



University
of Exeter

Eco-Systemic Psychotherapy and Deep Nature Connection

A transformational systemic CPD course for mental health professionals

Course overview

A unique course for psychotherapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and other allied health professionals with the aim of integrating nature, systems theory and the imagination into contemporary therapeutic practice by way of online lectures, in person and immersive experiential contact with nature. This will include experiential therapeutic work out-doors and a retreat. The course is designed to have a strong transformative impact on participants by encouraging new perspectives, not only on our relationship to therapy itself but also its context within our current social and political institutions and the ecological systems of our planet.

Course details

This is a one-year, CPD course that will be seeking foundation accredited upon completion with the Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy (AFSP).

The cost will be £2,800 per person. This includes the 18 days of training (a mixture of online and face to face) plus the three-day retreat (timetable on the next page).

Face to face training will take place in Washington Singer Building, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QG.

To express an interest in this training, [please complete this short form](#).

Modules

- Introduction to systemic theory and practice, eco-systemic psychotherapy - map, territories and patterns that connect
- Hospicing modernity - western narrative collapse and the need for a deeper narrative
- Decolonising nature and mental health- Reclaiming western indigenous knowledge for a post mechanist world
- Working with the imaginal- deep nature connection practice in clinical and non-clinical settings.
- Rites of passage revisited- nature based psychotechnologies essential to adolescent mental health.
- Psychedelics and dying practice - the role of nature-based development mapping tools.
- Systemic skills and practice - introducing systemic change - from micro to macro, from family interventions to whole system change.
- Re imagining and recentring human mental health- nature and mental health beyond a consumer culture
- Self of the therapist and being an agent for change.

Programme team



Roger Duncan MSc is a Systemic Eco Psychotherapist and Systemic Supervisor, author and writer working in the NHS and in private practice. Roger has been involved in exploring nature-based practice and Eco Psychotherapy for more than 30 years and writes and lectures internationally on Eco Systemic approaches to nature and mental health.



Professor Hannah Sherbersky is Director of the Systemic Portfolio and Deputy Director of Cedar (PGT Clinical Training) within the University of Exeter and CEO of the UK Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy (AFSP). Hannah is a family and systemic psychotherapist, supervisor and academic, and lectures and writes on a range of systemic ideas. She has an extensive background in psychotherapy, research and training, and a national and international profile as a

systemic leader in the field.

Guest lecturers



Marina Robb (PGCE; MSc; MA; BSc) is Founder and Managing Director of Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC and The Outdoor Teacher Ltd, leading organisations dedicated to transforming education and health through nature. With over 30 years' experience in outdoor learning, she is a qualified teacher, Forest School endorsed trainer, and author of *Learning with Nature* and *The Essential Guide to Forest School and Nature Pedagogy*. Marina has pioneered nature-based

programmes in health, education, and social care, securing national funding to support diverse groups. Her approach integrates environmental education, eco-psychology, indigenous wisdom, and therapeutic practice.



Nora Bateson is an award-winning filmmaker, writer and educator, as well as President of the International Bateson Institute, based in Sweden. She has developed curricula for schools in Northern California and produced and directed award winning multimedia projects on intercultural and ecological understanding. Her speaking engagements focus on a wide range of topics including anti-fascism, ecology, education, the arts, family therapy, leadership, and many more aspects of

advocacy for living systems.



Bayo Akomolafe (Ph.D.), rooted with the Yoruba people in a more-than-human world, is the father to Alethea and Kyah, the grateful life-partner to EJ, son and brother. He is a widely celebrated international speaker, posthumanist thinker, poet, teacher, self-styled 'trans-public' intellectual, essayist, and currently the Hubert Humphrey Distinguished Professor of American Studies in Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA (August 2025). Bayo is the host teacher at

Dancing with Mountains, an educational consultation and the visionary founder of The Emergence Network, a planet-wide networking project and inquiry at the edges of the Anthropocene.



Dr Matt Owens is a Developmental Psychologist at the University of Exeter whose primary research area is the prevention and treatment of common mental illnesses such as depression, with a particular focus on understanding the underlying mechanisms involved in its aetiology and pathogenesis in children, adolescents and young adults.



Israh Goodall is a rites of passage guide, midwife, and expedition leader. She has worked in the NHS and remote international settings, led youth expeditions worldwide, and for the past decade has run rites of passage programmes for young people and adults across the UK. Her work is rooted in the belief that rites of passage are vital in these times, both as a remembering and a reimagining of how we honour growth, belonging, and the cycles of life.



Rob Moore works as a systemic family therapist in NHS secondary adult mental health services. He practices family therapy in the nature-based context of a city farm and has researched and written on the ecological and climate crises in relation to family therapy.



Jenny Archard is a co-founder of Neroche Woodlanders, a social enterprise in 100 acres of Somerset's public forest estate, she supports nature-based wellbeing and ecotherapy for young people, adults, and families. Through her Woodland Journeys enterprise, she offers vision quests, Way of Council, and deep nature connection work. An experienced nature-guide, facilitator, and educator, her practice draws on ecology, neuroscience, Indigenous writings, and work with marginalised

communities. Trained with the School of Lost Borders and a Dartmoor-based shamanic practitioner, she is a qualified forest school leader and bushcraft practitioner, with a Master of Research in outdoor education exploring human-nature relationships.



