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## ISPS Newsletter - Summer 2022

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Dear members of ISPS and other friends,



Once again ISPS lost an important figure. We received the sad news that Johan Cullberg from Sweden passed away. He was an inspiring, hardworking psychiatrist / psychoanalyst not only for ISPS but for many mental health professionals, for people with psychosis and their families all around the world. When I was a young trainee in psychiatry, his book *'Dynamic psychiatry'*, first published in 1984, was a welcome 'antidote' to the DSM, the diagnostic system in psychiatry which labels people in an alienating way. Johan Cullberg always argued for a deeper integration of psychological and human values in the treatment of people with psychosis. In my opinion his book of 2006 *'Psychoses: an integrative Perspective'*, the first book in the ISPS series, is essential reading for every psychiatrist. Johan Cullberg was an international board member of ISPS from 1990 till 2003 and chair of the board from 1997 till 2000. In 1991 he was the host for the 10<sup>th</sup> ISPS international symposium in Stockholm, Sweden. This was a wonderful conference with a variety of challenging lectures and with more than 700 attendees. His warm but modest personality made a big impression on me. In the afterthoughts of this conference he cited *'the nightmare of Per Vaglum from Norway: that the patients are given very good individual and family therapy, but since they live in a destructive institutional or social milieu, the good effects of psychotherapy are destroyed by the environment. Be that large psychiatric wards, isolation in a lonely flat or being subjected to overmedication'*. And he continued: *'That must be another important challenge for ISPS: to help us create such milieus which are really therapeutic and to continue to show our interest in the therapeutic use even of the biological treatments and methods. After all we are treating a person, not a bunch of receptors'* (Cullberg, 2006). The economic surplus of this Stockholm conference was partly used to sponsor a national conference in Sweden which was the beginning of the later 'Parachute project' for persons with a first psychotic episode. The Swedish Parachute project became a worldwide example for good practice for treatment for psychosis. The project represents an effort to provide need adapted treatment on a large scale for all persons with first episode psychosis in a big area of the Swedish population. I am convinced that the world would be better if the six principles of this Parachute project would be used for everyone with acute psychosis: (1) intervention without delay by a competent and dedicated team, preferably in the patient's home; (2) initial crisis intervention is structured according the patient's needs; (3) immediate and recurrent family meetings, generally including the person with psychosis, intended to understand the strains and resources of the family and to provide a common understanding of the psychotic

reaction; (4) accessibility and follow-up continuity provided by a specialised treatment team over a five-year period; (5) use of the lowest optimal dose of neuroleptic medication with an attempt to avoid antipsychotics during the first 1-2 weeks and (6) access to small-scale, home-like, low-stimulus overnight care when the stay in the home proved insufficient or negative during this period. The crisis home is preferably situated outside the hospital, in an apartment or a small house, and used only for 3-6 persons with a first psychotic episode. I will never forget the first ISPS conference in our country (Belgium) in 2003 where Johan Cullberg was invited to present the first results of this Parachute project. He did it in such an engaged and impressive way that he became an example for my future psychiatric work. My heart is full of gratitude for what he meant to me in the development of my further ideas. And I am sure that I am not the only one. I wish his family and his friends much warmth and support for the loss of their beloved person.

The use of a small-scale, home-like, low-stimulus overnight in an ordinary house for an acute crisis shows a lot of similarities with the Soteria houses of Mosher in San Francisco and Ciompi in Bern. It reminds us to the revival of the therapeutic communities that grew in several regions in the world in the 1970 's, especially in Italy where under the influence of Basaglia big asylums were been closed. During the next ISPS conference in Perugia this year we will hear a lot about therapeutic communities and home-like places. I enjoy this movement away from the hospital but again to the community to make the treatment of an acute psychotic crisis more human and hopeful, less stigmatising and alienating and with more involvement of family members. Johan Cullberg would had been happy to hear on this conference that the nightmare of Per Vaglum from Norway changed in the fulfilment of his own dream for the future that he expressed in the following way: *'I hope that ISPS thinking will penetrate deeper into psychiatric services. I hope that the struggle between biological and humanistic and between cognitive and dynamic will increasingly belong to history. We shall have to regard our task in a dialectical way. The risk for mistreatment will be diminished when we try to keep the three requirements of psychosis treatment in mind (a good milieu, reliable and constant therapeutic persons and -if necessary- pharmacological treatments at lowest effective doses) not monopolizing one of them'* (Cullberg 2006).

