



Counsellors
Together UK

The UK's largest counsellors' campaign group

Newsletter

September 2020 Issue 10



Platforming Controversy?

How can we safely speak out against the
issues that affect us the most?

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Letter from the Editor

Dear members,

In many ways, we are now in the cusp of our most challenging time as counsellors and it really has nothing to do with the global pandemic we are still trying to navigate.

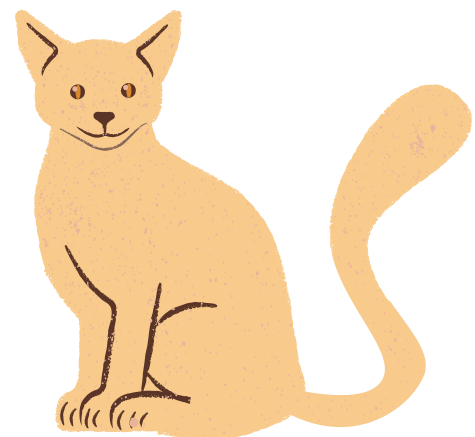
In some ways this is a gift; an opportunity to reflect upon ourselves and our sector. A chance to prevent stagnation and reaffirm our profession. It is also a really good time for us to decide what kind of profession and professionals we want to be moving forward. As this issue touches on lightly, this doesn't always feel like a gift. In fact, it rarely does. Change is hard and sometimes excruciating, but we are a profession that does need this metamorphosis.

We can't stand by and absolve ourselves of any action by saying "counselling isn't political". That doesn't fly any more. The personal is the political and we are in the business of the personal. But, to calm any squeamishness about that statement; it is a politics which rises above any one political party.

BACP members - don't forget to vote in the resolutions and motions process. There are 2 resolutions and 6 motions to decide upon (more info inside this issue).

