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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: 'Alternative' methods of coping: tattooing and humour as non-traditional methods of emotional expression

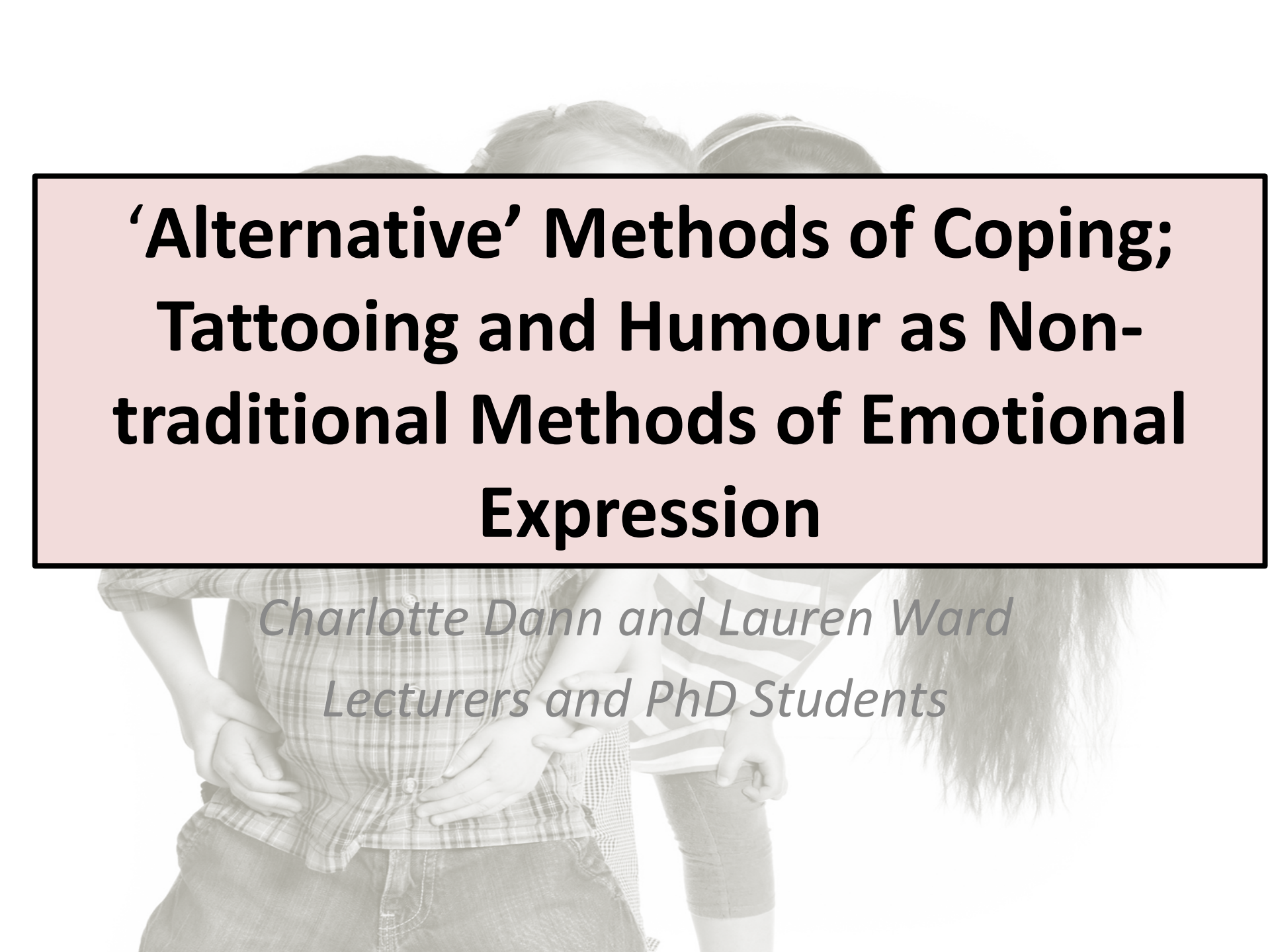
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Version: Presented version

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/6786/>



A faded, grayscale background image of three young women hugging each other from behind. The woman on the left is wearing a plaid shirt and jeans. The woman in the middle is wearing a striped shirt and shorts. The woman on the right has long hair. The image is centered and serves as a backdrop for the text.

