

Counselling in Scotland

WINTER/SPRING 2022/23

Identity Crisis: an interview with
Simon Beaumont

Counselling and Spirituality

When We Are Passively Receptive

COSCA Recognition Scheme Survey

Nature Based, "Contact" Oriented,
Therapeutic Experiences



COSCA

Counselling & Psychotherapy
in Scotland

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OFFICERS OF COSCA

Jan Kerr **Chair**

JOURNAL EDITORIAL GROUP

Brian Magee **brian@cosca.org.uk**

John Dodds **jakk1954@gmail.com**

STAFF

Brian Magee **Chief Executive**

Jenny Bell **Development Officer**
(Individuals & Courses)

Jenna Fraser **Development Officer**
(Recognition Scheme)

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Danielle McCutcheon **Assistant Administrator**

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Editorial



John Dodds

I wanted to call this editorial, “What Happens in Lockdown Stays in Lockdown”, but please pardon my levity and inaccuracy, as lockdown is now over and this was a poor attempt at humour.

However, we are still working in the presence of the pandemic, though all seems less intense than in the past couple of years. People are still dying, of course, which is profoundly sad, and lives have been changed, with the rise in mental ill-health and support services overstretched. My silly prospective headline does say something about how we all try to deal with difficulties in life, though – a little bit of levity (and good humour) can be valuable, as can pursuing hobbies and interests, and the chance again to do some “normal” things within certain parameters.

My wife and I are lucky to live in a rural area, and the therapeutic rewards of walks in the country, amid the trees, beside a river, listening to bird calls and watching flocks of crows and other birds taking to the air is well known. This is something that Rab Erskine discusses in some depth in his fascinating essay on what he describes as *Person-Centred Ecotherapy* (well, actually three essays, originally published in separate issues of *Person Centred Quarterly*). There is scientific evidence that being in the natural environment reduces the effects of the stress hormone, cortisol. But Rab’s work brings the context and work of counselling here, too, and I am sure you will be fascinated by what he has to say in this lengthy essay.

Dr Simon Lovat offers us an interview with Sebastian Beaumont, the psychotherapist and author of the novel, *The Lost Sessions*, which concerns a young therapist who loses his sense of self after a bike accident and concussion and then seems to “lose his mind”.

When seeking articles for this journal, I found myself wondering about religious-based counselling, which I know exists for different types of religions. I was pleased, therefore, to get a piece on the somewhat more neutral ground of counselling and spirituality, written by Ian Boyd.

Spirituality means different things to different people, I know, but that sense of something other than ourselves, a sort of universal connectedness, I feel is relatable to most of us. Working within that context is a process I was fascinated to read more about, and as you will appreciate, much of it is not so different at heart than the core conditions of counselling, albeit with an extra dimension but is, as Ian says, “rooted in human experience rather than abstract theology”.

Journal regular, Mike Moss, offers us a piece called *When we are Passively Receptive: Further Exploration of the Therapeutic Relationship*. In it, he shares his experience as a therapist and supervisor “exploring how reality can be perceived beyond what we may understand as normal, and in therapy in particular, we can create more possibilities by how we respond to the request for help from our clients and understand the transformative opportunities of therapy”.

Finally, I hope you enjoy this lengthy issue and I would like to sign off by wishing you all a wonderful festive season and a guid New Year.

John Dodds, Editor