



Spring Newsletter

Welcome

May 2023

The **S**eparation and **R**eunion **F**orum (**SRF**) is a group of women from the Caribbean region who were affected by early separation and reunion. The organisation was set up in 1999 and has worked mainly with people of African-Caribbean origin. However, as the phenomenon of broken attachments and traumatic reunions is applicable to other groups in society, SRF has expanded its remit. We now aim to help those who, through various circumstances, have suffered separation and loss. These circumstances may include separation through fostering/adoption, residential care, bereavement, family breakdown, boarding school and refugee/asylum status. We are now

Supporting Relationships and Families

The work of **SRF** is influenced by principles and concepts of Attachment Theory as pioneered by John Bowlby (1909-90) and other developmental psychologists. Our work is inclusive, valuing diversity.

We aim to educate through workshops, seminars, conferences, mentoring and consultations. SRF utilizes different psychotherapeutic and counselling approaches. We welcome people from all backgrounds who have suffered loss.

In this newsletter we hope that you are in good health and have had an enjoyable spring and you're looking forward to the summer.

Many events have occurred during the past months such as: the Musical Evening with internationally acclaimed tenor :Ronald Samm; Soprano ;Navaratnam Preshanti, and Pianist Waiyin Lee . This helped to raise funds for our research project on Selective Mutism.

This has been an ongoing desire of SRF, and it is hoped that you will support us in our aims, please email serefo.info@gmail.com or elaine.arnold456@btinternet.com for further information , or to share your knowledge on the subject with us.

In this newsletter you will find articles from people who work in the mediums of art and therapeutic services , our book corner with recent publications and community activities .

Please do send in your contributions for our summer edition . Get in contact if you would like to run or host seminars with and for us. We hope you enjoy your summer , great to have you in community.



Supporting Relationships and Families.

Loneliness

According to Government statistics more than 4 million people in Britain experience Loneliness and the following article is a quick look at some of the ways this is experienced and some ideas about why. One can be alone without feeling lonely, sometimes solitude is the way some people find peace. However, loneliness can be a whole different ball game from chosen solitude.

We've all heard the saying: "lonely within a crowd." This is such a relevant statement in 21st century cities with their countless crowds of busy people actively thronging the shopping centres, amenities and social spaces. In a city one can easily be in a place where the volume of people is overwhelming. Try to imagine that situation from the perspective of one who is agoraphobic or, has a neurologically diverse perspective that views large congregations as threatening. However milling hordes notwithstanding there are many people in such situations whose dominant experience is one of feeling alone.

To illustrate let's look at this excerpt from fantasy writer Tricia O Malley: "Song of the Fae"

"How so? You have a crew you work with on the boat? And you take people on charters, right? Aren't you always around people?" Caught, Imogen took a moment. How was she to explain that even if she was around other people, she was still alone? Alone with her secrets. Alone with her inability to trust anyone fully. Alone with her knowledge that if her own parents couldn't love her as a child - then who could love her as an adult?"

In this paragraph, important themes come through that can shed light on causes of the condition of loneliness. For example ...

Trust when our trust has been broken, or we do not learn to trust as children, we may find it difficult to be open and vulnerable enough to connect meaningfully with others. If we are with 'friends,' but don't feel we can share with them how we really feel we may feel lonely even when we in their company.

Secrets This is related to the above. If we have secrets that make us feel guilty, ashamed or worried, we may need to express those secrets in order to feel release from the feelings accompanying them. It's easy to see why not being able to trust would be a barrier to this release

Parental love Children who do not experience love, who are neglected, abused or abandoned by their parents, may find it difficult to form relationships with others, both as children and as adults. This might mean that once again they could be with a lot of people, even their friends, but not feel authentically connected to any of them.

Self-love At the heart of the trauma of abuse or emotional hurt of any kind is what some therapists call the inner child. Another way of saying that the way in which we see, love and think about ourselves is powerfully affected by the impressions related to our experiences, we take on about ourselves as children. These impressions are internalised and make it difficult to love ourselves. Naturally if we can't love ourselves, our relationship with others will be flawed by a lack of authentic reciprocity and connectedness. Once again we may feel unresolvedly separate even from those we try to love and thus loneliness sets in.