‘Alternative’ Methods of Coping; Tattooing and Humour as Non- traditional Methods of Emotional Expression

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Lecturers and PhD Students*

Overview:

- Coping

1. Humour

2. Tattooing

- Implications





Mental Illness



Mental Health



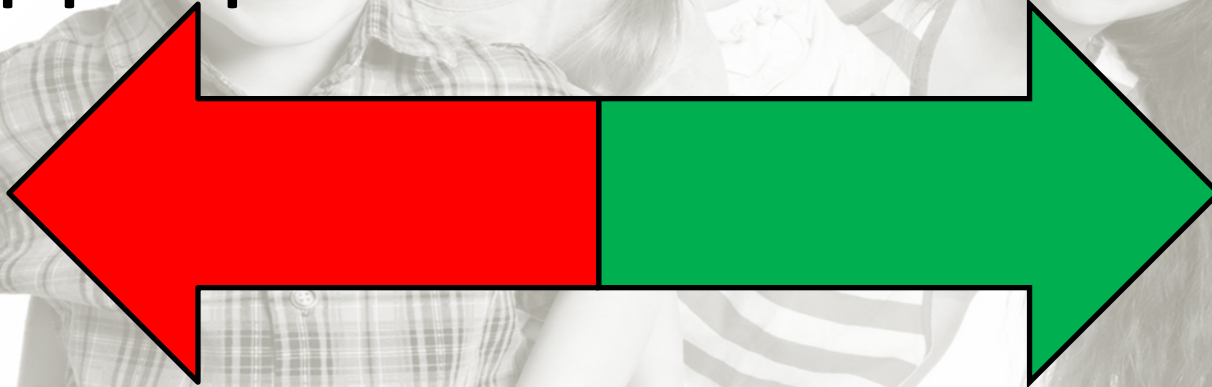
Causes

Coping

Coping

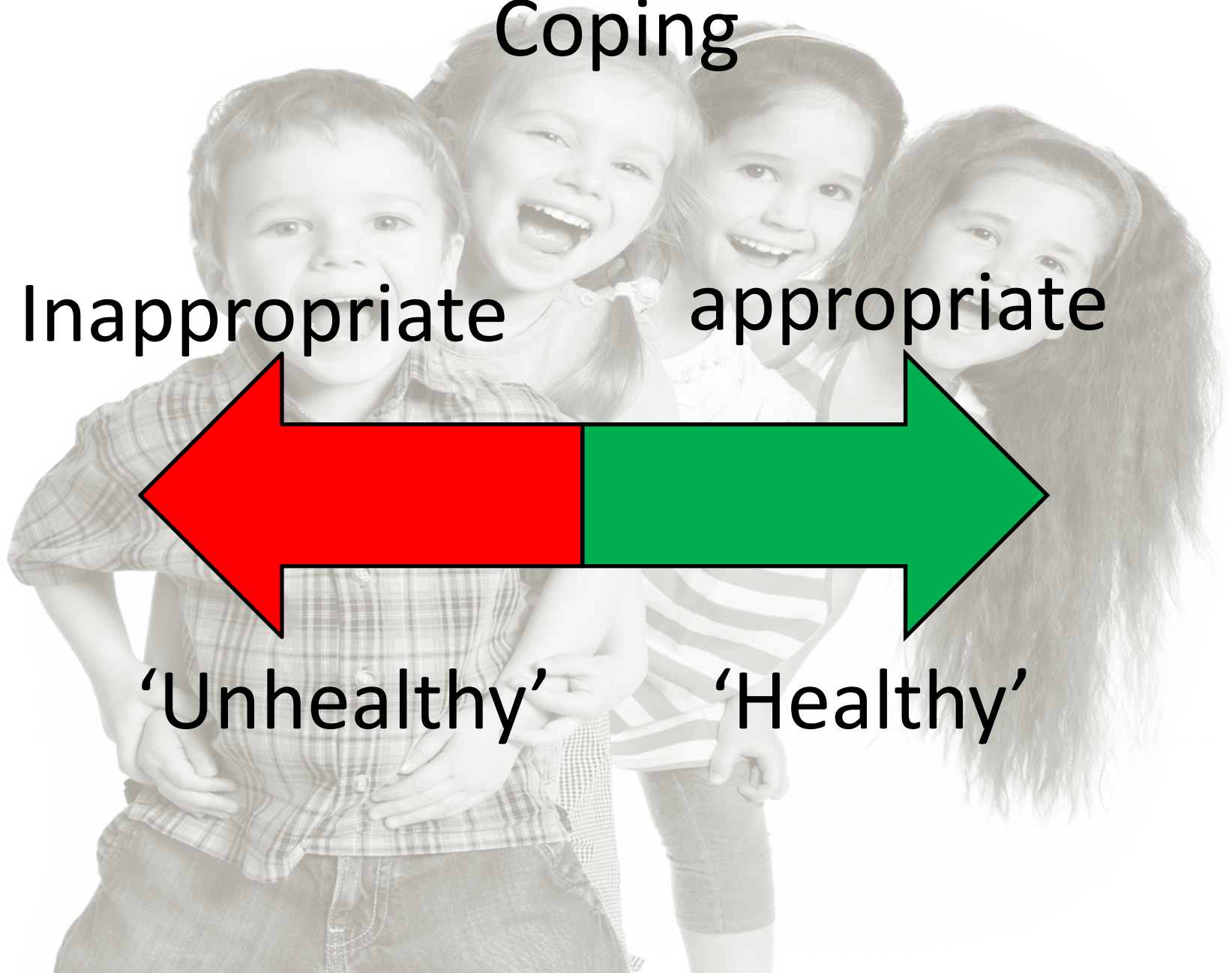
Inappropriate

appropriate



'Unhealthy'

'Healthy'



Part one: Humour and Emotion

Lauren Ward



Humour; What is it?



