



ISPS Newsletter - Summer 2021

Dear members and friends of
ISPS,

***'Le silence éternel de ces espaces
infinis m'effraye'***
Blaise Pascal



When I was a young psychiatrist I visited one of my patients on the closed ward of our psychiatric hospital. The evening before he was hospitalised in a forced way due to chaotic and threatening behaviour that his family was not able to tolerate anymore. As my patient refused any treatment at that moment he was hospitalised by a police intervention and the psychiatrist on duty, who did not know my patient, decided to give him sedative medication and to bring him to the isolation room. My patient spent whole night there. When I entered that room I saw him lying on his bed fixated with his arms and legs. He was not chaotic but told me with tears into his eyes: 'The whole night I was in an endless dark space surrounded totally cut off from earth. I was convinced that I would see no human being anymore but that I was condemned to remain alone in eternity in this endless space'. Sad feelings overwhelmed me and also my eyes filled with tears. I blamed myself for not being able to avoid this painful situation. The patient was known to me as a very soft hearted man who would never do any evil to someone else. Stimulated by my immense feelings of guilt I felt the urge to reparation and I promised myself that for the rest of my career I would fight against coercive measures in the hospital where I work. The answer of psychiatry to chaotic and threatening behaviour should not be reduced to such extreme repressive decisions which are often made based on anxiety by the care givers. In moments of chaos and threat people deserve the presence of a human being. It was thanks to contacts I found with ISPS that I was able to continue my fight for a human psychiatry. This is the reason why I am so grateful to ISPS, where I found a community of people who struggle for the same values.

But there is another reason why I told this painful story. The words of my patient in the isolation room brought me to the conclusion that one of the central issues of psychosis is loneliness. At the same time, his statement reminds me of one of the most poignant phrases ever written by the French theologian and philosopher Blaise Pascal, quoted above and translated in English: '*The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me*'. Blaise Pascal, who is known for his important scientific research, wrote this sentence after his mystic experience in 1655 which was the beginning of a secluded life in a monastery where he started research in theology. And here is also a link with my patient. A few days after his forced hospitalisation he told me that his psychotic breakdown was preceded by a kind of

mystic or transcendent experience during his holidays in Scotland where he was overwhelmed by the beauty of the wide landscape of the Highlands. He felt himself in contact with a kind of Godhead with a complete loss of the boundaries of his identity. It was a sublime experience that gave him an endless feeling of joy. When he turned back from Scotland to his country everything became futile and empty. This was followed by a loss of self-evidence and everything became strange to him. The emptiness changed a few days later in the opposite: everything became pregnant with meaning and there were no co-incidences anymore. Ideas of references frightened him and he developed paranoid behaviour which gave rise to his admission to hospital.

The story of my patient taught me that a transcendental, mystical experience and the anxiety for total emptiness and deep loneliness go hand in hand with each other. My opinion is that people with a sensitivity for psychosis have this special openness for transcendent experiences but also a special ability to feel the emptiness of humankind. These are existential issues which affect us all deeply and I am convinced that when we open ourselves for these issues we can come in contact with the deepest pain of our patients and of ourselves. It was during the painful meeting with my patient in the isolation room that all those things came together.

In classical psychiatry the thoughts that I just formulated are often considered as romantic and not scientific. But in ISPS freedom of thought and speech is possible.

During the last half year ISPS lost two meaningful figures who meant a lot for our ISPS community and who took their freedom of thought and speech: the British psychiatrist and researcher, Julian Leff who passed away in February 2021 and the American psychologist and psychoanalyst, Bert Karon who deceased in May 2021. To honour their important significance for ISPS Margreet De Pater from the Netherlands and Nancy Burke from America wrote warm tributes, that you can read in this Newsletter. Julian Leff and Bert Karon exchanged the temporary existence on earth for an eternal infinite space. Let us cherish the emptiness they left in our lives as a precious gift. The EC express their deepest condolences to their family and to those persons who were close to them.

I wish you all the best.

Ludi Van Bouwel
Chair of ISPS



ISPS webinar on 17th June 2021
Three perspectives on racism and psychosis
20:00 - 21:30 Central European Time

The EC, on behalf of ISPS members, recently became a signatory of a petition against racism and social injustice in mental health. We are against exclusion, stigmatization, hatred, violence, abuse of power, racism and all kind of discrimination. So the issue of Diversity was present in all the meetings of the EC the past year. During this time, in 2020, the EC organised two webinars on Covid 19 and psychosis. During these webinars a poll of the audience indicated a preference for 'Diversity and Psychosis' as a theme for the next webinar in 2021.

