



INSTITUTE of  
PSYCHOANALYSIS

# Institutional Harm

Contemporary Psychoanalytic  
Thinking & Ways Forward

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026**  
**8:30am - 6pm**

**London or Online via Zoom**

Booking:  
[psychoanalysis.org.uk/events](https://psychoanalysis.org.uk/events)



# Programme

**8:30am**

Clinical Seminars or Work Discussion Group (optional)

**9:30am**

Tea & Coffee

**10am**

Welcome & Conference Open

**10:15am**

*What do we mean by ethics? Psychoanalytic Reflections on Ethics and Responsibility* (Alessandra Lemma)

**11:30am**

Comfort Break

**11:45am**

*The Impossibility of Working in Organisations and Its Risks to Those Who Work in Them* (Rachel Gibbons)

**1pm**

Lunch (provided by IOPA for in person attendees)

**2pm**

*Harm in Healthcare: Attending to Accountability, Learning and Healing in Contemporary Healthcare Practice.* (Gerard Drennan)

**3:15pm**

Comfort Break

**3:45pm**

*Black Men's Minds* - A Presentation with Art Installation (Stephen Rudder)

**5pm**

Final Discussion with Elizabeth Allison and Rachel Gibbons (Chaired by Maxine Dennis)

**6pm**

Conference Close

# Speakers

**Alessandra Lemma** is a Fellow of the British Psychoanalytic Society and a Chartered Clinical and Counselling Psychologist with extensive experience as a clinician, academic, and author. Currently Visiting Professor in the Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London, Consultant at the Anna Freud Centre, and Visiting Professor at Centro Winnicott, Rome. Formerly Head of Psychology and Professor of Psychological Therapies at the Tavistock Clinic, she has written on psychoanalysis, trauma, the impact of technology on the psyche, transgender identities, and ethics. She is the recipient of the 2022 Sigourney Award, the 2025 Scharff Award and the BPC's 2025 Bernard Rattigan Award for Psychoanalysis and Diversity. Her most recent book was First Principles: Applied Ethics for Psychoanalytic Practice (2023). Her forthcoming books are: Psychotechnical Becomings; Psychoanalysis, Identity, Desire and Mourning in Times of AI and Digital Mediation (Routledge, 2026) and Journeying Through Psychoanalysis: Lessons from the Couch (Wiley, 2027).

**Dr Gerard Drennan Ph.D.** is the Head of Psychology & Psychotherapy for the Forensic & Neurodevelopmental Services of South London & Maudsley NHS Trust, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist. Gerard has led nationally to bring restorative practice into mental health settings, starting with forensic mental health, and now more broadly, in the context of a rapidly-evolving paradigm in patient safety. Over the course of the past thirty years, Gerard has developed services and published in the areas of communication in healthcare as a site at which institutional practice reproduces social disadvantage, the role of voice and participation in recovery-oriented practice mental healthcare, and in developing organisational capacity to attend to the needs of those who have been harmed when things go wrong in healthcare.

**Stephen Rudder** is a Psychodynamic Psychotherapist practising in private practice and in the NHS. He co-founded Southeast London Mind's Black River Counselling Service and is currently developing a Black men's therapy group offer at South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. He is a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Essex, where his research examines the presence of a colonial symbolic order in a Black male clinical dyad. Stephen is an award-winning audio-visual artist; his creative health practice explores mental health themes through collaborations with community groups, infusing multimedia works with deep insight. From these foundations, Stephen aims to improve engagement with the intersection of Black men and mental health services. He has been commissioned by organisations such as UNESCO, Wellcome Trust, Science Gallery International, and King's College London, and has developed and led several successful group projects, including Hood Mentality, Black Men's Minds, and Undisciplined Thought.

# Speakers

**Dr Rachel Gibbons** is a Consultant psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, group analyst and organisational consultant whose work has become central to contemporary thinking on institutional harm in mental healthcare. She is Vice Chair of the Psychotherapy Faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists and a national leader on the emotional and systemic impact of suicide and homicide on clinicians. In recognition of her national contribution, she received the RCPsych President's Medal in 2024. Across her clinical, academic, and organisational consultancy roles, Dr Gibbons investigates how institutions can become dangerous places when unconscious dynamics are unrecognised. Her work integrates psychoanalytic theory, systems thinking, and frontline psychiatric experience to illuminate how organisations defend against unbearable anxiety, how scapegoating takes root, and what it means to sustain reflective, humane practice in environments where the pressures may feel impossibly high. She has worked for more than two decades across inpatient, community, liaison and specialist services, including the Halliwick Unit and the Portman Clinic, and was formerly National Therapy Director at the Priory Group. She teaches, supervises, and consults widely in the NHS, the third sector, and professional bodies, helping systems understand the emotional realities of institutional life and the conditions required for truth-telling, repair, and recovery.

Her forthcoming paper *Scapegoating in Healthcare: A Primitive Response to Tragedy*. Recent publications on institutional harm. Her paper *The Impossibility of Working in the Current NHS: Sacrifice to a Primitive God*, published in *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*.

**Maxine Dennis** is a Psychoanalyst and consultant clinical psychologist who works with individuals, groups, and organisations. She is one of the original founding members of 10 Windsor Walk (psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and training in South London) and a founder/member of *Black Psychoanalysts Speak*. She is also a speaker and lecturer for various psychology, counselling and psychotherapy organisations in the UK and abroad and a training analyst for child psychotherapy and various adult psychotherapy trainings. She has directed and staffed on numerous *Group Relation Conferences* (GRCs). Maxine has a longstanding interest in art, psychoanalysis across the life span and its accessibility to a range of communities, and her clinical practice is in South London.

**Elizabeth Allison DPhil** is the Director of the Psychoanalysis Unit in the Research Department of Clinical, Educational & Health Psychology at UCL. She is an Associate Professor and Programme Director of UCL's MSc in Theoretical Psychoanalytic Studies. She is a psychoanalyst and Member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. She is the Editor of the Psychoanalytic Controversies section of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. She holds a doctorate in English Literature from the University of Oxford.