Personality trait

Humour as part of the person

Way of coping

Humour as a shield

Communicatory
tool

Humour as an enabler

Communicatory Tool

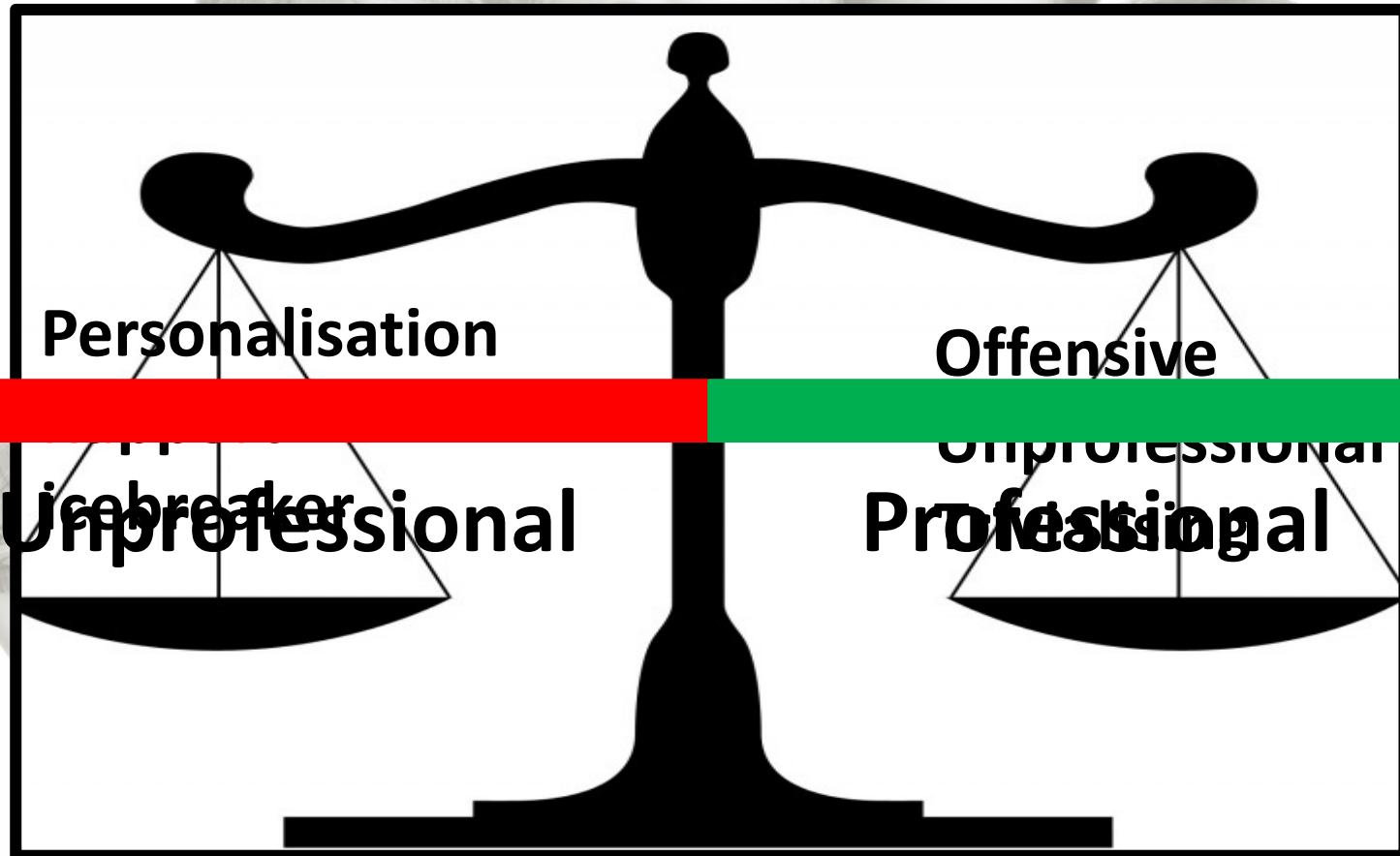
- YP friendly way to talk

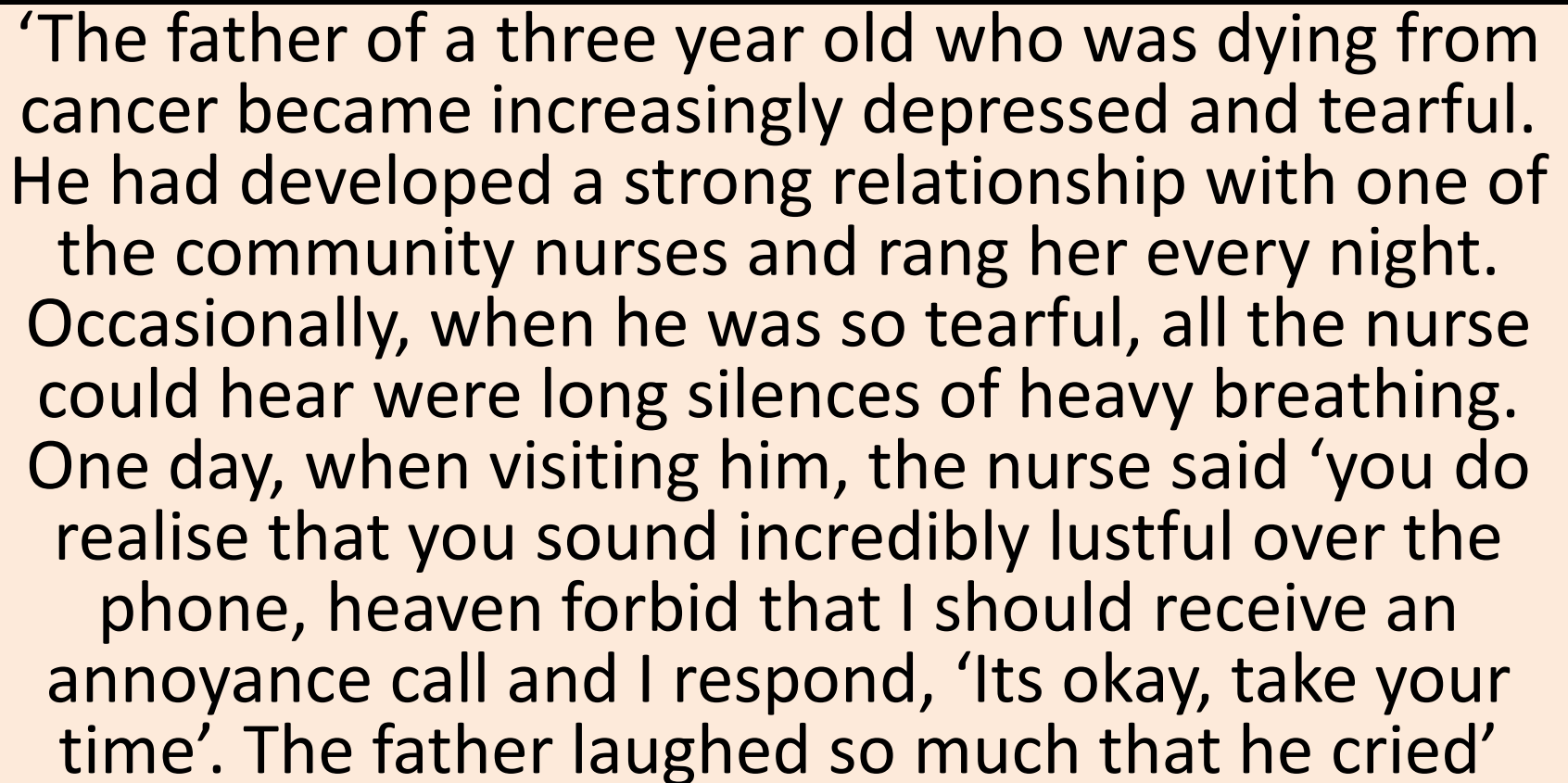
[Teenage MH Forum/blog](#)