The title of the Perugia conference 'Co-constructing healing spaces' is promising. A healing space (be it at home, in a therapeutic community, in a Soteriahouse, a peer respite house or another place) has to be co-constructed with each other. For this we need a whole community. We learned from Italy that the closing of the big asylums was only successful when big networks for mental health work together to change mental health organisations. In the promotion film of the Perugia conference we learn that after 1965 Perugia was the setting for one of the most successful movements for the reform of the mental health care in the community. An alliance of politicians, nurses, patients and psychiatrists managed not only to transform Perugia's huge asylum system but also to set alternatives to that system across the whole Umbrian region. I hope that many people will have the opportunity to come to this beautiful city with a long history, to attend the conference with a wonderful and large program. In this Newsletter you will read the latest information about the conference and you can register [here](#)

Besides regular news of the local networks you will find in this Newsletter the results of the elections for the new EC. This means that the current EC will remain active for only 2 more months. I had the enormous privilege of working with a fantastic team of the EC and I am very grateful for this. Each of them dedicated themselves in a very personal way to the goals they had set for themselves to serve ISPS and this with Antonia's ever-ready support. We have worked hard but we have done so with great pleasure and conviction. A summary of the activities over the past three years by the current EC will be send to our members in a few weeks. The circumstances were not favourable: the pandemic held the whole world in

its grip and many people passed away in loneliness. Solitude was sometimes hard to bear with the rules of social distancing and the lockdowns. Moreover, since February 2022 onwards, a terrible war holds us captive. The EC expressed their statement against the invasion and violent action of Russia in Ukraine. We realise that this war has a disastrous impact on the mental health of many people, not only the people who are attacked but also people who are sent to the battlefields to attack, and their children and grandchildren on both sides of the conflict. However, in the circumstances of the pandemic and the war, ISPS showed great flexibility and creativity and certainly did not lose touch with its members also thanks to the passionate commitment of the regional chairs of the local ISPSI networks. We discovered the power of online meetings and webinars and of increased internet communication through email discussion groups and social media. I would like to thank everyone for their contribution and commitment to bringing humane, psychosocial treatment for psychosis in this changing world that keeps on giving us new surprises.

Ludi Van Bouwel  
ISPS Chair



## Results of the recent ISPS Executive Committee elections

The membership has spoken and told us clearly that they are very happy with the work of the existing EC....everyone who stood for re-election has been re-elected!

**Also, we would like to warmly welcome the newest person to join the EC, Alf Gillham.** Alf is a retired Consultant Clinical Psychologist who has served on the ISPS UK committee for many years in the past and who also played a key role in helping to organise the ISPS Liverpool 2017 conference.

As for the other 7 members of the new EC, well you may already know them. But if you can read a bit about them [here](#)

### ISPS EC members elected for the 2022-2025 term (in alphabetical order)

Ludi Van Bouwel

Cecilie Brøvig Almås  
Alf Gillham  
Jen Kilyon  
Julie Kipp  
Debra Lampshire  
Margreet de Pater  
Dag Söderström

**A big thank you to everyone who took part in the elections, nominees, proposers and not least of all our members!**

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## **Tribute to Johan Cullberg** **by Sverker Belin**

**Swedish Honorary Lifetime Member ISPS International, professor Johan Cullberg has passed away.**

**He was for many years a leading figure in ISPS Sweden and also ISPS International. Among other things, he was the chief organizer of the ISPS International Conference in Stockholm in 1991.**

Over the years Johan Cullberg became a Nestor in Swedish psychiatry and a central representative of a humanistic psychiatry, not least the care of psychotic patients. In interviews he said that it was the mental illness of his brother, the artist Erland Cullberg, that led him to choose psychiatry as a career. The experience of his brother's compulsory care shook him to the core. The vision of being able to treat even psychotic patients with dignity began then and resulted in a dedicated life's work and a celebrated writing career.

