

UKCP Conference 2026

Threads across the divide: weaving connections in a fragmented world

Day 1 – Friday, 19 June

Time:	Lower ground floor	Main room	Breakout room 1	Breakout room 2
9am –10am	Registration, arrival refreshments and exhibition			
10am – 10:05am		Welcome and introduction		
10:05am – 11:30am		<p><i>Paradise lost? The estranged self and the longing for the ideal</i> Paul Hoggett</p> <p>Paul Hoggett examines the modern self's longing for an ideal world and pathways towards repair across cultural and political divides. Paul is emeritus professor of social policy at UWE Bristol and co-founder of the Climate Psychology Alliance.</p>		
11:30am – 11:50am	Refreshment break (networking, exhibition, poster boards)			
11:50am – 1pm		<p><i>Ethical fixity and flexibility: whither ethics in a fractured world?</i> Julie Stone</p> <p>Julie Stone considers whether ethical principles can remain consistent in a fractured world – and how a reflective ethical approach supports practice across divides. Julie is UKCP's independent ethics lead and chair of UKCP's Ethics Committee.</p>	<p><i>Bridging the relational divide: sameness, difference, and the wholeness solution</i> Mamood Ahmad and Sheetal Amin</p> <p>Joint session. Mamood Ahmad explores the concept of 'Relational Scope' and a 'Relationship v2.0' framework for fostering connection, repair, and unity across fragmented and polarised relational landscapes. Sheetal Amin examines why diverse representation of therapists, modalities, cultures and theoretical perspectives matters at every level of the profession.</p>	<p><i>Weaving together: neurodivergence and the therapeutic alliance</i> Debbie Livingston and Karen Rawden</p> <p>Debbie Livingston and Karen Rawden invite therapists to enrich their practice through a collaborative, relational approach to working with neurodivergent clients. Drawing on lived experience, clinical practice and research, this experiential workshop explores how masking, sensory overwhelm and neurological difference can be misread — even by experienced clinicians — and how to co-create an attuned, ethically grounded therapeutic relationship that honours neurological difference.</p>
1 – 1:10pm		<p><i>Sponsored spotlight talk</i> Balens</p>		

1:10pm – 2:10pm	Lunch (networking, exhibition, poster boards)		Breakout rooms available as quiet spaces from 1.15pm and 2.00pm.	
2:10pm – 3:20pm		<p><i>'I belong here. I belong': existential explorations of our intersectional identities in counselling and psychotherapy</i> Dr Dwight Turner</p> <p>Dwight Turner uses creativity and poetry to explore how practitioners hold clients' complex, layered identities while also reckoning with their own. Dwight is course leader on the humanistic psychotherapy course at the University of Brighton and a psychotherapist and supervisor in private practice.</p>	<p><i>It's complicated: can we bridge the different approaches to therapy?</i> Nick Totton</p> <p>Nick Totton brings the expert and process approaches to therapy into dialogue, exploring whether common ground can be found between seemingly opposed positions. Nick is a body psychotherapist, author and trainer with over 40 years' experience.</p>	<p><i>Fragmentation (internal and external) and the move towards inter-connectivity</i> Geoff Hopping</p> <p>This session explores psychological fragmentation and the internal disconnection, alienation and anxiety that can blur the boundary between inner experience and outer reality. Drawing on Winnicott, Jung, Klein and Francis Weller, it will examine how intra-psychic phenomena such as objectification and devaluation connect to broader societal, political and cultural divisions.</p>
3:20pm – 3:50pm	Refreshment break and dedicated poster session (networking, exhibition)			Governance session Emma Herbert
3:50pm – 4:50pm		Panel discussion		
4:50pm – 5pm		Final thoughts and event close		
5pm – 6pm	Networking			

