



needs someone with whom he can communicate and who helps to make the painful overwhelming reality more bearable.

In my opinion the psychotic part of the mind also provides opportunities. With the psychotic part we stay more in touch with an unknowable, infinite, undifferentiated stream of elements that have not been expressed in the usual symbolic way. This unknowable stream is more chaotic but gives the possibility to let grow things by intuition and regenerates art and transcendence through a unique creativity. Art is another way to transform painful traumatic events and transcendence is a possibility to tolerate the endless infinity. Good mental health means that we are able to oscillate between our own psychotic and non-psychotic part and that a dialogue between the two modes of functioning in our mind is possible. In the same way, when a therapist and a person with psychosis can reach this unknowable stream together, new things can happen for both and this makes working with people with psychosis susceptibility so passionate and stimulating for me. We are all human beings interdependent on each other and we both grow, thanks to a human mutual encounter.

Recently we received the sad news of the passing away of two figures who meant a lot to ISPS and to the psychiatric world in their own country. The first of these is Helm Stierlin of Germany, about whom a tribute was written at the time of his nomination as an ISPS Honorary member by Michael Wirsching. The second is Pier Maria Furlan and Maurizio Peciccia sent us a beautiful and moving text to honour him. We wish, in the first place, their families but also all those who surrounded them much consolation and friendship in their great loss.

Let me end with another quote of Desmond Tutu: *'In each of us, there is an innate ability to create joy out of suffering, to find hope in the most hopeless of situations, and to heal any relationship in need of healing'*. We are still living in a world where we have to live with the pandemic and with a future that is still uncertain. Over the last two years ISPS has manifested itself as a vibrant organisation which was creative enough to make links all over the world through very active discussion groups. Despite the differences of opinion, which sometimes appear in these groups, we stay in a joyful dialogue with each other. It was a signal of hope that ISPS Lombardia, the first region that was touched so dramatically by the virus in Europe, organized in the beginning of this new year a symposium about Collectivity and Hope. Also the webinars organised by the different regional ISPS networks all over the world demonstrated the flexibility and indestructible creativity of our organisation, full of hope. My wish for 2022 is that joy, hope and healing relationships can appear in everyone's life.

Ludi Van Bouwel  
Chair, ISPS  
February 2022

---



## **Tribute to Pier Maria Furlan** by Maurizio Peciccia

In January 2022 Pier Maria Furlan, honorary member of ISPS Italy, passed away. Piermaria Furlan in 1988, together with Gaetano Benedetti, organized the 9th ISPS international congress in Turin in which there were 1200 participants. This was my first ISPS congress, and with the exception of two, I have attended them all. Piermaria was helping us to organize the upcoming 22nd International ISPS congress in Perugia.

I remember with great pleasure his good natured, intelligent, and lucid self deprecating irony. A vivid memory I have of Piermaria summarizes his personality and our relationship. It was October of 2000 and he had organized the 42nd congress of the Italian Society of Psychiatry. The day before the congress, Turin was inaccessible due to uninterrupted flooding, the river Pò threatened to overflow. A group of patients from Sicily who had come for a theatrical performance, had adventurously arrived at the airport of Turin, but their accommodations offered by the congress were on the other side of the Pò. It was late evening, raining violently, and the group of patients and operators were on one side of the river. Piermaria and I were on the other side. We arrived at the middle of the bridge with a useless umbrella, torn by furious gusts of wind and rain. The police barred our passage. On the bridge Piermaria seemed like the commander of a ship that was inexorably sinking. The water hit us from all sides and he vehemently and impetuously shouted at the police to let us pass to reach the patients, but they were indifferent to his requests. He was trying to avoid discomforting the patients he'd invited and battled with all his force to protect them. He wanted to pass over the bridge to contact and comfort these people who suffered, to overcome the obstacles between us and them, shouting like a possessed man. For me, in that moment his even tempered professorial image left space to the soul of the 1968 protestor which had led him to close the assylum of Collegno, the biggest psychiatric hospital in Italy.

Piermaria, I will forever remember your generous and impassioned efforts to reach the suffering other, and even if now you are beyond the river, I will continue to follow your wordless example which you taught me on that bridge. Your best lesson ever.