Early on he trained as a psychoanalyst, which was and still is unusual among psychiatrists in Sweden. He always put forward perspectives other than the purely medical ones and he always put people first. This meant that he did not quite follow the norm and was often questioned within the psychiatric profession as he argued that psychological factors and dysfunctional factors in society could also be the central underlying causes of psychosis. At the same time, he was also criticised at times by other representatives for this very belief, who disliked the fact that he, despite this, argued for the necessity of neuroleptic treatment for the most ill psychosis patients. In Sweden the ambivalence to his integrative endeavours appeared when at times his contributions were passed over in silence or were considered unrealistic.

Johan Cullberg became the head of one of the outpatient clinics in the Nacka project, one of the first areas in Sweden to focus on psychiatric care outside the hospital. He took special interest in the interplay between the individual patients and their close environment. Normalization was at the centre of his interests and medicine and hospital care came second. Environmental effects on mental health were studied. He wrote about the anomic milieu; its alienating effects and how it tends to deprive people from getting enough confirmation of their human dignity to allow them to go on.

Many years of research were dominated by his work with the "Parachute Project". Important research questions were: What distinguished those of the patients who had a good outcome from those who never were able to return to their prepsychotic life? And what did it mean to them and their families that instead of noisy and messy hospital wards they stayed in quiet, small, homelike units – mostly outside the hospital? He also had a special interest in finding out the consequences of offering lowest effective doses compared to minimizing symptoms by using high doses of antipsychotics, often with heavy side effects. The project was presented at the ISPS conference in Madrid 2006.

A three-year follow-up research study showed less antipsychotic usage, less inpatient care and greater functional quality of life. The results and principles awakened, for some years, an interest in Swedish psychiatry but has today unfortunately very little impact on everyday psychiatric practise in the care of psychotic patients. None the less, it is encouraging that the Swedish Parachute project became a worldwide example for good practice for treatment for psychosis.

During his lifetime, Johan Cullberg published a dozen or so books that attracted attention. He made his debut in 1973 with the book "Crisis and Development", which became a bestseller with 400 000 copies sold. His most important textbook was "Dynamic Psychiatry" (1984), which was translated into a number of languages and has been used in psychiatry training in many parts of the world. In the ISPS series "Psychosis an Integrative Perspective" was published (2006). This book provides a unique perspective on the challenges associated with understanding and treating psychoses, bringing together insights and developments from medicine and psychology to give a full and balanced overview of the subject.

In later years he widened his literary perspective and wrote books with empathic psychiatric studies of the psychotic life crises of famous Swedish writers, August Strindberg, Gustav Fröding and Stig Dagerman. His last book was "Taken ill with psychoses", 2020.

ISPS has lost an Honorary Lifetime Member – a most honourable, humble man, a respected scientific researcher, a highly valued author and an important spokesman for the humanistic approaches to psychosis that ISPS is communicating.

Johan Cullberg passed away 14 June 2022 at the age of 88.

Sverker Belin  
Chair ISPS Sweden

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## ISPS Regional Group News

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### **Review of the annual Norwegian ISPS Norge conference in Hamar, 21.-22. april 2022**

The Board of the Norwegian branch of the ISPS arranged our annual conference in Hamar, 21.-22. April. During the pandemic, we had organized two shorter webinars in order to meet the need for professional updates in the field of psychosis. This spring of 2022, it felt great to meet physically again. Over 200 professionals and experienced representatives participated. The title of this years conference was «The collapse we call psychosis». Music therapist Ola Moe gave us an artistic and serious opening and insight from Aleksander, one of his patients, with textlines like this: «I don't want to be locked up», «I'm dying inside», «Can we get through this silence?». Moe claimed that Music can help us get in touch with our deepest sorrow and pain.

Our gracious communicator of experience Chantel K welcomed everyone to the conference, in the company of Cecilie B Almås, our conscientious and hard-working chairwoman of the board.

Furthermore, the plenary lectures came like pearls on a string. Liss G Anda, psychologist from the University of Stavanger lectured on «What we know about cognitive changes in psychotic disorders». One of the findings from her research amplifies the understanding of this: «Improvement in cognitive function depends on improvement in negative symptoms». Ole G Lillevik lectured on «Violence seen in a relational perspective and conflict mitigation». He is concerned that professionals can see and understand the backgrounds of the patient's anger and powerlessness in order to reduce injustice and violence. Professor of psychology, Jone Bjørnstad explained why the most important perspective on recovery is the *relational* recovery.