Those two elements were the starting point for the EC to plan the latest ISPS webinar on Racism and Psychosis (diversity in general is too big a topic for one webinar). Ingo Lambrecht, long time member of ISPS and ex member of the EC, agreed to be the moderator of this webinar. We found three panelists from different race (and different continents) to give their personal perspective on Racism and Psychosis.

The webinar will include an 'Open Dialogue' between the three panelists followed by a discussion between the panelists and the audience, with Ingo Lambrecht as moderator.

PANELISTS Michael O'loughlin, Pikihuia Pomare and Hári Sewell



Michael O'Loughlin is Professor in the College of Education and Health Sciences and Derner School of Psychology at Adelphi University. In Derner School of Psychology he teaches and supervises in the Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology and the Psy.D. program in School Psychology. He also teaches in the postgraduate psychoanalytic training programs at Derner School of Psychology. He has authored, co-authored or edited ten books, most recently [With S. Arac-Orhun and M. Queler], *Lives Interrupted: Psychiatric narratives of struggle and resilience* [Lexington Books, 2019]. Since 2018 he has been co-editor of the international journal *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*. He is editor of two book series, one in psychoanalysis, and one in childhood and youth studies. He writes about trauma, psychosis, migration, childhood subjectivity, schooling, psychoanalysis, race, and politics, and he directs the Adelphi Asylum Project. He is in private practice on Long Island, NY.

Dr Pikihuia Pomare is an Indigenous Clinical Psychologist, Psychology Lecturer, and Erihapeti Rehu-Murchie Postdoctoral Fellow at Massey University, New Zealand.

She has worked with children, youth, whānau (families) and adults in mental health services.

Her professional and research interest include Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Indigenous psychological approaches to emotion regulation, engagement of Indigenous Māori people in mental health services, youth mental health and wairuatanga (spirituality).



Hári Sewell is founder and Director of HS Consultancy and is a former executive director of health and social care in the National Health Service in the UK. He has worked for the Department of Health in regulation and policy.

Hári is a writer and speaker in his specialist area of social justice, equalities and ethnicity, race and culture in mental health. Hári is honorary Senior Visiting Fellow at the University of Central Lancashire and Specialist Guest Lecturer at University of Bradford and is a Member of the Scientific Board of the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health. Hári has had various books, articles and book chapters published, with new material emerging regularly.



Hári worked with another local campaigner to secure services for survivors of sexual violence and currently runs a campaign “Men Supporting Women’s Rights” including “Men Against Rape”. He is increasingly studying forms of masculinity and the possibilities in practice and employee relations to recognise the intersections between masculinity and other aspects of identity.

Discussion MODERATOR Ingo Lambrecht



Dr. Ingo Lambrecht is a consultant clinical psychologist in Auckland, New Zealand.

His special interests include children and adolescents, psychosis and personality issues, as well as trauma, mindfulness, and compassion. He has also written on the cultural-clinical interface through clinical work in different cultural settings, and was privileged to undergo an intense shamanic training as a sangoma, a South African traditional healer. In addition to his book, *Sangoma Trance States* (AM Publishing, 2014), based on his PhD research, he has contributed articles and chapters on the relationships between culture, psychosis, and spirituality, presenting at national and international conferences on these themes.

We hope you will join us!

The webinar is FREE

If you are not an ISPS member we kindly ask that you consider making a small donation to ISPS or joining ISPS!

[Register HERE](#)

NEW! in the ISPS series

Edited By Nick Putman and Brian Martindale

It is a pleasure to inform you that the long awaited comprehensive book on Open dialogue for Psychosis is available to order and if you so before the distribution date of 29th July you can obtain it at a discount.

This highly readable book provides a comprehensive examination of the use of Open Dialogue as a treatment for psychosis. It presents the basic principles and practice of Open Dialogue, explains the training needed to implement it and explores how it is being offered internationally.

Open Dialogue for Psychosis includes first-hand accounts by individuals, families and trainees of their experiences of the process. It explains how aspects of Open Dialogue have been introduced in services around the world, its overlap with and differentiation from other psychological approaches and its potential integration with biological and pharmacological considerations. The book concludes with a substantive section on the research available and its limitations.

