CONFERENCE

Self-compassion and self-esteem
16 April 2012

Low self-esteem is both a pre-disposing factor for mental health problems, and a consequence of them. Hence, many people with mental health problems experience the debilitating and distressing effects of low self-esteem. However, there are few evidence-based interventions available to guide the clinician in treatment. This 1-day conference will consider the state-of-the-art conceptualisation and treatment of low self-esteem, with a particular focus on recent developments in compassion-based approaches.

This Conference will be of interest to any mental health professional working with patients affected by low self-esteem, and to those interested in learning more about compassion-based approaches. The world-leaders in the field will provide keynote talks in the morning and deliver a choice of skills based workshops in the afternoon.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Daniel Freeman
University of Oxford
Paul Gilbert
University of Derby
Deborah Lee
Berkshire Traumatic Stress Service
Kristin Neff
University of Texas

£100/£80 (Concessions)
Venue: University of Reading

Email: cwi@reading.ac.uk Tel: 0118 378 6668
# Self-esteem and self-compassion

**Venue:** University of Reading  
**16 April 2012**

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<td>9.30 – 10.15</td>
<td>Keynote speaker</td>
<td>Professor Paul Gilbert Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>The two psychologies of compassion: engagement and alleviation and their connection to self-esteem</td>
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<td>Keynote speaker</td>
<td>Professor Kristin Neff University of Texas</td>
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<td>11.00 – 11.30</td>
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<td>11.30 – 12.00</td>
<td>Self esteem in psychosis: understanding and improving</td>
<td>Professor Daniel Freeman University of Oxford</td>
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<td>12.00 – 12.45</td>
<td>What does compassion have to offer CBT?</td>
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## Workshops

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<td>An introduction to compassion focused therapy</td>
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<td>Building skills of self compassion</td>
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<td>1.45 – 4.30</td>
<td>Using compassionate imagery in shame-based flashbacks in PTSD (tbc)</td>
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**Charlie Waller Institute**  
School of Psychology & CLS, University of Reading, Earley Gate, Reading, RG6 6AL  
[www.reading.ac.uk/charliewaller](http://www.reading.ac.uk/charliewaller)

**Email:** cwi@reading.ac.uk  
**Tel:** 0118 378 6668
Professor Paul Gilbert
KEYNOTE SPEECH
The two psychologies of compassion: engagement and alleviation and their connection to self-esteem

The definition of compassion is often given as sensitivity to suffering of self and others with a commitment to try to prevent and alleviate it. Compassion is therefore based upon two different psychologies. Firstly, to be aware of and able to engage with ‘pain and suffering’ (rather than the avoidance) and secondly, to have the skill to alleviate or soften pain and suffering. Not only are these quite different psychologies but they are also quite different to the psychology of self-esteem. This talk will explore ‘engagement’ and ‘alleviation’ attributes and skills, and point to future research exploring how compassion can provide a model for therapeutic work.

Workshop
An introduction to compassion focused therapy

This workshop will outline the origins and basic concepts underpinning compassion focused therapy. Participants will learn how to utilise evolutionary insights, particularly from attachment theory to understand people’s difficulties in emotion regulation. We will address the three types of affect regulation and how these are used in therapy. Participants will also be introduced to some of the compassionate mind training exercises that are used in therapy.

About the presenter
Professor Gilbert is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Derby University and visiting Professor to Universities of Fribourg (Switzerland) and Comibra (Portugal). He is a consultant clinical psychologist in the Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust. He was made a fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1993 in recognition of his contribution psychology and was awarded an OBE in March of 2011 in recognition of his contribution to mental health services. His research and clinical work has focused on developing evolutionary models to psychopathology and understanding the role of shame and self-criticism in mental health problems and how to alleviate them.

Professor Kristin Neff
KEYNOTE SPEECH
Self-compassion: a healthier way of relating to oneself

For many years self-esteem was seen to be the key to psychological health. However, research psychologists have identified several downsides to the endless pursuit of self-esteem such as narcissism, ego-defensiveness, constant social comparisons, and instability of self-worth. Research suggests that self-compassion is a healthier way of relating to oneself, offering all the benefits of self-esteem without its downsides. Self-compassion involves treating ourselves kindly, like we would a good friend we cared about. Rather than continually judging and evaluating ourselves, self-compassion
involves generating kindness toward ourselves as imperfect humans, and learning to be present with the inevitable struggles of life with greater ease. It motivates us to make needed changes in our lives not because we're worthless or inadequate, but because we care about ourselves and want to lessen our suffering.

