Interest Group	20
Meeting the Trauma Needs of Deaf People Special Interest Group	21
The Conference Organisers	
The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma	22
Emerald Publishing	23



A WARM WELCOME TO THE WEBINAR

Hello!

A very warm welcome from us to the live webinar to promote the recent special edition of *Advances in Autism* focused on meeting the trauma needs of autistic adults. In light of the interest in the volume, Emerald Publishing have kindly supported us to host a webinar to give the authors of the papers the opportunity to present and discuss their papers with others who have an interest in this area.

The webinar opens with an initial address from Cllr Ross Henley, who will be presenting his personal journey and expertise relating to autism and trauma. The webinar programme will then follow. The event will host seven papers, predominantly practice based, that focus on different areas of trauma related needs in autistic people.

The first paper, led by Dr Elanor Webb, sets the scene by exploring the role of exposure to different types of adversity, within the ACEs framework. We then move onto Dr Rachel Worthington, presenting on the complexities of the relationship between trauma, attachment and autism. Dr Arvid Kidahl continues with this theme, exploring how we can distinguish trauma and autism needs, before Dr Freya Rumball presents a consensus guidance paper for elucidating PTSD in autistic people. Dr Rachel Worthington then re joins us, to present on the potential role of moral distress and moral injury in the lives of autistic people, before Matthew Philips and Dr Madeleine Allman present two papers relating to Dialectical behaviour therapy and personality disorder in autistic people.

We are very much looking forward to the webinar, and to learning from the fantastic line up of speakers with considerable expertise and knowledge to share. Please be active in the conference chat and ask lots of questions!!



Dr Deborah Morris, Director,
Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma
Director of Postgraduate Programmes in Trauma, MSc Practitioner in
Psychological Trauma, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
University of Buckingham



Verity Chester
Editor *Advances in Autism*

HOUSEKEEPING:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONFERENCE



This is an online conference hosted on Zoom Webinar. All presentations are live. The presentations are not being recorded. Your microphone and video camera will be switched off to help the conference run smoothly. You will be able to use chat to send messages to selected people and use the Q&A function to ask questions about the presentations.

The speakers, presentation slides and interpreters will be best viewed using Gallery View. You will not be able to use multi-pin.

Five minutes before the end of each presentation the chair will appear on the screen indicating a warning that the presenter is nearing the end of their presentation.



To check your access to Zoom, you can join a test meeting set up by Zoom. Please go to [Joining a test meeting – Zoom Help Centre](#) to find out how to do this. Many problems with video conferencing are due to low bandwidth – please check yours before the conference starts. On the day, we are not able to help delegates resolve problems with their own internet connections



We very much want this to be an interactive event and we encourage you to ask questions throughout the event. Questions and comments to specific individuals can be posted into the 'chat' function. If you would like to ask a question relating to one of the posters or oral presentations, please use the Q&A function. The chairs of each symposia will ask questions posted into Q&A boxes at the end of each oral presentation.

Please contact the conference organisers directly through chat or email (cdct@stah.org), if you are having problems with Zoom, such as the image or sound, rather than posting these in chat, which can distract presenters and delegates.

Also, if you have concerns about any of the terminology or language being used at the event, please contact the conference organisers through a direct message or through email. This is to make sure we see and respond to you promptly and keeps chat focused on the conference!









Each delegate who attends the event will be sent a Certificate of Attendance after the conference. The conference counts for 7 hours of CPD. Certificates will not be sent immediately so do not worry if you do not receive your certificate straight away.