Open Dialogue for Psychosis will be a key text for clinicians and administrators interested in this unique approach. It will also be suitable for people who have experienced psychosis and members of their families and networks, particularly those who recognise that services need to change for the better but are seeking guidance on how this can be achieved.

Foreword by the former United Nations Special rapporteur on the right to physical and mental health.

Reviews by

Professor Larry Davidson, Yale University, USA

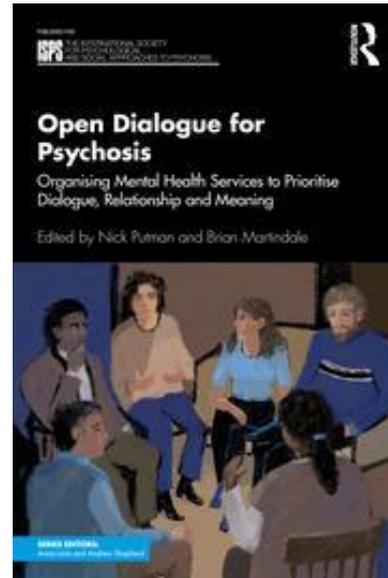
Adrian James, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK

Ludi Van Bouwel, Chair, ISPS

Monica Whyte, President, EFTA

"This is a much needed, timely book that provides the first account of the international implementation and adaptation of the Open Dialogue approach to promoting recovery among persons experiencing psychosis. Spanning theoretical, training, and research perspectives - with the welcome addition of first person accounts from providers, persons in recovery, and their loved ones - this comprehensive introduction is sure to hasten the spread of the first radically new approach to psychosis the field has seen in decades."

Professor Larry Davidson, Yale University, USA



[Further information](#)



TRIBUTE to ISPS Honorary Lifetime Member, Professor Julian Leff

by Margreet de Pater

On Tuesday 23 February, 2021 Julian Leff died. He was 82 years old and he was surrounded by his family he loved.

He was a hero of mine. Face to face I met with him only for 2 minutes. But in my fantasy I had many conversations with him. I was inspired by the research he did together with George Brown in the eighties of the past century. Research on families and even more importantly about family work.

Until then there were many influential ideas about families and psychosis, partly based on observation behind one way screens, by families who were attracted to a certain therapist. But Julian and George visited families at home talked with them and wrote down their observations. They saw that some families were able to be of help for their psychotic family member but others were upset angry and worried, and without their intention the persons psychosis worsened and they had to go to a hospital.

Together with Christine Vaughn he developed a method of family work and researched that. This method indeed prevented family upset by being with them and teaching everyone to cope with psychosis. This method was developed further by Ian Falloon, William mc Farlane and Michael Goldstein, to name a few. His method was a great help for my own work as a community psychiatrist. Usually families didn't want to come to the office for "family therapy". But what they did want was help and advice to cope with psychosis. In order to do research he had to develop an instrument called EE (Expressed Emotion). This instrument enabled him to measure outcome.

The Family movement has criticized EE, they felt stigmatized and yes I must say the way it was used in the scientific community with terms like 'high EE father' or 'high EE mother' can promote stigma. Julian Leff has always seen a connection with family burden however. And again assisting families to cope lowered EE.

So if I could have a conversation with Julian once more I would have discussed qualitative research to invite families to tell something about how come they had become so angry and worried and what helped them to overcome this feeling.

During the last years of his life he still had new ideas and developed Avatar therapy. While looking over his life work I discovered that he:

- Was actively involved in deinstitutionalization, and helped to develop alternatives in community resulting in a better quality of life of former chronic patients. (I was in the same movement)
- Published more than 200 papers and nine books, much of his attention remaining on family work with psychiatric patients in the community.
- Won the Royal College of Health's Starkey Prize in 1976, the Burgholzi Award from the University of Zurich in 1999, the Marsh Award for Mental Health Work in 2010, and the hugely prestigious Pelicier Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Association of Psychiatry in 2017.
- Continued to study silk-screening, ceramics and sculpture, and became an ardent silver-smith, designing and making exceptional jewelry. He played piano from the age of 5.

Although he was a very famous researcher he communicated with all parties in down to earth language.

Here are a few links that may interest you:

[The most important things I have learnt in my career as a psychiatrist](#) by Julian Leff
Julian Leff, honorary member of ISPS [description written by Brian Martindale](#)

[Avatar therapy](#)

[Family work for schizophrenia](#) a practical guide

[Long-term outcome of long-stay psychiatric in-patients considered unsuitable to live in the community. TAPS Project 44](#)

[The life of Julian Leff by Prof Dinesh Bhugra](#), Past president of the WPA.

