



ISPS Newsletter - Spring 2021

Dear members and friends of ISPS,



First of all I wish you all good health and warm relationships for 2021. At the time of transition from the old to the new year we were happy to leave the dark year of 2020 behind us and to start a new year full of hope. However, the future remains uncertain and still we have to be careful. But there is a strong belief that human vitality will survive. During this dark winter I saw an impressive movie on the internet 'For Sama'. A Syrian 29 year old journalist and filmmaker Waad al-Kateab filmed, for years, her own life in her heavily besieged city of Aleppo. Her daughter Sama was born in the midst of the Syrian war violence. She tells us: 'I keep on filming so the nightmares still have some value'. I was touched by the music and the songs drowning out the sounds of the bombs outside during the wedding party. I saw children playing in the remains of a bombed-out bus and old men playing chess in the rubble of the burnt-out houses. This film illustrates in a moving way that people can rise up again in the middle of destruction and this is the promising light we have to take with us during the next future. It reminds me of the statue of Zadkine, a part of the logo of ISPS conference in Rotterdam in 2019, which represents a metaphor for the recovery after psychosis.

We are living in a changing world. It is exactly 10 years ago that ISPS produced the first digital Newsletter. In that letter Brian Martindale wrote: '*There are many ways in which ISPS can contribute to its core mission of better understanding of the psychologies of the psychoses and the promotion of the many effective psychological interventions to benefit people around the world. Good quality news and information is a crucial component and therefore the revival of our newsletter is a vital addition to our ISPS journal, books, email discussion groups, our conferences as well as the work of our local networks.*'. It was new for us then, but we soon discovered the vast possibilities of the internet to collect a lot of information very quickly and to reach many people for ISPS purposes. The EC still fully endorse this mission and was very active last year. During this Covid-19 time the EC still stayed in contact with ISPS members and other people who were interested, by organizing two webinars about Covid-19 and psychosis. The older members of our EC are working on the new learning resources on our website to give this section a more attractive look with the new possibilities that the internet offers. The younger EC members are developing further news on social media since we notice that social media are conquering the world and developing into a hidden power with a strong impact on society. We decided not to miss this boat. I could not imagine that 10 years after the first ISPS digital Newsletter, the pandemic would force us to have therapeutic sessions through Zoom. It was a

pleasure to discover the places where people live and sometimes they could even tell me things which could not be talked about before, because on Zoom they felt more safe in their own place. But I was very happy that people could come back to my office now and that all the communication, that is lost on Zoom, can reappear again in the intimate relationship in real presence. It is amazing to see how scientific conferences are organised in a digital way and how the scientific world enters now into our living room. But still I am missing the real contacts with my colleagues and the warm debriefings which are so important during those conferences.

We also used internet communication for exploring the meaning of our EC members about the topic of Diversity that became an important issue on our EC agenda during the last year. How can we as ISPS guarantee that persons of another colour, another race, another gender identity.... are not excluded from mental health? How can we be more inclusive and make our organisation, which is predominantly white, more diverse? I was very touched by some replies on the psychoanalytical interest discussion group of ISPS. But there is still a long way to go. The second book of Françoise Davoine about the Seminars of Jean Max Gaudillière 'The birth of a political self' is worth a mention here. This book is fully in line with her talk given during the ISPS-US conference in October 2020 about 'Love and Justice in Engaging Psychosis and Extreme States'. She gave Boccaccio's Decamerone as an example to illustrate that by telling stories in a circle with a stable rhythm, one says **no** to annihilation in lawless political contexts. 'Justice is the right for a political subject to resist destruction'. Thinking further about it, Dag Söderström offered us the challenging question: 'Finally as psychoanalyst (and psychotherapists in general) facing racism and social injustice, should we all become political?'

But let us end by focusing on the upcoming ISPS conference in Perugia with this central theme: Co-constructing Healing Spaces. In Italy 50 years ago mental institutions saw an eradication from their violent past, thanks to a rise in humanity and political civility partly under the impulse of Basaglia. Such was the case in Perugia, Arezzo, Trieste, Gorizia, Parma, Reggio Emilia and Turin. The ISPS has significantly contributed to this expansion of humane interventions. So, we have a lot to celebrate this year. Maurizio Peccia, Claudia Mazzeschi and their team are preparing a very challenging program with interesting keynote speakers of the whole world. Due to the pandemic it has been decided that this promising conference will be postponed to September 2022. But the organizers will provide an alternative solution for us to connect with each other in September this year.

