

...with Sam Cartwright-Hatton

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One moment that changed the course of your career

Standing outside the loos in Birmingham University psychology department, waiting for a student who was showing me around on a postgrad open day. Idly looking at a noticeboard, I saw an advert for a DPhil studentship at Oxford, studying anxiety disorders in adults. It was funded (the main attraction at that point...) and although I hadn't really been that drawn to clinical psychology, it sounded interesting. I applied, and that was that. I ended up loving it, and a career as a clinical psychologist followed.

One way to ease anxiety in young children

I really think the best way of reducing the global burden of anxiety would be to ensure that all children grow up in a fair world, without poverty, where their basic emotional needs are met by happy, well-supported parents. And now in the real world...

One publication all psychologists should read

New Scientist. I read it cover to cover every week (OK, not the stuff on black holes...) and I am constantly picking up leftfield ideas that influence my thinking, and that I would never come across otherwise.

One acronym for your next project, following PACMan and TOPCAT!

Our next project will be running at the CATTLab in Sussex, hot on the heels of our CATTS and TOPCAT grants, so it had to have a feline-related name. We've called it the ASPI project – Anxiety Symptoms Prevention Intervention. Aspi (short for Aspidistra) was the name of my dear departed moggie.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

For anyone really, no matter what career they are aspiring to: Be nice to people; deliver what you promise. Do those



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two things and you won't go far wrong.

One thing that 'organised psychology' could do better

Convince the world that we really are scientists. My husband is an engineer and

readily admits that researching the human mind is more difficult than the most complex of engineering problems that he has faced. Unfortunately, that's still not how the public usually see it.

One cultural recommendation

Go and watch the Royal Ballet doing anything. Nothing takes me out of myself like watching dance and we are lucky to have one of the best companies in the world based in the UK.

One way parents may be impacting upon the anxiety of their children

First of all with their genes, but we can't do much about that (yet). If your children have landed some anxious genes, the best thing that you can do, in my opinion, is make sure they receive calm, consistent, clear parenting, and regularly push them just out of their comfort zone.

One great thing that psychology has achieved

We've started to understand mental illness. That's the first step towards de-stigmatising, and, thanks largely to psychologists, we are moving to a world that is sympathetic towards and accepting of mental health problems.

One more question

My favourite saying is 'friends are people who know all about you, but like you anyway'. For me, it reinforces what I need to keep in mind as a clinical psychologist – we've all got a dark side in us somewhere, and this is OK.

Much more online at www.thepsychologist.org.uk

resource

Cartwright-Hatton, S., Laskey, B., Rust, S. & McNally, D. (2010). *From Timid to Tiger*. Wiley-Blackwell. 'It details a new parenting-based treatment approach to dealing with anxiety in young children, which we got great results from in the PACMan trial.'

coming soon

A special issue on pain, including 'Looking back' with Ronald Melzack; childhood enemies; impressionists; and much more...

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