Full Webinar Programme and Running Order

Timing	Topic	Speaker & Affiliation
10:00	Welcome and housekeeping	 Dr Deborah Morris Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma  Verity Chester RADiANT Network
10:05	OPENING COMMENTS	 Cllr Ross Henley Cambridge University Autism Research Centre, RADiANT & Somerset County Council
10:20	Guest Editorial	 Dr Deborah Morris Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma
10:30	Paper 1 Is trauma research neglecting neurodiverse populations? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the prevalence ACEs in adults with autistic traits	 Dr Elanor Webb Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma, UK
11:05	Paper 2 Trauma or autism? – understanding how the effects of trauma and disrupted attachment can be mistaken for autism	 Dr Rachel Worthington University of Central Lancashire & Manchester Metropolitan University
11:40-11:50 BREAK		
11:50	Paper 3 Distinguishing between autism and the consequences of early traumatisation during diagnostic assessment: a clinical case study	 Dr Arvid Kidahl Oslo University Hospital & NevSom Centre Norway
12:25	Paper 4 Elucidating the presentation and identification of PTSD in autistic adults: a modified Delphi study	 Dr Freya Rumball Kings College London & Oxleas NHS Foundation

13:00-13:40 LUNCH BREAK

13:40	<p>Paper 5 Moral distress and moral injury in the context of autism</p>	 <p>Dr Rachel Worthington University of Central Lancashire & Manchester Metropolitan University</p>
14:15	<p>Paper 6 Dialectical behaviour therapy outcomes for adolescents with autism spectrum conditions compared to those without: findings from a seven-year service evaluation</p>	 <p>Matthew Phillips Kings College London & Goldsmiths University of London</p>
14:50	<p>Paper 7 Comorbid autism spectrum disorder and borderline personality disorder: case conceptualization and treatment implications</p>	 <p>Madeleine Allman University of Houston US</p>
15:25	<p>Final Remarks and Close of Webinar</p>	 <p>Dr Deborah Morris Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma</p>  <p>Verity Chester RADIANT Network</p>  <p>Cllr Ross Henley Cambridge University Autism Research Centre, RADIANT & Somerset County Council</p>

WEBINAR CHAIRS AND SPEAKERS

Dr Deborah Morris (Co-Chair)
Guest Editor for Special Edition

Director, Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma, UK
Director of Postgraduate Programmes in Trauma and
Senior Visiting Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
University of Buckingham

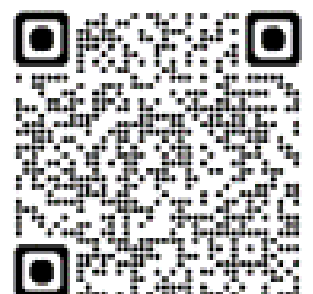


Biography:

Deborah is the Director for the Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma and the Director of Postgraduate Programmes in Trauma, University of Buckingham. A Consultant Clinical Psychologist by training, Deborah has worked clinically with adults with complex personality disorder, neurodevelopmental, forensic and mental health needs in the community, assertive outreach, crisis, residential, prison and inpatient settings.

Deborah has previously worked in professional and clinical lead positions and in services to support the mental health and trauma needs of healthcare professionals. Her publications and ongoing research interests include; occupational distress and trauma, treatments for personality disorder, intellectual disabilities, developmental trauma disorders, the intersection between trauma and personality disorder, moral injury, gendered approaches to trauma, adverse childhood experiences, the physical health impact of trauma, and the psychometric properties of psychological tools.

In her spare time Deborah indulges her obsessions with Star Wars, scuba diving with sharks and her typically unsuccessful attempts to establish an organic allotment. She is an avid cook and enthusiastically avoids gyms and all forms of organised fitness.



WEBINAR CHAIRS AND SPEAKERS

Verity Chester (Co-Chair)
Editor, Advances in Autism

Research Associate and Network Manager, RADiANT Research Consortium, UK & Editor, Journal of Intellectual Disabilities and Offending Behaviour



Biography:

Verity Chester is a Research Associate and the Network Manager for RADiANT, a clinical and research consortium focuses on mental health and behavioural issues associated with five developmental conditions; Intellectual Disability, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Epilepsy and Acquired Brain Injury. She is also the Editor of Advances in Autism and the Journal of Intellectual Disabilities and Offending Behaviour, and is currently studying a PhD at the University of East Anglia, exploring social information processing among autistic offenders.

Prior to this, Verity obtained her BSc in Forensic Psychology from the University of Leeds in 2009, and her MSc in Forensic Psychology from London Metropolitan University in 2012. Throughout her studies, Verity has worked as a Research Associate on a portfolio of projects ranging from clinical audit, service evaluation, quality improvement, and research. Verity has authored over 70 peer reviewed publications and her research interests are related to developmental disabilities (particularly intellectual disability and autism), mental health, forensic involvement, and the interface between these.