We may feel that we are being ostracised when in fact it is our lack of self love keeping us isolated from true relationship with others

A brain imaging study (from psychology today), showed that feeling ostracized actually activates our neural pain matrix.

Many would probably agree that whatever the cause Loneliness is painful. So, if that is the case, once we are experiencing that pain, is it eternal ?

Do we have to suffer the trauma of loneliness forever or are there some ways of dealing with it?

Mindfulness: Finding a way of connecting in the present moment to our breathing can result in feelings of well being and over time this feeling can be liberating



Meditation: often includes mindfulness and has other techniques linking ones self with something perceived as greater and therefore promoting self love.

Movement meditations like yoga and tai chi, have a similar effect. Some would say they are more potent than other types of meditation, since they change the way the body feels and the mind at the same time. Also being in a club practicing these is a good way of connecting with other people

Therapy: There are many therapies that can help one deal with the challenge of feeling lonely. The one to choose is the one you have researched as being suited to your way of processing things. Talk therapy might not be the best for a primarily kinaesthetic learner, but combined with movement or dance, therapy might be great.

Whatever you choose, just take comfort that there is an answer to loneliness, if you feel stymied in finding it, there are many people available who are specialists in helping you do just that.

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Loneliness by Marlene Antoinette Daley, Psychodynamic Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist

Many of my clients are coming into the therapy space and saying 'I feel so lonely'. When asked to explain their loneliness, they often struggle. Some saying 'I feel so stupid, because I am in a relationship, I have family and lots of friends, but I feel lonely. It's a horrible feeling and I can't quite explain it!'

Other clients will use words like anxiety, fear, shame and helplessness to describe how loneliness makes them feel.

So what exactly is loneliness?

Loneliness can be described as a distressing experience that occurs when a person's social relationships are perceived by that person to be less in quantity, and especially in quality, than desired.

Loneliness, is not necessarily about being alone. Instead, if you *feel* alone and isolated, then that is how loneliness plays into your state of mind.

Loneliness is a universal human emotion that is both complex and unique to each individual. Because there is no single common cause, preventing and treating this potentially damaging state of mind can vary dramatically.

A lonely child struggling to make friends at school, has different needs than a lonely older adult whose spouse has recently died. A university freshman might feel lonely despite being surrounded by roommates and other peers and the only unmarried female going out with a group of married friends might feel lonely despite being surrounded by her peers. Thus the experience of loneliness is highly subjective; an individual can be alone without feeling lonely and can feel lonely even when with other people.

Loneliness is often associated with social isolation, poor social skills, introversion, and depression and sadly loneliness is considered an expected part of becoming older, either by the person themselves or the society in which they live. Loneliness can leave people feeling isolated and disconnected from others. It is a complex state of mind that can be caused by life changes, mental health conditions, poor self-esteem, and personality traits (introverts).

Loneliness can also have serious health consequences including decreased mental wellness and physical problems the lack of social connection can increase the risk of anxiety, depression, stroke, heart disease, and dementia.

So what causes Loneliness?

Contributing factors to loneliness include situational variables, such as physical isolation, moving to a new location, and divorce. The death of someone significant in a person's life can also lead to feelings of loneliness. Change of job, facing retirement, sickness or menopausal concerns. Additionally, it can be a symptom of a psychological disorder such as depression. Depression often causes people to withdraw socially, which can lead to isolation.

Loneliness can also be attributed to internal factors such as low self-esteem. People who lack confidence in themselves often believe that they are unworthy of the attention or regard of other people, which can lead to isolation and chronic loneliness.

Overcoming Loneliness

Loneliness can be overcome. However, it does require a conscious effort to make a change. In the long run, making a change can make you happier, healthier, and enable you to impact others around you in a positive way.

Here are some ways to prevent loneliness:

Consider community service or another activity that you enjoy. These situations present great opportunities to meet people and cultivate new friendships and social interactions.