Warmest Wishes,

Tara Shennan



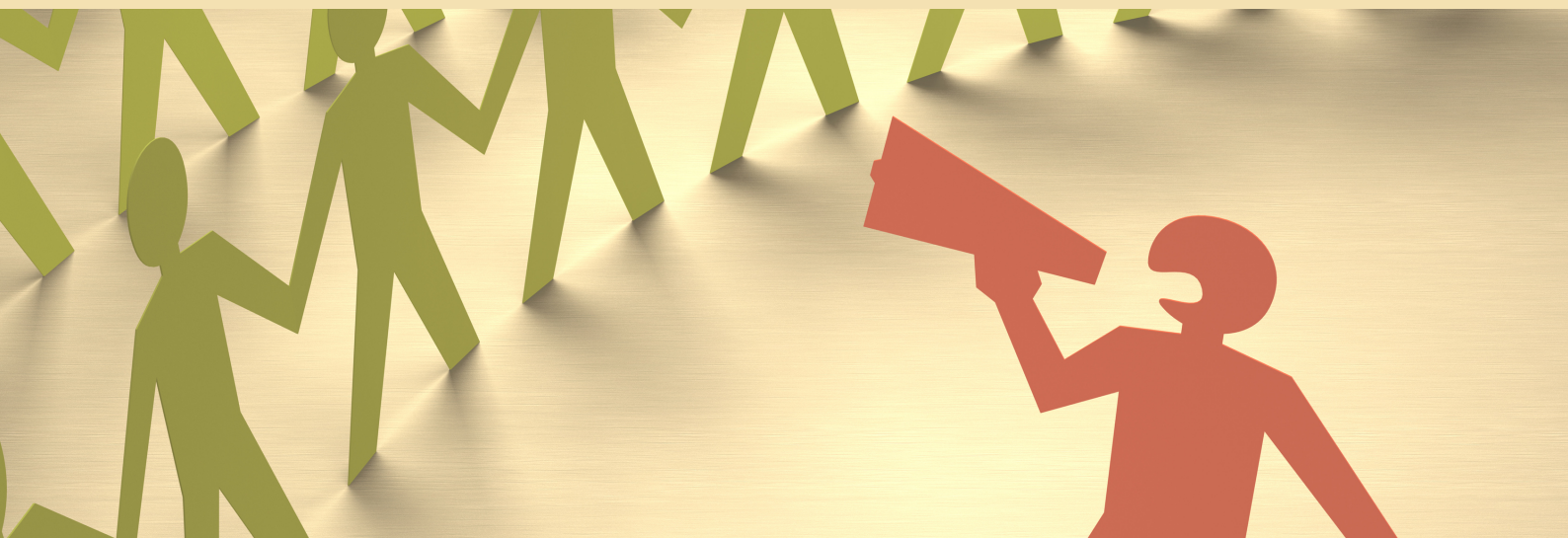
Platforming Controversy

Over recent years we have seen the emergence of no-platforming. No platforming is the act of removing someone's platform to speak. This usually happens to prevent the airing of hate speech but has been increasingly used to silence academic critique. Institutions from all sectors have struggled to operate from a position of anything other than fear.

What do these great institutions fear? "Woke" backlash. The cancel culture which has seen companies drop shares and individuals lose their jobs. I write this with an understanding that some will find even the mention of this topic controversial and with the understanding that for many people, speaking out has a cost. It is particularly costly when those in an opposing view are dogmatic and this is where we so often find ourselves in society at the moment; two extremes unable to meet. Debate has become non-existent. The solution, it would seem, is either avoiding the topic entirely or platforming everyone regardless of the harm it does. Neither of these approaches work well.

When we have a platform that can give a voice to others, we have a responsibility to make sure those voices are seated in a context which reduces harm. If people are afraid to talk about a topic for fears of being labelled a racist or a TERF, we have a responsibility to provide that space without delegitimising the oppression of another. For example, it is possible to open up a discussion around the fears of discussing race as a white person, without that discussion concluding that racism wouldn't exist if we didn't talk about it. It is possible to have difficult discussions without resorting to insults, including the notion that it is just 'fashionable' to recognise the oppression of an entire group of humans (both views shared in October 2020's Therapy Today). But such discussions require a level of nuance that is so often skipped or ignored.

It is important to remember that we are all learning and all trying to get out from under the centuries of oppressive thinking; whether that be sex discrimination, racial discrimination or the discrimination and othering of those with disabilities. We all have blind spots; therefore, we all need each other to see with true clarity.





That clarity starts with learning from each other's mistakes. Something which would have avoided a lot of controversy for the BACP's title publication, *Therapy Today*, this week if only they had paid attention to the controversy around the British Psychological Society's (BPS) publication, *The Psychologist*, back in August 2020. *The Psychologist* published a letter which was even less inflammatory than those in *Therapy Today*. The author penned a scolding note to tell *The Psychologist* and the society to stop involving itself in social justice issues like black lives matter and get back to being a science. This coupled with the author's views that white psychologists are experiencing racism led to an outcry. This eventually led to the letter being removed completely and replaced with a note from the Editor about the editorial process and the reflection that happened in the days after the publication went live.

One gets the sense that the editor of *Therapy Today* asked *The Psychologist* to hold her glass whilst she set in motion the steps for more blatant, unchallenged, racism. The difference being that when publicly challenged for her editorial decisions, she had no intention of displaying any humility, telling one twitter user that they needed to contextualise the racism within the entire magazine. Which completely misses the point. The two don't cancel each other out, this is not algebra! It is also completely tone deaf to argue that we need to provide a(nother) platform for something which has been thoroughly 'platformed' for centuries. From the discussions that are happening around this issue, the harm people experienced was not that the view was aired, but that it was aired without challenge. It would have been possible to print the opinion and then respond to it. It was even an opportunity to promote whatever anti-racism/diversity CPD BACP might be planning. Essentially a statement to say they don't agree with or promote the views within the letter and that they are offering X CPD on this subject. If members have any ideas about how to decrease anxiety around talking about these issues, they can contact X person.