OPENING COMMENTS

Cllr Ross Henley
Cambridge University Autism Research Centre,
RADiANT Network
Somerset County Council, UK



Biography:

Ross is autistic and by profession is a mental health trainer and has won a national award for his neurodiversity support policy for staff in local government in his role as a long standing county councillor.

Recently Ross has been running sessions in Belfast on trans generational trauma resulting from the troubles. He also has delivered autism awareness training to staff at Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge in his role as an expert by experience for RADiANT based in Norwich

PAPER

PRESENTER: Dr Elanor Webb

Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma, St Andrew's Healthcare, UK & Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Buckingham, UK

Co-authors: Benedetta Lupattelli Gencarelli, Grace Keavney & Deborah Morris



Journal paper:

Is trauma research neglecting neurodiverse populations? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the prevalence ACEs in adults with autistic traits

Abstract

Purpose: The prevalence of exposure to adversity is elevated in autistic populations, compared to neurotypical peers. Despite this, the frequency and nature of early adverse experiences are not well understood in autistic adults, with several underlying methodological limitations in the available literature. The purpose of this study is to systematically synthesise and analyse the prevalence of childhood adversity in this marginalised population, in accordance with the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) framework.

Design: Peer-reviewed empirical research articles were systematically searched for from electronic databases and screened against established inclusion criteria. Pooled prevalence rates for individual ACE types were calculated.

Findings: Four papers were included (N = 732), all of which used a predominantly or exclusively female sample. Only sexual abuse was reported in all papers, with a pooled prevalence rate of 38%. Physical abuse and emotional abuse were less frequently explored, with two papers reporting on these ACEs, though obtained comparable and higher pooled prevalence rates (39% and 49%, respectively). Pooled prevalence rates could be calculated for neither neglect nor "household" ACEs because of insufficient data. The limited state of the evidence, in conjunction with high levels of heterogeneity and poor sample representativeness found, positions the ACEs of autistic adults as a critical research priority.

Originality/value: To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is the first to systematically synthesise the prevalence of early childhood adversities, as conceptualised in accordance with the ACEs framework, in adults with autistic traits.

Biography:

Since completing her Masters degree in Clinical Psychology Research, Elanor has worked at St. Andrew's Healthcare in a research capacity. She is currently based within the Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma, working on a broad portfolio of projects related to trauma and mental health needs in secure mental healthcare populations. Alongside this role, Elanor teaches on the MSc Practitioner in Psychological Trauma course, in partnership with the University of Buckingham.

Elanor's publications to date have spanned a range of topics relating to trauma, including the prevalence and impacts of early adversity in marginalised secure mental healthcare populations, and comorbidity in trauma and personality disorder presentations. However, her primary area of focus, to date, has been on staff wellbeing and, in particular, moral injury.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Dr Rachel Worthington
Department of Psychology, University of Central
Lancashire, UK & Department of Psychology,
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Co-author: Professor Zainab Al-Attar



Journal paper:

Trauma or autism? – understanding how the effects of trauma and disrupted attachment can be mistaken for autism

Abstract

Purpose: Early bio-psycho-social experiences can dramatically impact all aspects of development. Both autism and traumagenic histories can lead to trans-diagnostic behavioural features that can be confused with one another during diagnostic assessment, unless an in-depth differential diagnostic evaluation is conducted that considers the developmental aetiology and underpinning experiences and triggers to trans-diagnostic behaviours.

Design: This paper will explore the ways in which biological, cognitive, emotional and social sequelae of early trauma and attachment challenges, can look very similar to a range of neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism. Relevant literature and theory will be considered and synthesised with clinical knowledge of trauma and autism.

Findings: Recommendations are made for how the overlap between features of autism and trauma can be considered during assessments alongside consideration for interventions to enable people to access the most appropriate support for their needs.

