



August / September 2024 NEWSLETTER

A little reminder that booking is now open:

Boarding School Survivors - Support

2024 Annual Conference

Saturday 9th November (9am - 5.30pm)

The Friends House, Euston, London

£95 including lunch*

FOR MORE INFO & CONFERENCE PROGRAMME - [CLICK HERE](#)

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE - [CLICK HERE](#)

**subsidies available in case of financial hardship*

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Dear all,

It's hard to believe that Summer is coming to an end, and the new school year is about to begin. For some former boarders, we know this can be a difficult time of year, as memories of past separation resurface.

Back to School Blues

It can often be hard to connect those annual feelings of unease or melancholy to the school calendar, especially if you're not actively preparing your own children for a return to school. But our bodies remember, and echoes of past loss and abandonment can feel very real, and very present.

If you are affected, we hope this newsletter brings you a glimmer of comfort, that you are among friends, who truly understand.

You'll also find details of events, groups and resources, including a guide to the different types of support and how they can help you as you navigate the process of healing.

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A Guide to Support Services

It's good to see an increasing range of services on offer to help former boarders navigate their healing journey, from deep-dive therapies, to local friendship groups, to online communities. We felt a short guide might be helpful for those navigating the Survivor's journey.

Services can roughly be grouped into 3 categories:

1. Therapy
2. Convening & Conferences
3. Community Support Groups

Each has a different purpose:

Therapy

All psychotherapy is (by definition) centred around therapeutic processes that are specifically designed to relieve or heal distress. The following information is specifically for Boarding School Survivors.

There are different types of therapy:

Therapeutic Support Groups - These are small, private meetings, facilitated by trained psychotherapists, who lead the groups with a therapeutic intention. A typical example would be the Hove fortnightly therapeutic support groups offered by Karen Macmillan, a Transactional Analysis counsellor working in private practice. ([Details here](#)).

One-to-one psychotherapy or counselling - These are individual sessions with a therapist or counsellor, using a range of modalities to explore your own psyche and guide you to challenge and change. It is recommended former boarders seek a psychotherapist specifically trained in understanding and treating Boarding School Syndrome. ([You can find one here.](#)) This is because mainstream psychotherapists may carry cultural preconceptions about boarding school being a privilege, and miss the very deep and often well masked trauma that boarding school survivors carry.

Group workshops - The gold standard in therapeutic interventions for Boarding School Survivors is the The 4-day Men's and Women's Workshops run by Nick Duffell, psychotherapy trainer and psycho-historian and author of *The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System*.

Using a highly attuned workshop structure, Nick and his co-facilitators - all trained psychotherapists - guide small cohorts on a deep and immersive therapeutic journey over 2 weekends.

These workshops are particularly suited to those who have never fully shared their experiences, as well as to those who feel they may not have yet fully lived their true potential, because they are stuck in rebellion, anger or distress. Participants need not have had one-to-one therapy beforehand, though some therapeutic support during the process is advised.

Year after year, participants emerge with testimonies as to the deep healing, saved marriages and renewed hope. The length of the waiting list speaks volumes too!

Convening & Conferences

These are curated events that bring people together to connect as a community, usually with a supporting itinerary or agenda on one or more aspects of Boarding School Recovery.

A long-standing example is the annual [BSS-Support Conference - being staged this year on 9th November](#). This annual event brings together around 100+ former boarders together to connect in a safe space, around a day of carefully curated expert talks, therapist-supported discussion groups - and a fabulous lunch.

Former boarders are invited to connect with others, and can share in group discussions if they wish. Whilst this is not group therapy, there are group discussions, with professional facilitators on hand to ensure a space safe is maintained. Participants report that connecting with others, and having the space to learn, share, and explore is very beneficial. The conference can also help provide clarity about next steps on the therapeutic journey.

Community Support Groups

These increasingly popular types of groups bring like-minded people together, for peer to peer support. Groups can be run via social media, for example the Boarding School Survivors facebook page (not connected to this organisation, but a highly respected and well moderated forum).

Another forum is the new online connection groups hosted by Seen & Heard, where up to 10 people gather in a safe space once a week to share their story, or hear others.

And finally, some groups like to meet in the 'real world', for example the forthcoming meet up for boarding school survivors and their supporters, generously hosted by Thurstine Basset in Hove in October. ([Details here](#)).

