



The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

Group Relations Conference

Strength and vulnerability: authenticity and risk in organisational contexts

Monday 17 to Friday 21 December 2018

The Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5BA



Context

This is not a conference with papers, presentations, experts and an audience. Instead, it is an immersive, participatory event where you learn from experience. Participants form a 'temporary organisation' with the sole purpose of observing and understanding the processes that go on 'under the surface' of

Strength and vulnerability

In the current social and political environment, it's not hard to find examples of strength being used in the abuse of power, or vulnerability being exploited and equated with weakness. What we do with our own strengths and vulnerabilities, and how we engage with the strengths and vulnerabilities of others impacts

in one's own vulnerability and that of service users. Organisational structures, roles and levels of authority work because they simplify how we relate to each other, but sometimes seeing just the role without also seeing the person can create barriers to more creative ways of working.



organisational life. The kinds of processes at work in a 'temporary organisation' are common in all organisations. This conference provides a space to see their impact, recognise our own contribution to them and make sense of the challenges of modern organisational life. This understanding is informed by psychoanalysis and open systems theory.

on how we collaborate, negotiate and work. This can be exacerbated by pressure from external forces. Certain roles can attract powerful beliefs about what it means to be strong, or what it means to be vulnerable. It can be hard to move away from such beliefs – or to trust that strength and vulnerability can co-exist. In the public sector, there is a risk of turning away from leadership and seeing it as a caricature of 'strength'; or of over-investing

Authenticity and risk

So how do we find the courage to find out about our collective and individual strengths and vulnerabilities? It means being oneself, but with an awareness that there is a job to do. Diversity can generate curiosity and interest, or it can lead to self-protective positions. Authenticity means taking the risk of expressing curiosity, rather than relying on group beliefs that make the world seem a simpler place.



One of the purposes of this conference is to learn from experience about how to create environments that promote authentic contact and the creative buzz of taking a risk.

Design and method

The conference is based on a model of 'learning from experience' and includes a range of events in which the nature of the 'temporary organisation' can be lived and explored.

As in any organisation, the experiences of organisational boundaries, differences in roles, the taking up of authority, and the possibilities for leading and following will be present. There to be learned from. What shape this particular 'temporary organisation' takes, how fluid it is or how stuck it gets, how much it can shift and change, will be determined by how all parts come together and interact. A key aspect of the role of conference staff is to provide consultancy ie to offer observations and hypotheses about ways of understanding what unfolds .

Conference plenaries

The opening plenary invites members and staff to share their experiences of 'crossing the boundary' into the conference ie what is desired or feared, what left behind? The closing plenary will be an opportunity to reflect as individuals on what has been experienced and what might be taken from this experience.

Small study groups

These are an opportunity to work in a group of between 9 and 11 people, in order to better understand small group processes as they occur.

Large study group

All members come together to experience and learn about the interpersonal processes arising in a large group.

Review groups

Groups of up to eight members come together to review the experience of the conference, including exploration of the roles taken up and opportunities still to be explored. A central aspect of the review group is using the perspectives of other members to make sense of individual experiences.

Application groups

These take place in the same configuration as the review groups and are an opportunity to explore links between conference experience and each individual's experience in their own organisation. Again, making use of the experiences of other members is key to this.

Intergroup event

This offers the chance to experience and explore relationships between groups, and the challenges and opportunities of exercising authority on behalf of others.

Organisational event

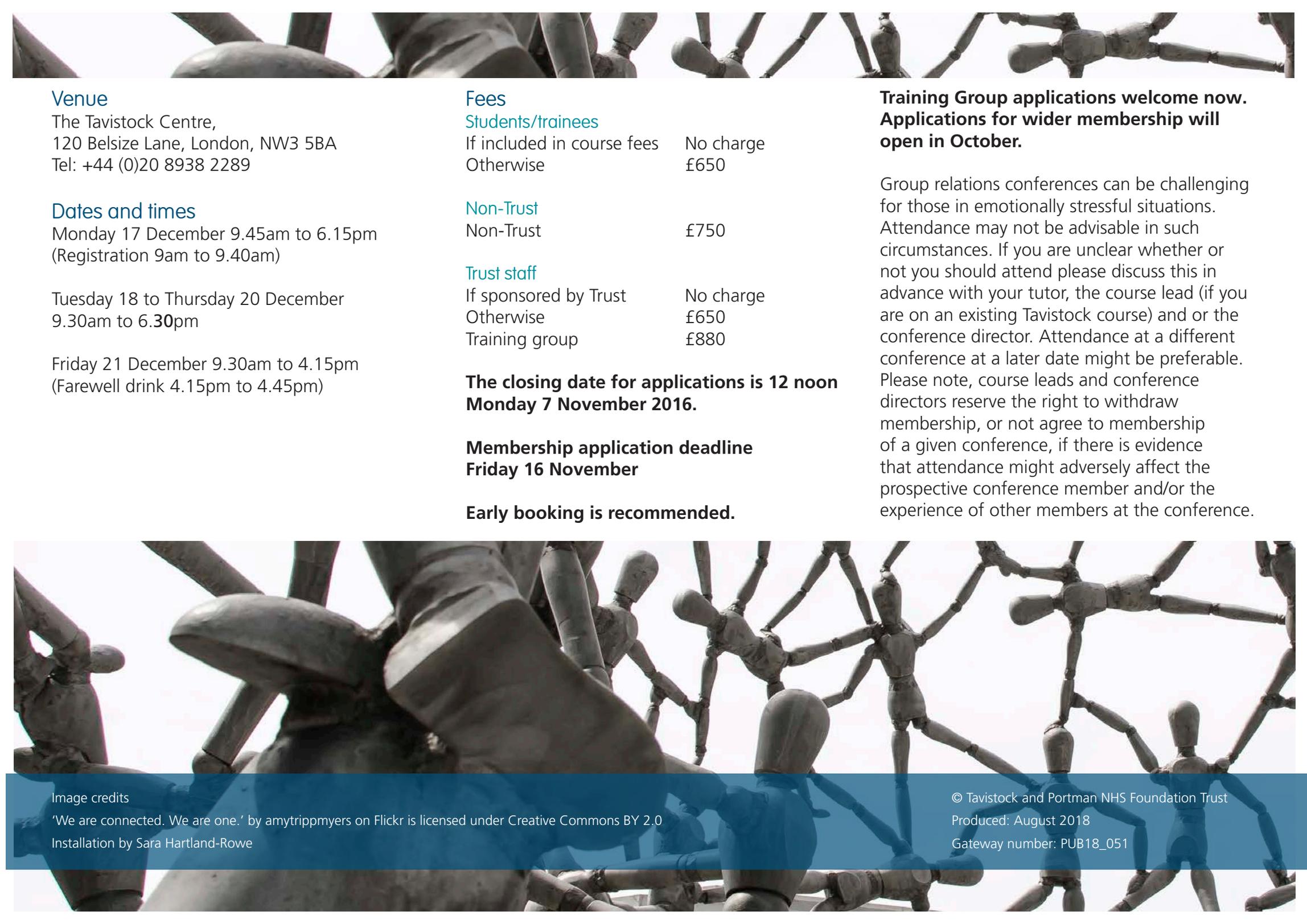
Unlike the intergroup event, where no individual group holds a management role, the organisational event explores a setting where there is a recognised management group, explicit roles and levels of authority. What kind of organisation is created, how it is experienced, and how open it is to change and development will be influenced by the conscious and unconscious beliefs brought to it.