Day 2 – Saturday, 20 June

Time:	Lower ground floor	Main room	Breakout room 1	Breakout room 2
9 – 10am	Registration, arrival refreshments and exhibition			
10 – 10:05am		Welcome and introduction		
10:05am – 11:30am		<p>Social thinning, the brain and mental health Professor Eamon McCrory</p> <p>Social thinning – the progressive loss of supportive relationships – may be a key pathway to mental health vulnerability across the lifespan. Our neurocognitive social transactional model suggests that early adversity recalibrates threat, reward and social learning, shaping behaviours that erode social support over time. Heightened threat processing promotes vigilance and withdrawal; blunted social reward reduces approach and affiliation. Understanding these mechanisms is critical for prevention, intervention and strengthening social support as a core protective factor.</p>		
11:30am – 11:50am	Refreshment break (networking, exhibition, poster boards)			
11:50am – 1pm		<p><i>Cyber trauma, online harm and its impact on human connections</i> Dr Catherine Knibbs</p> <p>Catherine Knibbs explores the risks of AI to client wellbeing, the role of technology in assessments and why working with children demands a deeper engagement with digital spaces. Catherine is a child and adult trauma psychotherapist, researcher and pioneer of cybertrauma theory, and CEO of Children and Tech.</p>	<p><i>In Conversation with Susie Orbach: 50 years on from the Women's Therapy Centre – gender, bodies, reviving psychoanalysis</i> Susie Orbach</p> <p>Susie Orbach revisits her seminal work, <i>Fat Is a Feminist Issue</i>, forty years since its publication. Drawing on her clinical and feminist insights, the discussion looks at how body relationship pressures appear in the therapy room and what they reveal about gender, identity and contemporary cultural life.</p>	<p><i>Rethinking exclusivity in romantic and sexual relationships</i> Niki D.</p> <p>Niki D's talk seeks to challenge the cultural assumption that monogamy is the only valid framework for healthy relationships, inviting therapists to critically examine their own inherited relationship scripts and intimacy biases so they can better support clients who practice open relationships or polyamory.</p>

1pm – 2:10pm	Lunch in exhibition area (networking, exhibition, poster boards)	<p>Oral presentations</p> <p>Across the divide: the C.H.A.R.E. framework for weaving connection in a fragmented world Adaku Thelma Olatise</p> <p>Is it safe to talk? Creating space for difficult conversations in an increasingly polarised world Dr Donna Gaywood and Keith Oulton</p> <p>Cheeky little murderous monkeys: understanding fragmentation, power and play in supervision through a developmental lens Magda Raczynska</p>	Breakout rooms available as quiet spaces from 1.15pm and 2.00pm.	
2:10pm – 3:20pm		<p><i>The challenges of working relationally</i> Dr Linda Finlay</p> <p>Linda Finlay's session explores what relational psychotherapy looks like in practice, using case studies to examine the pivotal and potentially transformative moments that arise when the therapeutic relationship is used as the primary tool of therapy, while acknowledging when a non-relational approach may be more appropriate.</p>	<p><i>The illusion of intimacy: how pornography fractures and fosters connection</i> Dr Paula Hall</p> <p>Paula Hall examines the paradox of pornography and online sexual services, exploring how they are often sought as a remedy for loneliness yet frequently deepen isolation and damage relationships. She also explores whether emerging forms of digital connection, such as OnlyFans, might, in some cases, legitimately fulfil unmet intimacy needs.</p>	<p><i>Coalition for Anti-Oppressive Practice and Inclusion: anti-oppressive practice guiding principles</i> Julie Sale and Myira Khan</p> <p>Founded in 2018, the Coalition for Anti-Oppressive Practice unites UK counselling and psychotherapy bodies and training providers to promote diversity. Its 10 guiding principles support ethical practice and training. Coalition members Myira and Julie will present the principles using client and training case examples.</p>
3:20pm – 3:50pm	Refreshment break and dedicated poster session (networking, exhibition)			Governance session Emma Herbert
3:50pm – 4:50pm		Panel discussion		
4:50pm – 5pm		Final thoughts and event close		

*Subject to change.