The parallel sessions on the first day of the conference included a wide range of themes such as: «Health services and organization», «Psychoeducational family work», «REACT – a program for relatives», «Goal Management Training». Amy Hardy, clinical psychologist, held a videolecture on «Building safer places: traumafocused therapy for psychosis».

Many more contributors could have been mentioned by their names, professions and special interests in work and practice. But finally, I choose to mention our gracious Professor of Psychiatry, Per Vaglun. He touched us all deeply with his lecture: «The traumatized therapist – experiences from a life».

The title of next year's ISPS Norge conference (2023) is: «It takes a lot to laugh, it takes a train to cry» (Bob Dylan said that). The main theme will be «Psychosis and emotions».

Olav Løkvik  
member of the Board of ISPS Norge

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## **"How Do I Stay With?"** **Review of an ISPS Lowlands webinar**

Dear people,

I am addressing this letter to the initiators, organizers and contributors of the 'How do I stay with?' webinar organised by the ISPS Lowlands network.

I would like to congratulate you and express my sincerest gratitude for the webinar, which not only provided important information on 'How dealing with psychosis differently?' but in which the meeting online developed into a rich encounter between people facing psychosis from different backgrounds and perspectives.

The most remarkable thing was that we, as participants, could physically experience what equal communication via Open Dialogue does to a person. An approach in which vulnerability is not shunned, but on the contrary is valorized and forms the safe, common ground from which the recovery process can take root.

I attended this webinar from all three perspectives:

- as a caregiver where in my work as a family physician I have been confronted several times in recent years with a client who was experiencing a psychotic flare-up.
- as a child of a parent who experienced a serious mental crisis many years ago, through which I personally experienced what a disruptive impact this can have on the next generation if this crisis is not (carefully) cared for.
- and as a human being, who is aware of her own vulnerability and is looking for ways to deal with it in a resilient way.

In all three perspectives I felt addressed and moved. Even more, the webinar contributes to the recovery process in which I currently find myself. Thank you for this.

That today a meaningful alternative is offered in such a way that benefits both the person living a psychosis, the family and the caregiver, has a healing effect in me and it gives me hope for the future.

What if Open Dialogue is not only applied within the context of a psychosis, but in every context in which there is a psychological crisis? In all kinds of counseling? In conflicts in the

classroom, on the work floor, in our daily lives? The world definitely would be a much friendlier place.

A webinar with so many contributors, is unseen, I believe. In any case, I have never experienced it before. I imagine it was not easy to organize this online. But it was exactly this set-up that made the message come across. Because it was not explained theoretically in a few powerpoints, but through an encounter and therefore could speak directly to the heart and have a much larger impact.

Please continue with these kinds of meetings, online or live. There is such a need for this, both with people who are going through a mental health crisis, as with family members who often do not know how to deal with it, as with social workers who, from powerlessness and not knowing any better, all too often hide behind a wall of so-called invulnerability.

Some ideas that come to mind for possible future webinars:

How to decode the meaning and richness that is (often) at the heart of a psychosis?

Psychosis as a catalyst for necessary change for the better in one's life?

How can living a psychosis contribute to the recovery process from unprocessed individual and transgenerational trauma?

And what message does psychosis have for society as a whole? Can it play a role in the healing process of collective trauma?

What is the impact of a psychosis that someone went through on the 2nd and 3rd generation in a family?

I wish you all the best and hopefully see you at a next meeting,

R. D.

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## **Post Partum Psychosis in the multitude reality of Motherhood**

**A webinar by Marie Brown**

**Reflection by Bo Jobse**

Marie Brown offers us in her webinar the necessary distance to observe the dominant narrative about motherhood and related psychological experiences in the Western patriarchal culture, and she offers us an invitation to enrich this narrative. Enrichment of the narrative in order to create space for a diversity of experiences en the freedom to give personal meaning to the experiences.

In the webinar she gives us a start by offering diverse perspectives that could be useful in the creation of an enriched individual and collective narrative about the experiences of motherhood, in which there is not only spoken about the mother in third person but in which the mother in first person gets a voice.