[Pesky Gnatts CBT Child friendly](#)

- ‘Shared experience’ (Struthers, 1999, p. 1198)
- Frees up dialogue

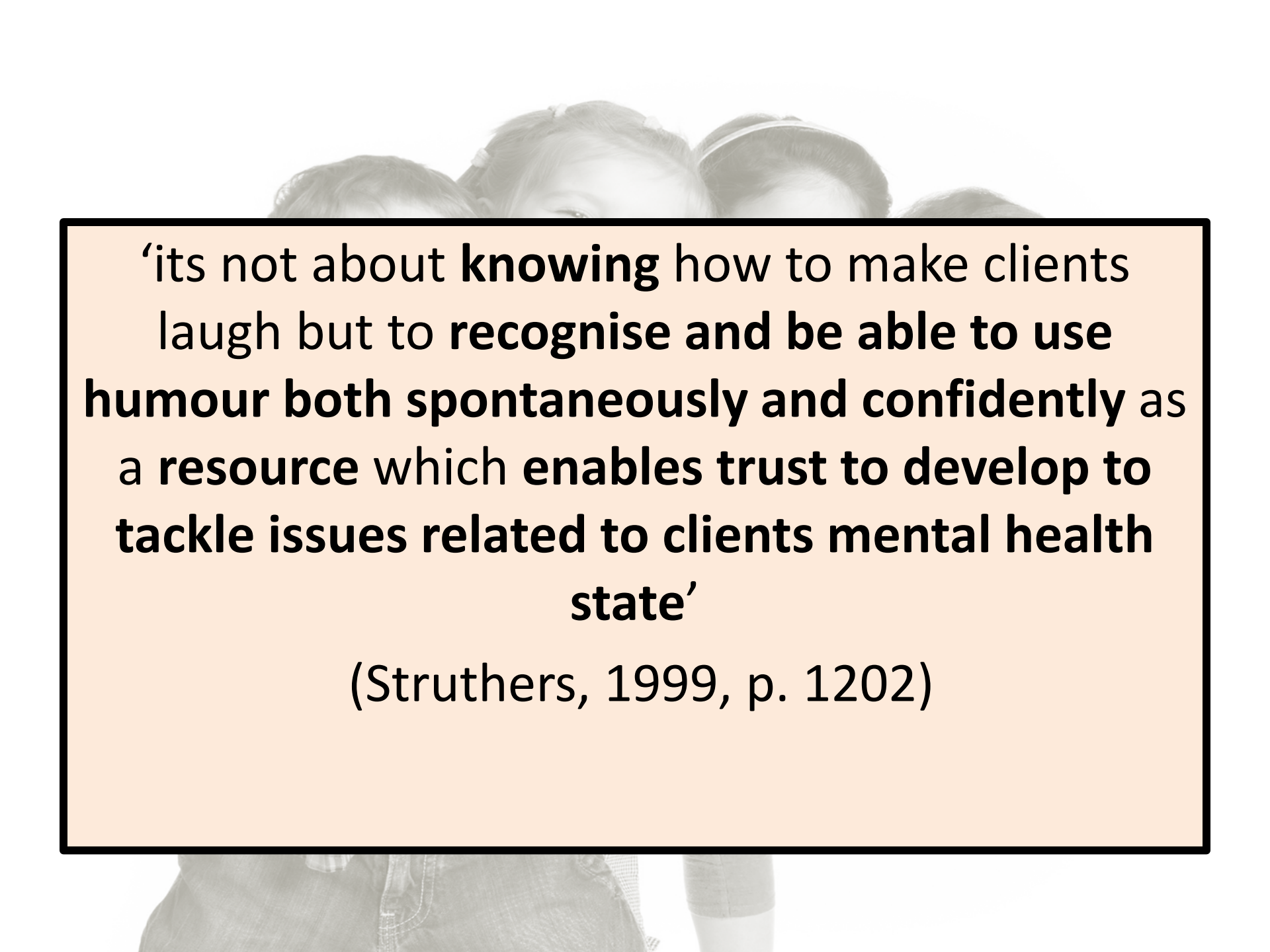
Humour as a 'Risky Business'





