



## WINTER NEWSLETTER

SRF has had an exciting but challenging year.

### **Seminars**

In 2019 SRF delivered four seminars on quite diverse topics. These were: *'Mindfulness-based self-care, empowerment, relating and letting go'* facilitated by Christene Burgess, *'Attachment: Gangs and Offending Behaviour'* facilitated by Ejay Okeke-deroy, *'Working with Adult Attachment Styles'* where the facilitator was Geraldine Thomas and *'The Migration Story through the Arts'*.

The seminars were well attended with participants coming from two local colleges and the community. Participants gave positive feedback on how helpful the information was for both their CPD and their personal lives.

### **The Migration Story through the Arts Seminar**



This was a new and creative presentation of a seminar, held in the evening and hosted by Yasmin Isaacs and Dr Elaine Arnold. The programme consisted of poetry recitals, dancing, story-telling, musical performances and the presentation of an auto ethnographic story on *'Child-Shifting and Reunification.'*

Bird-Speed, a poet and dancer, read her own poems and danced to Yasmin's spoken word single, *'Migration the Hammer.'* Also on stage was Ola Aralepo, a stand-up comedian/therapist, whose presentation was entitled, *'What I should have told the school counsellor'*. Ola used light-hearted humour to talk about some difficult and painful subjects.

Christa Welsh's presentation, on *'Migration and its effect on Trans-generational Relationships'* included her auto ethnographic study; an informative piece of research detailing her familial life experiences in the Caribbean and Britain. Many

members of the audience clearly identified with this experience. In the audience was a three-generation family as well as participants from a nearby community centre.

The feedback was positive, with people describing the event as entertaining, enjoyable, educational and much needed, in order to help those who have never voiced their feelings about the scars left by emigration, scars which still need healing.

### **The Annual Conference**

Our theme this year was “Strengthening Attachment Relationships in Families and Communities.” The title had been inspired by our 2018 conference on ‘The Impact of Social Media’.



### **Reflections by the moderator of the Conference**

The conference in London on 22 November 2019 to mark the twentieth anniversary of Supporting Relationships and Families was a celebration of everything that SRF has come to represent. It is a living organisation with powerful connections to a strong intellectual tradition which draws in leading scholars, policy makers and practitioners. Moreover, SRF nurtures a strong sense of community among students, academics, social policy influencers, health practitioners at all levels and many from and connected with Britain’s black and minority ethnic communities.

The day began with our Patron, Dr Nelda Frater, welcoming everyone and introducing Chris Gunness the Moderator of the day who began by inviting Sir Richard Bowlby, son of John Bowlby, who works to promote a wider understanding of his father’s ideas and impact in particular and attachment theory in general to open the Conference. He did this graciously whilst also paying tribute to Dr Elaine Arnold, (who, as a student, had discussed her research with his father John Bowlby) founder of SRF and who has applied Bowlby’s attachment theory, with measurable impact, to marginalised communities in the UK and beyond.

The first panel consisted of two experts who approach attachment theory from different yet complementary backgrounds, one an academic, the other a practitioner. Professor Ann Phoenix of University College London spoke about the historical context and social structures that enhance an understanding of racism. Giving contemporary examples of race hatred and demonstrated the

ways in which psychological experiences and social, historical processes are linked. Next, Lennox Thomas outlined fascinating case studies of “inter-generational negotiations” drawn from decades as a hospital social worker in paediatric care and as a probation officer. He demonstrated eloquently how the interactions of different generations can promote understanding and healing.

In the next panel, Gillian Paul, a psychotherapist with Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS), spoke engagingly on the subject of loneliness, its causes, its impact (both physical and psychological) and what we can do to address it, as individuals and communities. Janice Gittens, Founding Director of the Lives Fulfilled organisation and Chair of SRF, spoke movingly about dealing with the emotions and issues raised by the recent stabbing of her daughter.

The discussion that followed this, was ably facilitated by Dr Nelda Frater.

The first afternoon session featured Richard Parker who gave details of his various projects to promote “Attachment Aware Schools” where the outcomes in terms of student performance and other educational indicators have been impressive. The day ended with a group session led by Dr Maria Canute, a consultant psychotherapist, psychiatrist, and group analyst with over 40 years’ experience working in mental health. It was a free-flowing, wide-ranging session in which participants reflected on their thoughts and feelings – creative, life-affirming, inspirational and motivating - engendered by a day that engaged both the minds and hearts of all who attended.

Chris Gunness

Journalist, Podcaster, Broadcaster

<https://www.rhinegold.co.uk/rhinegold-publishing/magazines/classical-music/podcasts/>

“Congratulations on organising such a wonderfully inspiring conference. You could feel in the atmosphere that people were excited about what they were hearing and that they were also hearing things in a different way. Excellent speakers!!

“I was really touched and learnt so much from the speakers.”

“I found the whole event especially good”.

### **Working with other organisations in the Borough of Wandsworth**

SRF has been kept busy liaising with the various voluntary organisations which are trying to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the Borough of Wandsworth; our Director, along with the Treasurer and one of our Trustees attended a range of events which involved NHS Wandsworth, Health- Watch, Katherine Lowe Settlement, Aspire2 Inspire (dyslexia group) Canerows, Sound Minds and Lifetimes.

## **Fundraising**

Our volunteer fund-raiser has written to the various policy makers to inform them about the work of SRF. The Shadow Minister of Disabilities, who is the Member of Parliament for Battersea, had expressed interest in the organisation and wanted to hear more about our work. Unsurprisingly, the sudden General Election took precedence and she has since been re-elected. It is hoped that during the coming year a meeting with her will be arranged.

SRF's funding application to the Co-op was successful and we received a much welcomed £8,000 donation. We thank the Co-op and their customers for their support. In 2019, a cheque was presented to SRF's Director and one of our Trustees at the Co-op, Putney Bridge. It was a festive event where SRF had the opportunity to publicise its work through the distribution of leaflets to shoppers who stopped and engaged in conversation about the origin and the ongoing work of our organisation.

### **Recommended Book:**

Trauma and Loss: Key texts from the John Bowlby Archive  
Edited by: Robbie Duschinsky and Kate White  
Published by: Routledge London and New York 2020

This is an impressive collection of many of the unpublished works of Dr John Bowlby which provides more information on his thinking of Attachment Theory.

Members are invited to contribute items for the Newsletter.

### **Editors:**

Elaine Arnold and Yasmin Isaacs

SRF Room 03 250 York Road SW11 3SJ  
E: [serefo.info@gmail.com](mailto:serefo.info@gmail.com) W: [www.serefo.org.uk](http://www.serefo.org.uk)

T: 020 3417 6646  
Charity Number 1132487

