

one on one



We dip into the Society member database and pick...

Dr Michelle Hamill

consultant clinical psychologist at East London NHS Foundation Trust

One thing psychologists should be proud of

Contributions to improving dementia care, from Tom Kitwood to Ian James, emphasising the centrality of relational understandings and relationship-centred care, through applied methods and research. We still have a way to go but their work in particular has helped to set the scene for further improvements.

One moment that changed my career

Working with Dr Laura Sutton, a brilliant consultant clinical psychologist, on my older adult placement as a trainee clinical psychologist. I didn't want to leave after the six months ended and I was fortunate that she agreed to have me back for my third year to specialise further in CAT (Cognitive Analytic Therapy) and neuropsychology. I knew I had found my field working with older adults and I have never looked back.

One motto

'No one can make you feel inferior without your consent', Eleanor Roosevelt. A work in progress for me.

One thing I am proud of

The team of clinical psychologists and arts therapists that I work with across East London. Their energy and passion is uncompromising. They are always up for trying new things to improve service provision and address inequalities.

One book

Irvin D. Yalom's *Gift of Therapy*. His writing is so accessible, human and wise. I dip in and out of this. To me it's like getting a good dose of supervision.

One composer

I'd be lost without music. Einaudi is a favourite, especially when I'm travelling on the tube. I work with some brilliant music therapists, who are based on our inpatient wards. Their work is truly transformative. We co-facilitate psychology supervision and reflective sessions for the multi-disciplinary teams and often start by doing a mindfulness body scan to Einaudi, which sets the tone

nicely. Thankfully, the importance of music therapy in dementia care is finally being recognised.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Try to get involved in psychology research whilst at University. I didn't appreciate or understand the wealth of opportunities and possibilities available for research whilst I was doing my undergraduate degree.

One surprising thing about older adult mental health

Trainees are often surprised by the change that is possible, regardless of a person's age and presenting difficulties, and the extent of people's resilience over many years despite complex trauma. This work really is a privilege. I don't think many of us would stay in this job if that wasn't the case.

One essential for self-care

Regular private CAT professional supervision / personal therapy. You can't be a psychologist and not take your personal self to work. Making links between personal and professional relational patterns helps me to keep perspective.

One hope for psychology

To develop more opportunities for intergenerational service development and community-based initiatives, where people of all different ages can learn and socialise together, and ageism and ageist stereotypes can be challenged – that goes both ways between younger people and older adults, where the divide can feel very polarised especially given the current political climate. *The Toddlers who Took on Dementia* (with Professor Bob Woods) and *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds* are great examples of how much change is possible given the right circumstances and relationships. We have a lovely developing partnership between CAMHS and our Older Adult Mental Health service, so watch this space.

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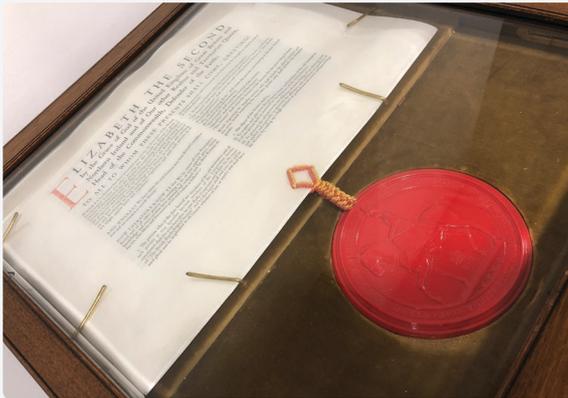




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