‘The father of a three year old who was dying from cancer became increasingly depressed and tearful. He had developed a strong relationship with one of the community nurses and rang her every night. Occasionally, when he was so tearful, all the nurse could hear were long silences of heavy breathing. One day, when visiting him, the nurse said ‘you do realise that you sound incredibly lustful over the phone, heaven forbid that I should receive an annoyance call and I respond, ‘Its okay, take your time’. The father laughed so much that he cried’

(Adapted from Jolly and Brykczynska, 1992, p. 245-246)



‘its not about knowing how to make clients laugh but to recognise and be able to use humour both spontaneously and confidently as a resource which enables trust to develop to tackle issues related to clients mental health state’

(Struthers, 1999, p. 1202)

A black and white photograph of a tattoo artist's hand holding a tattoo machine. The artist is working on a client's arm, which is covered in a large, intricate tattoo. The tattoo features a central floral design with multiple petals, surrounded by swirling, vine-like patterns. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Part two: Tattooing and Emotion

Tattoos: Background

Tattoos are a method for which people are able to communicate in ways in which they may not feel able (Way, 2013)

Previous research is predominantly negative – focus on young people and drug/alcohol abuse (Carroll et al, 2002; Brooks et al, 2003)

Motivations: fashion, enhancing individuality, rebel, sexual attraction, symbolic, friendship/love
Antoszewski et al, 2010

Tattoos: Media Influence

**'Are you sure that's allowed at Epsom?
Tattoos and piercings at Ladies Day' (Daily
Mail)**



**'Woman cuts off a tattoo of her cheating
ex-boyfriend's name with a scalpel and
POSTS the skin to him' (Daily Mail)**



**The ways tattoos can get you into trouble
(BBC News)**

**Maine "gun tattoo" man arrested
for stealing drugs (CBS News)**

Skin as a Container

(Patterson & Schroeder, 2010)

Tattoos enable people to express who they are, display what they have overcome and state how they see themselves within their social world (Anderson, 2014)

Rejection of the 'status quo'
(Dukes & Stein, 2011)

Skin as Projection

(Patterson & Schroeder, 2010)

Serves as a vehicle to mark the passage into adulthood; independence (Kang & Jones, 2007)

Links with spirituality; a reflection of moral character (Mun, Janigo & Johnson, 2012)

Skin as Modification

(Patterson & Schroeder, 2010)

Promoting positive self image after stress (Stitz and Pierce, 2013)

'Reading' someone through their skin (MacCormack, 2006)

Provides a narrative for emotion (Kosut, 2000)

Implications:



- Importance of being aware of these internal conflicts which regulate how we express and communicate with others as professionals.
- Through understanding, they can be used as resources to empathise, and create this mutual and shared understanding that is both personal and ‘professional’