



Compassionate Mental Health



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Safe Spaces for Suffering & Joy

1 Apr 2019 - Kingsley Hall, London, UK

A one day, experiential event designed to inform, inspire and empower people
living and working with mental distress

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'Safe Spaces for Suffering & Joy' is our sixth gathering designed to inform, inspire and empower people living and working with mental distress

Who's it for?

The event is for anyone curious about a compassionate approach to mental health. We bring together people and families with personal experience, front-line staff, commissioners, managers, clinicians, GPs, policymakers and Third Sector staff, to explore what works for people recovering from a mental health crisis

What's it about?

Compassionate Mental Health is part of a growing worldwide movement calling for a more integrative approach to mental health - one that relies less on diagnosis and prescription drugs, and more on empowering the person and engaging their social networks. At the heart of the project is a belief that it is possible to begin to heal oneself and others through the power of community and connection.

We're bringing people together for a day of conversation and workshops. The theme of this Spring's gathering is 'Safe Spaces for Suffering & Joy'. We'll explore how we can create spaces that are safe, compassionate and balance open-hearted, non-hierarchical relationships with wise boundaries.

Our key message remains that a mental health crisis can become a meaningful turning point and catalyst for change. Along with many other critical voices - we are calling for a radical shift in the way we understand mental illness, changing the script, challenging stigma and raising expectations.

This is a gathering and unconference, but there are key learning outcomes associated with service transformation, moving towards a more co-productive, psychosocial approach and creating a new narrative.

Each gathering has been held in a venue that is therapeutic in its own way. This time it's Kingsley Hall - a place with an incredible history of radical social activism and community engagement. Let's leave behind our professional and personal roles and labels, build community and connection, and move forward together to create positive change.



Speakers

We've gathered influential speakers and facilitators who are passionate about changing the script around mental health, challenging stigma and raising expectations



Malcolm Stern

Director and co-founder of Alternatives, a world renowned platform for visionary thinkers. He wants to transform stigma around suicide and help make mental health services safe, healing places



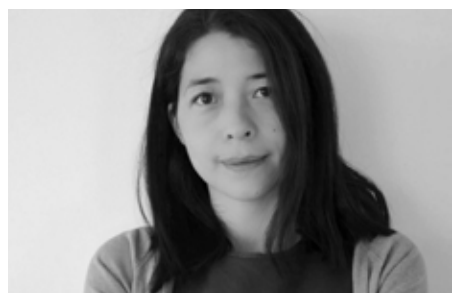
Rai Waddingham

International mental health trainer specialising in psychosis, trauma and dissociation, Rai works creatively with people who hear voices and have unusual beliefs



Dr Joseph H. Berke

Pioneer of the medication free therapeutic community who has dedicated his life to working alongside people some thought had no hope of recovery, providing safe spaces to grow through trauma



Akiko Hart

Chair of ISPS UK, Hearing Voices Project Manager at Mind in Camden and former Director of Mental Health Europe, passionate about peer support in statutory services promoting real change



Amy Jebreel

Psychiatrist and clinical lead in the national ODESSI Open Dialogue trial, a keen proponent of trauma-informed care and integrative psychiatry



Karen Taylor

Trained psychiatric nurse and Director of Working to Recovery, providing innovative mental health training internationally and pioneers of recovery communities



Yasmin Philips

Community Mental Health Nurse in the North East London Foundation Trust - the first full time psychiatric nurse using an Open Dialogue approach



Anne Cooke

Consultant Clinical Psychologist and leading voice in the debate around alternatives to the Disease Model Approach to psychosis



Shirley McNicholas

Women's Lead for Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust and Director of Drayton Park Women's Crisis Centre



Speakers

You can see full bios of all speakers with at www.compassionatementalhealth.co.uk/speakers



Benjamin Fry

Psychotherapist, author, broadcaster and founder of Khiron House and Get Stable. On a mission to help people understand trauma and how to self heal



Mirabai Swingler

Spiritual Care Lead at the North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), founder of the Only Us Campaign, psychotherapist, Spiritual Crisis Network member and activist



Alexandra Cat

International trauma sensitive yoga teacher and trainer, supporting recovery from inter-relational abuse/neglect through embodied dignity, agency and righteous fury



Andy Bradley

International trainer and speaker on a mission to bring compassion into health and social care settings, and encourage the compassion captain in us all