There are some really problematic views within the BACP structure right now. The way they respond to criticism is harmful – to those challenging them and to the BACP's image. But at the same time, it is difficult not to wonder why they didn't expect this happening at some point. The editor admits, in print, that she wanted to cancel the Black History special edition of the magazine. The special issue which only came into existence after complaints that it was absent prior to 2017, and the rationale for its removal was that it was unfair to shine a light on that one issue when others also existed. One can presume that it never crossed her mind to simply shine a light on them too. Make what you will of that commentary but the truth is, her viewpoint as editor steers the magazine. Its that attitude which sits behind the decision to publish the idea that racism doesn't exist without any comment.

As I wrote earlier, we need to work together to help each other see through our blind spots. That tends to be a little more challenging if we only offer criticism. I hope that in their review of this incident, BACP start to actually listen to feedback. Not listen to respond, but actually listen because some might say that this point was the inevitable end point of a line of falling dominoes. If that is true, there were plenty of dominoes that could have been removed prior to this point to prevent this harm from occurring.

Resolution 2: Scrap accreditation fees

Proposed by Tara Shennan and seconded by Maria Albertsen this resolution **closes for voting on 24th October 2020** (voting is extended to account for late addition)

Resolution summary: Scrap the cost of applying for and maintaining the membership level of individual accreditation

Explanatory statement: In August 2020 the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) renewed the BACP's position on their accredited registers programme. One of the key recommendations for the BACP to consider was how its accreditation programme may exclude members.

As has been openly discussed for years, one of the biggest barriers to the individual accreditation process is its cost. It is £230 to apply for accreditation. If you are unsuccessful in this process you may have to start a new application all over again, with the associated costs. An appeal to this decision costs £195. Furthermore, if your primary membership status changes across your working life because you take maternity leave or become a retired member during a break from practice, a return to 'accredited member' is not guaranteed. You may have to reapply all over again and pay that application fee all over again.

According to the latest BACP survey (2013), the average counsellor earns less than £1000 pcm and a quarter of counsellors receive no payment at all for their counselling work. These figures alone make the £230 application fee extortionate, but we shouldn't forget those that could be paying twice or thrice as much to go through an appeals and reapplication process. This unfairly locks out those members who are impoverished; not only from accreditation but from the employability this status provides. A voluntary membership process shouldn't create a system where you can be too poor to work. We eradicate that by removing the costs associated with the application and the ongoing increased membership fee.

Alternative membership bodies offer this change in membership status for free. No application fee and no additional membership fee. BACP should follow suit if they wish to meet the requirements of the PSA.

There will clearly be a financial cost. The value of such a change far outweighs the financial loss.



Open Resolutions & Motions

BACP

Governance
&
Resolutions

- **Resolution 1:** BACP should take a more proactive role by setting standards challenging institutional racism in the psychotherapeutic/counselling professions, at training, organisational and individual practitioner levels; with appropriate investment in external, independent monitoring of the implementation of these standards.
- **Resolution 2:** Scrap accreditation fees for individual accreditation

Resolutions require support of 5% of the membership to be accepted to second stage (circa 2700 votes)

- **Motion 1:** The members believe that open-ended and long term therapy should only be delivered by counsellors whose core training was to post-graduate level during which time they attended rigorously held weekly therapy with the same therapist.
- **Motion 2:** That the Board does more to support its members in the face of inadequate training.
- **Motion 3:** That there is more research, outreach, accessibility and potentially funding to help the (Ultra-) Orthodox Jewish communities access full mental health help and resources.
- **Motion 4:** That there is a requirement for members to be specific about their qualifications and level of experience when advertising their services.
- **Motion 5:** The BACP should create a Student Forum, which will actively support student members in sharing their views, and engaging with the development of BACP's policies and procedures.
- **Motion 6:** We are asking the BACP to repeat the 2014 members employment research survey so we can determine if members employment and/or earnings have changed for better or worse in the last six years.

Motions need the support of 0.1% of the membership but are not legally binding. This is circa 54 votes

Voting for Resolution 1 and all motions closes on Saturday 17th October 2020
Voting closes for Resolution 2 on Saturday 24th October 2020



BACP

Governance & Resolutions

Each year the BACP opens up their resolutions and motions process to members which allows members to submit ideas for how they feel the BACP should be managed and the areas members feel it should focus. It is supposed to provide a clear opportunity for members to have their voices heard by the board.

