

Dr Loyola McLean

The Secrets of the Something that Gets in the Way: Managing the Disorganised Attachment of Complex Trauma in our Therapeutic Spaces

11 May 2021 | Webinar



Webinar Overview

We humans are meant to be connected and in relationship. However those with complex trauma and complicated histories of loss and trauma are, underneath it all, often disorganised and their disorganisation can disorganise us. We see this, hear this and feel this in the therapeutic space, whether our treatment is pharmacological, structured, somatic, creative, procedural or psychodynamic. The traumatic unconscious memory system is awoken and the dragon is in the room, breathing ice or fire or the wind from the desert and we must find a way to survive, hopefully both patient and therapist! This webinar will initially seek to create some relational safety and then outline the powerful experience of disorganised attachment for the child and parent, unresolved loss and trauma in the adult and the therapeutic dyad and team, and low coherence states, where strategies fluctuate and shift in the moment. We will then take a number of sessions to think about what we do and could do to “work it out together” in the moment, creating trust and safety, shifting co-regulation, attending to affect and to the personal, deeply listening to the other and reaching out with feelings, words and images and accepting our limits. Attachment and traumatology and the Conversational Model, now dovetailing bodies of knowledge will be our guides as we think through together how we transform disorganisation and unresolved loss and trauma.

Objectives

- Have an understanding of disorganised attachment, unresolved loss and trauma and low coherence states of mind that will support clinical understanding and practice.
- Be equipped with a stance and some strategies to work together with the client and the team to understand the disorganisation in the moment and to work towards trust and safety, co-regulation and the creation of felt narrative and story.
- Have an understanding of the need to attend to the personal, deep listening, embodied affect, forms of language, and metaphor.
- Understand that we must ourselves reflect and be healed.

Detailed Webinar Outline

Who are we and why do we do this work?

This session asks all attendees to reflect on who we are as individuals and a group and why we engage in this therapeutic work. Having got here, what sustains us, delights us, holds us back?

“The something that gets in the way: disorganised attachment”

This teaching segment reminds attendees of the nature and power of disorganised attachment and the way it can be felt at any level of the disorganised individual or system.

Waking the dragon and surviving (*break out rooms*)

We break into groups and share when the dragon has awoken and how we survived, or perhaps felt we did not.

In the last part of the session we share the essential points with each other to create a template for work in the afternoon.

The secrets of taming the dragon

In this teaching session we will consider the cooling and warming power of breath; the power of the pilgrim’s walk together; the wonder of the dance; the flight of meditation; the shot of the arrow in the tender breast; the quest that must be completed. Ways that a conversation can simply connect will also be considered: words that can encourage and enliven versus set on fire or turn to stone, words that cut between the quick and the marrow; deep and attentive shared silences. And of course, the power of music...

Tending to the healer and the warrior (*break out rooms*)

In this session we will consider sharing with one another what sustains and repairs us and the why and how of it. We then gather that up in the big group.

What is out of sight? What have we forgotten?

Here we consider a system/a ritual to “scan the system”, a little like a body scan, in order to consider where the trauma and loss are still hiding. How do we hold and consider the gaps in the stars, where the dark matter hides, the trauma resides?

Shake it off!

We take a final few minutes to breathe and shake off the trauma together! Perhaps we will even sing a little!

About Dr Loyola McLean

Loyola McLean is a Consultation-Liaison Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist and Psychotherapy Educator in public, private and academic practice. She holds appointments as: an Associate Professor with the BMRI, University of Sydney; a Psychotherapy Educator and the Psychotherapy Coordinator for the Sydney West and Greater Southern Psychiatry Training Network (WSLHD); a Faculty member of the Westmead Psychotherapy Program for Complex Traumatic Disorders, Discipline of Psychiatry, Sydney Medical School; an Honorary Consultation-Liaison Psychiatrist with Royal North Shore Hospital. She is a certified Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Coder. She applies an interdisciplinary biopsychosocial model to her research and clinical work, informed by attachment, neuroscience and the modern conceptions of the Self and Trauma in the Conversational Model. She is researching integrative body-mind medicine, psychotherapy, and spirituality to explore dis/organising responses of self and systems to stress and illness and the emergence of recovery, resilience and post-traumatic growth. She is exploring how attachment can be integrated with other models to open up opportunities for better collaborative research, formulation and multimodal treatments. Her PhD examined the prothrombotic and inflammatory factors in linking depression and cardiovascular disease. Her projects or collaborations include: work in burns recovery and rehabilitation and an RCT of early EMDR post burns injury; the development of and recovery from chronic complex trauma and its various sequelae including psychosomatic disorders and personality disorders; Type D personality in various health presentations; the role of attachment in eating disorders; incorporating the Adult Attachment Interview and its probes into psychosomatic research and mental health assessments; novel applications of the Conversational Model to psychiatry; process research in psychotherapy; psychotherapy education.

Registration Details

11 May 2021 | 9am-5pm | Webinar via Zoom

Standard: \$295 | Concession: \$249 | Register at: www.startts.org.au

About STARTTS

STARTTS is a specialist, non-profit organisation that for more than 30 years has provided culturally relevant psychological treatment and support, and community interventions, to help people and communities heal the scars of torture and refugee trauma and rebuild their lives in Australia. STARTTS also fosters a positive recovery environment through the provision of training to services and educational institutions, advocacy and policy work.

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