I wish you all the best,

Ludi Van Bouwel
Chair of ISPS



ISPS-Int discussion group and Learning Resources for psychosis

On the ISPS-Int discussion group there was a recent debate on medication. Members told that they were functioning better without medication, although they had psychosis. Others told that they had met people who were using medication and were content with it.

In the learning resources area of the ISPS website there is a page [Pharmaceutical approaches](#) with many links to relevant stories and research.

We have also added a new link to a large prospective study which is now going on in the Netherlands:

A large prospective study: [to continue or not continue?](#) There is an indication that people are functioning better in the long term when they use a small dose or no dose. These researchers aim to find out if this is true!

Another discussion is going on about race and psychosis. How important is it for therapists to study this subject? What is the influence of the therapist's own race on the therapy? Take a look at **Psychodynamic therapies and culture:** O'Lochlin, M. (2020) Whiteness and the psychoanalytic imagination. See [PDF](#)

If you are interested in joining the discussions in the ISPS-Int group contact [ISPS](#) (use of the email discussion groups is an ISPS membership benefit).

Margreet de Pater
ISPS EC member

ISPS Perugia News

The International Organizing Committee of the Perugia ISPS conference, given the pandemic emergency, **has decided to reschedule the Perugia conference of 2021 to next year on September 1st-4th, 2022.**

Consequently the abstract presentation deadline has been extended until: **January 31st, 2022.**

We would however like to maintain September 3rd-4th, 2021 as the date for a two-day "co-constructing healing spaces" virtual conference.

At this virtual conference the plenary speakers will briefly present and discuss the following themes of the 2022 conference:

CLOSING ASYLUMS / OPEN HEALING SPACES; INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND PSYCHOSIS; FAMILY INTERVENTIONS; EARLY INTERVENTIONS; TRAUMA, STRESS, ILLNESS AND PSYCHOSIS; COVID PANDEMIC COMMUNITY AND PSYCHOSIS; CREATIVITY AND NEW THERAPIES FOR PSYCHOSIS.

A small participation fee will be charged.

More information coming soon.



Abstract submission is open

The scientific committee is pleased to invite authors to submit their abstracts to be delivered at the 22nd International Conference of the International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis (ISPS):

"Co-Constructing Healing Spaces" in Perugia, Italy, 1st-4th September 2022

The organizers welcome the submission of abstracts for original contributions to the field in the following thematic areas:

- closing asylums / open healing spaces
- intersubjectivity and psychosis
- family intervention
- early interventions
- trauma, stress, illness and psychosis
- COVID pandemic in therapeutic communities
- creativity and new therapies for psychosis

(All abstract authors are asked to choose the closest relevant thematic area during the submission process)

How to submit your abstract

Follow these easy steps:

1. Decide on whether you wish to submit a paper, workshop, panel/ symposium, meet the author, session or poster
2. Select a theme/topic from the suggested list
3. Prepare a 300 word abstract
4. Submit your abstract [here](#)

Types of submissions:

It is possible to present scientific contributions verbally, in symposiums (in English or Italian) or by submitting a poster. Recently published books may also be presented.

- Papers - 20 minutes with 10 minutes for discussion
- Panels/Symposia - 90 minutes. May include two, three, or more participants
- Performance/Workshop - 90 minutes, opportunity for active audience participation and learning
- Meet the Author - 30 minutes discussion of a recently published book.
- Posters - for presentation of research, projects or programs, or other

work on conference themes.

Further information

Important dates

January 31st 2022 - NEW Deadline for Abstract Submission



*It is with great sadness that we inform you that our esteemed **ISPS Honorary Lifetime Member, Professor Julian Leff** passed away peacefully at home on Monday February 22th.*

He made enormous contributions to family engagement and social factors in the field of psychosis that had world wide impact. Younger members will probably know him through his development of avatar therapy, an intervention showing great promise for those with persecutory voice experiences. ISPS wishes to offer condolences to his family members and all those who were dear to him. In our next Newsletter we will write more about his important work and the person he was. In the meantime you can read a biography written at the time of his nomination as an ISPS Honorary Life Member, by Brian Martindale, [here](#)

FOSTREN: A new COST Action aiming to reduce the use of coercion in European mental health services

A new network was established in October 2020 which aims to improve mental health services for all users including people with psychosis. The network is called FOSTREN (Fostering and Strengthening Approaches to Reducing Coercion in European Mental Health Services) and it is funded by the European COST programme for the next 4 years.