Expect the best. Lonely people often expect rejection, so instead, try focusing on positive thoughts and attitudes in your social relationships.

Focus on developing quality relationships. Seek people who share similar attitudes, interests, and values with you.

Recognize that loneliness is a sign that something needs to change. Don't expect things to change overnight, but you can start taking steps that will help relieve your feelings of loneliness and build connections that support your well-being.

Understand the effects of loneliness on your life. There are physical and mental repercussions to loneliness. If you recognize some of these symptoms affecting how you feel, make a conscious effort to combat them.

Join a group or start your own. For example, you might try creating a Meetup group where people from your area with similar interests can get together. You might also consider taking a class at a community college, joining a book club, or taking an exercise class.

- **Strengthen a current relationship.** Building new connections is important, but improving your existing relationships can also be a great way to combat loneliness. Try calling a friend or family member you have spoken to in a while.

Talk to someone you can trust. Reaching out to someone in your life to talk about what you are feeling is important. This can be someone you know such as a family member, but you might also consider talking to your doctor or a therapist. Mindfulness or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy may help. Online therapy can be a great option because it allows you to contact a therapist whenever it is convenient for you.

Loneliness can have a serious effect on your health, so it is important to be able to recognize signs that you are feeling lonely. It is also important to remember that being alone isn't the same as being lonely.

If loneliness is affecting your well-being, there are things that you can do that can help you form new connections and find the support that you need. Work on forming new connections and spend some time talking to people in your life. If you're still struggling, consider therapy. Whatever you choose to do, just remember that there are people who can help.

Marlene-Antoinette Daley

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Overcoming Loneliness as an adult dyslexic student

Family and Friends would describe me as a confident, cheerful and happy person, always with a big smile on my face. I was always surrounded by people and was the one to instigate social events and suggest trips away, I was never lonely. When it came to my education and studying, I felt different and could not figure out why I felt lonely and a "sense of isolation". I now understand it was Emotional loneliness due to not feeling I fitted in intellectually with my peers, feeling something was wrong with me as I did not understand or took long to grasp what the lecture was teaching us. I would just smile and nod my head and pretend that I understood so as not to look stupid or silly.

It all made sense in 2022 when a Diagnostic Assessment for Dyslexia revealed that not only did I have Dyslexia but also Dyspraxia. Then in 2023 I was diagnosed with Inattentive Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This diagnosis allowed me to seek the support I needed to have a better experience of education, it also opened doors for me to make connections with other neurodiverse people and organisations. My confidence grew and I was able to share with my peers at university, my tutors and staff members at work what I needed to make me feel less isolated and more included at a level that did not feel so overwhelming and pressured.

Looking back at my career path I can now understand why working as a Specialist Mentor at the University of Arts with students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) I felt a sense of belonging and understood the challenges the students were facing; I could relate and identify with these students; felt a closeness and attachment to them. Working with these students encouraged me to have an assessment for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) when I started my Family Practice course at Kings College London.

In a conversation with Dr Elaine Arnold (The founder of Supporting Relationships and Families (SRF, formerly known as the Separation and Reunion Forum) about the academic challenges I was having on the course she suggested that I contact Elizabeth Takyi (Founder/CEO/ Director A2i Dyslexia CIC).

After contacting Elizabeth, I started to watch her YouTube and listened to her Podcasts. I was beginning to feel a sense of belonging and the loneliness was gradually slipping away from my sense of self. I learned so many tools and resources that helped me in my role as a Daughter, Mother, Grandmother, wife, carer, work colleague and student. This new learning also enhanced my skills as a Counsellor, Clinical Supervisor, Mentor and Systemic Family Practitioner. By incorporating and sharing the techniques I had now learned to combat the feelings of isolation and loneliness. One of Elizabeth's shows pointed me in the direction of seeking a Work Coach through Access to Work. My work placement at the time, Croydon Drop In, arranged for me to have my Access to Work Assessment and put the necessary things in place that were recommended for me.

