



CAPO Newsletter

Counselling and Psychotherapy Outdoors

Edition 5

SUMMER 2011

Special points of interest:

- Next CAPO meeting at Powdermill Woods, Nr Battle, East Sussex September 2011.
- If you would like to join CAPO please go to www.outdoortherapy.org.uk where you will find further information and membership details.
- Please email future newsletter contributions to Jacksonpsychology@hotmail.co.uk

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Welcome to our 5th edition....

Message from the Editor

We hope you enjoy some of the delights of our summer edition. These include an exciting article from our colleagues in Sweden who are researching the benefits of Nature Based Therapy (NBT). Hear about 'The Way of Council' as a therapeutic approach, which draws on our deep innate connection with nature. We also have a fantastic book review for you and more. Thank you to all the CAPO members who contributed.

Please do send any further articles, poems, artwork, and member profiles for future editions to Lana at Jacksonpsychology@hotmail.co.uk



Editor: Lana Jackson

Lana is a qualified Clinical Psychologist working with children, young people and families in London and Brighton, UK.

Poetry and Quotes

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 For a hundred miles through the desert,
 repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your
 body, love what it loves.
 Tell me about your despair, yours, and I
 will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of
 the rain
 are moving across the landscapes, over the
 prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean
 blue air, Are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and
 exciting

over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

"Forget not
 that the earth delights
 to feel your bare feet
 and the winds long
 to play with you hair".

Kahlil Gibran



Nature Based Therapy

**Eva Sahlin and Anna Maria
Palsdottir**

Phd students at the Swedish University
of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp

Major changes in 1990th in the Swedish labor market, such as downsizing and reorganization led to many employees experienced job overload and more stress in their workplaces. This is considered one of the main reasons for the dramatic increase in the early 21st in sick leave due to stress related disorders such as depression, anxiety, burnout and the Swedish diagnosis exhaustion disorder.

Lack of established rehabilitations programs in Sweden for individuals suffering from stress related mental disorders and limited treatment success are some reasons for the growing interest in Sweden of including Nature Based Therapy (NBT) in rehabilitation programs for this group of patients. NBT's in Sweden have reported very good results for participants in terms of decrease in sick-leaves and enhance in activity-level.

In 2002 Alnarp rehabilitation garden for individuals diagnosed with stress related mental disorders started. The rehabilitation garden is a part of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and is a centre in Sweden for multidisciplinary research concerning effects of NBT for individuals diagnosed with stress related mental disorders. Region Västra Götaland, started 2006 a similar rehabilitation program in the Gothenburg Botanical Garden, "Green Rehab". This NBT is also linked to research in SLU. Many NBT's lean on the "Alnarp model" but resources, environmental possibilities or limitation have led to various types with slightly different content. NBT can for instance be accomplished in a therapeutic garden setting, in the wilderness, a combination of garden and

nature, in a green house or on a farm.

The program in Swedish NBT embraces two parts; (i) the traditionally used medical rehabilitation methods for stress related disorders such as body awareness, relaxation, stress management, physiotherapeutic exercises, conversational therapy, handicraft and (ii) activities or just staying in garden or/and nature.

The NBT's environment as well as program and activities are designed to meet the special needs required for this group of patients. It leans on the assumption that individuals suffering from severe exhaustion need massive support from specially designed supportive garden/ nature environments as well as from a multidisciplinary rehabilitation team with special competencies. Support from a limited number of others, shelter from too many impressions and mild sensory stimulation are fundamental. This ecological approach leans on the evolutionary physical, mental and social adaptation of human beings to a life in small groups in nature.

Our aims are to understand and explore the effects of NBT on return to work as well as on health and well being. Our research focus on different activities in NBT and their effect on health, an overall understanding about how participants in NBT experience and evaluate their rehabilitation and further, the use of garden rooms and their impact on the rehabilitation process.

There is lack of good controlled studies about the effects and a need of showing evidence about the efficacy of NBT. During 2012/2013 some interesting controlled studies at the SLU will try to give awaited answers about the value of NBT compared to other treatments for this group of patients.