Each year, this process gets undermined in some new way. You can see a breakdown of previous changes here: <https://ukcounsellors.co.uk/official-complaint-against-bacp-for-not-consulting-members-about-changing-the-resolution-and-agm-voting-process/> and here: <https://ukcounsellors.co.uk/ctuk-response-to-the-bacp-scrap-scoped-members-resolution-result-2019/>

2020 appears to be no different with many resolutions being declined for reasons which are questionable at best.

Maria proposed a resolution which aimed to bring in a democratic vote for members to decide whether they wanted their membership body to remain involved in the SCoPED project. One of the criteria listed in that was that BACP needed to get 50% engagement in that vote and that a majority win; essentially 26% of the membership. One of the reasons for declining this resolution was BACP admitting they couldn't guarantee they would get that level of engagement.

If they cannot get 26% of their membership to say they want to continue to develop the SCoPED framework (which is approximately 14000 members) then firstly, they should stop saying the majority of counsellors want this framework. They have admitted they cannot even guarantee enough members would vote to allow for 26% to say they want it, never mind a "majority". Secondly, the applications process for resolutions would have allowed for amendments; they chose not to seek an amendment to this value to allow for a mutually agreeable one. They essentially chose to jump onto that criterion and use it as a get out clause.

This is the resolution that they chose to deprive their members of:

Give members a democratic vote on SCoPED'

Summary of the Resolution

Hold a democratic vote on BACP's involvement in SCoPED and its development. To ask members:

1. 'Do you want BACP's involvement in the SCoPED project to continue?'
2. If yes, should the framework continue in its current format? Aim: to give members a voice in the direction of BACP.



BACP

Governance & Resolutions

Voting criteria:

- Ballot responses should be in a 'yes or no' format allowing for a true reflection of voter wishes. The level of total engagement must be at least 50% of the total membership at the time of the vote. A majority vote will be upheld. An independent organisation are required to carry out the voting process.
- The BACP must not write on the ballot page to indicate how they feel members should vote nor interfere with the voting page in any way as to confuse members about how, when or where they should vote.
- BACP should refrain from promoting the SCoPED framework during the voting period

Why we propose this resolution

In the first instance, there was no proper consultation sought before the project nor at its first consultation point. Only at the second consultation have members been asked if they understand the project, its aims and whether they support the proposed framework. If members do not support the framework there is no reassurance that this will be taken on board and actioned.

Second, this framework is being posited as the mapping of the profession and as such impacts how counsellors are seen now and in the future. It is therefore imperative that members are given a clear opportunity to have their voice heard after a reasonable amount of time has been given to fully digest the information within the framework and the key critiques of it.

Third, of those key critiques, the primary concern is the lack of transparency presented to members of the organising membership bodies and the profession at large. But, primarily, a lack of transparency as to why BACP members have been placed at the bottom of a hierarchy which elevates the members of the UKCP and BPC. At the point of this resolution, thousands of pounds have been spent on a project the SCoPED team have not confirmed its members want. We believe that any project that impacts the entirety of its membership and the profession as a whole should be subject to a fully democratic vote. Financial implications This is unclear as there has been no information provided by the SCoPED team

(despite requests for this information) about the financial costs thus far. If members vote against the continuation of the SCoPED project, the potential losses will be limited to funds already spent on its development. We are not aware of any future financial implications.

Members and sector unite to protect counsellors

At the beginning of the month members in our facebook group shared their discovery that an online directory (Online Angels) was taking the information from public directories and adding that information to their own without permission.

It quickly became apparent that this was a bigger issue than initially thought and counsellors took to social media and their emails to make their membership bodies and directories aware of the problem.

As a result of the tenacity of all involved the Counselling Directory, the National Counselling Society and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy quickly mobilised to challenge this company on their practices.

It was a very swift action that had an even swifter reaction from the company involved and those whose profiles had been obtained without permission had their profile removed from the Online Angels site.