Benna Waites

Joint Head of Psychology, Counselling & Arts Therapies, for Aneurin Bevan Health Board, passionate about facilitating compassionate care in the NHS



Tommy Holgate

Ex-tabloid journalist whose brush with death led to a renewed appreciation for life and a desire to inspire others to embrace health and write new stories



Mick McEvoy

Eco-mindfulness practitioner and expert, interested in re-wilding the human experience through connection with the earth and community



Brigid Bowen

Founder and curator of Compassionate Mental Health. Brigid is a freelance journalist and writer whose personal journey with psychosis and recovery is the driving force behind this event

Thank you to our sponsors

We are calling for healing mental health services in a range of settings that people feel safe to use when they are in crisis and in need of connection. Our sponsors share our ethos of compassionate approaches to individual and societal recovery.





Programme

Our programme offers an exciting mix of plenary sessions and workshops, with plenty of opportunities for participation, reflection and networking.

9:00 - 9:30 **Two optional early morning**
9:30 - 10:00 **guided meditation sessions**
Mick McEvoy in the Peace Garden

9:30 - 10:00 **Register / Meet & Greet**

Plenary Sessions

Kingsley Hall

10:00 - 10:20 **Welcome and Setting the Scene**
Benna Waites and Malcolm Stern

10:20 - 10:50 **Compassion Pods & Deep Listening**
Andy Bradley

10:50 - 11:10 **Leaving the Labels Behind**
Rai Waddingham

11:10 - 11:30 **Making Meaningful Change Happen**
Akiko Hart

11:30 - 11:50 **Pause & Refresh**

Experiential Workshops

11:50-1:10 Choice of Experiential Workshops	
A	Telling our Stories <i>Malcolm Stern</i>
B	Trauma Sensitive Yoga <i>Alexandra Cat</i>
C	Creating Safe Spaces for Recovery <i>Karen Taylor</i>
D	Introduction to Open Dialogue <i>Amy Jebreel, Yasmin Philips, Satyin Taylor</i>

1:10 - 2:00 **Eat & Enjoy**
With Food for Thought from Mirabai Swingler

Plenary Sessions

Kingsley Hall

2:00 - 2:30 **Safe Spaces for Suffering & Joy**
Joseph Berke in conversation with Malcolm Stern

2:30 - 3:10 **Why we need a non-medical crisis house in every town**
Anne Cooke in conversation with Shirley McNicholas and Andie Rose

3:10 - 3:30 **The Invisible Lion - does ‘Mental Health’ really exist**
Benjamin Fry

3:30 - 3:45 **Releasing Trauma in the Body**
Alexandra Cat

3:45- 4:15 **Pause & Refresh**

Plenary Sessions

Kingsley Hall

4:15 - 4:45 **Discovering Open Dialogue**
Amy Jebreel, Yasmin Philips, Satyin Taylor

4:45 - 5:15 **Group Gatherings**
facilitated by Malcolm Stern

5:15 - 5:45 **Compassion Pods**
Andy Bradley

5:45 - 6:00 **Close of the Day & Summing Up**
Benna Waites

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# Workshops

## Telling our Stories

*Malcolm Stern*

Malcolm holds a safe, non-judgemental space where individuals can speak their own truths aloud. The power of giving voice and being witness to situations we’ve survived touches a place of profound and shared authenticity for the whole group.

“I don’t really understand what went on in that room - in which most of us had not met before, and from which we emerged with a sense of camaraderie, and having communed on a deeper level - but I knew that we had touched upon some archetypal experiences that resonated with all of us and graced us with a sense of intimately shared humanity.”  
*~past participant in ‘Telling our Stories’*

## Creating Safe Spaces for Recovery

*Karen Taylor*

Karen will explore how we can create alternatives to hospital admission and treatment. Participants will explore what they envisage the perfect safe space for recovery could be. Karen is passionate that recovery is for all, including mental health workers. Her work embraces a “nothing about us, without us” approach and she focuses on engaging with mental health services, family members and experts by experience, and challenging them to review their roles. Karen Taylor was an RMN with 16 years experience in the NHS in England with both older people and adults of working age. She has personal experience of designing, implementing and managing innovative community care services. After leaving the NHS, Karen has worked with her husband, Ron Coleman to bring the hearing voices approach to many Countries around the world. All Karen’s learning on working with psychosis is rooted in practice and living with a voice hearer for 20 years.