My childhood into adult life felt lonely at times, even in togetherness with others. Neurodiverse people have a sense of loneliness that incorporates three different types of loneliness: emotional, social and existential, which rarely gets addressed before, during and after diagnosis. Working with neurodiversity has become an area in my work that I am passionate about and want to research further, particularly with people of colour and disadvantage.

As a professional, neurodiverse, disabled, black woman my aim is to help and support people like myself by sharing my story. Being different can cause loneliness, but if you can find a healthy attachment to a community that understands and speaks your language it can help make your life more content and enjoyable.

Wendy Blenman

MSc in Therapeutic Counselling (MBACP) Counselling young people (Coaching MSc level) Systemic Family Practitioner (PG Dip)



Black mental health, like all mental health, is the achievement of the well-being of body, mind and spirit of individuals affected by any form of mental ill health, through access to appropriate care and resources. To achieve this for people of colour, mental illness treatment must be offered in a culturally and contextually appropriate manner, and health bodies and institutions, practitioners and community advocates should work in partnership to end stigma, build awareness and advocate for systemic change to ensure a more culturally appropriate and effective care system." -

Reverend, Dr Rosemarie Mallett - Bishop of Croydon

Responses to the challenge

New things being piloted in and for the community

The **Ethnicity & Mental Health Improvement Programme (EMHIP)** is a community-led intervention programme to reduce disparities and bring about change for Black, Asian, and minoritised people in mental health care. In order to see system change, **it needs all of us**, which is why it is a collaborative partnership between NHS South West London (SWL ICB), South London & Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM), BME residents, voluntary, community and faith groups, including Croydon BME Forum and Asian Resource Centre Croydon. The main objective is to reduce ethnic inequalities in **access, experience, and outcome** of mental health care.

We are in the very early stages of delivery (report available on request) .

In the EMHIP Croydon report there are **5 Key Inventions for Change**, which include **'reducing coercion and restrictive practices'** across SLaM. The first of these interventions is the development of a **Mental Health & Wellbeing Mobile Hub Service** which is due to launch in July 2023. This will be an early-help, whole-family intervention service, providing mental health and general wellbeing support, through counselling, workshop activities and links to other services, including physical health checks for long-term conditions. The Mobile Hub team will rotate between different community locations across the borough providing care to communities in environments they are most comfortable with (such as community, youth centres and places of worship).

How can you get involved? In order to see sustainable change for our people, EMHIP needs to be integrated into every aspect of our care. The heart of this programme is co-production between community, faith and health care services. It needs all of us. Please get in touch with stella@bmeforum.org for more infor-

**Information from
Croydon BME Forum's
first
Black Mental Health
Conference April 2023**



HOME PLACEMENT PROJECT
Community Cares




We are looking for African and Caribbean families with a spare room who can host community members (18-65) during their mental health recovery journey as an alternative to hospital care. Stays may range from a few days up to 2 weeks. Clinical support for the guest living in your home will be provided. Families will receive full training, ongoing supervision, support and payment

**BE A REVOLUTIONARY AND A PIONEER OF
BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CARE !**

- Learn new life skills
- Learn about mental health
- Learn more about yourself
- The ways in which you care (especially culturally), can positively impact recovery
- Financial remuneration



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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH











Please join us for an in-person book launch, signing and gathering for "**Therapy in Colour - Intersectional, Anti-Racist and Intercultural Approaches by Therapists of Colour**".

Therapy in Colour supports the development of critical thinking about black, African, Caribbean, and Asian training and therapeutic needs.

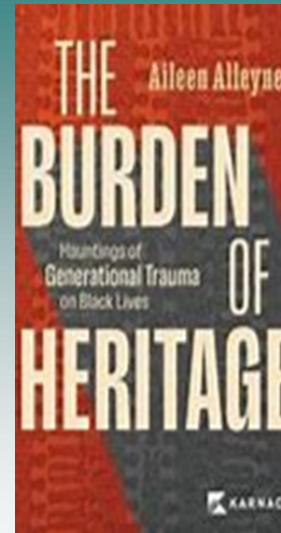
You are invited to personally meet, discuss and hear presentations from the Editors and Authors, and purchase your own signed copy of the book.



