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Welcome from the Editor

This month, our 15th issue of *Conversations in Psychology*, starts with a quick introduction from the new editor. My name is Skye and I am the Academic Administrator for the wonderful School of Psychology at Arden.

We start our issue, with a note from our Head of School, followed by our usual **faculty news**, including an outline of our **Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategies** for the next 3 years. We then have an update from the growing **Academic Skill Team**.

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Stay in touch & get involved

Our community section also includes new segments. The **You Said, We Did** segment will highlight how we are working to implement improvements, based on student feedback and our **Student Shout Out** section features recognition for some amazing contributions.

If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of the newsletter, contact me at socialsciencenewsletter@arden.ac.uk

I will end by wishing you all happiness for the upcoming holidays and a joyful start to 2023.

We profile Senior Lecturer, Marie Chellingsworth in our **'getting to know the Psych team'** segment.

You will also read thought provoking articles by Melanie and Galina in our student article and dissertation spotlights.

Our **Student Community** section is full of exciting opportunities and information, including dates for upcoming events and how to stay connected with your peers.



Skye Tupholme

Academic Administrator
School of Psychology



A note from our Head of School: Gail Steptoe-Warren

Welcome to our final Psychology Newsletter of 2022 and what a year it has been for the School of Psychology and our students.

We have launched 3 new courses BSc (Hons) Psychology, BSc (Hons) Psychology with Counselling and MSc Business Psychology. Our school has grown both in terms of student numbers and academics (over 50 permanent academics in the school now). It is truly amazing!

We have also been working very hard on new projects to support our students in developing additional skills such as the virtual learning assistant, virtual peer guide, virtual research assistant and many more! I fully support and encourage students to be involved in these schemes as it provides you with opportunities to develop your knowledge and practical experience, which employers want to see and thank those that have been involved to date, you make a difference!

The most enjoyable days of the year, for me, has been the 2 [graduations](#) of 2022 that I had the pleasure to attend. This is where we celebrate the achievements of all our students who have worked hard and achieved their goal of attaining a degree from Arden University. Well done to you all!!



Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy and healthy festive period and look forward to a fantastic 2023.

Gail Steptoe-Warren

Head of School
School of Psychology

Welcome

We warmly welcome new team members and celebrate internal promotions!

- ◆ **Nick Shaw**
Assistant Lecturer, Birmingham
- ◆ **Tao Yang**
Assistant Lecturer
- ◆ **Teresa Arrulo-Clarke**
Lecturer, Manchester
- ◆ **Ella Hatton**
Senior Lecturer
- ◆ **Amy Hogan**
Senior Lecturer
- ◆ **Leanne Rowlands**
Principal Lecturer
- ◆ **Emily Blakemore**
Assistant Lecturer
- ◆ **Sharon Buckland**
Programme Lead
- ◆ **Ashleigh Johnstone**
Lecturer
- ◆ **Bethany Wainwright**
Lecturer
- ◆ **Susie Phillips-Baker**
Business Psychology Programme Team Leader
- ◆ **Skye Tupholme**
Academic Administrator to the School of Psychology



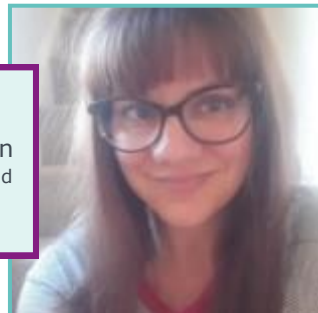
Teresa Arrulo-Clarke



Ella Hatton



Amy Hogan



Sharon Buckland



Skye Tupholme

From associate to permanent lecturer!

We are thrilled to welcome to the permanent team:

- Stephen Farmer**, Holborn
- Georgios Argyros**, Holborn
- Chris Gunn**
- Christina Murphy**
- Linda Rockson**, Tower Hill

Congratulations

- ◆ **Konsatntios Arfanis** was selected as the lead feature in THE's latest [spotlight feature](#) on misinformation. His feature, which explores what we can learn from Socrates to help students question information, is well worth a few minutes of your time!



Konstantinos Arfanis

- ◆ **Gail Steptoe-Warren** has been appointment as the UK member for the EuroPsy Specialist European Awarding Committee for Work and Organisational Psychology – S-EAC W&O
- ◆ **Dr Chris Gunn** has completed his PhD





Introducing our Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy 2022-2025

As part of our commitment to helping students achieve success, we're proud to unveil Arden University's new Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy for 2022-2025.

The strategy was delivered by our Faculty of Teaching and Learning and comprises a number of clear objectives, paying specific attention to areas that best help achieve student success across their specific programmes.

Encouraging us to support students' learning experiences, our Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy asks three vital questions:

- 1) What factors shape and inform our approach to the learning, teaching, and assessment aspects of our programmes?
- 2) How do we approach the design of our programmes, our teaching practices, and students' assessment?
- 3) How do we maintain quality and consistency across all of our degree courses?