Originality/value: Many features of the behaviours of individuals who have experienced early childhood trauma and disrupted or maladaptive attachments, may look similar to the behaviours associated with autism and hence diagnostic assessments of autism need to carefully differentiate traumagenic causes, to either dual diagnose (if both are present) or exclude autism, if it is not present. This has for long been recognised in child and adolescent autism specialist services but is less well developed in adult autism specialist services.

Biography:

Dr Rachel Worthington is a Forensic Psychologist with over 25 years' experience of working with clients in prisons, secure psychiatric hospitals and in the community. She is trained in the assessment and delivery of therapy for adult and adolescent clients (male and female) with neurodiversity, personality difficulties, PTSD and complex PTSD, mental illness, intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injury. Rachel has also undertaken specific training in Autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing and have supported both verbal and non-verbal clients. She has published and presented both nationally and internationally on neurodiversity and offending behaviour. Her current research is focussed on supporting young people to be safe in the online space and she is a member of the Institute for Children's Futures.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Dr Arvid Nikolai Kildahl
Oslo University Hospital & NevSom Norwegian Centre of Expertise for Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Hypersomnias, Norway

Co-authors: Kristin Storvik, Elisabeth Christina Wächter, Tom Jensen, Arvid Ro & Inger Breistein Haugen



Journal paper:
Distinguishing between autism and the consequences of early traumatisation during diagnostic assessment: a clinical case study

Abstract

Purpose: Distinguishing between autism characteristics and trauma-related symptoms may be clinically challenging, particularly in individuals who have experienced early traumatisation. Previous studies have described a risk that trauma-related symptoms are misinterpreted and/or misattributed to autism. This study aims to describe and explore assessment strategies to distinguish autism and early traumatisation in the case of a young woman with mild intellectual disability.

Design: A clinical case study outlining assessment strategies, diagnostic decision-making and initial intervention.

Findings: A multi-informant interdisciplinary assessment using multiple assessment tools, together with a comprehensive review of records from previous assessments and contacts with various services, was helpful in distinguishing between autism and trauma. This included specific assessment tools for autism and trauma. Autism characteristics and trauma-related symptoms appeared to interact, not merely co-occur.

Originality/value: The current case demonstrates that diagnostic overshadowing may occur for autism in the context of early trauma. The case further highlights the importance of not ascribing trauma-related symptoms to autism, as service provision and treatment need to take account of both. Overlooking autism in individuals who have experienced early traumatisation may result in a risk that intervention and care are not appropriately adapted, which may involve a risk of exacerbating trauma symptoms.

Biography:

Dr Arvid Nikolai Kildahl is a Specialist in Clinical Psychology who has worked in specialized mental health care for autistic people and people with intellectual disabilities for more than a decade. He completed his PhD in 2021 at the University of Oslo, on the topic of identification of post-traumatic stress disorder in autistic adults with co-occurring intellectual disabilities.

Dr Kildahl is currently employed at Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway, as a researcher in two national centres of expertise: The Norwegian Advisory Unit on Mental Health in Intellectual Disabilities and the Norwegian Centre of Expertise for Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Hypersomnias. He conducts research relating to various topics within the field of mental health and intellectual disabilities/autism, and has primarily published on topics relating to trauma and PTSD in these populations.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Dr Freya Rumball

SGDP Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London & Adult Autism Service, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Dartford, UK

Co-authors: Rachel Parker, Ailbhe Elizabeth Madiagn, Francesca Happe & Debbie Spain



Journal paper:

Elucidating the presentation and identification of PTSD in autistic adults: a modified Delphi study

Abstract

Purpose: Autistic individuals are at increased risk of trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Diagnostic overshadowing, however, often results in PTSD symptoms being mislabelled as autistic traits. This study aims to develop professional consensus on the identification and assessment of co-occurring PTSD in autistic adults.

Design: An online modified Delphi design was used to gather professionals' perspectives on key aspects of the identification and assessment of PTSD in autistic adults. Data were gathered qualitatively in Round 1 and then synthesised using content analysis into a list of statements that were rated in Round 2. Statements reaching 60–79% consensus and additional suggestions were sent out for rating in Round 3. Consensus for the final statement list was set at 80% agreement.