When: Sun, 4 Jun 2023 13:30 - 16:00 BST

Where: Professor Stuart Hall Building at Goldsmiths University can be found here: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/find-us/> The Book Launch will be held in room number PSH LG01

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/therapy-in-colour-book-launch-registration-625709001467>



The Burden of Heritage: Hauntings of Generational Trauma on Black Lives is a timely addition to the literature on inter- and transgenerational trauma. The book addresses black ancestral trauma passed down the generations, highlighting the ongoing impact on black lives.

Aileen Alleyne explores the unheeded dimensions of individual and collective identity trauma, paying particular attention to the themes and concepts of identity shame, black identity wounding and cultural enmeshment.

The author expands on her striking concept, the 'internal oppressor', that inhibits self-belief, full agency and potential. She reworks the psychoanalytic concept of 'hauntings', separating it from Freud's interpretation as unconscious repression, and presents it as a living and conscious element of the black trauma burden. To break the cycle of generational trauma, Alleyne suggests an active process of separation from archaic attachments, and engagement in intentional modes of transformation.

Alleyne makes use of her own experiences throughout, alongside therapeutic suggestions, approaches and theoretical handles for steadying the practitioner in the consulting room. The book weaves the personal, historical, socio-political and theoretical, and includes countless observational examples, clinical vignettes and case material.

The Burden of Heritage offers effective tools to practitioners who work therapeutically with black and minority ethnic clients, and highlights ways to strengthen critical enquiry for deeper conceptual and theoretical understanding of generational trauma.

Re views

Aileen Alleyne has written one of the most ground-breaking books on the vital subject of intergenerational trauma. This truly heartening and gripping contribution to modern psychology offers many bold and essential insights into the nature of global suffering and hatred. We all have much to learn from the author's wisdom, regardless of the colour of our skin." - **Professor Brett Kahr, Senior Fellow, Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology, London.**

"... a powerful reminder of the deep and prolonged impact of racial oppression on black communities, and of the importance for all of us – black and white, people of colour ... Full of new concepts, written with clarity and passion, this book will be invaluable for all those dedicated to racial justice." - **Professor Stephen Frosh, Birkbeck, University of London.**

We hope you are looking forward to the summer and invite you to share your activities with others in the community .
You can send in your submissions by August 20th .. email serefo.info@gmail.com

Healing and Self-Care Retreats by the Bay.

TIME TO BREATHE - TIME FOR YOU

Therapeutic Retreats for All

Nurture yourself in our safe space and comfortable space,
where you can be open and honest, feel understood
and supported.

Remove yourself from the Stresses of every day life!

It's time to put yourself first and stop neglecting your mind and your body!

Nestled away in beautiful Botany Bay (voted as one of the best beaches in
England 2021) you can rest, rebalance, take time out to focus on YOU.

At our retreats you'll enjoy delicious and nutritious food,
or you can decide to self-cater.

Practice mindfulness and learn simple tools that you
can put into your daily routine when you get home to
continue your journey to a healthier mind, body and
you.

Call or message- Marlene on 07956166474 or
email retreatsbythebay@gmail.com

For therapeutic/healing information see: www.integratedthinkingtherapies
See Retreats by the Bay insta page for more information and photos.



75th Anniversary of Arrival

We are Gathering

To Celebrate & Recognise
The Generational Dynamism
of
Windrush

Children of the Bold & Brave

Art ,Music ,Poetry
Drama ,Sharing Personal Successes

Hosted by
Marlene
Antoinette
&
Tanya
Evette

Sunday 25th June
5pm—9pm
The Parklangley Club
44a Wickham Way Beckenham BR3 3AF

DALEY BREAD
Raising money for work in the community

Tickets includes refreshments ; book on Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/to-celebrate-recognise-the-generational-dynamism-of-windrush-tickets-635395684597>

Email: tanya@sparkingessence.org.uk for further information