Hugh Palmer is a systemic psychotherapist, educator, and writer based in Yorkshire. He recently led systemic training on the Hull Clinical Psychology Doctorate and writes on ecological and relational approaches to therapy, including the *Fourfold Vision* framework. His work integrates second-order systems thinking, sacred immanence, and ethical responses to collapse.



J. Phoenix Smith is a diviner and Elder Initiated in the Earth-honoring Lucumí Afro-Cuban tradition. They offer eco-spiritual mentorship grounded in 20+ years of community practice. She holds an MSW from Howard University, an Ecotherapy graduate certificate, and is training in EMDR. With 20+ years in U.S. public health managing HIV clinics and advancing health equity, she has practiced Ecotherapy since 2012 with a focus on collective care for BIPOC, LGBTQ, immigrant, and

underserved communities. She created Liberation Ecotherapy®, rooted in healing justice, and founded the Alliance for Ecotherapy & Social Justice in 2020. Her work has been featured in The Atlantic, NPR, and Harvard Medical School.



Chiara Fortina Santin, an Italian systemic psychotherapist, integrates nature, social justice, and diversity into her work. Based in the UK, she develops ecosystemic therapy, supporting adoptive families and professionals. A trainer, author, and director, she promotes ecotherapy, decolonised mental health, and community healing through creativity, nature, and inclusive dialogue.



Dr Andy Letcher began his career as an Ecologist before moving across to the humanities and the Study of Religion. He specialises in the critical and psychological study of what have been called 'dark green' religions: religions that centralise their relationship to the nonhuman, such as Paganism, shamanism, animism and especially psychedelic spiritualities. He is programme lead for the PGCert Psychedelics: Mind, Medicine and Culture at the University of Exeter, and is author of numerous papers on psychedelics, ecology, animism and paganism.



Professor Ben Wheeler Ben is Professor of Environment, Health and Inequalities at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health at the University of Exeter, and co-director of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Natural Environments and Health. He has recently been appointed to Natural England's Science Advisory Committee (NESAC).



Beth Collier is a writer, Nature Allied Psychotherapist and ethnographer whose work explores how people connect with nature and each other. She is founder and CEO of Wild in the City, championing the experiences of people of colour in green spaces, and a senior leader in the environmental field. Beth developed Nature Allied Psychotherapy, an outdoor therapeutic approach working with relational depth. In 2015 she established the Nature Therapy School, offering CPD and Diploma training for psychotherapists and allied professionals. Her forthcoming book, *Nature Allied Psychotherapy: Exploring Relationships with Self, Others and Nature* will be published by Routledge.



Dr. Catriona Mellor is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist whose clinical and academic work focuses on the intersections of nature, climate change, and youth mental health. She works with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, and Natural Academy. Her recent projects include the design and evaluation of nature-based interventions within the NHS, the development and delivery of Nature Connectedness training for mental health practitioners, and research examining climate-related anxiety in young people. In addition, she has completed formal training in Ecotherapy and Forest School Leadership, to strengthen her experience in evidence-informed, nature-based approaches to psychological wellbeing.



Mary-Jayne Rust is a psychotherapist with 40 years' experience, trained in art therapy, feminist psychotherapy, and Jungian analysis. Inspired by journeys to Ladakh in the 1990s, she became a pioneer in ecopsychology, exploring its cultural, economic, and spiritual roots. Her books include *Towards an Ecopsychotherapy* (2019) and *Vital Signs* (2011). Passionate about wild swimming, she now lives in North London, working beside ancient woodland in her indoor and outdoor practice.



Marie-Hélène Dalila-Boyle is a UKCP-registered Integrative and Transpersonal Psychotherapist with over 30 years of experience. Her work weaves psychotherapy, nature-based practices, and indigenous traditions from West Africa and the Lakota Sioux. She integrates healing modalities such as breathwork and sacred ceremonies. As a spiritual guide in the Universal Sufi path, she leads retreats and supports transformation through elemental alchemy. Passionate about nature, peace, and embodied spirituality, she also facilitates the Dances of Universal Peace.



Michael Boyle began his career as a psychotherapist in the early nineties, working with poet Robert Bly and psychologist James Hillman in the field of Mytho-poetics – using myth and story for personal transformation. Inspired by indigenous initiation rites, he developed contemporary Rites of Passage as experiential education for young people. He founded *abandofbrothers*, a charity mentoring disaffected youth, awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service in 2015. A certified leader with

the ManKind Project, Michael delivers initiatory trainings worldwide. As a Founding Partner of Olivier Mythodrama, he has led arts-based leadership programmes internationally, including workshops for Shakespeare’s Globe.

More guest speakers to be announced soon!

Timetable

March 2026	Two teaching days	Face to face
April 2026	Two teaching days	Online
May 2026	Two teaching days	Face to face
June 2026	Two teaching days	Online
July 2026	Two teaching days	Face to face
September 2026	Three days	Retreat
October 2026	Two teaching days	Online
November 2026	Two teaching days	Face to face
Jan 2027	Two teaching days	Online
Feb 2027	Two teaching days	Face to face