

## Psychotherapy research: evidence and its discontents

**Date:** Monday 13 July 2026

**Location:** in-person | RCPsych, London

Time	Session
09.00am	<b>Registration and refreshments</b>
09.30am	<b>Welcome and introduction to the day</b> Dr Vikram Luthra and Dr Giles Story
09.40am	<b>Opening Keynote:</b> <b>Statistical Spin, Linguistic Obfuscation – The Corruptions of Science</b> Farhad Dalal, psychotherapist and group analyst  The ‘Psi’ professions – psychiatry, psychology, as well as some schools of psychotherapy –claim to be scientific disciplines grounded in empirical evidence. In this talk I will argue that much of the evidence is problematic, and on some occasions downright corrupt. I will suggest that the issue is not one of ‘bad apples’, but is systemic. In particular, I will interrogate the evidential claims for the efficacy of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and find them wanting.
10.25am	<b>Grasping the Nettle: The Case for Psychotherapy Research</b> Liz Allison, Director of the Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London. and Dr Emma Hotopf, consultant psychiatrist  Dr Liz Allison and Dr Emma Hotopf will explore the challenges and benefits of engaging with research in psychotherapy for clinicians and for the field, drawing on examples from their own work with colleagues.
11.00am	<b>Morning break   Poster viewing</b>
11.30am	<b>Measuring Mentalising across Clinical Contexts: Some Lessons Learned - Implications for Practice and Research</b> Dr Tobias Nolte, University College London

Time	Session
	<p>In this talk I will outline some of the lessons learned from assessing mentalizing in clinical practice and research. I will draw on findings from a number of studies (RCT and others) to facilitate discussion around the utility of measuring certain capacities of people undergoing NHS mental health secondary care. I will try and outline some aspects of how measurement-based approaches have informed the development of MBT and conclude with an agenda of how this can be taken forward in the future - primarily with a focus of co-created approaches.</p>
<p><b>12.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Panel Q&amp;A and discussion</b></p>
<p><b>12.45pm</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch break   Poster viewing</b></p>
<p><b>1.45pm</b></p>	<p><b>Service user involvement in an RCT of MBT for offenders with antisocial personality disorder</b>            Dr Jessica Yakeley, consultant psychiatrist</p> <p>Service user involvement in psychotherapy research is in its infancy. In this talk, I describe 2 qualitative studies exploring the experiences of peer researchers, and of Experts by Experience ( individuals with lived experience of offending and mental health difficulties) involved in implementing a randomised controlled trial of mentalization-based treatment for antisocial personality disorder within the criminal justice system. Findings highlighted the unique contribution of shared lived experience in fostering epistemic trust, engagement and mentalizing, alongside significant challenges related to role ambiguity, power dynamics, boundary management and emotional toll. The studies underscore the need for robust training, supervision and organisational support when embedding peer roles in forensic interventions.</p>
<p><b>2.15pm</b></p>	<p><b>Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy versus treatment as usual after non-remission with NHS Talking Therapies high intensity psychological therapy for depression</b>            Dr Florian Ruths, consultant psychiatrist</p>
<p><b>2.45pm</b></p>	<p><b>Physician, know thyself (and study it)' Conducting research on personal therapy in psychiatry as a trainee</b>            Dr Jennifer Dunn, Resident doctor in core training</p>

Time	Session
	<p>Dr Jennifer Dunn, a core trainee from Scotland, will outline the process of setting up a national study examining how psychiatrists (of all grades and subspecialties) use personal therapy. From study idea to research data collection via a national survey to analysis, she will hope to illuminate the processes involved and show that this is an undertaking trainees can engage in! Provisional findings from the study will be shared.</p>
<b>3.10pm</b>	<b>Panel discussion and Q&amp;A</b>
<b>3.30pm</b>	<b>Afternoon refreshments   Poster viewing</b>
<b>4.00pm</b>	<p><b>Large Group Experience</b> Dr Maria Papanastassiou and All Delegates</p> <p>The large group will be a co creation from all delegates participating in the conference. It will provide an opportunity for delegates to express their thoughts and feelings about the conference and to find one's voice in a large group. The aim is for a creative discourse to take place where the experience of the day can be reflected upon and understood a little more. The large group conductor will introduce the group and time boundaries and facilitate the discussion and, via the lens of the large group, will aim to deepen the experience of the day.</p>
<b>5.00pm</b>	<p><b>Closing remarks</b> Dr Vikram Luthra and Dr Giles Story</p>
<b>5.15pm</b>	<b>Close of conference</b>

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