In order to answer these, we've outlined ten 'Pedagogical Principles' which we believe should be embedded in everything we do as a university.

Through our 10 principles of pedagogy, our learning, teaching, and assessment strategy will:

- Be digital by design
- Respond to changing professional contexts
- Embed inclusivity
- Be enriched by data and informed by evidence
- Promote engagement
- Stretch and challenge our students
- Embed skills development
- Reflect real-world situations
- Showcase contemporary, innovative teaching practice
- Offer flexibility

Our objectives, and these principles underpinning them, are a key driver for us in ensuring we provide a digital-led and inclusive education process with an emphasis on real-world skills development. Especially as our focus is on giving students everything they need so they can take leading roles in the jobs of the future.

Through the implementation of these principles we are confident of fulfilling our strategic objectives of ensuring high levels of student achievement, sustaining a relevant, flexible, and diverse academic portfolio, and enabling the continuous development of academic staff to support teaching excellence.

Victoria O'Donnell
Interim Deputy Vice Chancellor



Psychology
At Arden University

School of Psychology:

Our strategy

Our purpose

To become the first-choice provider of Psychology programmes for ambitious, career-focused, lifelong learners worldwide and gain a reputation for delivering outstanding impact, convenience and relevance to the graduates and workplaces of today and in the future

Our vision

To help people thrive and succeed through 'real world relevant' education that is fuelled by technology, shaped by employers and built around learners' lives.

Our commitments

Digital first

To provide our learners with an innovative 'digital first' student experience that supports their career progression and wellbeing.

Convenience

To challenge traditional conventions in Higher Education by pioneering new, flexible modes and options for accessible learning.

Global reach

To diversify and expand our global offer by providing leading, digital first programmes to existing and emerging markets across the world.

21st Century business

To work hand in hand with industry partners to equip every Arden graduate with the skills they need for them to thrive in their chosen career.

Continually evolving curriculum

To continually introduce new programmes that focus on emerging professions, skills and market disruptions.

Our values

Aligned to our **SPARK** values: Stand-out, Progressive, Accessible, Resourceful, Kindness.

Stand Out

Our creativeness and willingness to do things differently shines brightly on the inside and is truly visible on the outside.

Progressive

We inspire our students and one another, igniting bright futures through developing our knowledge and innovative use of technology

Accessible

We make education truly accessible, creating an inspiring and welcoming environment for everyone to flourish.

Resourceful

We strive for the best for our students and each other, finding ways to catalyse careers and accelerate development.

Kindness

We embrace a culture of togetherness and support that radiates through our teams

Near-death experiences, the nature of conciseness, and turning the brain-mind dynamic on its head

By Melanie Henretty
BSc (Hons) Psychology

In all honesty, I had always believed that near-death experiences (NDEs) were more of a sociological fabrication of western culture than anything else, somewhat analogous to reports of alien abduction. If there was any truth to it, it was likely just the brain's circuitry going doolally as it died. I had not given the concept any serious thought at all. Until now.

I was introduced to the debate around NDEs during a recent lesson within the Key Studies module of the BSc Psychology. Whilst initially cynical, the reports of veridical perception had me intrigued. I read accounts from those who claimed to have risen out of their bodies whilst unconscious in A&E, and could later recall vivid details about the people, conversations, layout, and features of the emergency room, despite

never having been *awake* in that environment. I found this feature of the NDE compelling, and before I knew it, I had embarked on a journey down a rabbit-hole that Alice herself would be envious of.

The literature around NDEs is truly awe-inspiring. There are several common characteristics which define a near-death experience, including visions of spiritual beings, religious figures or deceased relatives, transcendence of spatiotemporal boundaries, accounts of veridical perception and out of body experiences (Greyson, 2003). Many experiencers speak of an all-encompassing sense of unconditional love, peace, and acceptance, accompanied by a powerful light, and an overwhelming clarity of awareness, as though suddenly

everything in the universe made perfect sense to them.

As something of a cynic, with my default perspective of life firmly rooted in science, I was keen to discover what the assumed biology was behind this phenomenon. I expected to read evidence of neurological correlates and offered explanations involving atypical neural activity or neurochemical imbalance within the brain that were responsible for these visions.

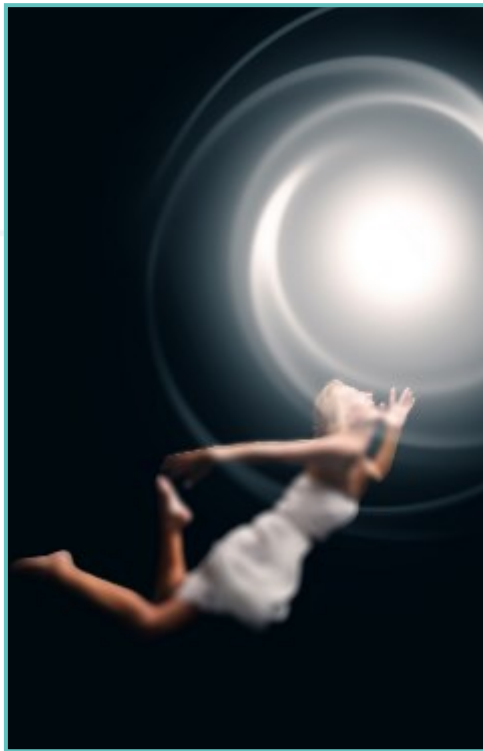
However, the present literature offers little evidence for a neuroscientific aetiology for NDEs. These well-defined experiences have not been replicated through electro-stimulation studies such as that of Penfield and his contemporaries (Tong, 2003). The experiences of seizure