Maurizio Peciccia



---

## **"Familiar and Psychosis"** **Two ISPS webinars focused on families**

ISPS International invite you to two webinars. We hope these conversations will raise the profile of family members, promote greater understanding of their perspectives and encourage them to be more involved in working together through ISPS internationally and within their local groups.

## Webinar 1

### What Can We Learn From Family Members?

3rd March 8.00-9.30 pm CET

Three family members will share their experiences of supporting their loved ones, campaigning for more compassionate and family friendly approaches to psychosis and how they can support others.

**We will be joined by Cindi Fisher from US, Leigh Murray from New Zealand and Tanya Frank from UK.**

**This webinar is FREE. Register [here](#)**



**Cindi Fisher**, Mother of Siddharta, age 44, is a passionate advocate for Community Transformation that includes Transformation of Herself.

**Tanya Frank** is a family member with lived experience. Her son is currently in a locked mental health rehab in the UK where he has been for almost a year now. Tanya is a member of Safely Held Spaces, Soteria UK and ISPS and it is through sharing experiences and learning from other family members that she is able to advocate for her son and herself. She has written about her journey over the last decade entitled ZIG ZAG BOY: MOTHERHOOD, MADNESS, & LETTING GO (due to be published in February 2023). She was recently published in the Observer Magazine on the subject of community and self care in the aftermath of trauma.



**Leigh Murray** is a well known family (whānau) leader in the New Zealand mental health and addiction sector. She has brought a family perspective to the ISPS-NZ national executive since 2010. As the Family Advisor for Auckland DHB (Te Toka Tumai) mental health services she has contributed to better outcomes for whānau (including children) and people with mental health and addiction needs at a local, regional and national level. Leigh is the lead developer of a new course aligned with recovery and cultural approaches called 'Awe Mātau – empowering whānau when someone experiences psychosis'.



## Webinar 2

### Learning from each other

7th April 8.00 - 9.30 pm CET

A conversation with a family member, someone with their own experience of psychosis and a clinician is planned. Family members can often feel excluded when they're doing their best to advocate for their relatives. This can cause tension and breakdown of communication within families and with clinicians. In this webinar we will explore how trust can grow and open communication can develop if we feel safe enough to be more honest with each other.

More details to follow soon.

---

## ISPS Regional Group News

---

### Review of ISPS Australia webinar Childhood Trauma and Psychosis



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 ISPS Australia hosted an online webinar with Associate Professor Sarah Bendall on the important topic of childhood trauma and psychosis. This 90-minute webinar was highly engaging and delivered guidance to attendees on the latest evidence with regard to childhood trauma and psychosis, including implications for practice. This review will share some of the key messages from this webinar.

Firstly, attendees were provided with up-to-date information on the prevalence of childhood trauma in people with psychosis, with some studies finding that up to 82% of people with psychosis have experienced trauma in childhood (Larsson et al., 2013). Something that really stood out to attendees was how common PTSD is among people with psychosis but how rarely this is diagnosed and treated. This is very important to address in treatment services given trauma has been found to predict symptoms of psychosis in prospective studies (Kelleher et al., 2013) and it has been reported that "if childhood sexual, physical and emotional abuse were removed from the population, the number of people with psychosis would be reduced by 33% (Varese et al., 2012).

A model where PTSD symptoms explain the link between childhood trauma and psychosis (Peach et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018) was presented before we began to look into what type of treatments can address childhood trauma in psychosis. Promisingly, current research suggests that standard interventions for trauma are both safe and effective for use among people with psychosis, these include EMDR (Eye-Movement Desensitisation Therapy) and Prolonged Exposure (van den Berg et.al, 2015).