Margreet de Pater
ISPS EC member

NEW! Family member network

Do you have family member with psychosis? Or are you a carer of someone who has experienced psychosis?

A new email discussion group has just been created in order to facilitate family members to be more involved in ISPS International. We are the list moderators.

If you are an ISPS member, and family member, then you can contact [ISPS](#) and ask to join the new group. If you are not yet an ISPS member but you are a family member then please do [connect with us](#) and consider joining ISPS!

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jen Kilyon and Pat Wright

News from the ISPS Learning resources and ISPS-INT list

The Learning Resources area of our website will soon have a new name: Information on psychological treatments and more. We believe this will help people who are googling to find the pages more easily.

There is a new article on the influence of city life on psychosis [Psychosis and the city](#)

And a relevant article for the discussion on racism and psychosis [Whiteness and the psychoanalytic imagination](#)

On the ISPS-INT list there has been a very intense debate after a question: Is the lack of contact with reality, which is said is so characteristic for psychosis, actually not a lack of contact with the ideology of the group?

You may be interested to take a look at a [book on the socialization of 5 year old boys](#) who lose their authenticity in order to belong to the group of boys.

Ron Unger mentioned a [new article](#) that stated that psychosis susceptible person rely more on their own experience than "normals".

The British Psychological Society has just come out with a new guide for young

people with psychosis, and for those who care for them. The guide can be found [here](#). It seems well written, very friendly and colorful, easy to read. There is also a [short video](#) that describes psychosis in a very friendly and non-pathologizing way.

Do have a look at the ISPS learning resources. Do you have anything you'd like us to add? Or criticize? Please [write to me](#) if so.

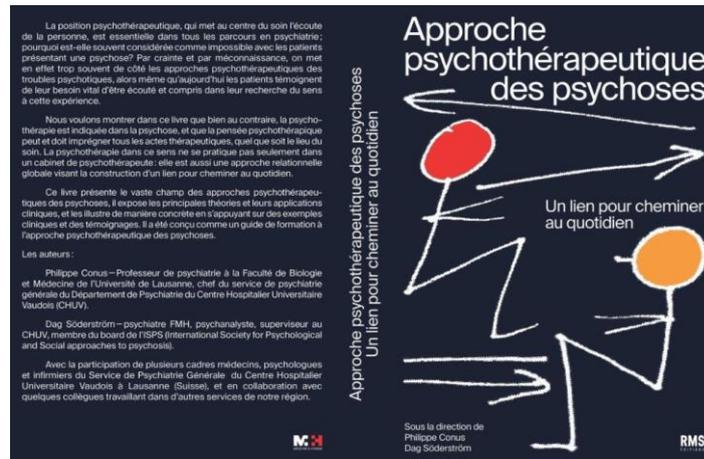
Margreet de Pater
EC member

ISPS Regional Group News

ISPS Suisse News

Stuck in the COVID during 2020, the swiss branch is now on the road again!

The french speaking intervention group, organized by Dag Söderström and Françoise Davoine, restarted this spring with around 15 participants (CH, F, Be) working on clinical presentations. Theme : critical moments in transference. We hope to bring the results to the ISPS Perugia conference in 2022.



The isps-ch conference will be held on the 8th October 2021 in Lausanne on the theme : Integration of psychotherapeutic and social approaches. More information can be found [here](#)

This conference will support launching a new book trying to give an update.

Title : Approche psychothérapeutique des psychoses, un lien pour cheminer au quotidien, Philippe Conus and Dag Söderström, RMS editions, Geneva (May 2021).

ISPS Suomi (Finland)

For years we talked about starting ISPS Finland. We did almost do it during the Madrid congress whilst having some very nice wine in a local restaurant. But this fell short, everyone was living too busy lives. Finally in 2018 we did it. We became a formal association and held our first congress – Psychosis 2019 - in January of 2019. It was a success beyond our expectations, we had over two hundred participants. We were fortunate to have Brian Martindale and Grainne Fadden as our foreign visitors.

Psychosis 2020 was most likely one of the last congresses. Jan-Olav Johannessen came from Norway and Amy Hardy from UK. Both gave excellent presentations. Mostly due to us being late with marketing we had a lower turnover

but were quite happy with the congress. Then came Covid and everything was closed. Quite soon we learned to live with Teams and Zoom but had to abandon activities that were planned.