Whilst community groups like these cannot provide therapy, and still need an appropriate level of facilitation or moderation to help keep the space safe. Community groups are a valuable source of peer-to-peer support. Meeting others with similar experiences can be very useful in combatting the feelings of loneliness or 'otherness' that are commonly reported by former boarders.

The rest of this newsletter gives details of Therapy, Conferences and Support Group meetings that might interest our subscribers.

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10% Discount for BSS-Support Subscribers

Nick Duffell's Men & Women's Group Therapy Workshops Autumn 2024

These much-sought after 4-day non-residential workshops are spread over two weekends, several weeks apart, with participants expected to commit to attend all 4 days. The venue is North central London, Hampstead (adjacent to Hampstead Heath with good public transport links).

These courses are very popular and typically overbooked, but we have places for a small number of BSS-Support subscribers at 10% discount on the £650 course. Please quote BSS10 when booking.

Autumn 2024 - Men's Course

- **Weekend One:** Sat 21st / Sun 22nd Sept 2024
- **Weekend Two:** Sat 2nd / Sun 3rd Nov 2024

Autumn 2024 - Women's Course

- **Weekend One:** Sat 5th / Sun 6th Oct 2024
- **Weekend Two:** Sat 16th / Sun 17th Nov 2024

Application procedure and forms are online [here](#) or contact Lyn Jones directly at info@boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk

Note: BSS-Support will also consider giving bursaries for those genuinely struggling to pay workshop fees. Please contact Paul Fray ASAP: info@bss-support.org.uk

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Brighton & Hove - informal meet up - Saturday 12th October

You are invited to a gathering of boarding school survivors and their supporters on Saturday 12 October 2024, 9.30 to 12.45, in the Loft

Room, Cornerstone, Church Road, Hove, BN3 2FL.

This event is free of charge and includes talks from a variety of interesting speakers, as well as a chance to mingle and contribute to discussions. The [full programme](#) is available on BSS-Support website.

To book your place, please email thurstinebasset@gmail.com

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Fortnightly Therapeutic Support Group - Hove

From September, Karen Macmillan will be running a fortnightly therapeutic support group for ex boarders in Hove on Wednesday evenings. This is open to any adult who went to boarding school and who would like to understand and process their boarding experience within a supportive ongoing group. For more details, and to reserve your place, please go to <https://www.counselling-hove.com/bss-support-group>

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Seen & Heard weekly connection groups

These FREE online connection groups are a flagship of Seen & Heard's service provision. Run by experienced group facilitators and modelled on a format that the founders have personally experienced and found hugely beneficial.

This is not group therapy, but a sharing space to be seen & heard and bring yourself, exactly as you are. Even if you don't want to speak or share, it can be extremely powerful to witness and hear others.

Weekly online Zoom meeting (1 hr 30 mins)

Typically 4-10 people attend, including at least 1 facilitator.

Find out more [here](#), including the Eventbrite schedule with dates and times and how to book your place.

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RESEARCH CORNER

Research into child sexual abuse on siblings

John Gillies-Wilkes is conducting a study into the impact of child sexual abuse on the sibling(s) of the abused child and would like to interview counsellors and psychotherapists who have experience of working in this field. John is a fellow boarding school survivor and is currently completing an MSc in Counselling (Children & Young People) at Birmingham City University.

If you wish to participate, please contact John Gillies-Wilkes: john.gillies-wilkes@mail.bcu.ac.uk

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Disclaimer: BSS-Support shares details of a range of research opportunities. This is done in good faith, but we are unable to attest to the quality, ethics or aims any research programme. Do please only proceed if it feels right for you.

This newsletter comes from the directors of BSS-Support, a Not-for-Profit Limited Company, who's aim is to guide and support former boarders on their healing journey.

All Directors give their time as volunteers, without remuneration. Any income, whether from events, sale of books or donations, is used for the sole purpose of staging our annual conference, providing individual bursaries for therapies and participation, or financial support to organisations that share our agenda and aims.

It is brought to you with very best wishes -

from **Allison, Caroline, Mike, Paul, Pippa, Tim and Sam**

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Boarding School Survivors - Support

A Not-for-Profit Limited Company (limited by guarantee)

Registered in England, Company no. 11973972.

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