

# The U-n-l-o-c-k-i-n-g

*Newly Qualified Dramatherapists Sarah and Bekki were accepted to present at the BADth conference, 2014. The Peter Slade Fund helped to go towards conference costs.*

## **Our Experience:**

We were ecstatic to be able to present and share at conference our current voluntary project. We have been working in a Dramatherapy partnership for almost a year within a local charity and felt enthused to present in a creative and performance medium. We decided to share our journey through applying the 6 part story method. Within this written piece we want to share both our story and experience of presenting at conference.

## **Characters:**

**Sarah** originally came from a psychology and counselling degree background before completing her Masters in Dramatherapy. Through training and since being qualified she has worked with a variety of clients including those with various eating disorders (both diagnosed and undiagnosed), anxiety, depression, borderline personality disorder, hearing voices, body image and social, emotional and behaviour difficulties.

**Bekki** originally came from a performance degree background before completing her Masters in Dramatherapy. Through training and since being qualified she has worked with a variety of clients including those with various eating disorders (both diagnosed and undiagnosed), autistic spectrum disorder, emotional and behavioural difficulties, borderline personality disorder and sexual abuse.

## **Setting:**

An eating disorder (ED) charity which supports those with all ED types, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. The charity provides a range of support services to both sufferers and carers. Many of the service users have comorbid mental health issues alongside their ED.

## **Mission:**

To pilot evidence based Dramatherapy practice over the period of a year which would involve working with clients on a 1:1 basis. Therapy would be provided to all individuals suffering with an eating disorder, including those who did not meet specific NHS criteria.

## **Helper:**

A metaphorical helper was created by identifying specific personality characteristics held within the characters of Sarah and Bekki. The metaphorical helper encompassed **loyalty** to Dramatherapy, **passion** to offer therapeutic interventions, **compassion** to both the clients and to self and **perseverance** to overcome the barrier and boundaries met along the journey.

## **Obstacles:**

Throughout the journey several obstacles presented which included; a lack of funding, the need to educate individuals about Dramatherapy and resistance from some external professionals.

An ED client group brings many obstacles into the therapeutic space. Many individuals can be resistant to change and be ambivalent towards whether or not to let go of ED behaviours. Throughout the Dramatherapeutic work, it was evident that several recurring themes were present amongst the majority of clients. These themes included a lack of imagination, indecisiveness, people pleasing, perfectionism and black and white thinking. These had the potential to cause barriers in the therapeutic space therefore, throughout the therapy process, it became evident that the therapeutic relationship needed to be strong in order to overcome such hurdles.

**Ending:**

*"Then he turned it once round, and now we must wait until he has quite unlocked it and opened the lid, and then we shall learn what wonderful things were lying in that box."* (Grimm & Grimm, 2009, p.828).

**Concluding our experience:**

Through being accepted to share our story at conference and receive the Peter Slade funding, we were able to have our passion and energy for the Dramatherapy project witnessed. This exceeded our expectations of what could be achieved as newly qualified Dramatherapists. The experience has highlighted that there is a need for more CPD and research into Dramatherapy and ED. Consequently, the next chapter to our story is to facilitate CPD workshops focusing upon working with ED through creative interventions. To find out more please feel free to contact us at: [info.awakentherapies@gmail.com](mailto:info.awakentherapies@gmail.com)

*Sarah Buxton and Bekki Watson*

**Reference:**

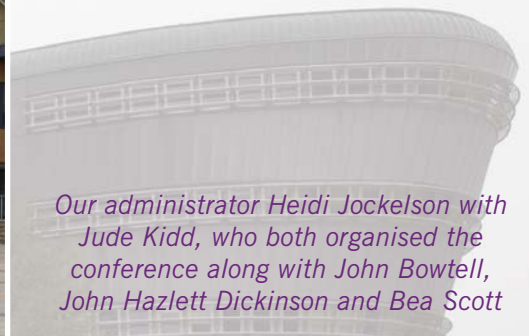
Grimm, J., & Grimm, W. (2009). *The Completed Fairy Tales of The Brothers Grimm*. UK: Wordsworth Library Collection.



*Mary Smail and Bruce Howard Bayley, who facilitated the Closing Workshop*



*Susan Crockford with Alan Turing*



*Our administrator Heidi Jockelson with Jude Kidd, who both organised the conference along with John Bowtell, John Hazlett Dickinson and Bea Scott*