The majority of participants in our congresses have been nurses as they in Finland have a central role in working with psychosis patients. Thus, we had a plan to activate them even more by organizing focused workshops. But again, this was hit by the pandemic.

At present ISPS Finland has close to 50 members. The board meets regularly and is now busy planning the Psychosis 2022 congress. This time we are planning to organize it in cooperation with FinFami, the relatives association in Finland. This time we will focus on both basic skills when working with patients and families and on new advanced methods.

A major concern in our country is that mental health services have not improved during recent years. The treatment deficit actually seems to be growing. In our 2019 congress Karoliina Ahonen raised the question of civil rights of patients with more chronic mental illnesses or addiction problems. In her a thesis from 2019 Ahonen wrote:

“Examining mental health policy governance in Finland from 1970 to the present leads to the following observations: 1) The first documents governing mental health policies written in Finland clearly include concepts that concern the protection of the fundamental and human rights of seriously ill citizens. In the following decades, such objectives no longer appear in the written documents governing mental health policies. 2) The focus of mental health policies changed from protecting the fundamental and human rights of seriously ill citizens to the management of the mental health and wellbeing of the entire population. 3) The Finnish mental health policy focuses on the promotion of health, preventive care and development of a service system as part of welfare state policy. Because the objectives have been extensive and by their nature abstract, it has been impossible to form effective policy governance to achieve them. 4) It has not been possible to ensure the fundamental and human rights of seriously ill citizens with a development process focused on the service system. The concepts and paradigms utilized in the development process documents have directed the focus away from the questions relating to the realization of fundamental and human rights. 5) The ethos of wellbeing and preventive healthcare has steered attention away from the improvement of the position of the seriously ill. Public authority’s definition of a good life as well as the central focus of mental health governance in the development process of the service system has resulted in the seriously ill being forgotten in seemingly inclusive outpatient care.”

More information can be found at <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/307820>
Klaus Lehtinen

TRIBUTE to Bert Karon, long time member of ISPS-US

By Nancy Burke

Bert Karon, PhD, Professor Emeritus in Psychology, Michigan State University, Past President of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association and the Michigan Psychoanalytic Council, and author of *Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia: The Treatment of Choice* (1977), *The Widening Scope of Psychoanalysis: Collected Essays of Bertram Karon* (ed. Cosgro & Widener, 2018), and more than 100 peer-reviewed papers.



Bert Karon may have written the Bible regarding how to help people with psychosis understand and transform themselves, but he was not God. That was his gift, and I and many others are grateful for it. Rather, he allowed himself to understand more fully than most how hard it is to be *human* amidst the often-crushing social forces, events, family legacies and internal experiences that lead us into small zones or vast landscapes of madness. This perspective was foundational in each of the arenas in which I knew him, as mentor, consultant and psychoanalyst/therapist, and I believe that it has served as an anchor not only for me but for the field as a whole, *our* field, whose core mission is the promotion of understanding as an alternative to pathologizing. It's my hope that the anchor he provided to me and to us will hold firm going forward, because we're going to need it against the rising institutional thirst for "mental health service delivery systems" of treatment-as-control.

To me, most important was that at least in his role as therapist, Bert Karon was not afraid. This allowed him to hear about awful and terrifying things without turning away. I don't know anything at all about his biography -- perhaps snippets about his analysis, or about his "hang-ups," as he called them, but nothing specific or in-depth -- but I could tell that he had somehow found a stance that allowed him to live in his work by Terrance's motto, which should be framed on the wall of every clinic: "Nothing Human is Alien to Me." Also, he was humble. We fool ourselves if we believe we could do better at life, be healthier, than our patients in navigating devastating physical and emotional situations, and Bert did not seem tempted in the least by this illusion. I suppose he didn't need it, because he wasn't afraid to listen. Also, his appreciation of people's internal lives was complex. He understood that we are more than we know ourselves to be, having absorbed deeply the most clinically useful ideas of Freud and his followers. He clearly viewed psychoanalytic insight as a resource for appreciating that our thoughts and lives, if they can be comprehended through fantasies, metaphors, dreams and delusions, are sensible, and he was open to any idea that would help someone, without the interference of dogmatic allegiance.

