

# #TherapistsConnect

In many ways, during 2020, I have never felt so distant from other people. The impact of the global pandemic has touched all of our lives in some way. We are all now familiar with the terms 'socially distanced', 'understand the importance of 'social bubbles', and have become accustomed to the daily use of masks. Many features of this new world are about physically distancing ourselves from each other, albeit to keep us safe. This has meant that for many of us we have had real difficulty connecting with others.

In these uncertain times, it is even more important that we come together as a community, to support each other and the work that we do. Using social media and digital technology to create virtual spaces for therapists to come together is certainly one way of doing this. In January, I sent out a tweet encouraging therapists to introduce themselves to each other, using the hashtag #TherapistsConnect. This sparked a lot of interest from

therapists across the world, and highlighted a desire from therapists for a greater sense of community and connection with each other.

Inspired by this enthusiasm, and in collaboration with my colleague - Caz Binstead, we decided to create and develop an online community of therapists, under the original hashtag. Little did we know that the need for these virtual communities would become so important for therapists, and the rest of the world.

#TherapistsConnect is now an international community of thousands of therapists. We have a committed team of volunteers [see pictures] who are helping us to expand this community and support each other. Our aim is to encourage connection between therapists, through meaningful dialogue, conversation and collaboration. We support any event, activity or therapist who is working towards these goals. Some of our own projects include: a weekly Twitter discussion group for students of counselling and psychotherapy called #TraineeTalk; free to access

debates covering important issues that impact therapists and a podcast interviewing therapists about their lives and work.

To celebrate our first year as a community we are hosting a free conference for therapists from Monday 4th January through to Friday 8th January. The conference will include a variety of individual events.

The majority of these will be broadcast free via our YouTube channel and can be watched later if you can't make it on the day. However, we will also have some networking events over the course of the week which therapists will be able to book onto.

These events all centre on the themes of connection, collaboration and campaigning. To have an overview of this developing programme, please see our events page [here](#).

Some highlights from the week will be panel discussions around topics such as social media use by

therapists, the relationship between politics and therapists' practice, and what it is like for therapists to be dually qualified with another profession. The conference will also explore some creative ways we can connect as therapists, including workshops on creativity, as well as a session on poetry and other types of creative writing for therapists. We also launch our Film Club with a film screening with a Q&A afterwards.

As I look back and reflect on the challenges of 2020, I can see that whilst we may feel physically disconnected from each other there are ways that we can remain connected, even if that is virtually. I would invite anyone to join our online community by finding us on any of the major social media platforms, join us for our conference in January. As we start 2021, I hope that we start the year feeling connected and closer to one another, even if we can't be physically in each other's presence.

**With thanks to Peter Blundell.**



Becky



Cath



Caz



Dani



Leila



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Marianne



Peter



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