patients (for those few that remember anything at all) do not match the NDE profile either (Greyson, 2014). It is said that electrical activity in the brain ceases around 6-7 seconds after the heart stops (van Lommel, 2011); if NDEs are a product of such electroactivity, how can they continue after this activity has ceased?

Then there are neurochemicals. Once again, accounts of hallucination-like experiences during hypoxia do not match the NDE profile either (Whinnery, 1997) in that these patients normally describe a stressful, muddled, 'unreal' state (Breitbart et al., 2002), not the calm, hyperaware state described by experiencers. Similarly, the effects of medications employed during medical crisis, are not thought to induce NDEs – in fact fewer NDEs have been recorded in medicated patients than unmedicated (Greyson, 1982). Finally, psychoactive substances such as ketamine have been shown to *depress* brain activity rather than heighten it (Corazza & Schifano, 2010). In short, the current neuroscientific literature can only provide partial and/or vague explanations for some of the component elements of NDEs - nothing conclusive, compelling, and certainly not a theory which can begin to explain the phenomena as a whole.

Before I knew it, my reading had taken me from a handful of intriguing peculiarities to the cusp of a new understanding of consciousness, and the idea that our generative view of the brain-mind dynamic, the basis of all neurosciences, might be misguided. If NDEs can occur when the brain is clinically void of any physical functioning, and memories of such experiences can be stored and later recalled, then this is to suggest that consciousness is something that exists independently of the brain, rather



than being produced by it. Alternative theories, drawing on philosophy, mathematics, astrophysics, and psychiatry, suggest that consciousness is an external entity – a universal truth – which sits outside of the physical world. NDE research has led some scientists to believe that the brain may function as a filter, or moderator, of consciousness, allowing us access to only the elements necessary for our physical survival, in the same way that our eyes and ears only register the rays and waves useful to our species (Greyson, 2012). It fits then, that if the brain activity is reduced by psychoactive substances such as ayahuasca, its filtering capabilities are thus compromised, which might explain why users are able to experience a "higher state" of consciousness and

unimpaired awareness.

Of course, this article cannot begin to do justice to the myriad of questions and implications these ideas raise. Nor can it convey in any detail the wealth of contemporary evidence and historical accounts which support this alternative view (although I would implore you to explore this for yourself). It seems there is no more concrete evidence that the brain produces consciousness than there is for this alternate perspective, and yet, if we continue to only pursue our understanding of the brain-mind dynamic through the generative lens, we risk continually "chasing problems that simply do not apply in a non-local world" (Dossey, 2013).

As for me, my interest in neuroscience has not diminished; rather, it has been reframed. The NDE literature has opened my eyes to far more than the authenticity of this phenomena; my perception of the fundamental nature of consciousness has been completely transformed. By approaching my study of the brain with an open mind, I hope to be part of a seismic shift in our understanding of how the brain and the mind truly interact.

Would you like to write an article for the next newsletter?

Contact socialsciencenewsletter@arden.ac.uk to find out more.

SKILLS

Academic Skills: Embedded sessions

What are embedded Academic Skills sessions?

This means the Academic Skills workshops and session will be integrated with your usual classes and will work with your module tutor to make sure you have the skills needed to get the best possible experience from your course.

Why are Academic Skills being embedded in courses?

With these new sessions our aim is:

- To give our new students an essential rounding in academic skills at the start of their program
- To ensure all students are aware of the Academic Skills Tutor team and their role in supporting students throughout their time at Arden
- Embedding academic skills in a module is a much better way of delivery, as we aim to help students understand the importance and value of the skills, rather than as a stand alone session

What will be covered in the sessions?

The material will be covered over approximately 3 sessions and will include:

Research, credible resources and academic writing.

- Navigation of the Library Portal and subject guides
- Critical thinking
- Paraphrasing
- Structuring an assignment

Academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism

- How to avoid plagiarism
- Turnitin reports
- Citing and referencing (program specific)

How will the session be delivered?

An Academic Skills Tutor has worked with the programme's module leader to contextualise the workshop, to make it directly relevant to your study material.

The session will be delivered face-to-face, with the Academic Skills Tutor leading the session, but with your tutor on hand to support.



Academic Skills Tutors— what can they offer?