Associate Professor Sarah Bendall spent the remainder of the session presenting a model for trauma-informed care in youth mental health services, which is currently operating as a collaboration between researchers and clinicians at an early psychosis service in Melbourne, Australia. This program focuses on addressing PTSD and symptoms of psychosis within a trauma-informed model of care. The overall treatment involves engaging in a series of modules which include, screening for symptoms of PTSD and psychosis, addressing safety (including both assessment and teaching distress management skills), psychoeducation, developing a timeline of life experiences (including trauma, PTSD, symptoms of psychosis and positive events/protective factors) and the development of a shared formulation in understanding the relationship between trauma, PTSD and symptoms of psychosis. Reflections from those with lived experience who had received treatment through this service were shared throughout the presentation and demonstrated how important the trauma-informed approach had been in terms of both treating their distressing symptoms and empowering them in their recovery journey.

Overall, the presentation from Associate Professor Sarah Bendall provided attendees with a comprehensive framework of treating childhood trauma in psychosis and left us all highly motivated to take what we learned into our places of work.

Julia Nicholls

---

**Review of ISPS UK webinar**  
**Burnout in Mental Health Services:**  
**Abdullah Mia and Matthew Broome in conversation**

In January Abdullah Mia, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Matthew Broome, Professor of Psychiatry and Youth Mental Health offered a webinar on Staff Burnout in the form of a dialogue facilitated by ISPS-UK Chair Akiko Hart. The format led to a lively presentation with input from the audience through the chat. The choice of topic was timely, and the discussion encompassed the stresses created by the pandemic, the BLM Movement and learning for the future.

Abdullah highlighted the similarity between stress experienced by staff and stress experienced by patients. This is disguised by terms such as burnout and moral injury. Matthew reminded us that some NHS staff had pre-existing mental health problems. They are not distinct groups.

At the start of the pandemic the feeling was that we were all in it together but then things started to get worse. Stress arrived from many directions. NHS staff bore the brunt of the early Covid deaths. Then they found themselves working in a struggling system. The general side was overwhelmed by admissions. The mental health side was deprived of face-to-face meetings and treatment options. In Birmingham staff and furniture were removed from mental health wards for a Nightingale Hospital that never opened. Some staff found

the NHS applause incongruent as they felt privileged to be in work but unable to live up to their values, offering limited services.

Abdullah pointed out the danger of shutting down our feelings to get on with the job; ignoring our own distress makes it hard to acknowledge the distress of others. Mental health staff offered support to acute medical wards. In addition to our experience of running groups, Matthew pointed out, we have longstanding experience of the unpredictability and lack of resources that the pandemic visited on the general side.

The discussion moved on to the disproportionate impact on some groups. Young people, including trainee nurses, were deprived of mentoring. Children were deprived of teaching. Not everyone has a private space where they can get help on a computer and online work is tiring.

Abdullah provided a different perspective on the BLM Movement. Although it was welcome it could mean that staff, especially ethnic minority staff, were asked to do more when they were already overstretched. There was too much questioning about the experience of racism, leading nowhere. It is the same with the communities that we serve, we over-consult, then do nothing.

A question in the chat asked about the medical model and burnout. Matthew found a podcast on Max Weber helpful. Events do not necessarily have a single cause and how we understand our experience affects outcomes. Mental health needs to look beyond diagnosis to intention and meaning, power relationships and inequalities. Abdullah agreed. Offering choice helps bring people into treatment as people worry about getting a treatment that they dislike. The cultural demonisation of mental distress creates fear.

Matthew recommended: 'When Doing the Right Thing is Impossible' by Lisa Tressman. She helps us understand that we cannot lead an ethically unproblematic life when working in a constrained system.

Abdullah recommended: 'Intelligent Kindness: Reforming the Culture of Healthcare' by John Ballatt and Penelope Campling. It highlights that the NHS is based on doing good for people but does not always work.

The webinar reminded me of: 'How to Run Reflective Practice Groups: A Guide for Healthcare Professionals' by [Arabella Kurtz](#).