For further information please email:

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therapies in
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The Way of Council in Nature



Pippa Bondy Of Ancient Healing Ways

Speaking and Listening from the Heart to the Heart of the Earth

Some years ago I founded Ancient Healing Ways to bring together ancient and modern healing practices. These teachings and rites live within the Earth and our innate being. They were a natural way of living for many of our ancestors. Reconnecting with these ancient traditions and values can help us to remember an inherent knowledge and connection we have within ourselves through nature.

These courses are held in the 'Way of Council'. In ancient times many would gather in a circle to discuss issues or challenges within their village or tribe. The circle is a symbol of wholeness. Sitting in Council is a way to share stories and feelings without interruption. By using a talking piece and passing it round those present learn to listen and speak with respect and honour. We come to feel and experience a deepened sense of interconnectedness. This way of listening with our whole body and feelings births empathy and compassion. What may have seemed diverse and impossible becomes the compost for peace and resolution within us, each other and our environment.

Many people come with deep issues, e.g. loss, break-ups, being at a crossroads in their lives or seeking a more conscious meaningful life. Through Council in Nature we step through a threshold beyond our ordinary everyday habitual lives. We step into an experience of our bodies, feelings and thinking from a deeper dimension and expanded awareness.

It then may be possible to find a gift from

within our wounds; what seemed a tragic disaster may transform into a treasure. We can embrace a larger consciousness that goes far beyond our personal pain, thereby crossing a threshold into healing. One of the keys to opening such a ceremony is to create a special time and space in the natural world. The Circle provides a 'container' for this awareness.

I've come to notice over the years of offering these nature based healing rites that the land, trees, rivers, skies, stars and all beings are nourished and loved when we listen to nature as a teacher. When we open our hearts and souls and acknowledge the land and our own shadows and wounds, something happens that is far greater than we can understand with just our linear thinking mind. We connect and remember what the ancients took for granted; that all life is spirit and all life is animate. The Way of Council teaches this sort of deep listening and innate understanding. Council creates a bridge for the healing of ourselves and the healing of the Earth on which we live.

By embracing Council and Nature as a form in our modern day, we are nurturing and nourishing the spirit of the old ways. It is very simple. Council is always in the unknown, always unique and always a new beginning. It's a practice of presence and truth, a path towards peacemaking, which invites the phenomenal power of the vulnerable heart, and reconnects us with the natural world as mirror and teacher.

Pippa Bondy lives in Snowdonia North Wales and offers these courses/ceremonies throughout the year and travels to teach in Europe.

To find out more about The Way of Council and Pippa's work please go to:

www.ancienthealingways.co.uk

Tel: 01766 780557

*“the land,
trees, rivers,
skies, stars, and
all beings, are
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Book Review: Acorns Among the Grass - Adventures in Eco-Therapy

Author: Caroline Brazier
 O-Books, 2011
 ISBN 978 1 84694 619 6, £12.99

Disclosure: "Acorns Among the Grass" was written following and inspired by an ecotherapy workshop in France in the summer of 2010, which I participated in, and some feedback of mine is quoted in the book. The author, Caroline Brazier, is my tutor on my training course in Buddhist Psychotherapy. I hope this review is as objective as possible, but my personal interest is bound to influence what I write - indeed this is one of the central themes of the book.

The book is situated within the theoretical framework of the Other-Centred Approach, which Caroline and her former husband David Brazier have been developing over the last 15 years. There is a chapter in the book that explains the basic theory and practice of the other-centered approach and the grounding of this in Buddhist psychology. In summary, "Buddhism understands the basic human problem to be rooted in our rigidities of thought, and of the way we perceive the world and relate to it. We do not just inhabit the world or relate to others, but... psychologically appropriate what we see for our personal project". The driving force behind this 'appropriation' is understood to be the creation of a sense of a relatively unchanging, but ultimately unreal, self as a protection from the existential reality of the impermanence and uncontrollable nature of life. However, although we may see the world through this filter of our 'personal project', there is a real world that we can see more clearly. Working towards this clarity of perception is the foundation of other-centred therapeutic work, and as such, working in nature, and particularly in more physical, less verbal ways, is presented in the book as offering an earthy and embodied opportunity to encounter the other (environment, other creatures, other people) in a real and direct way.