Findings: Overall, 108 statements reached consensus. These form the basis of professional-informed recommendations to facilitate the identification and assessment of PTSD symptoms in autistic adults. The final Delphi statements provide a framework to assist with the assessment and recognition of traumatic stress reactions in autistic adults presenting to mental health, diagnostic or social services.

Originality/value: To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to explore the presentation and identification of PTSD in autistic adults (with and without intellectual disability), using a bottom-up approach informed by professional consensus.

Biography:

Dr Freya Rumball is a Principal Clinical Psychologist and researcher, leading the Oxleas Adult Autism Assessment Service within the NHS. She completed a PhD at the University of Exeter in 2013, specialising in understanding the risk and resilience mechanisms in PTSD development.

During her PhD she became aware of a research gap regarding the experience of trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in autistic individuals, and began researching this neglected area during her postdoc and DClin training. Dr Rumball's research over the last 10 years, collaborating with the Re:Spect Lab at King's College London IoPPN, has focused on exploring the experience and interpretation of trauma and mechanisms of PTSD development in autistic individuals.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Dr Rachel Worthington
Department of Psychology, University of Central
Lancashire, UK & Department of Psychology,
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Co-author: Professor Zainab Al-Attar



Journal paper:
Moral distress and moral injury in the context of autism

Abstract

Purpose: Clinically, it is often observed that autistic people may have a heightened need for rules and may find rule violations very distressing. It is clinically plausible that autistic individuals may be prone to hyper-morality and greater reactivity and adverse experiences arising from moral threats and violations. Such adverse experiences may, in some instances, lead to moral distress (MD) or in more extreme cases moral injury. Thus, this study aims to examine how MD can operate in the context of autism.

Design: The authors explore clinical hypotheses on how MD can intersect with different features of autism by drawing on clinical and research knowledge of autism spectrum disorder and how it contextualises experiences of morality.

Findings: Based on a review of the literature and theory, the authors hypothesise that autistic individuals may be more prone to MD where they have a lower threshold for MD. As a result of this lower threshold, they may have more frequent exposure to MD, experience more immediate and intense subjective reactions to moral transgressions, for more protracted periods. Also, they may find it more difficult to override and neutralise moral outrage. As a result, they may be more susceptible to mental health sequelae and impaired social and occupational functioning. Practical recommendations are made for clinicians supporting people with autism with a propensity for MD or moral injury, to improve their quality of life.

Originality/value: Understanding MD in an autistic context is important for detecting and treating the adverse impacts of MD on autistic individuals. Importantly, erroneous preconceptions about moral reasoning in autism need to be mitigated to fully understand the moral experiences and harness the many strengths of people with autism.

Biography:

Dr Rachel Worthington is a Forensic Psychologist with over 25 years' experience of working with clients in prisons, secure psychiatric hospitals and in the community. She is trained in the assessment and delivery of therapy for adult and adolescent clients (male and female) with neurodiversity, personality difficulties, PTSD and complex PTSD, mental illness, intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injury. Rachel has also undertaken specific training in Autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing and have supported both verbal and non-verbal clients. She has published and presented both nationally and internationally on neurodiversity and offending behaviour. Her current research is focussed on supporting young people to be safe in the online space and she is a member of the Institute for Children's Futures.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Matthew Phillips

Department of Psychological Medicine, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London & Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths University of London, UK

Co-authors: Rhian Parham, Katrina Hunt & Jake Camp



Journal paper:

Dialectical behaviour therapy outcomes for adolescents with autism spectrum conditions compared to those without: findings from a seven-year service evaluation

Abstract

Purpose: Autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and borderline personality disorder (BPD) have overlapping symptom profiles. Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) is an established treatment for self-harm and BPD, but little research has investigated the outcomes of DBT for ASC populations. This exploratory service evaluation aims to investigate the outcomes of a comprehensive DBT programme for adolescents with a diagnosis of emerging BPD and a co-occurring ASC diagnosis as compared to those without an ASC diagnosis.