## Organising and Wellbeing Team

Andy Bradley, Karen Taylor, Mick McEvoy and Tommy Holgate are our Wellbeing Team for the gathering. Brigid Bowen and Jenny Grewal are the Organising Team. All will be on-site throughout the event for any support you need. Any of these workshops and group discussions may include distressing content being presented or discussed. Please put your own wellbeing first - you are welcome to take time out if you need it. Please don’t hesitate to make yourself known to the Wellbeing Team if you feel overwhelmed at any point, or need support.

## Trauma Sensitive Yoga

*Alexandra Cat*

An introduction into the neurophysiology of stress and trauma, this workshop will explore how to create safety and stabilisation in ourselves to allow the processing of traumatic memories. Alexandra Cat is a trauma sensitive yoga teacher and international trainer, and works with a range of clients including those experiencing complex & developmental trauma, abuse and neglect. Her interests are in body dysmorphia, fantasy and shame, embodied dignity, agency and righteous fury; she has a special interest in working alongside those with non-conforming identities of sex, gender and sexuality. A gentle introduction to trauma sensitive yoga practices that can lead to consolidation, integration and reconnection. No previous experience of yoga is necessary.

## Introduction to Open Dialogue

*Amy Jebreel, Yasmin Philips and Satyin Taylor*

Open Dialogue is a compassionate approach that involves working with families and social networks, rather than just the individual. It equips staff of all disciplines with the tools to effect change at deeper levels, and discover how we can reshape a social response to psychosis and emotional crisis. Open Dialogue was developed in Western Lapland in Finland over the last 25-30 years. International results consistently show that it reduces hospitalisation, the use of medication, and results in less crisis recurrence compared with other approaches. Amy, Yasmin and Satyin are involved in the first NHS pilot of Open Dialogue in the UK, and participants will learn key principles and explore how it differs to “treatment as usual”.





## Venue Information



### Venue

**Kingsley Hall, Powis Rd, Bromley-by-Bow,  
London, E3 3HJ**

Each gathering has been held in a venue that is therapeutic in its own way, and Kingsley Hall is no exception. Started by the extraordinary Muriel and Doris Lester in memory of their brother Kingsley, it became an important community hub and place of fellowship for all. During the General Strike of 1926, Kingsley Hall was a shelter and soup kitchen for workers. Mahatma Gandhi stayed at Kingsley Hall when he visited London in 1931, and in 1935, the Jarrow hunger Marchers stayed at the Hall. Between 1965 - 1970 R. D. Laing, Joe Berke and friends turned Kingsley Hall into a radical therapeutic community, where people could be free from restraint to emerge from madness into self healing.

**“Insanity - a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world.” R.D Laing**

Please bring warm clothes in case the building is draughty. Kingsley Hall is an old and historic building, but there are few mod cons so dress comfortably. If you like you can also bring a cushion if you want to join the early arrival meditation session in the morning and prefer not to sit in a chair.

**Buddy Up** to get here - you can use our Facebook Group to meet others to travel with

[www.facebook.com/groups/CMHcommunity/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CMHcommunity/)



### Arrival

Arrive from 9.30am to register in the Hall. You can join Mick McEvoy for two optional, early morning guided meditation sessions in the Peace Garden at 9.00 or 9.30. Please remind the Welcome Desk of any dietary or access requirements and photography permissions when you register.

### Getting to Kingsley Hall

Tube: Bromley By Bow, DLR Bow Church

Buses: 25, 205, 8, 108, S2

Parking is very limited, so please use public transport if possible. Please leave plenty of time to get here if you haven't visited Kingsley Hall before and are unsure of the location.

### Accessibility

Ground floor and Peace Garden have wheelchair access. Induction Hearing Loop for Hearing Aid Users (Main Hall). Please let us know in advance if you have any specific access requirements.

### Photography and filming policy

There may be discreet photography and filming taking place during the event for public information and publicity purposes. Please let us know at registration if you do not consent to be filmed or photographed.

### Conference Contacts

Brigid Bowen and Jenny Grewal 07711 051 241  
[ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](mailto:ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk)

**“There’s ‘Them’ and there’s ‘Us’. We are well, happy and safe. They are mentally ill and dangerous. Is this really true? Or is the uncomfortable truth that there’s a continuum, a scale along which we all slide back and forth during our lives. When we separate ourselves we hurt those labelled as sick, ill, even mad, but we also hurt ourselves...” ~ Only Us Campaign ~**