Maxine Sacks

---

### **TRIBUTE to Helm Stierlin** **ISPS Honorary Member**

Psychiatrist-psychoanalyst and ISPS colleague Helm Stierlin (12th March 1926 - 9th September 2021) has passed at the age of 95. Dr. Stierlin helped organize the 7th ISPS conference in Heidelberg, Germany. He edited a book on the papers given at the conference along with Lyman Wynne and Michael Wirsching: "Psychosocial Interventions in Schizophrenia." He wrote the piece on this conference in the ISPS book edited by Yrjö Alanen, Ann-Louise



Silver & Manuel González de Chávez entitled "Fifty Years of Humanistic Treatment of Psychoses". [View here](#)

Helm became an advocate of integrating family therapy with psychoanalytic approaches. He wrote a book on this topic (Psychoanalysis and Family Therapy). Julie Kipp and I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Stierlin and having a discussion with him on ISPS and other mutual interests. Below is an ISPS Biography on him. This is another sad loss for ISPS and our field.

From this memorial:

*"With Helm Stierlin, German-speaking psychiatry and psychotherapy lost one of its most prominent personalities. He was one of the most influential among the people who had spread family therapy and systemic therapy methods around the world since the 1970s. The "Institute for Psychoanalytic Basic Research and Family Therapy" at Heidelberg University, which he founded in 1974, has become one of the most important centers in Europe. This effect was based on the one hand on Stierlin's publications, which were also understandable for laypeople, on the other hand, by organizing large international congresses in the German-speaking field among psychotherapists, his institute initiated a paradigm shift from psychoanalysis to systems theory. All of this has to do with Stierlin's personality and career. After a short time as an anti-aircraft helper, he began to study medicine and philosophy after the war. His philosophical teacher was Karl Jaspers. Stierlin completed a psychoanalytic training, worked in Switzerland and for more than seventeen years in the United States. There he worked in schizophrenia research at the National Institute of Mental Health and came into close contact with family research. When he was called to Heidelberg, he was infected by American pragmatism without losing his interest in existential philosophical questions and had already gained an international scientific reputation."*

Brian Koehler  
New York University  
ISPS-US member

### **Biography of Helm Stierlin**

**written at the time of his nomination as an ISPS Honorary Member  
by Michael Wirsching**

Helm Stierlin was born in 1926 in Mannheim. He lost his father rather early. Whereas his brother became an engineer (living in Malaysia for many years), he himself was caught between philosophy and medicine. He studied both subjects in Heidelberg, Freiburg and Zurich. In Heidelberg his academic teachers were Karl Jaspers, Alfred Leber, Alexander Mitscherlich and Victor von Weizsäcker. Jaspers became his "Doctorvater" for his philosophical dissertation.

After finishing medical school, in 1953 he went to Munich. He was disappointed by German post-war psychiatry, as it was practiced at the time in Munich's "Universitätsnervenklinik". Through the literature of Harry Stack Sullivan's writings he became curious about modern psychiatry and earned a scholarship for the Sheppard-Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson, Maryland near Baltimore. From there he changed to Chestnut Lodge, the legendary center for psychoanalytic treatment of psychosis. Even though Frieda Fromm-Reichmann had already died in 1957, he met Otto Will, Hilde Bruch and others. At that time family therapy began to evolve rapidly throughout the United States. Soon Stierlin came into contact with Gregory Bateson (who had also worked at Chestnut Lodge before), Ted Lidz, Murray Bowen, Nathan Ackerman, Lyman Wynne, and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy. This opened the family perspective for the treatment of schizophrenia and was from then on a decisive turning



point in Helm Stierlin's until then psychoanalytically oriented professional life. After the short interlude in Europe from 1963 to 1965 (Bellevue Sanatorium, Bellevue-Kreuzlingen, Switzerland) and two shorter study periods in New Zealand and Australia, Helm Stierlin returned to the United States and became a member of the National Institute of Mental Health, where he worked together with Lyman Wynne and Margaret Singer, famous developers of family psychiatry. As head of the adolescent unit, Stierlin worked on young runaways, and his first well-regarded book was on separating parents and adolescence.

A new period began after Walter Bräutigam brought Helm Stierlin back to Heidelberg to the Department of Psychosomatic Medicine, where Stierlin became director of the Department of Psychoanalytic Research and Family Therapy in 1974. From then on his theoretical and clinical work rapidly expanded. The Heidelberg concept grew, especially in cooperation with the Milan group (Mara Selvini Parazzoli, Luigi Boscolo and Gianfranco Cecchin). Stierlin also dealt with psychosomatic issues from then on and with family dynamics and treatment of severe physical illness (i.e. cancer patients).