Counselling Directory were seeking legal advice at this time to help protect their members.

If you find yourself on a directory or website that you have not given permission for, please get in touch. It's clear what can happen when we all work together!



IAPT WORKERS CAFE

Open Letter

September 25th, 2020

Dear IAPT national team,

We are IAPT psychological therapy workers based across England who want to ensure that recent global movements highlighting the ongoing impact of racism will lead to tangible antiracist initiatives in IAPT services. As with most psychological services, there are many ways in which IAPT services have been perpetuating unjust racist structures in our society. This has had distressing and far-reaching consequences for our clients, our IAPT colleagues and our wider communities, including differing access and recovery rates for people from minoritized backgrounds[1] and discrimination and marginalisation of many of our IAPT colleagues in their workplaces[2].

We all need to work to right these wrongs, but particularly those of us who are White and have experienced many implicit societal advantages as a result. We describe the following initiatives as antiracist[3], since it is impossible to hold a 'neutral position' while still participating in a society whose current outcomes are much worse for those from minoritized backgrounds. We are calling on you, the national IAPT team, to vigorously develop and promote the implementation of these initiatives in IAPT services nationwide.

1. Many IAPT workers are not aware of the IAPT BAME Positive Practice Guide from the BABCP or they are struggling to utilise it in their everyday practice and senior managers and commissioners are not ring-fencing adequate resources to ensure its implementation at a service-wide level. We urge you to offer training, run by minoritized experts in the field of antiracism, in implementing the guide for everyone who works in IAPT and to liaise, in a sustained manner, with IAPT senior managers, to ensure services make the recommended adjustments.
2. Currently, commissioners consider access in terms of quantity of access and recovery, but not in terms of diversity. We call on you to campaign to make meaningful diversity of access and recovery a key performance indicator; for example, by encouraging more sustained types of outreach work as opposed to one-off community events; gathering data around ethnicity during this work; and following up on effectiveness of outreach by checking at assessment if outreach led to self-referral.
3. We would like to see a national consultation aimed specifically at staff from minoritized backgrounds, with the focus of identifying the impact of racism, including microaggressions and bullying, on our workforce. As part of this consultation, we would ask that senior managers get together to plan solutions.
4. We ask that the national IAPT team act as a point of support for any IAPT worker if they feel they have been subject to racism and are not being adequately supported by their service - and especially for any cases where racism is committed, or covered up, by senior members of staff. We would ask the national IAPT team to then remind any such service to follow best practice for managing allegations of racism.

5. We are requesting nationwide measures to ensure diversity in recruitment of staff and trainees and to support and retain existing staff from minoritized backgrounds, particularly PWPs who are at the coalface of IAPT and suffer disproportionately high burnout and low retention rates. Years of discrimination and the impact of structural racism may be linked to job dissatisfaction. Remedial measures should include a zero tolerance policy for racism, as well as training for trainees, managers and supervisors to increase their knowledge and skills to proactively address the impact of racism in our IAPT workplaces.

6. Despite many IAPT services reporting ethnically diverse workforces, there are anecdotal reports that those who attain senior leadership and teaching positions are disproportionately from White backgrounds. We call for a diversity audit of the entire national IAPT workforce, including senior and teaching positions. Cross-sectional audits should investigate the number of people from minoritized backgrounds in the IAPT workforce, and longitudinal audits are required to observe retention in the role. This would determine how much further work there is to do in addressing structural inequalities that can affect an individual's career progression in IAPT. As a first step, we need to ensure there is a person from an ethnically minoritized background on every interview panel, including for high-level interviews.

7. We would ask you to ensure that diversity teaching is expanded beyond a one-off module and is woven into all elements of the IAPT certificate and diploma training courses to improve awareness, knowledge and skills (e.g. White trainees should be aware of the impact of the colour of their skin in the therapy room). Furthermore, it is currently possible for course providers to skirt around the issues of privilege and race and the cultural specificity of the CBT evidence base. We recommend that the IAPT national curriculum specify minimum standards for diversity training -including factors that perpetuate structural racism- that all IAPT training courses should adhere to.

