



PRESS RELEASE

3RD COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY FESTIVAL

15TH & 16TH SEPTEMBER – ARNOLFINI; BRISTOL

The time for action is now! In an increasingly complex and divided society, a growing number of people have been drawing on the power of collective action and the ethos of **community psychology** to bring about change. **Community psychology** is a different way of doing, thinking about, and using psychology, and does not shy away from engaging with critiques of its parent discipline. For example, community psychologists have demonstrated that poor mental health is often the result of structural inequality, social exclusion, and insecurity; thus it seeks to relocate and address human distress within its social context. **Community psychology** is not just about mental health, it is fundamentally concerned with promoting social justice and collective wellbeing. Primary prevention, building alliances, advocacy, critical perspectives in psychology, and public engagement characterise the work of community psychologists, who work in diverse settings such as schools, NHS services, universities, and the third sector.

As an official Section of the **British Psychological Society** (BPS) we give a platform to research and practice aligned with the above. The **Community Psychology Festival** is the flagship event of the Section, and is coming to Bristol for its third iteration. Come and join our creative and inclusive forum in which we aim to create a welcoming space where everyone can learn from each other, regardless of professional background and experiences.

The theme for this year's Festival is '*Falling apart, pulling together: Collaboration in times of division*' in recognition that as a society, we have far more that unites us than divides us. The Festival aims to take a critical stance on dominant narratives in the treatment of mental health problems and celebrate the role of community organisations in addressing inequality and social disintegration. We aim to do so while having the closest thing to a party that psychology can offer.

This year's contributions involve a lecture followed by Q+A with *Dr Lucy Johnstone*, who will query whether there is any value left in psychiatric diagnosis. *Deputy Mayor of Bristol*, Asher Craig, will talk about '*Thrive Bristol*', a project seeking a whole city approach to mental health & wellbeing. Lecturers and students from **UWE Bristol** will channel the community psychology spirit by bringing children, young people, and Festival participants together to build a welcoming and enabling city out of cardboard. If you

have not heard of a '*Social Dreaming Matrix*' before, then why not join one during the Festival? You do not need to learn any steps to dance the dance of life at the *Biodanza* workshop! The Festival will host approximately 40 contributions in the form of workshops, papers, symposia, performances, debate forums, and community projects, connected to the following thematic strands:

1. Housing, mental health and wellbeing
2. Supporting those who work in communities
3. What's art got to do with it?
4. What does it mean to be critical?

Register for the Festival and keep informed of the latest developments to the Program here: <https://tinyurl.com/CPfest17>

One of the hallmarks of **Community Psychology** is to use accessible language to communicate complex ideas. We encourage people with a range of experiences (including personal experience of hardship and isolation) and professional backgrounds to attend so that we can learn from, challenge and inspire each other. If you are involved in community work, make use of psychological services, and/or are an interested member of the public, you are most welcome to join us. A limited number of free tickets (bursaries) for Bristol residents and student members of the BPS South West branch are available.

We welcome media enquiries regarding the nature and scope of **Community Psychology** and the **Festival**. To apply for a press pass, please send an overview of proposed coverage to Dr Katie Wood.

Contacts & Links

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Media enquiries: Dr Katie Wood kmwood46@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/communitypsychologyfestival/>

Ning: <https://communitypsychologyuk.ning.com/>

Read more about **Community Psychology**, in *The Psychologist* magazine archives: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/festival-community-psychology>



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