The main focus of the network is on reducing the use of coercive and restrictive practices in both hospital and community mental health settings across Europe. These practices include seclusion, restraint and rapid tranquilisation. People with psychosis are often subjected to these practices. Most mental health services aspire to minimise and even to eliminate the interventions but often struggle to do so because of various structural and organisational obstacles, including lack of resources.

There is extensive research available on why and when coercion occurs and several evidence-based innovations for reducing the problem such as Safewards have been developed and tested in recent years. The challenge now is to get these research findings and evidence-based models into everyday practice. FOSTREN aims to do this by developing an implementation model to underpin sustained change in service cultures away from an over-reliance on coercion.

The network will draw together mental health academics, experts by experience, practitioners and other key stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences on this topic. The specific objectives are: to advance understanding of successful

interventions to reduce coercion within an implementation science paradigm by building a stable interdisciplinary network of European researchers and practitioners; and to apply this understanding by articulating and communicating best practice to key stakeholders responsible for mental health service delivery.

Activities are organised around five work groups: risk factors; alternative interventions; outcomes & recovery; implementation science; and dissemination and exploitation of findings. Experts will come together in various collaborative events such as exchanges, support for early career researchers and workshops. The network recognises and values the multiplicity of mental health service models across Europe and intends to draw on that diversity to develop an approach that works for all. We hope that in the long term key outputs which are planned such as a framework for shared datasets and targeted implementation model will contribute to a pan-European effort to enhance human rights for vulnerable people with mental health problems.

Currently 24 European countries have signed a formal commitment to supporting this network and all of these countries are represented on the network Management Committee. Activities based on travel are obviously limited in 2021 due to the pandemic but various online events have taken place and are planned over the first few months of the year. These include a Spring Workshop in March and a Training School for early career researchers in Denmark in September.

We welcome dialogue with any individual or organisation with an interest in our overall objectives: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA19133>

Prof. Richard Whittington
[Email](#)

Centre for Research & Education in Forensic Psychiatry
Forensic Department Brøset
St. Olav's Hospital

Department of Mental Health
Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU)

Invitation to take part in a research study: Calling all CBT Therapists!

My name is Rebecca Wade and I am a doctoral student from St. John's University School Psychology program. I am currently conducting a study about how therapeutic techniques are clinically applied across a variety of cultural populations. The study is designed to identify any modifications made to specific CBT techniques based on cultural or linguistic considerations.

The questionnaire used in this study will be distributed to clinicians in multiple countries. After the study has been completed, a general profile of the results will be shared. The results of the study will indicate the ways in which various CBT techniques are modified based upon cultural or linguistic considerations and what reasons underlie these modifications. This will help clinicians and educators identify ways in which CBT techniques can be made more appropriate to a wide range of cultural populations. There are no perceived risks to this study.

You will be asked to rate the frequency in which you utilize of a number of techniques that are core to the practice of CBT. You will also be asked to rate the

degree to which you modify each of these techniques as a function of cultural considerations.

The entire process should take approximately 20-30 minutes.

If you wish to take part you can do so [HERE](#)

Please contact the researchers Rebecca Wade or Mark D. Terjesen, Ph.D. at (718)990-5926 or Dr. Raymond DiGuseppe, the chair of the St. John's University Institutional Review Board at (718)990-1955 if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

ISPS Regional Group News

ISPS Lowlands News

On 28th May 2021 two experience experts, who are also ISPS Lowlands members, will organize a conference called **'Moeder op drift' (mother is wandering)** about the psychological aspects of puerperal psychosis.



More information can be found [here](#)

The Psychiatrie and Philosophie foundation is the official organizer. ISPS fully supports this conference.

ISPS Norway News

Due to the pandemic ISPS Norway replaced the annual symposium with a webinar focusing on corona and

psychosis. The first Norwegian ISPS webinar opened with a brilliant presentation on how the understanding of psychosis/schizophrenia has changed from a brain disease to the current understanding as a response to severe stress/adverse life events, by former Chair of the ISPS and the Norwegian king of early intervention, Jan Olav Johannessen.

Our good colleagues and partners from the early intervention field, TIPS sor-ost, presented fresh and important results from two national surveys on how the pandemic has affected people with psychosis and bipolar disorder and their families. The results showed that service users have suffered during the pandemic and are reporting poorer mental health now. Their families have been more concerned and feel more alone in the caring for their loved ones. The studies emphasized the important role of health care services under lock down and the



fact that they need to offer a greater availability in ways that are more creative. TIPS sor-ost also presented their experience with REACT-NOR, the Norwegian version of the React toolkit, a digital toolkit for relatives to people with psychosis.