Our specialist tutors can provide support to students including:

- ◆ Referencing & plagiarism
- ◆ Academic integrity
- ◆ Academic writing
- ◆ Critical thinking
- ◆ Reading & note-taking
- ◆ Advanced literature searching
- ◆ Searching for & evaluating literature using the Library Portal
- ◆ How to use your Virtual Classroom
- ◆ Proofreading (up to 500 words of one assignment)

Embedded sessions are currently only available to our Blended Learning students.

All support and guidance from the Academic Skills Tutors can be utilised by our Distance Learning students online.

Meet the Team!

While we did a feature on the wonderful Academic Skills Tutors back in September 2021, the team has grown considerably since then, lets us introduce you to them!

Academic Skills Team

						
Debora Quattrocchi (Holborn)	Mayowa Dada (Holborn)	Lisa Farrant (Holborn)	Martin Marguerie (Tower Hill)	Kevin Myers (Tower Hill)	Yachien Huang (Tower Hill)	Mariam Settas (Ealing)
						
Hazel Bowley (Birmingham)	James Nixon (Birmingham)	Christopher Moore (Leeds/Distance Learning)	Lauren Hamilton (Manchester)	George Collins (Berlin)	Metin Esen (Berlin)	Hannah-Freya (Leeds) Beg 3 rd Oct.

**One-to-one support
Workshops
Online and face-to-face
6 days a week**

Monday to Friday 09:00—22:00
Saturday 09:00—17:00

BOOK NOW

by visiting the Academic Skills Tutor Appointment page on the Library Portal or email directly at study-skills@arden.ac.uk



You can also follow the Library Team on Twitter
@LibraryArden



Summarise who you are and your role at AU.

Hello! I'm Marie, and I am a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Arden University. Since starting, I have been authoring a range of new modules and supporting Introduction to Individual Differences and Mental Health on the last study block, as well as setting up the Faculty SPARKindness Wellbeing Committee. My passions include listening to music and watching it live, my 3 Irish Setters and 4 rescue chickens and spending time around the lovely Devon Countryside and beaches where I live. Prior to working at Arden I worked as Clinical Director for a large mental health and psychological therapies organisation and as a Subject Matter Expert and Author for digital health platforms creating and reviewing online CBT treatments for Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Insomnia and anxiety disorders and depression. In my spare time at home, you can probably find me either listening to music or watching Netflix, but I'm generally at my happiest when pottering in the garden, walking the dogs or buying new clothes or things for my house! I do love shopping....

Can you tell the readers about your main research interests?

My research interests are in Low Intensity CBT and psychological wellbeing, CBT,

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), student wellbeing, the design and readability of Self-Help materials, Digital CBT programmes, and the transfer of clinical skills behavioural training into clinical practice and patient outcomes.

What is your favourite academic experience to date?

When I worked at Nottingham University many years ago back in 2008, I moved over from clinical practice in psychological therapies to be Director of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) training at the start of the national roll-out in England. I was a member of the Department of Health Workforce, Education and Training committee, co-authoring many of the materials and resources for the training and clinical services at the time.

It was a hugely exciting time and so amazing to see the massive impact the new Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) role had on patient outcomes. What was envisioned and attempted for IAPT back then was ground-breaking for mental health, including that new role! Prior to IAPT patients may have had to wait 12-24+ months for an evidence-based therapies for depression and anxiety disorders like CBT; if they could

access it at all. IAPT meant many thousands of new CBT therapists and the PWPs were funded to train and deliver these treatments to give patients quicker access to treatment. I was then a consultant to the development of the Australian IAPT programme and my work at Nottingham led on so many great opportunities to present internationally and travel. The team I worked with there were fantastic and we remain really good friends. It was a fun time – but very busy!

What is your favourite thing about being part of AU?

I've only been in the role since January, but so far, the rest of the team! Everyone is so welcoming, friendly, and supportive of each other. I'm also really love the distance learning approach at Arden, supporting students and the authoring process! I really like how quick paced the university is, new ideas get actioned so quickly and there are so many exciting things happening! I particularly love that I have been able to bring in my passion for wellbeing for staff and students and create the SPARKindness Faculty Wellbeing Committee.

Dissertation Spotlight

No place for humour? Art therapists' perspectives on humour, and the relevance of setting to humour in group art therapy

By Galina Gardiner
MSc Psychology

'Humour has its place in life ... one place where it has a very limited role, if any, is in psychotherapy'
(Kubie, 1971, p866)

Tanzania, 1962: an epidemic swept across the western shores of Lake Victoria, affecting one thousand villagers and leading to the closure of several schools. Yet there was no viral transmission – this was an outbreak of the giggles. You may laugh – but laughter is contagious, thought to result from emotionally wired mirror neurons in the cortex firing upon observing others' behaviour (Kramer, 2012).

Imperial College, London, fifty-six years later: a class of MSc engineering students were watching funny video-clips of Mr. Bean. Following this, they were tasked to create innovative designs for shoe racks. They performed significantly better in creativity measures than their counterparts who do not watch the videos (de Napoli et al., 2018).

