

4th INTERNATIONAL IPT CONFERENCE

This conference was held in Amsterdam, on the 23rd and 24th of June.

I had not intended to attend, given the cost of the conference, accommodation and travel, but had been interested in hearing the feedback from 2 of my colleagues who were due to attend courtesy of a FPSA grant and some other charity funding.

However, one of these colleagues was unable to attend due to a family bereavement and I ended up taking her place, very last minute. FPSA very kindly transferred the grant from my colleague to me so I only had to negotiate the extortionate bmi baby flight costs!

IPT (interpersonal psychotherapy), has been around for a few decades, but is not as well known as the likes of CBT and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy.

This is a shame, as it is a versatile model, easy to train in and according to lots of the research, as efficacious as CBT in treating depression and bulimia nervosa.

The conference was organised into the usual mix of lectures and parallel workshops. The lectures on the first morning were disappointing and only tangentially linked to IPT. It seemed a shame to have some of the founders of IPT present and not use them to give lectures, only 10 minute long forwarding addresses.

The afternoon workshops were more interesting and vibrant. I attended one on IPT for adolescents with depression which was presented by a very knowledgeable and experienced clinician and researcher. It was full of ideas for practice and the adaptations needed to make IPT suitable for adolescents (i.e. IPT-A).

It is unfortunate that this experience of a workshop was not the common theme of all the presenters of the workshops I attended. It meant that it was often the research itself that was being presented, rather than the IPT. There was a very wide range of experience (from virtually none to years of regular practise with the IPT model), in the workshop facilitators, which meant a wide variety in content, presentations and usefulness. However, this couldn't be anticipated in advance from the abstracts and descriptions.

It appeared that my colleagues at the conference gained more from attending the workshops run by old hands at IPT rather than the ones I attended about newer versions of IPT (i.e. IPT-cc) run by professionals less knowledgeable about IPT in general. I did wonder if the onus for useful and effective IPT based workshops could have fallen on the organisers' shoulders a little more, with them selecting more vigorously who was 'competent to present'.

As always, the networking opportunities were great, as was the poster presentation. There were several international schemes working with adolescents and given that everyone was fluent in English, we were able to have useful conversations about these projects and services.

Overall the conference left me encouraged to continue my IPT practise and to continue trying to find adaptations for the IPT-A version.

I would say that the international IPT body has a way to go in terms of conference management and ensuring robustness of the presenters and their material. I would also like to see some more interesting styles of presentation, 2 days of power point is not overly stimulating!

But the best bits for me of the whole experience were the chance to catch up with colleagues and think about IPT service development and liaison; also that I finally managed to find an IPT supervisor!! Many thanks to FPSA for making this all possible.

Zoe thistlewood
Senior clinical nurse
Leicestershire partnership NHS trust