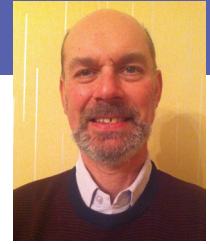


Gratitude, Grace and Giftedness

by Chris Williams, Deputy Chair



Celebrating the God-Given uniqueness of us all in Christ – ACC and PCUK members, our loyal and industrious staff, our enthusiastic volunteers, and the dedicated board of trustees.

I have had the privilege of being part of this wonderful association from first attending Conference as a Theology and Counselling trainee in 2004, benefiting then and ever since from the shared faith, wisdom, and supportive fellowship of a pioneering and excellence-striving community of Christian people helpers.

The world of professional counselling and pastoral care is in a constant cycle of dynamic change which has seen greater openness and transparency of ethics and practice, and greater scrutiny of standards and competence of practitioners in recent years. Our country has woken up to the scale of mental health suffering and the importance for those in need to have access to the best help available. ACC has been travelling on this road, and through all our endeavours has gained and maintained Professional Standards Accreditation for its counsellors to be recognised as registered professionals. At the time of writing ACC is still the only PSA registered organisation which is underpinned by its basis of faith, and it now commands respect widely within the profession, which is especially gratifying, given our size. More will be said about the direction of professional counselling and psychotherapy in the News Section.

Diversity and Inclusion, loving and caring for the other, have always been bywords of ACC and we have continued to engage with others around the table in national fora, both professionally and pastorally, in the fields of gender and sexual diversity, cultural differences, institutional abuse, and inequalities of opportunity for training and employment due to race or

economic disadvantage.

In this edition I was excited to read about personal stories outside the mainstream of counselling experience and adaptations to suit unique circumstances.

Mark Arnold writes passionately about how we can pastorally help families of children with special needs in his piece on *'Faith in a Pandemic.'*

Conflict resolution is the theme in the article by Owen Bubbers Jones *'Facilitating Dialogue: insights of a Mediator'*, showing that apparently intractable positions can be changed with sensitive and structured input and with patience and reframing – all this in the context of an on-line 'what's app' community!

Of course, in this season of personal restriction, we have all had to adapt to the constraints on face to face counselling, involving stresses and strains on all parties but also generating ingenuity and Lucy Beney's *'Walk and Talk'* approach illustrates this well.

You will find a further wealth of articles as we look at personal stories of what it is like to be disabled and a counsellor in Christine Willows' *'Counselling in a wheelchair'*. Then there is the importance of recognising and attending to both personal and client disablement and the 'invisibility' element of such engagement, which can be explored in the article by Gill Harvey on *'The With-ing'*.

Ruth Dormandy's adaptation of her MA dissertation on the 'fit' of Psychosynthesis to a position of faith/spirituality in her *'Deep*

calls to Deep' explores how a secular model can enrich a faith based counselling approach, whilst Melanie Blamires' article, *'Living the Spirit-led life and IFS,'* champions the transforming nature of an Internal Family System model infused with 'Christian' spirituality, charting her own journey of discovery and how this particular model of counselling can be adapted for training.

Rosie Tringham's *'Reflections on Supervision'* are a timely reminder that, as professionals, counsellors need to stay fresh and be appropriately challenged and one of the ways of doing this is to consider when it is right to change their supervisory arrangements.

It would be wrong to end this editorial without expressing all our thanks in particular to our Chair, Sue Monckton-Rickett, and to our Director of Counselling, Kathy Spooner. I have firsthand knowledge, being the other member of the Executive, of the enormous efforts that both have put in to serve the membership, reach out alongside others to the wider community with the COVID CRISIS COUNSELLING SERVICE, and handling the myriad of other matters that are so important in keeping our reputation high amongst our own community as well as the wider secular echelons of the counselling and Psychotherapy world. I commend all of us as we end this momentous year to keep up our support for ACC and allow us to continue to innovate and influence the world of counselling and pastoral care. In all this we do well to remain humble and listen closely to God's promptings.