What do these examples show? Humour – including laughter – is both a social and a creative phenomenon. Traditionally overlooked in psychology, its importance for wellbeing is beginning to be understood. Defined in psychological terms as

a recognition of 'playful incongruity,' accompanied by feelings of mirth, humour has been shown to reduce stress and enhance neural circuits. It has considerable potential to improve lives through psychotherapy. (Martin & Ford, 2018).

This article describes a research project investigating the potential of humour in **group art therapy**. Like humour, group art therapy contains both creative and social elements, combining art therapy - in which art making helps to process mental distress - with group therapy, whereby social interactions enable emotional healing (Case & Dalley, 2014).

Existing research, albeit sparse, indicates that humorous interventions in group art therapy can improve client outcomes, enhancing bonding and enabling shared enjoyment and acceptance of difficulties (Grand, 2017; Mango & Richman, 1990). Recent studies point to a further factor relevant to humour and group art therapy: that of the setting, or space where therapy takes place. Museum and gallery settings have been found to level power dynamics and enable shared humour

in group art therapy (Watson et al., 2021; Lobban, 2017), It is also theorised that secure, relaxed environments help put people in a 'paratelic' (open, playful) state, thought to be necessary for humour (Gibson, 2019).

This research explored how humour interacts with group art therapy, and the influence of setting on this relationship, in the hope that findings could help target future interventions designed to improve client outcomes. To do so, online interviews were conducted with five art therapists, posing open-ended questions designed to elicit their experiences of humour and setting in group art therapy. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts (after Braun & Clarke, 2006) identified three themes relevant to the research project.

Firstly, the multifaceted nature of humour became apparent - including surprise, defensive, self-deprecating, and even gendered humour, experienced across a range of client groups. Although mainly positive (e.g., providing hope or inspiring debate), therapists pointed out potentially nega-

tive repercussions of misunderstood jokes or culturally inappropriate banter.

Secondly, the potential value of humour for group art therapy was described to have several channels. Art was one of these channels: humour experienced in mess-making, experimentation and humorous images allowed therapeutic benefits such as acceptance of mess/mistakes, pleasure in creative play, and symbolic expression. Group interaction provided another outlet for humour: shared mirth was perceived to encourage group bonding and improve social skills. Sensitive therapist management in timing and appropriateness of humour was also seen to be important; and group art therapy itself was depicted as a unique channel for humorous expression. This was particularly poignant in challenging environments such as an adolescent inpatient unit in which the art therapy group was 'one of the only spaces where [clients] were free to, laugh and joke'.

Thirdly, the influence of setting on humour in group art therapy was found to depend largely on client group differences. For example, the severity of some inpatients' conditions limited both choice of setting and clients' engagement with humour. For outpatient groups, informal commu-

nity spaces such as museums and artist communities were perceived to encourage humour in contrast to the 'heavy, tense' atmosphere of formal clinical settings. Online settings were described to invite their own distinctive humour: for example, the technical challenges of moving online during the Covid pandemic led to shared mirth and bonding when 'animals walk[ed] across the keyboards.'

However, it is important to relate these findings to client outcomes. The apparent ability of humour to mediate therapeutic processes such as bonding, pleasure/play, and symbolic expression (Gabel & Robb, 2017) implies that humour has potential in many areas of group art therapy. However, its complexities need unpicking to isolate the influence of different elements of humour (amount, style, timing etc), on different therapeutic mechanisms. Adding setting into the mix further complicates matters.

One way forward might be to conduct targeted studies on groups with shared characteristics using similar humour interventions. For example, the perceived ability of creative mess to generate humour could be investigated by correlating messy/non-messy therapy sessions with



incidents of mirth, using an appropriate facial coding system alongside pre- and post-test self-reports of wellbeing (Martin & Ford, 2004). Focused studies may help isolate different facets of humour, enabling therapists to manage and integrate humour according to their preferred methods.

In conclusion, this research suggests that, contrary to Kubie's (1971) initial pronouncement, there may well be a place for humour in group art therapy. However, considerably more focused research is needed before its true potential becomes clear.



Would you like to feature as our next dissertation spotlight?

Speak to your supervisor or contact socialsciencenewsletter@arden.ac.uk



What is a Drama Therapist?

Drama therapists use performance arts to provide a safe environment to help people explore, address and deal with a range of personal and social difficulties.

As a dramatherapist, you'll create channels of communication through theatre, story-telling and performance arts. Working either on a one-to-one basis or with groups of clients, you'll use a range of interventions, including stories, puppetry, masks, role play, drama and movement, to allow them to explore their experiences and express themselves in a way that might be easier than directly talking about it.

You can work with clients of all ages with a range of difficulties, including psychological and/or mental health issues, physical or learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties, addiction, and neurological or physical illnesses.

What should I expect from a career as a Drama Therapist?

Establishing a full-time career in dramatherapy can be challenging and you may work part time to

begin with, building up to a full working week.

