

Managing Complaints key learning:



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Aims & format:

- How big an issues is it?
- Wider exploration on themes
- Key issues from PPS's perspective
- Facilitated groups
- Considering learning for your own practice
- Conclusion

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Highlights:

- Reassuringly relatively low prevalence rates...
- However, impact personally is huge on all involved
- No winners through complaints/legal processes
- Important to separate out good contracting (anticipating difficulties) from actual therapeutic relational issues
- Using supervision to explore what you might be missing-i.e. what is client 'saying' through (un)conscious processes versus what are you hearing?
- What kind of feedback/complaints processes have you made available & explicit to clients?

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Prevalence rates*

- BACP 667 complaints over 15 years (44 p.a.)
- In 2016, 88 complaints (45,000 membership)
- 71% of BACP complaints by associated people
- 0.24-0.26% taken against members
- Disproportionately complaints against male practitioners (*BACP*) (46%) up to 8x
- Whilst no.s small, impact individually is huge

*2008 & 2010 Allegations of serious professional misconduct Symons, Khele et al CPR Vol 11 2011 Issue 4

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HCPC 2019 Cases by Profession

	Number of HCPC Registrants	Number of cases HCPC Dealt With (2018)	% of Registrant Subject to Concern
Art Therapists	4,759	22 (8)	0.21%
Practitioner Psychologists	25,634	175 (160)	0.68%

The number of cases in 2019 for Arts Therapists increased significantly from an average of 8 the previous years.. The number of cases in 2019 for Practitioner Psychologists was consistent with the trend since 2009, when Practitioner Psychologists joined the register for the first time.

Whilst Practitioner Psychologists represent 1/7th largest group of HCPC they are the 3rd largest group complained about. (Total HCPC complaints 2,302 in 2018 & 2,424 in 2019)

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Psychologists Protection Society Data

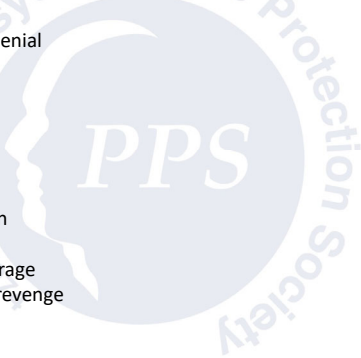
2010 is the year the new PPS Trust was formed. What is interesting is the change from predominantly male to predominantly female, although number of claims is small so the figures look dramatic. The % of membership rates vary from 0.11 to 0.30. This would seem consistent with BACP figures and the HCPC figures for Arts Therapists, but not Practitioner Psychologists. Irish claims are generally much lower than UK claims.

Financial Year	Total Claims	% of Membership	UK claims	Irish Claims	Male	Female
2010/11	9	0.23	78%	22%	67%	33%
2011/12	15	0.29	93%	7%	60%	33%
2012/13	9	0.17	89%	11%	67%	33%
2013/14	14	0.26	100%	0%	29%	71%
2014/15	6	0.11	100%	0%	17%	83%
2015/16	14	0.25	93%	7%	29%	71%
2016/17	14	0.24	100%	0%	21%	79%
2017/18	10	0.17	90%	10%	0%	100%
2018/19	9	0.15	89%	11%	56%	44%

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Impact individually

- Disbelief/denial
- Confusion
- Shame
- Impotence
- Hurt
- Despair
- Fear
- Persecution
- Betrayal
- Anger/Outrage
- Desire for revenge



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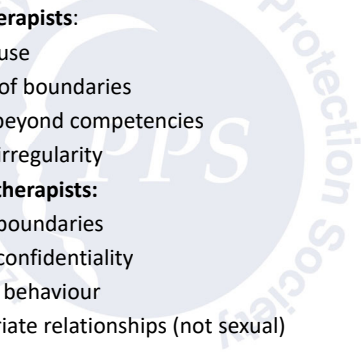
Key complaint themes (BACP)

For male therapists:

- Sexual abuse
- Violation of boundaries
- Working beyond competencies
- Financial irregularity

For female therapists:

- Breaking boundaries
- Breaking confidentiality
- Unethical behaviour
- Inappropriate relationships (not sexual)



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Key themes for complaints

- Good quality of care
- Keeping trust
- If things go wrong..
- Main areas are *breach of good practice & respecting privacy & confidentiality*

New mechanisms:

- *BACP Consensual disposal agreements*
- *UKCP Alternative Dispute Resolution*



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Smaller Groups & scenarios

- Small groups
- 10 mins on the key themes & discuss within your group
- Key themes identifies....

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Potential solutions to minimise risk:

- Good clear contracting** setting out:
- Expectations from both parties
 - Parameters & content of client-practitioner relationship
- NB: Build in **regular reviews** of work with client
- Broader contractual issues to include:
- Provision of information for clients
 - Confidentiality, boundaries, payment, managing endings
 - Dual relationships?
 - Arrangements for resolving conflicts with clients
 - Professional relationships

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Conclusion

- What, if anything, will you do differently in your practice from today?
- Evaluation

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Further reading:

- Allegations of serious professional misconduct Symons, Khele et al BACP CPR Volume 11, 2011 Issue 4
- Controversies in Psychotherapy & Counselling: C Feltham (Sage)
- Naming & Shaming Therapists Phillip Cox: webcast at theprofessional practitioner.net (PPS)
- The Mirror Crack'd: A Kearns (Karnac)
- The Management of Erotic/Sexual Countertransference reactions: Ray Little: Transactional Analysis Journal, DOI:1080/03621537.2018.1471290
- Complaints & Grievances in psychotherapy: F Palmer Barnes (Routledge)
- Surviving Complaints against counsellors & psychotherapists: Editor R Casemore (PCCS Books)
- Ethical Complaints: Anne Rogers (Dissertation) http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/13062/1/ARogers_thesis.pdf
- Therapists in Court: T Bond & A Sandhu (Sage)

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