Althe Brown, Comedian; 

**"We're All Bipolar Now"**

Althe Brown is a stand up comic who was diagnosed with Bipolar disorder. Mental illness is famously prevalent amongst comedians but is the diagnosis part of the malady itself? Can the classification of any disorder make life easier or harder for the sufferer? Althe speaks about his own experience with diagnosis, medication and how ideology and environment can affect our mental state perhaps more so than being "chemically imbalanced".

The 9th Annual Keele Counselling Conference gathers together a dynamic, interdisciplinary and creative range of opinion and experience on the central issue of how we see and treat "mental illness" generally and how this may be redefined as a "complex individual response" to life experience; including loss, trauma, abuse, social alienation, deprivation and conflict. The conference will appeal to counselling and other mental health professionals.

Rufus May, as seen in C4's "The doctor who hears voices". Rufus also has an interest in mindfulness, voice dialogue and moving forward (Piatkus, 2015) http://www.profstephenjoseph.com/

Clare Shaw; 

**"An illness like any other? The disadvantages of equating human suffering with physical disorders"**

Clare Shaw is a prominent figure in the UK self-harm survivor movement, Clare’s work is grounded not only in academic and professional knowledge, but also in lived experience. This expertise, along with a deep passion for the issues she addresses, means that her work has gained a national audience, and influences practice across the UK and beyond. Her belief in the value of lived experience and her commitment to user-led practice continues to fuel her work as a self-harm trainer, project researcher and author. With a list of publications to her name, Clare co-edited “Our Encounters with Self-injury” (PCCS 2013); and authored the groundbreaking stopbook resource for younger children suffering with self-harm “Ons Doesn’t Sorach” (PCCS 2015).

Clare is also "one of Britain’s most dynamic and powerful young poets" (Arvon Foundation). Her first poetry collection, "Straight Ahead" was published by Bloodaxe in 2006; and was described by Jackie Kay as "an memorable and visceral”.

Dr Gary Sidley, author of Tales from the Madhouse; An insider critique of psychiatric services was published by PCCS Books Feb 2015 http://bit.ly/1zBp6XW

**"Working with the method in the madness"**

Dr Rufus May, presenting

"We’re All Bipolar Now" ﬁrst played in 2010; and was described by Jackie Kay as "an emotional blast of a book"; her second collection "Head On" (2012) is, according to the TLS "fierce … a personal memoir of depression and recovery". Clare is also "one of Britain’s most dynamic and powerful young poets" (Arvon Foundation). Her ﬁrst poetry collection, "Straight Ahead" was published by Bloodaxe in 2006; and was described by Jackie Kay as "an memorable and visceral”.

Prof Stephen Joseph; 

**"What doesn’t kill us: The psychology of posttraumatic growth"**

Most people experience some form of psychological trauma in their lives. It could be an event unique to us and our families such as an accident, illness, bereavement or divorce, or it could be because we are victim of a large scale event such as terror, war or in this talk, Professor Joseph introduces the idea of posttraumatic growth. This is the idea that we can create a positive turning point from a life changing crisis – a revolutionary perspective that is changing how we work therapeutically with survivors of psychological trauma.

For Conference bookings, please contact

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Registration 8.30 to 9am, Conference 9 am to 5pm, Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd March 2015