You may work for a number of employers during the week, for example in schools or prisons or in the NHS. The work can be emotionally challenging as you may be working with clients who are in distress.

How would I become a Drama Therapist?

Achieving your BPS-accredited degree in Psychology at Arden helps to secure a place on a Postgraduate Drama therapy qualification. On successful graduation from one of these

courses, you're eligible to register with the HCPC and practise as a drama therapist. You can also apply for full membership of the British Association of Drama therapists (BADth). You will also need to undertake and pass a DBS check.

Where can I find out more information?

Visit [BADth :: Becoming a Dramatherapist](#) for further information on how to get qualified.

You can also view NHS information regarding the role of a Drama therapist here: [Dramatherapist | Health Careers](#)



Students' Association

The Students' Association website is now **LIVE.**

Visit now: [Home \(ardenstudents.org\)](https://ardenstudents.org)

Follow on Twitter: [@ArdenStudents](https://twitter.com/ArdenStudents)

hub so students can get involved in focus groups and product initiatives ran by the university, sharing discounts that our students are eligible for and much more.



Arden University Students' Association exists due to feedback received from our students. Our Student Representative Network in 2019 approached the University with a proposal to create a Union or Association to enhance the student experience by allowing students to feel part of a community.

We gained approval by the Academic Board in May 2021, and we have been growing ever since.

We elected our first Students' Association President in November 2021, we ran a student competition to design our logo which was won by Robert Simmonds, we have successfully set up 5 Clubs & Societies, and we offer a monthly fun and interactive online quiz.

We have many more plans to come, which include offering our students an Independent Advice service, a volunteering

Your president

Your Students' Association President for 2022/2023 has now been elected!

Find out more about Dace and her aims for this year here:

[The President \(ardenstudents.org\)](https://ardenstudents.org)

To contact her with a question, suggestion, or a friendly chat, message her directly at [@studentpresident](https://twitter.com/studentpresident) or ardenuniversity.ac.uk



Dace Rozina

LEARNING COMMUNITY STUDENT REPS

Kerry Benton – Level 4 BSc
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Kim Crown – Level 6 BSc
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Amal Kasmani – Level 6 BSc
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Pragya Modi – Level 6 BSc
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Gemma Wood – Level 5 BSc
STU79681@ardenuniversity.ac.uk



Kerry Fisher – Level 5 BA
STU94298@ardenuniversity.ac.uk



Your learning community student representatives!

We have a number of Learning Community student reps who you can contact regarding any feedback or ideas you have that you think would help us to increase the sense of “learning community” within our Psychology school.

The reps will then pass this on to the staff team anonymously. Get in touch with one of your reps today.

- ◆ **Kerry Benton**
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Student SHOUT OUT



In this new segment, we want to thank and acknowledge specific students who have been recognised by our staff for their incredible contributions. These students are SUPER STARS and we are so proud to have them at Arden.

Pragya Modi

Pragya is a BSc Psychology student (Level 6) who contributes to most (if not all) of our schemes! She has been a VLA twice in the past, and is now contributing to the scheme by running a workshop for our current VLAs. She is also a VRA on many of our research projects, and is an absolute asset to these teams. She is dedicated, incredibly hard-working and engaged and makes massive contributions to these schemes as well as many other things going on within the school/ faculty, far too many for us to name in full (e.g., the new FoSS social scheme, NSS Learning Community Student Reps, SPARKindness committee). Not only this, but she has completed a computer-science degree recently which she did *at the same time* as studying with us full-time! We have known Pragya for a couple of years now, and the development in her skills, knowledge and confidence is a testament to her hard work and pursuit of developmental opportunities.

Gemma Wood

Gemma is a BSc Psychology student (Level 5) who is also involved in many of the schemes within our school. She has been involved in the VRA scheme since the very beginning and is part of many of the research projects housed under this scheme. Not only is she a part of these projects, but she takes on many of the key roles within these groups (e.g., being the primary contact between the group and external organisations that are affiliated with these projects). She is part of many other schemes, including the VLA scheme, the NSS Learning community student reps and the SPARKindness committee (to name a few). Gemma is a joy to work with – she has made great contributions to everything she has been involved in and does all of this whilst also being an incredible student on the modules she is currently studying.

Kim Crown

Kim is a BSc Psychology student (Level 6) who has been an integral part of our VLA scheme, and has recently joined us on the VLA scheme as a “senior VLA”. Kim has made massive contributions to the VLA scheme already – she has been a pillar of support for the new VLAs and has taken it upon herself to run a number of support sessions for them already to improve their confidence and reduce their nerves ahead of starting their role formally next week. We have also known Kim for a few years now and she is an amazing student (and human being!) – she radiates kindness and warmth, and is extremely thoughtful when it comes to helping others.



Get involved with support and schemes across the School of Psychology.

Click the buttons above to find out more.

Student opportunities

Coffee and chat sessions

Hosted by School of Psychology staff

Join your lectures and Psychology School staff for "coffee and chat" this term! Sessions are hosted across each level and will be a great opportunity to meet other students on your level in an informal meeting set-up.

