NEXT SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHIATRY
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETING

Friday 4th April 2014

Venue: Royal College of Psychiatrists, 21 Prescot Street, London E1 8BB
Open to Members and Associates of the Royal College of Psychiatrists
and their invited guests

Programme Organisers: Professor Chris Cook & Dr Sarah Eagger

‘Transcendence, Immanence and Mental Health’

Spirituality and religion are often, in different ways, portrayed as being concerned with transcendence. But what is “transcendence”\? In one theological dictionary, the entry under transcendence says simply “See God”\?! Looked at this way, spirituality might sound very much like religion and both might then be understood as outside the domain of psychiatry in a secular age. The word transcendence is more often used to refer to some kind of higher/other non-material dimension, more or less unknowable or ineffable; again, some might argue it has little to do with scientific, evidence based, psychiatry.

Transcendence is often contrasted with the world of immanence – the knowable, the perceivable and the reality of present experience. This kind of polarisation often leaves spirituality associated with transcendence, and science associated with immanence. But, in fact, faith traditions have often seen the two as being more or less inseparable, the transcendent hidden within the immanent, and the immanent within transcendence. Spiritual practices such as mindfulness also emphasise a focus of attention upon the immanent rather than the transcendent.

This day conference will explore some different conceptions of the ways in which transcendence and immanence might be understood; how they illuminate our understanding of the nature of spirituality; their significance for the beliefs and values of both patient and clinician, and their relevance for best practice in mental healthcare.

10.00 am Registration and Coffee
10.30 am Welcome and Notices: Dr Paramabandhu Groves, Chair SPSIG
10.40 am Introduction: Programme Chair, Dr Sarah Eagger
10.45 am ‘Transcendence, Immanence, and Mental Health’
    Professor Chris Cook
11.45 am  ‘Transcendence and the Psychotherapeutic Quest for Happiness’
Professor Emmy van Deurzen

12.45 am  Lunch

1.45 pm  ‘Spiritual Revolutions and Vitalism Today’
Professor Paul Heelas

2.45 pm  Transcendence and the Transliminal'
Isabel Clarke

3.45 pm  Tea

4.15 pm  Plenary with speakers

5.00 pm  Close of meeting

Programme Notes:

‘Transcendence, Immanence, and Mental Health’
Professor Christopher C.H. Cook

Abstract:
The concept of transcendence has featured controversially in debates about spirituality and psychiatry. It is amenable to interpretation within both psychological and theological frameworks of reference, but is often understood rather differently by theologians than it is by psychologists and psychiatrists. Properly understood, transcendence should be seen in a close relationship with immanence, rather than in opposition to it. A clearer understanding of the concepts of immanence and transcendence, and the dynamic and inseparable relationship between them, has potential to clarify some of the present controversies in this field.

About the speaker:
Professor Chris Cook is Professor of Spirituality, Theology & Health in the Department of Theology & Religion at Durham University and an Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist with Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. He trained at St George’s Hospital Medical School, London, and worked in the psychiatry of substance misuse for over 25 years. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 2001. He is Director of the Project for Spirituality, Theology & Health at Durham University and editor of Spirituality and Psychiatry (Eds Cook, Powell & Sims, RCPsych Press 2009) and Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health (SCM, 2013).
‘Transcendence and the Psychotherapeutic Quest for Happiness’

Professor Emmy van Deurzen

Abstract:

The perennial questions that continue to tax and confuse people are whether life has any meaning and how to live so as to make the most of the time allotted to us. The contemporary pursuit of hedonism and happiness can be irksome to those who live in difficult circumstances and needs to be reconsidered and set in perspective.

This talk will address some of the existential challenges that are intrinsic to the human condition and that people have to learn to live with in order to find their way in the world. It will argue that our philosophical outlook and the values we live by are a more essential part of daily existence than we might think. What makes a real difference in the outcome of psychotherapy is the engagement between therapist and client and this is in large part related to deep communication about the things that actually matter.

Existential therapy aims to face the dangers, paradoxes and contradictions of life head on so that people may find a way to transcend them rather than hoping for utopia and happiness. If we have clarity about what is happening at all dimensions of our life we stand a better chance to find new direction, purpose and energy. By using a combination of psychological research, philosophical methods and dialogical interaction, people can be enabled to find the courage to tackle the very things they have tried to obfuscate and hide from previously. This can lead to a stronger sense of moral, emotional and spiritual awareness and with it a renewed motivation to live a meaningful life.