Who can take part?

The conference is for up to 75 members, who currently work or study at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, or are on any Tavistock accredited courses in the UK as well as those from settings external to the Tavistock. A range of backgrounds will be represented including social work, child psychotherapy, systemic family therapy and psychiatry, and organisational consultancy.

Training group

The conference also offers the opportunity for a group of up to ten members to work in experiential as well as consultative roles. The training group has its own additional schedule and events. Training group applicants should have previous membership experience of two group relations conferences. Early application is recommended as places are allocated on a competitive basis. NB The Training Group schedule will also involve time on Sunday 16 December and may entail earlier start and later finish times than the wider membership.



Venue

The Tavistock Centre,
120 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5BA
Tel: +44 (0)20 8938 2289

Dates and times

Monday 17 December 9.45am to 6.15pm
(Registration 9am to 9.40am)

Tuesday 18 to Thursday 20 December
9.30am to 6.30pm

Friday 21 December 9.30am to 4.15pm
(Farewell drink 4.15pm to 4.45pm)

Fees

Students/trainees

If included in course fees	No charge
Otherwise	£650

Non-Trust

Non-Trust	£750
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Trust staff

If sponsored by Trust	No charge
Otherwise	£650
Training group	£880

**The closing date for applications is 12 noon
Monday 7 November 2016.**

**Membership application deadline
Friday 16 November**

Early booking is recommended.

**Training Group applications welcome now.
Applications for wider membership will
open in October.**

Group relations conferences can be challenging for those in emotionally stressful situations. Attendance may not be advisable in such circumstances. If you are unclear whether or not you should attend please discuss this in advance with your tutor, the course lead (if you are on an existing Tavistock course) and or the conference director. Attendance at a different conference at a later date might be preferable. Please note, course leads and conference directors reserve the right to withdraw membership, or not agree to membership of a given conference, if there is evidence that attendance might adversely affect the prospective conference member and/or the experience of other members at the conference.

Image credits

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Installation by Sara Hartland-Rowe

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Application form

Please complete and email to the Conference Administrator, Tavistock Centre at: grc@tavi-port.nhs.uk.

Personal details

Title

Forenames

Surname(s)

Gender

Date of birth

Home address

Postcode

Telephone

Work

Home

Mobile

Employing institution

Current work title

Discipline

Main role(s)

If you are a student/trainee at the Trust indicate

Course code

Course name

Course year

Training

Please give details of any training undertaken (including any group relations experience) that may be relevant to the conference, giving name of institution and dates.

What do you hope to gain from attending the conference?





Payment arrangements

Please tick one

I enclose payment of the Training Group member fee of £880.

Please invoice me for the Training Group member fee of £880. Invoice address:

The £650 conference fee is covered by my course arrangements. (Please check with your course director)

The conference fee is not covered by my course (or Trust employment) arrangements and I enclose payment for £750.

Please invoice me for the fee of £750. Invoice address:

The fee will be fully/partly covered by the following funds/sponsor (please give full details including invoice address and contact details):

I am employed by the Trust and sponsored by the department. Please give details:

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust follows an equal opportunities policy in all its practices and teaching. All applicants will be considered on the basis of suitability for this conference irrespective of disability, gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, or social class. The information you provide will be treated as confidential.

Please discuss any special needs with the pre-conference administrator.

Declaration

I commit myself to attending the whole conference programme from Monday 17 to Friday 21 December 2018.

Signature:

