

NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING EMOTION-FOCUSED THERAPY

Conférences de l'Institut Universitaire de Psychothérapie : Actualités en psychothérapie 2025-26



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Director of the Institute for the Study of Trauma and Personality Disorders, Spain

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Auditoire Aloïse Corbaz – Nouvel hôpital – Bâtiment 60, rez – Salle 179

Site de Cery – 1008 Prilly

Entrée libre ou via Zoom :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87938317791>

Meeting ID: 879 3831 7791

La présentation se fera en anglais

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in individual brain function, including conditions such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia and dyspraxia. It is estimated that 15-20% of the world's population exhibit some form of neurodivergence (Doyle, 2020). Findings indicate that autistic people experience high levels of trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Stewart et al., 2021) and suicidality (Conner et al., 2020), arising directly from being neurodivergent: such as feeling stigmatised, ignored, discounted, left out and/or misunderstood (Robinson, 2018). As such, there is a need for more person-centred-experiential therapies, such as Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), to help clients work through painful experiences and trauma, emotion regulation and self-compassion. In this talk we will present our preliminary findings from the recent research of autistic and neurodivergent (AuND) experiences of Emotion-Focused Therapy. This research involved exploratory qualitative interviews, questionnaire, and focus groups with both clients and therapist participants. Using Elliott and Timulak's (2021) generic approach to descriptive-interpretive qualitative research (GDI-QR) to analyse our data, we present themes giving rise to guiding principles for neurodiversity-affirming EFT.

Dr Anna Robinson is a Senior Lecturer in Autism & Neurodiversity and Director of the Neuro-EFT Research Clinic at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. She is a practising Emotion-Focused Therapist providing individual and group therapy to autistic and neurodivergent clients, as well as clinical supervision. She provides doctoral supervision in the areas of autistic/neurodivergent process, emotions, mental health, counselling and psychotherapy.

Dr Anna Oldershaw is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Reader in Clinical Psychology at the Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University. An accredited EFT trainer and supervisor, she heads the Emotion Focused Therapy Institute of England. With 20 years' experience in the field of eating disorders, her research and clinical work has utilised lived experience insights to develop the SPEAKS therapy, an integrative EFT and Schema-informed therapy for enduring anorexia, and she co-authored the corresponding clinical guidebook Transforming Emotional Pain and Rediscovering the Self in Anorexia Nervosa (Routledge, 2025). Her ongoing research centres on eating disorders, EFT, and neurodivergence. She is involved in NHS service innovation and UK policy on eating disorders, and teaches internationally on EFT, SPEAKS, and related topics.