About the Speaker:

Professor Emmy van Deurzen is a Philosopher, Counselling Psychologist and Existential Psychotherapist. She founded the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling at Regent’s College, the Society for Existential Analysis and the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, of which she continues to be Principal. She was the first chair of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. She was delegate to the European Commission and the Council of Europe on behalf of the European Association for Psychotherapy for many years.

Her application of philosophical ideas to psychology, psychotherapy, counselling and coaching has been instrumental in establishing the existential paradigm firmly in the UK and in Europe. She is visiting Professor with Middlesex University and has been a professor with Regent’s College, honorary professor with Schiller International University and the University of Sheffield and a visiting Fellow of Darwin College, Cambridge. Amongst her books are the bestseller *Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling in Practice* (3d edition 2012, *Psychotherapy and the Quest for Happiness* (Sage, 2009) and *Everyday Mysteries* (2nd edition Routledge, 2010).
‘Spiritual Revolutions and Vitalism Today’

Professor Paul Heelas

Abstract:

First, I'll be discussing 'spiritual revolution': the shift that is under way from the transcendence and immanence of Christian religion-cum-spirituality to the non-theistic immanence of spiritualities of life. Second, I want to explore how this 'revolutionary' change is bound up with the 'new vitalism'; a far more popular 'life force' rendering of the vitalism of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. Lastly, from the perspective of later life, I'll be offering some reflections of my own on the nature of the life force, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Transcendental Meditation and the meaning of 'wellbeing'.

About the speaker:

Paul Heelas has served as Professor in Religion and Modernity at Lancaster University and as Senior Research Professor in the Sociology of Contemporary Spirituality at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He is the author of a trilogy of volumes with Blackwell: The New Age Movement (1996), The Spiritual Revolution (2005; with Linda Woodhead et al.), and Spiritualities of Life (2008). His CV, including references to essays on CAM/TM and mention of current research, is readily available via Google.

‘Transcendence and the transliminal’

Isabel Clarke

Abstract:

The human faculty to step beyond the boundedness of the individual self into a place of connection has long been recognized by religious traditions and spiritual practitioners. The concept of the ‘transliminal’ (Thalbourne) has been introduced into the discourse by Claridge in research into schizotypy – or openness to unusual experiencing. This talk will attempt to bridge the psychological/scientific and spiritual divide by combining the evidence of experience with a theory of cognitive architecture, in order to unpack the way in which the person operates both as a discrete individual and embedded in relationship, including relationship with the ultimate: that which is beyond human knowing. Thus, with respect for both science and mystery, the aim is to reach a richer understanding of a crucial but elusive aspect of human experiencing.

About the speaker:

Isabel Clarke is a consultant clinical psychologist with 20 years' experience in the NHS. She is currently lead for a project to embed a psychological therapeutic approach across the Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust acute mental health teams.

Psychosis and spirituality and the psychology of spirituality are major themes in her writing and speaking. Her most recent books are: Psychosis and Spirituality: consolidating the new paradigm (Wiley, 2010) and Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God ('O'Books, 2008). More details of her publications and activities can be found on her website: www.isabelclarke.org
Reply Slip for Registration:

**Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group**

I wish to attend the next meeting of the SPSIG on Friday 4th April 2014 on
‘Transcendence, Immanence and Mental Health’

**Venue:** Royal College of Psychiatrists, 21 Prescot Street, London E1 8BB
(This meeting is open to members, associates, affiliates and trainees of the
College and their invited guests)

Name: (Capitals)………………………………………………………….College No: ………………………………
Contact phone number…………………………………………………………………………………………
Email…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

I wish to bring with me, and pay for, the following guests: Name(s): (Capitals please)
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

I enclose a cheque for the total registration fee of £ …………………….payable to the
Royal College of Psychiatrists. The registration fee of £70 per attendee includes lunch
and refreshments. For College trainees, members and associates who are self-funded,
the concessionary registration fee is £30. (Please note: cheques cannot be accepted
from invited guests).

This reply slip to be returned to Sue Duncan, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 21 Prescot
Street, London E1 8BB no later than Friday, 28TH March 2014.

Please be aware that places are limited and will be offered on a first come first served
basis. Registration will be confirmed on receipt of your cheque. Entry to the meeting
cannot be permitted unless registration has been confirmed. With regret, registration
fees cannot be refunded in the 4 week period immediately prior to the programme date.