The theory chapter is adequate for the

reader with no background in Buddhist psychology, and the author provides references for her other books which cover the theory and practice in more detail.

The book is constructed around a set of evocative and poetic descriptions of some of the explorations engaged in during the ecotherapy workshop referred to above, and also other experiences of the author in nature during the same summer in France. These provide a 'toolset' of exercises that could be used chiefly in groups, but also in some cases in one-to-one work, but also would serve as an inspiration to the reader to build on creatively according to his or her own way of working (not necessarily using the other-centred approach). Interspersed between these descriptive sections are some theoretical and practical chapters giving overviews of Buddhist psychology, group work in the outdoors and boundaries and therapeutic space, as well as different ways of working in the outdoors (art and writing, myth, journey etc). Also interspersed are chapters on the 'five elements' (earth, air, fire, water, space) which are a mixture of personal experience and more of the theory of Buddhist psychology.

This interleaved construction of the book is unusual; this format (and the lack of an index) made it difficult at times to refer back to material. However, it did add to the intensely personal and evocative feeling of the writing, and I found that powerfully engaging, although I'm unable to say whether this was in partly due to familiarity both with the author and with the settings she describes (and in some cases with the actual experience). It is an interesting mixture of theory, practice and inspiration, and I have found that I've already drawn on it as a resource for my own outdoor work. There is an overtly Buddhist and spiritual underpinning to the book, but this should not deter readers who don't identify with this.

The following extract from the last pages of the book gives a vivid sense of its tone and style.

*"There beneath
 the trees were
 acorns: early
 fallen, and still
 emerald green,
 lying amongst
 the grass"*

Book Review Continued...

"I thought for a long time about a title for this book..... Eventually I gave up struggling with words, stopped searching for the right answer. Instead I brought to mind the scene, last month.... at the bottom of the meadow, where the spiders weave their webs among the long grasses of the field and ants scurry to and fro, carrying their burdens of straw stalks and butterfly wings..... There beneath the trees were acorns; early fallen, and still emerald green, lying among the grass. I found my title.

The image speaks on many levels. At simplest it creates a picture: a summer afternoon in a field beneath the oak trees. It expresses the raw beauty of an encounter, a moment of seeing, caught in a single phrase. But more, it resonates with other meanings. Our fields are scattered with oak saplings. ... The trees are not planted. They have grown from acorns scattered by

the wind and animals. All we can do is stop ourselves from getting in the way. Whether this book describes a therapy for humans or for the planet, whether it offers inspiration or methodologies, theories or stories, it speaks of possibilities, of ways of being which might provide conditions for a future. Perhaps it too is a scattering of acorns, thrown out by the wind into the long grass. Perhaps some of those acorns will grow".

Elise Tate

Further information on Buddhist psychology and the other-centred approach is on the web at

Wwww.amidatrust.typepad.com/psychology/

CAPO News & Events

The next **CAPO meeting of members** (non members are welcome but will need to join overall cost £40 inc. weekend) is being held on:

Date: Friday 23rd September—

Sunday 25th September

Location: Powder Mill Woods, Battle, East Sussex—Camping self catering

Cost: £20



Powdermill Woods

Meeting to discuss and share good practice in taking therapy into the outdoors. Members will be sharing practice in the form of workshops, exploring the question of 'why take therapy into the outdoors?' and also what therapeutic role does nature have in the therapeutic process? The group will also be discussing roles and future direction of CAPO.

Please email: m.jordan670@ntlworld.com

A Code of Ethics and Practice
CAPO are currently developing a **Code of Ethics and Practice** for Counselling and Psychotherapy Outdoors. To see a draft copy and or to make any suggestions please email Martin at M.jordan670@ntlworld.com