Level 4

Join Amy Hogan on Friday 6th January, 1pm-2pm (UK time)

Click to join: <https://arden-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/93623089701?pwd=S3A1YJIWGR0dkQ5SnUra0N2eFFEZz09>

Meeting ID: 936 2308 9701
Passcode: 664784

Level 5

Join Stephen Farmer on Sunday 18th December, 5:30pm-6:30pm (UK time)

Click to join: <https://arden-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/91386282453?pwd=VGdZaThpZ3NGYzRFcjJiektEMTcydz09>

Level 6

Join Marie Chellingsworth on Monday 19th December, 2pm-3pm (UK time)
<https://arden-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/99943598508?pwd=NSs5SWo0aUU3Q3R4YkITREc1S3pFUT09>

Meeting ID: 999 4359 8508
Passcode: 448314



More sessions coming in 2023!



Virtual Career & Employability Event 2022 **recordings still available!**

A week-long event presenting a broad range of **graduate, employment, and volunteer** talks designed to help students improve themselves professionally and their career prospects. The sessions will cover **Psychology, Criminology, Sociology, and Law**, as well as those tips and tricks when CV writing through to the interview. Throughout the week, we will showcase the paths your career can take after completing your degree and the essential skills needed to secure your chosen future career!



Our Faculty of Social Sciences Virtual Career & Employability Event took place from 19th–23rd of September 2022 and was excellently received.

If you were unable to attend the event live, full recordings of many of our key speakers are still available to watch back in your own time.

Essential viewing for anyone looking to support the essential skills needed to secure your chosen future career!

Click [2022 FoSS Employability Event Recordings - OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
To view the full schedule and select recordings to watch.



Remember to log in through your **Arden University student email address**, or you won't be granted access to the recordings.

Annual Student Conference 2022 **recordings still available!**

The Faculty of Social Sciences Annual Student Conference ran this year on the 14th and 15th of November and comprised of student-led talks on a variety of topics from sharing study tips, career advice, dissertation research and topics/subjects within the course that students are passionate about.

It was wonderful opportunity for students to deliver talks, meet fellow students within the faculty and to spark stimulating conversations.

Click [Student Conference Talks 2022 - OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
To view the full schedule and select recordings to watch.

"STUDY WITH US" SESSIONS ARE BACK!

WHAT ARE "STUDY WITH US" SESSIONS?

We know that distance-learning can be lonely at times, and having the motivation to study can be particularly difficult without others around you or the right environment!

Therefore, we have set up "study with us" sessions – these are 3-hour long Zoom meetings where you can come and study alongside other students and lecturers.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

In order to create a study-friendly environment:

- We will have everyone on mute, but you are more than welcome to type in the chat-box!
- We will have some light background music on (similar to working in a coffee shop) but you can mute this if you wish
- Everyone is welcome! Blended- and distance-learning students, students from all levels and even your lecturers!
- You can join at any time during the "Study With Us" session and you do not have to stay for the full time
- You do not have to have your camera on if you don't want to!

DATES AND TIMES (UK TIME)

Click here to join: [Meeting - Zoom](#)

Password: **TEAMDOG**

**Study With Us sessions will
continue in 2023.**

Keep your eye out for more dates
coming soon!



DECEMBER

Sunday 4th December, 11am–2pm
Thursday 8th December, 6pm–9pm
Monday 12th December, 9am–12pm
Saturday 17th December, 3pm–6pm
Monday 19th December, 4pm–7pm
Wednesday 21st December, 6pm–9pm

YOU SAID, WE DID!

Over the last 10 months, we have been working hard to improve your experience by **listening to your feedback** and **implementing change** to provide the best quality education experience possible.

In our ongoing **You Said, We Did!** segment, we will keep you up to date on how we are taking your feedback onboard to make improvements.

This section is split into key focus areas and highlights how we are making improvements in each.

YOU SAID,

WE DID!

Learning Community

We want to be able to have a voice in the opportunities we have to socialise...

We recruited a number of learning community student reps across levels who you can pass your ideas onto. We ran a course-wide survey asking you to voice your opinions of what "learning community" is to you, and what contributes most to your sense of "learning community" which we will now use to inform our future actions. (Psychology-specific)

We would like to be able to study with our peers in the distance-learning context...

Two of our learning community student reps are running online "study with us" sessions twice a week this term! See details on page. (Psychology-specific)

We would like to be able to have more informal spaces to chat with our peers and lecturers...

We are running level-wide "coffee and chat" sessions three times during this term. (Psychology-specific)

We want to be able to easily find the opportunities we have to socialise with others...

We now have a "learning community" tab on our Psychology School page! This will host any opportunities to socialise you may want to engage in. We will also continue to ask your lecturers to share these with you too! (Psychology-specific)

Organization & Management

I find it hard to navigate the module pages as there are many changes from one module to the next..

We are standardising all module pages. The layout and contents of which have been voted on and decide by you. (university-wide)

The current timetable does not work effectively for me...