We are acknowledging our needs and limitations. We are asking for help and are open to working with you to discuss and develop these initiatives. Antiracism cannot be achieved with one action or plan. The necessary sea change towards a more equitable IAPT for everyone will require a joint and sustained effort, across local and national levels.

If you are a current or past IAPT worker would like to sign this letter, please email IAPTWorkersCafe@gmail.com with your details.

[1] Baker, C. (2018). Mental health statistics for England: Prevalence, services and funding. Briefing paper 6988. House of Commons Library.[2] <https://notaguru.blog/2020/07/11/on-racism-in-iapt-part-1/>[3] Kendi, I. X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. One world.



Public consultation - Guidance on pre-trial therapy

Text taken from the CPS website:

The CPS is conducting a public consultation on the draft guidance on pre-trial therapy which replaces and combines earlier guidance the “Provision of Therapy for Child Witnesses Prior to a Criminal Trial” and the “Provision of Therapy for Vulnerable or Intimidated Adult Witnesses prior to a Criminal Trial”, 2002.

The revised draft operational practice guidance has been developed with the assistance of the psychologists, therapists, police, government departments, voluntary sector providers and other experts in the field. The revised guidance is intended to be a practical document to assist in ensuring that victims receive the therapy they require while supporting therapists, investigators and prosecutors successfully to navigate the legal and procedural issues that can arise where a victim has received/is receiving therapy or is deciding whether to receive therapy.

The Ministry of Justice is developing an ‘easy read’ version of this document which will be specifically designed to ensure that victims understand the key messages contained within this guidance.

Have your say here: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/public-consultation-guidance-pre-trial-therapy>.



Sexting: advice for professionals

The NSPCC released their latest guidance on Sexting.

You can read the full guidance here: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/sexting-advice-professionals>

In brief: All organisations should have a sexting policy. There are guidelines for how these should look. There is information for recognising and responding to sexting, as well as reporting guidelines.

You should make a child protection referral if:

- the incident involves an adult
- there is reason to believe that a child or young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, if they have a learning disability)
- what you know about the image(s) suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person’s developmental stage, or are violent
- the image(s) involves sexual acts and any child in the image(s) is under 13
- you have reason to believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm due to the sharing of the image, for example if they are presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

Both ourselves and the BACP have been campaigning to place a paid counsellor in all schools; with BACP extending that plea to academies and FE colleges.

Our petition to the government has over 20000 signatures and remains open for support so please sign and share across your networks.

<https://www.change.org/p/uk-parliament-make-it-mandatory-for-every-uk-school-to-provide-counselling-for-children-and-young-people>

Meanwhile the BACP are making headway in parliament with the support of nearly 3000 members and other supporters writing to MPs across the country as part of their national campaign.

If these efforts are successful, it would "bring England into line with the other nations of the UK" (BACP, 2020).

The BACP also state:

"Our submission to the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) – a blueprint for government funding over the next four years – included a clear recommendation how counselling can complement existing investment by providing a cost-effective and universal, non-stigmatising early intervention. And of the MPs who responded to our members, some 45% confirmed they'd written to Treasury Ministers on behalf of their constituents to ask them to consider school counselling in this year's CSR."

Let's keep applying the pressure and keep this a pressing issue for those in parliament.



A critical evaluation of the revised SCoPEd Framework (July 2020)

By Albertsen, M. and Shennan, T.



Counsellors Together UK
www.ukcounsellors.co.uk

On the 23rd July 2020, CTUK released our critical evaluation of the SCoPEd framework.

You can read the full document here:

<https://ukcounsellors.co.uk/a-critical-evaluation-of-the-revised-scoped-framework-july-2020/>

We are asking BACP to scrap the SCoPEd project

change.org

Join over 4700 counsellors and sign this petition to scrap the SCoPEd framework
<https://www.change.org/p/british-association-for-counselling-and-psychotherapy-we-are-askingbacp-to-scrap-the-scoped-project>

Monthly Therapists Planner

The Therapist's Planner brings all your organisational needs into one handy place.