The dominant discourse in the current psychiatry concerns the bio-medical model. Seen from this reference frame intense emotional femal experiences are often pathologised; the result of disfunctions of the female body concerning hormones and/or an underlying psychological vulnerability. Even though little research has been done on the topic of post partum psychosis, and the current classification system DSM-V doesn't entail a seperate diagnose for it, a stigmatising image of danger and a treatment focused on prevention of danger is applied. The power of the bio-medical discourse hereby robs the woman of

concern of her agency and it is often this experience of powerlessness that is at the base of the subjective experience of trauma.

Because of the dominance of the patriarchal and bio-medical discourse there has also been little research about motherhood and its subjective experiences in other fields, among which the social-psychological field. Therefore there has not been created a specific psychotherapeutic protocol focussed on support of women and their emotional experiences of motherhood. Research has shown that the socio-cultural context seems to be of influence on the development of post partum psychosis. Among which the load of the task of motherhood, varyingly influenced by different personal factors, in combination with often little support experienced in the Western individual culture. Also the paradoxical cultural values and norms concerning motherhood seem to be of influence; on the one hand a mother should be connected with her child and her own identity as a mother and on the other hand a mother needs to differentiate herself from her child and be productive within society in the area of work. A mother can actually not do it right and exactly this difficulty, professionally called 'the double bind' and subjectively often experienced as the chronic 'mom guilt' puts a mother in a trap and creates feelings of confusion. The superior worth of differentiation and autonomy opposed to connection and symbiosis that is dictated by the Western patriarchal culture seems to be of influence on this experience.

Seen from the psychoanalytical and developmental perspective the main challenge of motherhood is seen to be differentiation of the self in the symbiotic relationship with the child. Another challenge for the mother seems to be to adapt her identity to the transformational process of motherhood. With the birth of a baby also a mother is born, and therefore it is important that not only the child but also the mother feel supported and nurtured in this life phase.

The feminist perspective emphasizes this importance to see the mother in her subjective experience and not to reduce her merely to a functional object in service of the child. This offers a counter-voice to the (traumatizing) objectification of women in general and mothers in specific, observed in the Western patriarchal culture.

The spiritual perspective matches with the subjective experience of connection and oneness that is often experienced in the relationship with the child. Instead of pathologizing this experience a transcendent meaning is given.

'What are the implications for treatment of this multitude of perspectives?' was a question of one audience member. 'That there is a multitude of subjective experiences of motherhood and in line with that a multitude of treatment options' was Marie Brown's answer.

To lower the volume of the voice and thereby the power of the dominant Western patriarchal narrative and to create space for a multitude of voices, preferably also female and with personal experiences. Normalizing and accepting a diversity of subjective experiences also the ones that seem to divert from the mainstream norm. A perspective on post partum psychosis that integrates the female physiology with her individual and social-cultural context. That is the narrative Marie Brown likes to add and which I support. Marie Brown enriches us hereby with the awareness that the patriarchal and bio-medical lens seems to have become our norm(al) yet that it is just a single lens out of many possible lenses.

Bo Jobse

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**ISPS is pleased to present  
Jason Haitana from New Zealand  
Winner of the 2022 David B. Feinsilver Award**

**Jason will be giving the presentation "Te reo ororo: an indigenous maori perspective on hearing voices" at the 22nd International Congress of the ISPS in Perugia this summer.**



The Feinsilver Award is a full scholarship to fund attendance at the ISPS congress. The award is given the best research or clinical paper by a newcomer, who cannot otherwise afford to attend the congress. The fund was set up by David B. Feinsilver, former chair of ISPS, before he died after a long illness.

In Jason's own words:

E rere kau mai te awa nui nei  
Mai i te kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa  
Ko au te awa  
Ko te awa ko au.  
The river flows  
From the mountains to the sea  
I am the river  
The river is me.

That is in essence what I try and get back to in my healing, healing that I needed in order to give back in the work I do. I have been working in mental health for fourteen years. My values are of respect and servanthood, of caring for my people who struggle against not only the weight of what they carry but a system that is broken.

I believe that we need to make peoples voices heard and to challenge those things that blind or prevent us from understanding and loving one another. That means the stigma and the discriminations we all have and learning how to overcome these. People matter regardless of where you come from and what you believe in. I believe that we all have knowledge that is sacred and fulfilling and belongs only to you. This then is my journey and my hope.