**Workshop**

**Building skills of self-compassion**

This workshop will provide a few simple tools for responding in a kind, compassionate way whenever we are experiencing painful emotions. There will be an interactive discussion of concepts, but the workshop will mainly be experiential, teaching a variety of practices designed to cultivate self-compassion. These skills will be equally applicable to health care professionals themselves as to their clients. This workshop will provide simple tools for responding in a kind, compassionate way whenever we are experiencing painful emotions. We all want to avoid pain, but letting it in—and responding compassionately to our own imperfections without harsh self-condemnation—are essential steps toward living happier, more fulfilling lives. Using discussion, meditation, and interactive exercises, this workshop will teach skills of self-compassion that are not only relevant to clinical work, but also to our own lives.

**About the presenter**

Professor Neff received her doctorate in Human Development from the University of California at Berkeley in 1997. She spent two years as a postdoctoral trainee with Susan Harter (a leading self-esteem researcher) at Denver University. She is currently an Associate Professor of Human Development and Culture at the University of Texas at Austin. She is considered to be one of the world’s leading experts on self-compassion, and a pioneer in the field of self-compassion research.

**Professor Daniel Freeman**

**KEYNOTE SPEECH**

**Self-esteem in psychosis: understanding and improving**

Negative thoughts about the self are extremely prevalent in individuals with schizophrenia. Such thoughts contribute to a sense of vulnerability in which paranoid thoughts flourish and they frequently feature in the content of voices. Further, the individual’s appraisal of their problems can lead to even more self-critical thoughts. The depression and anxiety that result contribute to the persistence of delusions and hallucinations. Therefore improving self esteem and mood in patients with schizophrenia is often a key target in therapy. In this talk an overview will be given of how to understand the occurrence of low self-esteem in psychosis. The multiple evidence-based techniques that can then be used in treatment will be described, drawing upon work on lifestyle, activities, happiness, calming negative thoughts, emotional expression, worry, social comparison, and visualisation.

**About the presenter**

Email: cwi@reading.ac.uk   Tel: 0118 378 6668
Daniel Freeman is Professor of Clinical Psychology, a Medical Research Council (MRC) Senior Clinical Fellow, a British Psychological Society Fellow, and a consultant clinical psychologist. He moved to Oxford University in 2011. Professor Freeman has described the new science of suspiciousness in _Paranoia: The 21st Century Fear_, and cognitive techniques to reduce the problem in _Overcoming Paranoid and Suspicious Thoughts_. He has also written more widely on the treatment of psychological and emotional problems in _Know Your Mind: The Complete Family Reference Guide to Emotional Health_.

**Dr Deborah Lee**  
**KEYNOTE SPEECH**

**What does compassion have to offer CBT?**

Compassion focused therapy has a focus on self soothing, self support and self nurturance. It is not technique driven but process driven and derived from evolutionary model of social mentality Theory. This transdiagnostic therapy offers a way to work with shame and self-attack. This keynote lecture will help elucidate the emotion regulation processes underlying soothing and shame, and discuss ways of turning off the threat system thereby alleviating distress. It will review sources of safeness alongside the key components of compassionate-focused therapy and what it has to offer mainstream cognitive behavioural treatments.

**Workshop**  
**Using compassionate imagery in shame-based flashbacks in PTSD**

Compassionate imagery in shame-based flashbacks in PTSD The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence recommends cognitive behaviour therapy for PTSD and EMDR. These established interventions need modifications to address the shame-based flashbacks, self-attacking thoughts and self-criticism as many clients have a poor capacity to self-soothe. This workshop will describe the role of self-criticism and PTSD, and the psychological threat that clients experience. The issues in treating shame-based PTSD will be identified and the role of psychological ‘safeness’ examined. The workshop will teach methods to help clients build an inner sense of safeness along with ways to address shame memories.

**About the presenter**

Dr Deborah Lee is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist who has specialised in the field of trauma and PTSD for 20 years. Her main role is Head of Berkshire Traumatic Stress Service, where she offers a national treatment service to those suffering from PTSD and complex PTSD. She is also an Honorary Senior Lecturer at University College London. Her clinical and research interests include working with complex trauma and shame. To date, she has presented over 150 invited workshops and talks on this area of clinical work.

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