



PSYCHOTIC MECHANISMS

Saturday 6 November 2021 – 10am – 4pm

Workshop conducted by Henry Adeane via Zoom

This workshop will help us to consider what is meant by Psychosis in Psychotherapy and how the term is thought about differently, because developmentally, from Psychiatry and Psychology.

Within counselling and psychotherapy, we think carefully about psychotic organisation or disorganisation, about what we can treat safely and how, and the developmental experience that has led to the mind protecting itself in a way that closes down or splits off the capacity to symbolise, for example by attacking coherent thought, perhaps because thinking can be dangerous to the integration of the mind.

Attendants at the workshop will be encouraged to talk about their own and their clients psychotic episodes or defences. From this, we may demystify what is meant by the word and take the terror out of being in the room with a psychotic client so that we have an opportunity to turn the volume down on the psychotic mechanisms that the client's troubled mind employs in order to ward off fragmentation and disintegration.

Often, it can be helpful, for example, to offer tentative links to a client between the organisation of their internal world and what may have led to this experience. A possible link may arise from a traumatising incident that the undeveloped mind cannot make sense of, so that the mind has no choice but to 'take leave of its senses' and partition the experience off. Split off from the ego, while retaining a vestigial connection, the ego's internal monologue of the identifiable self may be heard as a 'not me' voice or the voice/voices of those in attendance at the time of the trauma. Partitioned off, perhaps without identity, the trauma itself revisits without language, but only experience, so terrifying and devoid of meaning that the client may need concretely to cut it out or choke it off. Others may try to convert the emotional pain into physical pain and bloodletting in order literally and not symbolically to evacuate it from the body. Or, in forensic cases, some may need to push it into the body of another and then kill the other in order to ensure that it remains there, projected without possibility of reprojectation and re-introjection.

This gives a foretaste of the dark material that is likely to arise in our discussion group in order to assist counsellor and client to find a way of helping our most troubled of fellow humans.

Henry Adeane is a Psychotherapist, Visiting Lecturer and Clinical Supervisor. He currently works at the Counselling Foundation in St Albans, The Bedford Prison Counselling Service, Matrix College of Counselling and Psychotherapy in Norwich and in a number of other organisations in various capacities. He specialises in complex cases, forensic psychotherapy and the ethical treatment of addiction and personality disorder.

The cost of the day is £65.