Design: Differences from the start to end of treatment in the frequency of self-harming behaviours, BPD symptoms, emotion dysregulation, depression, anxiety, the number of A&E attendances and inpatient bed days, education and work status, and treatment non-completion rates were analysed for those with an ASC diagnosis, and compared between those with an ASC diagnosis and those without.

Findings: Significant medium to large reductions in self-harming behaviours, BPD symptoms, emotion dysregulation and inpatient bed days were found for those with an ASC diagnosis by the end of treatment. There were no significant differences between those with an ASC and those without in any outcome or in non-completion rates. These findings indicate that DBT may be a useful treatment model for those with an ASC diagnosis, though all results are preliminary and require replication.

Originality/value: To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to report the outcomes of a comprehensive DBT programme for adolescents with an ASC diagnosis, and to compare the changes in outcomes between those with a diagnosis and those without.

Biography:

Matthew Phillips is a second year Trainee Clinical Psychologist at Royal Holloway. Prior to starting clinical training, he worked within eating disorder research and practice for several years. The paper for the special edition, looking at the outcomes of DBT for those with an autism spectrum condition was begun during his MSc in collaboration with Dr Jake Camp, Dr Rhian Parham, and Dr Katrina Hunt at the National and Specialist CAMHS, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Service. He has an interest in research that seeks to expand diagnosis-specific conceptualisations of mental ill health and treatment, which is what drew him towards the project in the first place.



PAPER

PRESENTER: Madeleine Allman
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, University of Houston, USA

Co-authors: Sophie Kerr, Carmelo Ismael Roldan, Geri Maria Harris & Gerald E. Harris



Journal paper:
Comorbid autism spectrum disorder and borderline personality disorder: case conceptualization and treatment implications

Abstract

Purpose: Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and borderline personality disorder (BPD) are complex disorders characterized by pervasive symptoms of rigidity, emotion dysregulation and social cognitive difficulties. Comorbid ASD and BPD are recognized emerging clinical problem that may be challenging to treat.

Design: The authors present a case study of a young person in the authors' assessment clinic diagnosed with BPD and ASD who had received standard dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) with modest effects. The authors provide ASD-informed recommendations for continued DBT treatment.

Findings: The de-identified patient described in this case report met full criteria for ASD and BPD. The patient's cognitive, behavioral, social and personality functioning are described in detail. Other practitioners seeking to treat this complex comorbidity may make use of the authors' treatment recommendations for their patients. The authors underscore the importance of individualized treatment planning and hope the authors' exemplar will be useful to others.

Originality/value: Several evidence-based treatments exist for ASD and BPD symptom reduction. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no current treatments exist for comorbid ASD and BPD to target emotion dysregulation in individuals with restricted and repetitive interests and behaviors and disturbances in social and communication domains.

Biography:

Madeleine Allman is a fifth-year doctoral student in the Developmental Psychopathology Lab. Madeleine earned her BS in Psychology and Public Health from Tulane University in December 2016 and her Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in December 2017. After graduating, she came to Houston to work in global health research at Baylor College of Medicine.

Madeleine is interested in caregiver-child relationships, especially how they are impacted by exposure to trauma and interventions that address the impact of adversity in caregiver child relationships. Madeleine defended her masters thesis analyzing the impact of the Mediation Intervention for Sensitizing Caregivers (MISC) on Social Cognition among Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in South Africa. She is also working on her dissertation project focusing on MISC's implementation in the context of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which is funded by an NIH F31 predoctoral fellowship. Madeleine is also interested in the assessment and treatment of emotional and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents.





Postgraduate Programmes in Trauma

-Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences-

MSc Practitioner in Psychological Trauma

The part-time, two-year programme provides health professionals with the theoretical understanding and professional competencies to develop, provide and lead psychological trauma services and trauma-informed care models, for wide ranging populations.

The course structure and content follows the level three 'trauma expert' competencies outlined by the BPS. Face-to-face teaching is delivered at the Foster Postgraduate Centre, Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma, St Andrew's Healthcare, Northampton.