ISPS Norway wish to thank all the brilliant contributors and the around 90 colleagues that attended the webinar. This digital form of connection with our members and others, who are engaged in the psychosocial treatment of psychosis, was a good substitute for our annual symposium given the pandemic. Still, we cannot wait to meet up again and connect in real life for our next symposium in Hamar next February.

Cecilie Brøvig Almås

ISPS Israel News

On the 24th of February we held an online advanced workshop on the topic of Working with Voices, conducted by Caroline Mazel-Carlton and Natan Cohen from Hearing Voices Network of the USA.

On 18th of March we will hold our annual member meeting, preceded by a lecture given by Sandrin Brener Dijan on "Concepts of cure as reflecting knowledge battles in mental health discourse".

For more information about ISPS Israel please contact [Renana Elran](#)

ISPS-US Webinar on 26th March

When people talk about finding something of value in “mad” or “psychotic” or “extreme” experiences, they are usually accused by those in mainstream psychiatry of “romanticizing an illness,” and overlooking how disruptive and distressing these states can be. But when only the negatives about mad experiences are noticed, the focus goes to attempts at suppression, despite increasing evidence that attempts at suppression can contribute to long term dysfunction.

The next ISPS-US webinar - [Exploring the Promise and the Pitfalls of "Mad Pride"](#) -will explore a middle ground approach, which balances an awareness of the hazards of mad experiences with a willingness to notice what might be positive about them. Starting with a more open mind, it becomes possible to help people explore and eventually understand their experiences in life promoting ways, rather than being stuck in either avoiding and suppressing them or being overwhelmingly immersed in them. Methods of applying this approach to improving interactions with “mad” people, and with the “mad” portions of our own minds, will be discussed.

About the presenter:

Ron Unger, LCSW, is a therapist specializing in psychological approaches for psychosis, especially cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). (Ron is independently offering a series of live zoom seminars on CBT for psychosis starting on 3/26/21 – [information on those seminars is available at this link.](#)) He has a particular interest in the intersection of trauma, dissociation, psychosis, and spirituality, and his work is informed by his own personal experience of that intersection. Ron chairs the education committee of the [US Chapter of the International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches for Psychosis \(ISPS-US\)](#), maintains a blog

at recoveryfrompsychosis.org, and is an advisory board member of the Mad in America Continuing Education project.
Day, time, and how to register:

This webinar will occur on Friday, March 12, 2021, at noon EST. (Time Zone Alert: if you live in an area that is not on "Eastern Standard Time" you can use a site like <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter-classic.html> to see when this event will be in your local time.)

You can register for the webinar [at this link](#)

A donation of \$5-\$40 is requested, though no one turned away for lack of funds. Please note that *your donation goes for a good cause*: It goes to support the efforts of ISPS-US to bring more attention to psychological and social approaches to psychosis.

It is a difficult time for smaller non-profits like ISPS-US, so any donation you can make is much appreciated! But if you cannot afford to donate anything, please click "Register" then click on "Enter promo code" and type in the code "Scholarship" to access free registration.

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NEW! in the ISPS series

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 in 2020

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](#)

Haven't joined ISPS yet?

Here are 4 good reasons why you should join us!

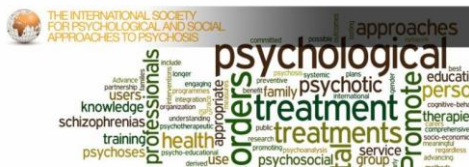
1) Members enjoy reduced delegate fees for ISPS conferences such as [ISPS Perugia 2021](#)

2) Members receive 4 issues of *Psychosis* per year and also have online access to 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

[Join now](#)



Why your organisation should consider joining ISPS

- To take advantage of discounted fees for [ISPS International Congresses](#)
- To access the ISPS Journal *Psychosis*
- Your institution/organisation can advertise its psychosis conferences and events on our website, in the ISPS International Newsletter and via our social media accounts, without additional cost
- Your institution/organisation will be listed on our website as a supportive member of ISPS together with some information about you and a link to your site
- Last but not least, we will assist you to **increase the knowledge** of your members about psychological therapies for psychoses and this will increase the chances of their implementation as recommended by guidelines and as requested by many patients and families

[Find out more](#)

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