

Call for contributions for

A Treasury of Narratives from Neonatal Psychological Practice

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Book outline

Neonatal psychological practice is an emerging field with a developing identity. It is related to many other specialities, and yet is distinct from them, undertaken by different professionals from different backgrounds, working in different contexts. In this book, we aim to curate a collection of stories that capture the richness and diversity of psychological practice in neonatal care in the UK, elucidating and articulating what this work looks and feels like.

This collection of stories will not seek to define what neonatal psychological practice *ought* to entail. Rather, through weaving a tapestry of individual narratives from practice, it will provide an anchor and a map for psychological professionals and other interested readers, to support creative engagement with the many varied possibilities of working in this area.

The diversity of practice in this area is matched by the diversity of families and professionals who access and provide care in the neonatal system. This book will value and celebrate a range of perspectives and will incorporate reflections on an intersectional approach to diversity and inclusion. To help readers connect with the collected stories in different ways, the book will also contain a range of other writing (including poetry and therapeutic metaphors), that connect to the themes and topics covered by the stories.

We have agreement from Routledge to publish this book, and the reception to the proposal from the broader community has been very positive.

Call for contributions

We are inviting neonatal psychological professionals to contribute to this collection by sharing stories from their practice in writing. We are hoping to collect chapters that, together, cover the broad range of psychological work undertaken in the neonatal setting, focusing on work with infants, parent-infant relationships, parents and families, staff-family relationships, staff, and the broader system. Our intention is to include different personal and psychological perspectives and theories that inform this work, including ideas about attachment, compassion, relationships, systemic practice, and beyond.

We are interested in proposals for stories that describe first-person accounts of concrete lived experiences of working as a neonatal psychological professional. We would like these stories to include evocative descriptions of the work, showing the

values, choices, people and relationships that provide such important context. Personal reflections on the work as well as ideas about links between theory and practice are encouraged. In essence, we would like to collect writing that exemplifies your reality of what stands out in this work for you, in ways that connect emotionally to readers. We encourage writing that moves between a focus on the context (clinical scenarios, setting, infants, families, teams and relationships) and your personal experiences of this. We would also welcome other forms of contribution – poetry, written metaphor, visual imagery, or other creative forms.

Stories might be about therapeutic work you have undertaken with a particular family; a specific encounter that has stuck with you; a dilemma that you have faced (or that you have supported others with); an incident or episode in which you have supported a staff team; a day in your job that stands out as significant; or indeed anything that has happened to you or that you have done in the course of your work that you feels shows an aspect of your role. We have identified a range of different themes and topics that we are hoping to include in this collection of stories (see the final page of this document) but if you have a story to tell about a different facet of practice, we would love to hear about it.

Co-authorship is possible, as is contribution of more than one story. If you feel there is a story (or stories) you would like to tell, or an aspect of your practice you would like to share, but feel you would need some help in the telling of it, support will be very forthcoming from the passionate editorial team.

At this stage, chapter proposals do not need to be detailed. An initial idea for the story you would like to contribute, along with the broad theme or aspect of practice you would like to address in your writing, would be sufficient. Proposals will be reviewed by the editorial team with a view to agreeing a plan for contributors by September 2024.

If you are interested in contributing to the book please send a summary of your chapter proposal (up to 200 words), to include:

- A broad outline of the story you would like to tell
- A description of the broad theme or aspect of your role you feel this story illustrates
- An idea of which psychological perspectives (e.g. models, theories or approaches) you feel this story speaks to and would like to explore.

Please send chapter proposals or questions to Davy and Ruth at therelationalpractice@gmail.com by June 21st 2024.

Themes and topics you might consider telling stories about (not an exhaustive list!)

- Working psychologically with babies
- Attachment in the neonatal unit
- Compassion focused practice on the neonatal unit
- Supporting families through:
 - o transition into parenthood
 - o adjustment to difference and disability
 - o decision making
 - o the feeding journey
 - o transitions
 - o neonatal loss
 - o trauma
- Supporting families who have experienced complex trauma
- Supporting families after discharge
- Parental experiences of therapy (this could take the form of a transcribed conversation between a parent and psychological professional, reflecting on the work)
- Navigating relationships between families and staff
- The use of team formulation
- Creating space for staff to think
- Supporting staff with moral dilemmas, moral distress and moral injury
- Supporting staff with other forms of distress
- Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) in NICU
- Working as a male psychological professional in a perinatal setting
- How the Social Graces show up in the work of a neonatal psychological professional
- The personal/professional boundary: working as a neonatal psychological professional who has lived experience of neonatal care
- The personal/professional boundary: working as a neonatal psychological professional who is also a parent
- The personal/professional boundary: working as a neonatal psychological professional whilst pregnant, or through loss.
- The experience of moving into neonatal psychological practice from other specialities (e.g. perinatal mental health, paediatrics, CAMHS)
- Working psychologically with AHPs, or in the neonatal MDT
- The legacy of COVID-19
- The impact on the self of the work of a neonatal psychological professional
- Co-production of neonatal care and championing Parent Voice
- Experiences of training placements in neonatal care