Jason Haitana



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**We look forward to welcoming you to  
"Co-Constructing Healing Spaces"  
The 22nd International Conference of the ISPS**

**and the Arts Therapies Festival for Psychosis**  
**31st August - 4th September 2022**  
**in Perugia, Italy**

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**ISPS Perugia 2022 Keynote Speakers include:**

Jaakko Seikkula, Alison Yung, Amy Hardy, Vittorio Gallese, Alain Gibeault, Andrea Raballo and many more internationally renowned experts.

**Find out more about our speakers**

**View the [UPDATED conference programme](#) [HERE](#)**

**Registration fees**

ISPS Member 550 €

Non ISPS Member 700 €

Art therapists and social workers 250 €

Person with lived experience 150 €

Family member 200 €

Student 200 €

**Registration for 1 day only 180 € (perfect if you have limited time and money)**

All listed registration fees are in Euros and are inclusive of Italian VAT.

**Registration fee includes:**

- **Open Access to all sessions:** Participate in all scientific sessions.
- **Open Access to Healing Spaces Festival:** Visit performances, installations and exhibitions.
- **Participate and engage:** Join the Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception.
- **Enjoy refreshments:** During coffee breaks and lunches as indicated in the programme.
- **Meet the speakers:** Opportunity to discuss with speakers and experts in-person.
- **Network with colleagues:** Dedicated time and place for networking with your peers in-person.

Register [HERE](#)

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**PERUGIA**  
**28 AUGUST**  
**4 SEPTEMBER**  
**2022**

*Registration is open!*

### Upcoming ISPS Events

Looking for a webinar or conference on psychosis?

Did you know that 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](#)

## Did you know ISPS has a YouTube channel?



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**

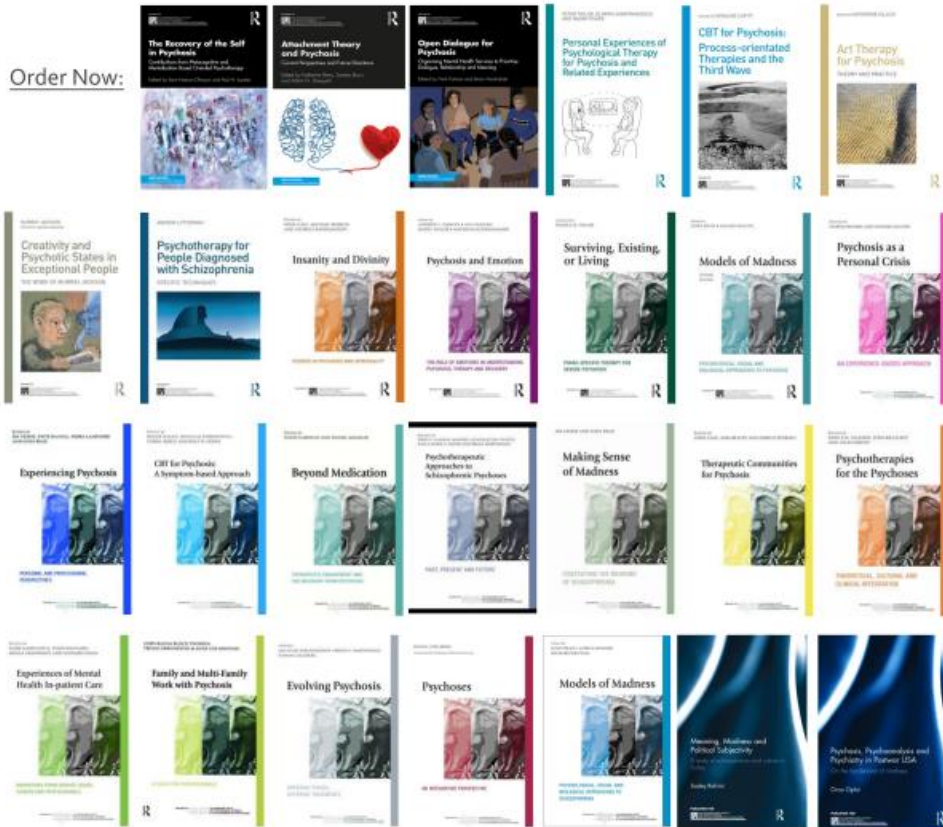
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