



WEST MIDLANDS
INSTITUTE OF
PSYCHOTHERAPY

**Unbearable Otherness:
“Working with the Threat
of Difference in
Psychoanalytic Practice”**

**SUSAN MIZEN
PHILIP STOKOE**

SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2026

9:45am – 4.30pm

ONLINE

*Chaired by WMIP Co-
Chairs Laura Chaisty
and Shane Sneyd*



CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

In this conference we will explore the psychic turbulence that arises in states of mind where otherness is experienced as too different, too separate, or too intrusive. Whether expressed through omnipotence, projective attack, idealisation, or the refusal or fear of another's separate subjectivity these psychological states present challenges familiar to all psychotherapists and mental health practitioners. These ways of relating can be found in critical states of distress, but also in the subtler corners of everyday clinical work.

TIMETABLE

9:45 – 10:00 Welcome
10.00 – 11.00 Dr Susan Mizen ‘Othering’, ‘Selfing’, the body and the brain’
11.00 – 11.30 Discussion, Chair-led Q&A and audience reflection
11.30 – 12.00 Break
12.00 – 1.00 Philip Stokoe ‘The perilous process of creating our thinking mind’
1.00 – 1:30 Discussion, Chair-led Q&A and reflection
1:30 – 2:30 Lunch
2:30 – 3.15 Break out groups - small, facilitated groups to explore the day's themes in greater depth
3.15 - 3.45 Break
3:45 – 4:30 Plenary session including facilitated reflections, integration of group discussions and closing remarks from chairs
4.30 Close

VENUE

Online via Zoom – joining instructions will be emailed out shortly before the event

BOOKING

Booking is required for this event. Completed booking forms should be emailed to:

admin@wmip.org

FEE

£70 ~ Professionals

£60 ~ WMIP members

£50 ~ Students/trainees

SPEAKERS: SUSAN MIZEN & PHILIP STOKOE

Our keynote speakers, Dr Susan Mizen and Philip Stokoe, will each offer distinct but complementary perspectives on the dilemmas that can challenge relating. Their psychoanalytic contributions will support participants to think about how we work therapeutically with the threat of difference and the intolerance of otherness within our practice.



Dr Mizen will introduce the Relational Affective Model, developed through her NHS work with patients facing severe narcissistic and somatic disorders. She will explore the dynamics of acquisitive and attributive projective identification as defences against the panic of separation and suffocation, illustrating how these patterns manifest in the therapeutic relationship and how they can be worked with psychoanalytically.

Philip Stokoe will explore how the cognitive conscious part of the human mind, which we generally consider to be the whole of our mind, develops from the activity of an innate curiosity drive. This capacity to develop cognitive conscious self-reflection is also available for perversion and transformation into mechanisms that serve to disconnect us from reality with the aim of protecting and maintaining unconscious beliefs. These processes distort normal development and, at their most extreme, create borderline personalities.

Drawing on his rich clinical experience and institutional work, he will consider how the consequent incomprehension of otherness can shape not only the internal world but also the wider cultural and societal fabric and what it means to hold a therapeutic position in the face of these pressures.

CPD CERTIFICATES

Requests for certificates should be sent to admin@wmip.org after the event.