Included each month are:

- Weekly Personal diary pages
- Weekly time-sheet to log client sessions
- Weekly social media planner
- To do Lists
- and more...

You can get your copy, for free, if you are a member of the CTUK membership club.

to find out more about our membership club and how to join, turn to page 19.



National Counsellors' Day Conference

Video of 2020 event

Missed this year's event? Grab your copy of the 2020 National Counsellors' Day Conference from the 10th August 2020.

Copies are priced at £10 each and will be available to buy via www.nationalcounsellorsday.co.uk

Next year's event

Tickets are available on a donations basis, from as little as £1. Buy your ticket now: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-counsellors-day-conference-2021-tickets-110239328800>

National Counsellors' Day 2021
Online Conference

Theme - 'Diversity and Inclusion in Counselling
and Psychotherapy'



Saturday 19th June 2021
9.30am - 5.00pm

Find out more and support us here:
www.nationalcounsellorsday.co.uk

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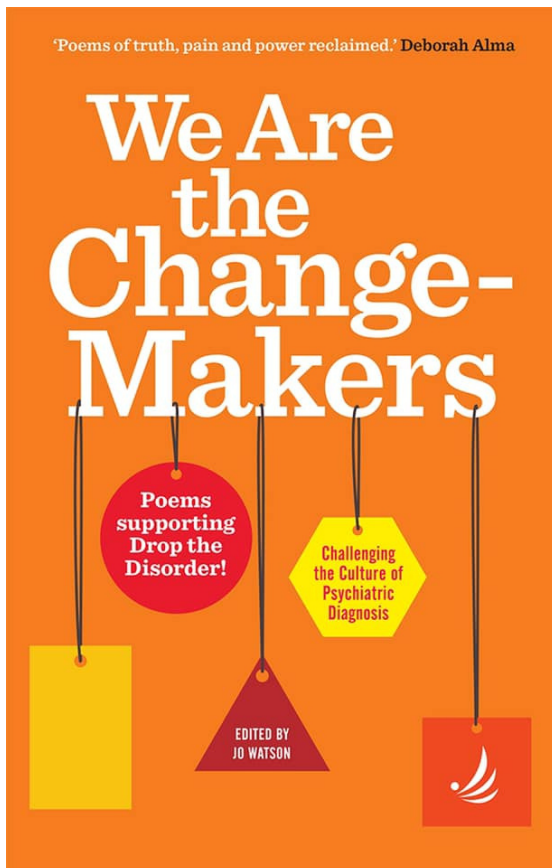


Monthly Prize Draw



Each month on our public Facebook page we hold a prize draw where you could win a book or book voucher just by commenting on our post.

This Month's book:



BOOK OVERVIEW

This is a unique collection of poems written by and for people who have survived our mental health system and the diagnostic process that is used to categorise and treat mental and emotional distress.

In October 2016, Jo Watson launched A Disorder for Everyone (AD4E) – an international campaign to challenge the culture of psychiatric diagnosis and the labelling of expressions of emotional distress as medical disorders. Since then hundreds of people have attended AD4E events all over the UK, and thousands have joined the campaign Facebook group 'Drop the Disorder!' What began as a shout of protest has become an international roar.

Poetry has long been used to give voice to resistance and to drive change in all kinds of social movements, and it is a central aspect of this campaign as well. It has been at the heart of every AD4E event and, more recently, several online poetry events have brought together poets and poetry-lovers from across the globe under the Drop the Disorder! banner.

We Are the Change-Makers is a collection of these and other poems that seek to describe the otherwise inexpressible and challenge the power of psychiatry that misrepresents and medicates what it does not understand.

Counsellors Together UK

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A series of approximately ten blue brushstrokes of varying lengths and orientations are scattered around the central text, creating a dynamic, hand-drawn effect.

Thank you
for
Reading!

Issue 11 comes out on the 1st November 2020

If you have any comments or suggestions for our newsletter please contact the editor at tara@ukcounsellors.co.uk. If you would like to write an article, a book review or write about your research in our newsletter, please also contact Tara.