

Olivia Djouadi – Candidate Statement

Good day I am a UKCP psychotherapist looking to seek the post of Trustee so I can start conversations around disability, trauma and about online counselling. Disability may be a new topic to members or only have an awareness of clients with conditions; what about us as practitioners? Some psychotherapists and counsellors practice way beyond their 65th birthday and this can mean health may be one of the concerns we have over practicing. I have had type 1 diabetes for 45 years and when first practicing I did keep quiet about it as I was nervous of jeopardising my career. Now I have gone public about my condition and I have continued in my career and fulfilled commitments for continuing my accreditation.

I wrote and edited A disabilities magazine for Mensa for years and have also contributed writing a chapter called Using Creativity in Online Supervision and Chronic Illness in Anne Stokes 2018 book Online Supervision A handbook for practitioners. I have also done numerous CPD talks on various health talks on diabetes, diabulimia (ED), chronic illness etc. I have also spoken at conferences about the connections between early childhood adversities and later health issues like autoimmune conditions in adults.

Much of my work has been as a trauma psychotherapist so work with those who have dissociative disorders, PTSD, been through captivity/cults and health ailments which for some also includes chronic illnesses such as pain disorders and other life altering conditions. I also speak and have visited Mosques as part of my education from DiabetesUK, I have been Muslim for the past two decades so am aware of some of the difficulties that can occur for those of faith or minority groups.

As a Trustee I want to speak for those who have faced trauma, chronic illness and the aging process which we all face. I want to look at policies over fitness to practice because even those who have a variety of chronic conditions can full fill a career providing they are taking care of their needs. What is our duty of care to our clients about saying we have a condition. I now explain I have diabetes because it is necessary because I wear an insulin pump that alerts me when my blood sugar changes which means clients also hear that. Other practitioners may have either seen disabilities so they may use a wheelchair or guide dog for sight so an explanation is needed. Many have unseen conditions like mine which can be due to medical or psychological chronic disorders. It is an area that needs more focus which I hope to bring.

Another area I plan to look at is online psychotherapy/counselling which I use and also tutor to online supervision levels. You may not practice online so can assume its not something to be concerned about however if you hold client information on your phone then its important that you are registered under data protection laws. We also need to be aware of GDPR regulations which came in recently. I would like to try and get a standard of practice for online practitioners as its important they have an adequate level of online training. What we learn as therapists or counsellors in order to get accreditation doesn't often include online training yet we can just start practicing online without training; that needs to change so there is a standard in the regulations.

Much of my work now with clients and supervisees is online after I also was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I now work with a work life balance so I'm at my best for those I see online and those I

tutor counselling and supervision online. I regularly do CPDs discussions for Onlinevents on chronic conditions, trauma, dissociation and captivity so those living a distance or have conditions which make extensive travel impossible a possibility. I do travel into London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham etc for conferences and discussions at the Houses of Parliament that revolve around mental health care. I also have an adult son with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair fulltime so understand about the mental health concerns for both those with condition and carers.

I am a determined individual who makes changes to benefit the greater population and those within the UKCP.