

Abstracts for SIF conference 23rd October 2015

**Workshop 1**

**Narrative therapy, Neuroscience and Post-structuralist thought.**

When exploring the many findings that are coming from neuroscience, how do we hold to the politics of experience and not slip into biological determinism and scientific truths of how we operate?

What is happening in the brain, as stories are being developed and experienced? What are the findings from neuroscience that point to the importance of developing rich stories that have an affective and embodied component?

In this workshop we explore how these questions impact our practice, and draw links between what can sometimes be seen as quite disparate areas of knowledge. The focus will be on how the findings from neuroscience support the practice of Narrative Therapy.

**Workshop 2**

**Narrative Therapy and Trauma.**

**From implicit memories to explicit stories – the pathway of the ‘absent but implicit’**

Trauma can subordinate a preferred story of self and disconnect people from a sense of having any agency in their lives. It can have the effect of escalating hopelessness, despair and emptiness. Being able to use this distress or emotional pain as entry points to a preferred story of self can provide alternative places to stand in relation to the effects of the trauma. Rather than stay 'stuck' in the single-storied account of loss and emotional pain, we can invite people to step into these different territories of self that have been subjugated. A narrative approach centres on creating opportunities for people to experience a re-invigoration of the very thin stories about their ‘sense of self’ that are a consequence of the trauma, and to pick up on the ways in which they have been responding to what has happened. This can then be richly storied in order to develop a sense of being more able to navigate one's own life.

We will look also at how the pathway of the ‘absent but implicit’ can support people to move from *implicit* negative experiences of distress, to explicit stories of their preferences. In doing this we will explore how scaffolding the ‘absent but implicit’ in what is traumatic or troublesome, constructs a bridge between the limbic (affective experience) and the cortical (meaning-making) neural systems of the brain, and so links these in ways that develop new pathways of story and hence of agency in the person’s life.

We will also draw on Deleuze’s metaphor of the rhizome as an image of how ‘lines of flight’ can be taken into new territories of meaning and how this mirrors the absent but implicit pathway.