

# WORKING WITH LGBT ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Saturday 13 November 2010



**Psychotherapy originated in the face of anti-semitism and the rise of nazi extremism. The fathers of psychoanalysis could not shy away from a persecutory political landscape. Psychotherapists today can take shelter behind internationally enshrined human rights laws with the assumption that such laws protect the human from the abuses of the past. From our own positions, we are often more comfortable involving ourselves in the world of fantasy than we are engaging with the reality of our clients – particularly when this reality is one to which we would rather turn a blind eye.**

When working with persecuted minorities, “The Other”, external reality cannot be ignored. Those of us who work with the LGBT community are only too familiar with issues of discrimination, prejudice and Othering. Nobody knows better than the asylum seeking population in the UK the pain of being on the receiving end of prejudice and persecution. LGBT asylum seekers find themselves fleeing sexuality based persecution and arriving in another hostile political climate.

Psychotherapists working with LGBT clients may be aware of the implications of homophobia and sexuality based persecution and discrimination, but may not be aware of the political landscape being negotiated by their clients. Psychotherapists are generally at ease with the concept of bearing witness in the aftermath of trauma, but the notion of bearing witness takes on a new meaning when working with this population.

The workshop will focus on the asylum process (including support arrangements for asylum seekers), and the role of the psychotherapist within the asylum process. The notion of the witness will be considered – with particular focus on the difference between the active and the passive witness. Small group exercises and/or role play will enable participants to think in broader terms about

issues that may confront the therapeutic couple who find themselves immersed in the UK’s asylum process.

Participants will be encouraged to question, to speak openly of their own fears, prejudices and presumptions. Lucy will aim to make the session challenging without being confrontational in a forum in which we can explore our own experiences and relationship. Differences and similarities will be explored and openly discussed.

By the end of the day, participants should have a good understanding of the asylum process and the implications and complications of this process for the therapeutic couple.

**Lucy Kralj** has been working in a therapeutic capacity with survivors of torture since 2003. She is currently the lead clinician at the Helen bamber Foundation where a range of clinical, therapeutic and advocacy work is undertaken with survivors of gross human rights violations. Lucy is a registered nurse with specialist qualifications in working with asylum seekers and refugees. She is a qualified counselor and is currently completing a masters in integrative psychotherapy.

Lucy has come to specialize in long term therapeutic work with clients who have a diagnosis of complex traumatic stress +/- other disorders and disturbances. She has a strong relational approach in her practice and believes strongly in the importance of being an active witness in the aftermath of repeated relational trauma.

The presentation will focus on the intricacies of the asylum process, issues of particular significance for LGBT asylum seekers and the implications of various aspects of the asylum process for the therapeutic couple and the relationship.

**Saturday 13 November 2010 - 1pm to 7pm**  
**Central London W1**

Course Fee: £110 for Directory members (£120 for non-Directory members)

For booking form: <http://www.pinktherapy.com/training/AsylumSeekersAndRefugees.html>  
 or call 020 7434 0367