Further information can be accessed by heading over to: www.buckingham.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/msc-practitioner-in-psychological-trauma/

Structure of the MSc

Module 1: Theory informing practice: Theoretical aspects of different trauma presentations

Module 2: Idiosyncratic assessment & formulation

Module 3: Idiosyncratic treatment of trauma & associated needs

Module 4: Working with different populations

Module 5: Self and systems in context: Developing leadership skills & trauma-informed systems

Module 6: Research methods and dissertation



Anonymous University student survey experience feedback

"So far I have found the course as very thought provoking. There have been many aspects that I have been using in my clinical practice and I have noticed a clearer understanding of why certain tasks need to be carried out."

"I found critiquing/analysing diagnoses very useful, which provokes thinking with an open mind in regards to labelling. I have found every topic very interesting."

"I appreciate the additional mechanisms for support, this has been invaluable. Lunchtime sessions, tutor meetings, the approachability of the team has been greatly appreciated."

"I have really enjoyed all of the lectures - it's been a real steep learning curve for me."

"The support and guidance is amazing"
"Lecturers are well prepared and slides are fab"

EXCELLENT



Able to access support when needed



Quality of materials and inclusivity of materials



Learning materials influence and improve clinical practice

- Interesting content
- Interactive sessions
- Clarity of learning objectives
- Safe to ask questions
- Increased understanding
- Overall course feedback



Postgraduate Programmes in Trauma

-Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences-

NEW

Post Graduate Diploma in Complex Trauma

NEW

Distance learning Course
First intake: September 2025

“Elevate your practice and become equipped to provide psychological services to those who require specialised trauma care.”

This new online part-time, one-year, distance learning, programme focuses on imparting health professionals with the knowledge and competencies to support people with complex trauma needs by developing, implementing and evaluating psychological assessments and interventions. The course, which follows the BPS level three ‘trauma expert’ competencies, is delivered via online, interactive lectures and seminars.

Further information can be found at:
<https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/postgraduate-diploma-practitioner-in-complex-trauma/>

Structure of the PGDiP

Module 1: Theoretical models underpinning complex trauma

Module 2: Idiosyncratic assessment & formulation

Module 3: Idiosyncratic treatment of trauma & comorbid needs

Module 4: Working with ‘hard to reach’ populations

Why complete this course?

After completing the PG Dip Practitioner in Complex Trauma, you will have developed skills to allow you to pursue or develop specialist trauma roles in various healthcare settings, including:

- **Strong, theory-driven knowledge base** of the lifelong impact to the whole person of experiencing complex trauma. Including the understanding of how to apply this knowledge to clinical, research and service development activities.
- **Theoretical and applied skills** appropriate to function at the Level 3 ‘trauma expert’ competences outlined by the British Psychological Society.
- **Knowledge** of how to implement, evaluate, and reflect on specialist trauma assessments and interventions in different settings.
- **Skills to work within an ethical framework** to promote the wellbeing of service users and practitioners

Support provided throughout your course

- **PERSONAL TUTOR** Every student is assigned a personal tutor who recognises the challenges of studying whilst working with traumatised and complex presentations and will provide support at every stage of the PG Dip.
- **PORTFOLIO OF RESOURCES** Students have free of charge access to resources at the Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT), which include:
 - A renowned international conference programme that attracts global experts in trauma
 - Trauma Special Interest group events
 - The CDCT’s ‘research skills for clinicians’ series of 10 workshops



Join our Moral Injury Special Interest Group

The CDCT hosts an established 'special interest group' (SIG) for academics, clinicians, researchers and others with an interest in moral injury.

Moral injury is commonly understood as the *distress that arises when a person either directly engages in, or learns about, witnesses and/or fails to prevent behaviours of others which conflict with their own values and beliefs about what is right.*

Membership of the SIG is completely free and provides:



Access to discounted ticket prices for CDCT conferencing events



Newsletters and updates from the CDCT direct to your inbox



Invitations to attend bi-annual SIG meetings, including:

- Hosted presentations on practice and research advancements and debates within the field
- Discussion of opportunities for research collaborations and partnerships
- Opportunity to network with others in the field

Register here!



