



Gender Affirming Therapy: *Working with gender expansive clients*

Live event with
Laura Scarrone Bonhomme, Skye Davies and Dr Michael Beattie

Live event in London
19 September 2023, Tuesday
Times:
6:00pm to 9:00pm, London, UK time

Venue:
Radisson Blu Edwardian Grafton Hotel, 130 Tottenham Ct Rd, London W1T 5AY

CPD/CE credits: 3

Limited number of early bird tickets at £59 only
Regular price: £69
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Every part of our lives, whether we're aware of it or not, is touched by gender identity and the cultural and contextual meanings made of it. However, perhaps because of the very pervasive nature of gendered experience, **issues of gender dysphoria or even reflexivity around one's own gender identity are rarely explored.** Instead, gender is either taken for granted, or otherwise felt to be the preserve of 'experts' and that, outside specialist gender clinics, general practitioners in the mental health field cannot or should not attempt to work with gender diverse clients.

While with growing societal awareness and acceptance, more and more gender diverse individuals are *coming-out* safely, there is extensive data to suggest that **gender-diverse people are more likely to experience mental health difficulties due to the impact of stigma.** The harmful history of reparative therapies and widespread attitudes towards gender diversity perpetuate fears within these communities; particularly around being judged, or to being made responsible for educating their therapists. On the other hand, **mental health practitioners often disclose worries about feeling de-skilled or saying the wrong thing.**

To support practitioners in addressing these challenges, Laura, Skye and Michael wrote the book *Gender Affirming Therapy: A guide to what transgender and non-binary clients can teach us*, published by Open University Press in May 2023. The book aims to take therapists on **a journey to discover the inner life and**



challenges of trans and non-binary people, and that of their loved ones with the aim of sparking compassion and confidence, allowing therapists to take on gender diverse clients, rather than referring them on.

During this engaging and interactive seminar, Laura, Skye and Michael will draw on ideas from the book and focus on three main areas before opening this up to a moderated discussion and Q&A:

Introduction to Gender Affirming Therapy

An exploration of how the book came about and why it's important for mental health professionals right now. The meaning of 'gender affirming therapy' and **what affirmative practice with a gender diverse population looks like is unpacked and explained.**

Building Common Ground

One of the key tenets of affirmative practice is increasing our knowledge on the area we're interested in building up our skills and capabilities. So much of the negativity around gender diversity has its roots in fear of the unknown and so this part of the seminar busts some myths and gives practitioners the facts around:

- **Gender Identity & Diversity:** including the prevalence of gender-diversity, detransition, access to therapy, and why and **how therapy has been helpful for gender diverse clients**
- **Gender Norms:** getting comfortable and familiar with what we mean by masculinity and femininity and the norms in society we're expected to follow to fit in and be acceptable
- **Socio-historic Background:** where are we with gender in the West right now? A short history of gender diversity and current politico-legal status of trans and non-binary folk is presented

Gender Reflexivity

Affirmative practice also involves engaging in reflexivity around our own identities as gendered mental health practitioners. Laura, Skye and Michael will explore their **own experience of intersectional identities**, and position themselves in terms of training, and the ideas they were exposed to in terms of gender, and how these were reinforced (or not) through professional training. Attendees will be encouraged to join a reflective practice exercise and conversation around the role of gender for the practitioner.

Clinical Vignettes

Finally, Laura, Skye and Michael will present a series of short case vignettes where common themes arising in gender affirming therapy come up. The interactive nature of these case presentations is structured to encourage reflexivity and wider discussion. The aim is for attendees to come out of the seminar with as many questions as they came in with, just different ones!

Open Discussion and Q&A

There will be plenty of time at the end of the seminar for questions from the floor, exploring and commenting on the themes arising and highlighting concerns for further study and exploration. So, get your questions ready to get valuable insights from these recognised gender specialists.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the prevalence of gender-diversity, detransition, access to therapy, and why and **how therapy has been helpful for gender diverse clients**
- Explain what affirmative practice with a gender diverse population looks like
- Discuss the importance of reflexivity around one's own gender identity



Following the seminar, participants will have the chance to buy the book at a 10% discount on the RRP and the authors will be happy to sign your book if you'd like.

About the speakers

Laura Scarrone Bonhomme (she/her) (MSc Health & Clinical Psy., CPsychol.) is a Clinical Psychologist who trained and developed her career internationally, working in Spain, South America, and the United Kingdom. She specialises in gender and sexual diversity working in a private capacity and, for many years, as part of the NHS Adult Gender Identity Clinic in Charing Cross. She has publications on the therapeutic relationship and challenges faced by transgender and non-binary people. Laura is part of the BPS Gender Diversity Specialist Register, a Member of the British Association of Gender Specialist (BAGIS), and a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH).

Skye Davies (she/they) is a Peer Support Worker at TransPlus, a gender dysphoria service. They are studying a Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of East London. They are currently on a counselling placement at Metro Charity where they work with LGBTQ+ people. She has previously worked as an Assistant Psychologist at the NHS Tavistock and Portman Adult Gender Identity Clinic. Her research interests are the experiences of people who detransition and psychosexual therapy for trans people. She is a member of the British Association of Gender Specialists (BAGIS).

Dr Michael Beattie (he/him) is an HCPC Registered Chartered Counselling Psychologist with a research interest in the psychology of men and masculinities. He has worked in the field of sexuality, sexual identity and sexual health as well as with issues of gender identity and gender dysphoria. His book *Counselling Skills for Working with Gender Identity & Gender Dysphoria* was published with colleagues by Jessica Kingsley in 2018. He currently works as a Counselling Psychologist in private practice as well as devising and delivering training and CPD for mental health professionals in the field of gender both individually and in collaboration with colleagues. He is a Member of the British Association of Gender Specialist (BAGIS), and a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH).

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