We are looking into the reasoning behind this though student feedback. Keep an eye out for effectively changes coming soon. (university-wide)

YOU SAID,

WE DID!

Student Voice

We aren't sure how our feedback to the school or university is acted on, or what changes are made as a result

This new "you said, we did" update will feature in every newsletter and module going forwards, so that you can be continuously updated on how we are acting on your feedback! We have also put together a group of staff who are focusing on implementing lots more changes to help you understand how we act on your feedback. The school also has a Lead for Student Voice, Dr Rachel Marchant, who oversees ongoing projects and changes to support your voice and act on your feedback!

(Psychology-specific change)

The end of module feedback surveys are released too late, so we don't have time to fill it out

Changed the release date of the end of module survey so that they are released earlier in the cycle (university-wide change)

We would like more opportunities to give feedback to lecturers on how we are progressing with modules and if we need any additional support

We are trialling the use of engagement surveys as part of the progress checks process (Psychology-specific change)

We would like our student reps to know what actions are being taken to improve teaching and assessment across modules, and be able to feed into this process

Course-level student representatives now attend the school course committees (where we discuss continuous improvements to our modules and courses, based on student feedback) (university-wide change)

We want to feel more connected to our fellow students, and have the opportunity to form societies as in traditional universities

We created the Arden Student's Association! (university-wide change)

We want to understand how to get academic support when we need it outside of the live sessions.

We created a document with academic support information to be shared across modules where you can find links and relevant details regarding the academic support available to you throughout the study blocks. This also includes our infographic to give visual aids and links about academic support.

(Psychology-specific change)

We want to know how to contact our lecturers during the study block and get quick support back.

Each module now has a specific email inbox that all lecturers in the module have access to, which will allow you to receive responses quicker. Lecturers also made their iLearn modules clearer regarding what kind of academic support is available and where. (Psychology-specific change)

We would like it to be clearer what our formative or summative feedback means in practical terms and how we can improve - tips and examples would be helpful.

We created and are trialling an interactive resource that you can use to dive deeper into what each type of feedback comment means, what it looks like, and tips to improve that specific academic skill that you received a comment about. To be released soon!

(Psychology-specific change)

Academic Support

YOU SAID,
WE DID!

But this is only the start!

Keep an eye out on you module pages and future newsletters to stay up to date with how we are continuing to make improvements.



Mental Health awareness

World Mental Health Day 2022

The theme this year is ensuring mental health and wellbeing for all becomes a global priority. As a Faculty with a global footprint, that aim couldn't be more relevant for us all.

A focus upon positive wellbeing for staff and students and building a sense of togetherness in the academic community is so important.

As a result, earlier this year, we formed the first **Faculty of Social Science SPARKindness Staff and Student Wellbeing Committee** to focus on achieving these aims.

Part of our ongoing work has involved developing resources and delivering a range of regular staff and student led events and activities, as well as hosting a whole week of events for mental health awareness week.

We have a range of active committee members from the Schools in the Faculty and would love to get more of you involved.

Please do reach out if you would like to join us and get involved as we plan for mental health awareness week 2023: sparkindnesswellbeinggroup@arden.ac.uk



Looking for mental health support within Arden?

- ◆ Contact our **inclusion team** by visiting the Inclusion portal on iLearn [Home | Wellbeing Portal \(arden.ac.uk\)](#) or email them directly at inclusion@arden.ac.uk
- ◆ We also have **mental health first** aiders located at all our study centres. Speak to a member of staff at one of our study centres or online to help support.

Anxiety UK

Anxiety UK are the UK's leading anxiety charity. They aim to support people living with anxiety, stress, anxiety-based depression or phobias that affect their daily lives.

Anxiety UK are a great source of information and strategies regarding anxiety, the affects it can have on your life and how to manage them.

Here they have listed some self-management ideas which could be helpful for living with anxiety.

For further support from the charity, you can call them directly on **03444 775 774** or 'Ask Anxia' at



Anxiety UK's Top Tips for managing anxiety

MANAGING

ANXIETY

STAY PRESENT & PRACTICE
MINDFULNESS

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY
Eat well, exercise and sleep

Focus on what is
within your control

AVOID UNHELPFUL
MEDIA COVERAGE

MAINTAIN HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS

SUPPORT OTHERS
Helping others in turn
helps ourselves

MAINTAIN ROUTINES

SEEK HELP
Contact your GP and Anxiety UK

Stay in touch & get involved!



YOU can contribute to the next school newsletter!

contact Skye at socialsciencenewsletter@arden.ac.uk to find out more

Join the conversation...

For daily articles, events and opportunities, follow our Psychology School Twitter page.



Watch and learn...



Follow us on YouTube for regular videos that include:

- ◆ Arden podcast sessions
- ◆ Born For This series
- ◆ a day in the life of
- ◆ graduation ceremonies
- ◆ helpful resources

@ArdenUniPsych
#ArdenUniPsych



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