To join the SIG, simply scan the QR code or head over to:
<https://forms.office.com/e/sL9u0u5C1v>





Special Interest Group: Advancing trauma & 'personality disorder' needs

The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT) hosts a special interest group focusing on advancing our understanding and treatment of people with trauma and 'personality disorder' needs. The SIG group has a broad international membership and meets twice a year.

At SIG meetings we

- Host presentations relating to good practice and advancements in the field
- Discuss the latest evidence on understanding the relationship between trauma and personality needs
- Share research collaboration opportunities
- Distribute newsletters twice a year relating to the SIG, recent research and practice updates

Joining the SIG and attending SIG meetings are free of charge. To join the SIG, please complete our membership and SIG form by scanning the QR code or following the link here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/sL9u0u5C1v>



**The next SIG meeting takes place on the
6th February 2025 (13:15 - 15:15pm BMT)**



In collaboration with the Deaf Service, St Andrew's Healthcare and Sign Health, the Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT) hosts a special interest group focusing on advancing the trauma needs of deaf people. The SIG group has a broad international membership and meets four times a year.

At SIG meetings we

- Host presentations relating to good practice
- Share research updates
- Share research collaboration opportunities
- Outline innovations in the field



Joining the SIG and attending SIG meetings are free of charge. Join by scanning the QR code or following the link **here: <https://forms.office.com/e/sL9u0u5C1v>**

NEXT MEETING!!!!

Special Interest Group

Meeting the Trauma needs of Deaf people (BSL interpreters are provided)

Friday 31st January

10:00-12:00pm (BMT) | Zoom





Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma

Part of St Andrew's Healthcare



About us

The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT) was established in 2020 and is based in Northampton. The core aim of the CDCT is to drive better outcomes for people who have experienced repeated trauma across the lifespan.

Our values integrate contemporary frameworks of working with trauma; combined with a high level of academic rigour to deliver research, education and CPD activities that are theoretically underpinned and focused on developing data-driven approaches to understanding trauma and delivering personalised care.

Central to our values are the role of co-production and empowerment. The CDCT operates a highly collaborative working model, prioritizing developing relationships with stakeholder groups to ensure that our work is co-produced, relevant, impactful and translatable to clinical services.

Our CPD, research and service development activities are conducted through an intersectional lens, with the differential impact of gender, neurodiversity and ethnicity playing a central role in the design and reporting of our activities.

For further information about the CDCT, please head over to our website at www.stah.org/cdct/ or via the QR code here:



You can also get in touch at CDCT@stah.org

Portfolio of activities

To achieve our goals, the CDCT delivers a growing portfolio of activities and services that seek to advance knowledge, skills and clinical practice.

The CDCT's portfolio of current activities



Student and professional clinical and research placements



Comprehensive research, service development and evaluation programme covering 8 areas of trauma and over 20 current projects



International conference programme



Postgraduate education programme in psychological trauma with the University of Buckingham



Research skills for clinicians CPD programme



Hosting special interest groups



Consultation and supervision

Advances in Autism (AIA) builds and disseminates evidence on the health and care aspects and outcomes of autistic people, with the goal to inform researchers and professionals; improving the quality of life for those living on the autistic spectrum.

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Aims and scope

Advances in Autism (AIA) is unique in its focus on the health and care aspects and outcomes for people with autism.

The journal's content is international in focus and peer-reviewed. It includes the following:

- research-based articles
- evidence-based clinical and support articles
- articles on policy and advances in services where these can be internationally applied.

Key areas of research covered include:

- clinical developments
- people's experience through qualitative research
- policy debates and outcomes
- inclusion and quality of life
- developmental issues
- population and epidemiological studies
- services developments
- evidence-based reviews of key practice issues.

The content of this new journal will be a key tool in building and disseminating evidence to change the way that professionals work with people with autism and to challenge traditional assumptions and ways of working. It will do this by:

- publishing the latest research with a focus on the implications for practice
- becoming a home for emerging research
- increasing awareness of and the profile of the health and care aspects of autism
- Keeping readers up-to-date with the latest developments to improve the quality of life for people with autism and autism spectrum disorders.



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