Stierlin rapidly became a fixed point in Germany's professional and cultural scenery. He was founder of the famous journal "Familiendynamik" and author of thirteen books translated into twelve languages, e.g., Separating Parents and Adolescents, Conflict and Reconciliation, Psychoanalysis and Family Therapy, The First Interview with the Family, Unlocking the Family Door, Demokratisierung der Psychiatrie. The number of his scientific articles is approaching 300.

Helm Stierlin is also a family man at home. His wife, Satuila Stierlin, also a recognized clinician, teacher and family therapist, and his daughters, Larissa and Saskia, build the most important frame in his life.

Today almost 80 years old, Helm Stierlin is still busy in teaching, travelling and writing. He is a critical reviewer of development, not only in family therapy, but also in our society in general. Coming from a psychotherapy of schizophrenia, which heavily influenced clinical and theoretical thinking, he has expanded to become one of the prominent thinkers and workers in today's fast-expanding world of psychotherapy.



### **Upcoming ISPS Events**

Looking for a webinar or conference on psychosis to attend in 2022?

**The ISPS has over 20 regional networks around the globe, many of which organise annual events either online, or in hybrid format, as well as in person.**

Take a look at the list of [forthcoming regional ISPS events](#) and make sure you don't miss the abstract submission deadline of 15th February for ISPS Perugia 2022!

**THE CALL FOR ABSTRACTS CLOSES ON 15th FEBRUARY**  
**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](http://www.isps22perugia.it)  
CALL FOR ABSTRACT OPEN

**VIRTUAL HEALING SPACES**  
ISPS WEBINAR 3- 4 SEPTEMBER 2021  
online preview of the ISPS conference/festival 2022  
[virtual.isps2021.it](http://virtual.isps2021.it)

**HEALING SPACES HAPPENING WITHOUT AUTHORS**  
1st INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS THERAPIES FOR PSYCHOSIS  
TO BE SELECTED AS AN INVITED NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR COUNTRY AT THE 2022 FESTIVAL PLEASE PRESENT A SHORT VIDEO OF YOUR WORK TO THE "VIRTUAL HEALING SPACES 2021 - INTERNATIONAL ISPS WEBINAR"  
[www.healingspaceshappening.it](http://www.healingspaceshappening.it)

**PERUGIA 28 AUGUST 4 SEPTEMBER 2022**

SAVE THE DATE

**Did you know ISPS has a YouTube channel?**

**CO-CONSTRUCTING HEALING SPACES**  
PERUGIA 31 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2022  
22ND CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL APPROACHES TO PSYCHOSIS

**Recording of Alain Gibeault speaking about the reform of the French psychiatric system after World War II and psychosis at the  
ISPS Virtual Healing Spaces taster event for the ISPS Perugia 2022 congress**

---

**Have you joined ISPS yet?**

**If not, here are 4 good reasons why you should join us today!**

1) **Members enjoy reduced delegate fees** for ISPS conferences such as ISPS Perugia 2022.

2) Members receive 4 printed issues of the **ISPS journal Psychosis** per year and also have online access to all previous issues.

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](#)**

---

# International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis Book Series

Series Editors: Anna Lavis & Andrew Shepherd

[www.routledge.com/series/SE0734](http://www.routledge.com/series/SE0734)

Order from [routledge.com](http://routledge.com) for 20% off titles on display, and free global shipping!  
Enter discount code **IRK71** at checkout.

Order Now:



\*20% discount offer is only available on titles purchased at the ISPS conference or ordered directly from [www.routledge.com/mentalhealth](http://www.routledge.com/mentalhealth) and cannot be combined with any other offer or discounts.

**ISPS** THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL  
APPROACHES TO PSYCHOSIS

**Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group

ISPS [www.isps.org](http://www.isps.org)



ISPS | Paktolou 7-9, Ano Glyfada, Athens, 165 61 Greece

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [isps@isps.org](mailto:isps@isps.org) powered by



[Try email marketing for free today!](#)