This isn't the place for an account of my own treatment with Bert -- he described many of his clinical encounters clearly and specifically in his works, and wrote especially generously about the actual things he did and said. But I do want to mention the terrible sudden moment of the world gone dark -- I know you felt it too -- following that devastating call: There'd been an accident. The days weeks months after were a blur, and no less the next period, following an update: He'll likely survive, but there was no telling whether he'd be back. He encourages you to find someone else with whom to continue. I waited, and then one day he was back, despite hours each day of painful rehabilitation. He was back and ready to listen. Back, then absent, absent, then back. And, at the very end, when he was

less able to hold as much in mind, the scaffold of his convictions seemed somehow to emerge even more starkly, as a lingering imprint of what matters.

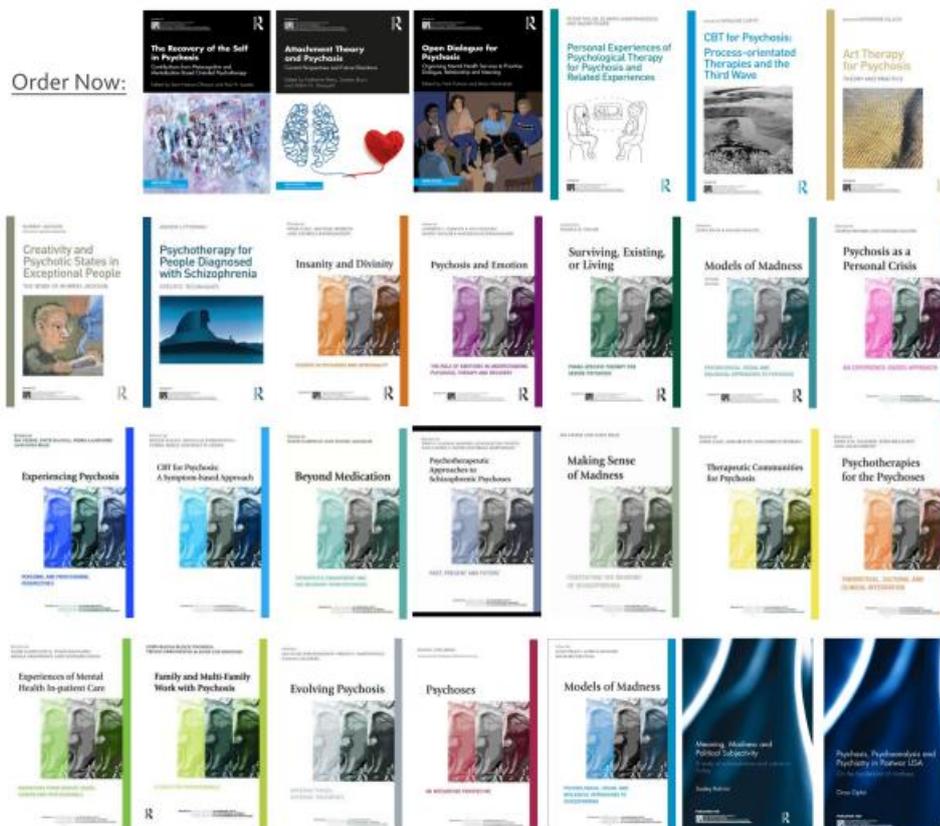
Nancy Burke

International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis Book Series

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Upcoming Events

The ISPS has over 20 regional networks around the globe, many of which organise annual events. Take a look at the impressive range of meetings and conferences taking place soon!

[ISPS events listing](#)

THE CALL FOR ABSTRACTS IS OPEN The 22nd International Congress of the ISPS

1st - 4th September 2022
in Perugia, Italy
[More information](#)

CO-CONSTRUCTING HEALING SPACES
PERUGIA 31 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2022
22nd ISPS CONGRESS
www.isps22perugia.it
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPEN

VIRTUAL HEALING SPACES
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online preview of the ISPS conference/festival 2022
virtual.isps2021.it

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PERUGIA 28 AUGUST 4 SEPTEMBER 2022

SAVE THE DATE

Haven't joined ISPS yet?

Here are 4 good reasons why you should join us!

- 1) Members enjoy reduced delegate fees for ISPS conferences such as [ISPS Perugia 2021](#)
- 2) Members receive 4 issues of *Psychosis* per year and also have online access to all previous issues of the journal
- 3) **20% discount** on books in the ISPS series published by Routledge
- 4) By joining ISPS you can connect with over 1,500 people around the world - who share your interest in psychosocial treatments for psychosis - through our email discussion groups and regional meetings

"Psychosis" is 10 years old
Read the Editorial
by Jan Olav Johannessen
Routledge
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Psychosis

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