



NEWS & UPDATES - JUNE 2025

Boarding School Survivors Conference 2025

Saturday 1st November 2025

9.30am-5pm The Light Auditorium, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

BOOK
HERE

In this edition

[Reflections & memories of Joy Schaverien](#)

[BSS-Support Conference 2025](#)

- how to book
- support on the day
- help with costs

[Creative Grant Spotlight: *Mummified* at Brighton Fringe](#)

[Upcoming Screenings: *Boarding on Insanity*](#)

[Brighton Meetup – 5th July 2025](#)

[Hello & farewell - change of Directors at BSS-S](#)

[NEWS! Some big changes at BSS-S](#)

- We're changing our name to **Boarding School Concern**
- Same name, same commitment - and same great conference!
- Seeking 2 volunteers (Directors of Marketing/PR & Fundraising)

[How to get in touch if you need help](#)

Dear Friends

In this newsletter, we take a moment to honour the life and legacy of Dr Joy Schaverien, whose passing has deeply moved our community. Her work gave voice and structure to the poorly understood - and often hidden - harms of boarding. Her contribution has left an indelible mark.

But we also look ahead - with hope. As plans for our **November 2025 Conference** take shape, we can see how far we've come, and how far we want to go, to build a community that is centred on compassion, collaboration, and courage.

We also share exciting news of a **name change** that reflects our evolving mission - *so please read to the end for this important update.*

Reflections & memories of Joy Schaverien



In Memory of Dr Joy Schaverien (1947–2025): A Voice for the Boarding School Survivor Community

[BBC R4 Obituary – Last Word](#)

[The Guardian Tribute](#)

It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of **Dr Joy Schaverien** - Jungian analyst, author, and the first person to name and frame the psychological impact of boarding school as a syndrome.

The outpouring of tributes from therapists, academics, and most poignantly, from countless former boarders, is a testament to the

profound reach of her work.

Joy was not a boarder herself, and it was perhaps this very distance, combined with intellectual rigour, clinical insight, and deep human empathy, that enabled her to shine such a clear and compassionate light on the hidden wounds left by early separation and institutionalisation. Her book, [Boarding School Syndrome](#), gave language to a shared but often unspoken experience, and has helped thousands of former boarders begin their own journeys of understanding and healing.

At BSS-Support, we were honoured to work with Joy over many years. She gave keynote talks at our conferences that reached hundreds of former boarders.

Joy's landmark concept of the **ABCD of Boarding School Trauma - Abandonment, Bereavement, Captivity, and Dissociation** - provided an accessible frame that helped so many survivors make sense of their complex emotional landscapes. *Through her research and public speaking, Joy offered more than analysis; she gave validation, recognition, and - crucially - hope.*

BSS-S Directors reflect:

Charlotte Sharpe, Director of BSS-Support
psychotherapeutic counsellor

"There is no doubt Joy Schaverien's work was transformative for me. During my therapeutic training my therapist handed me Joy's book, Boarding School Syndrome, for me to read over my summer break. At this point I had undertaken many hours of personal therapy and thought most things had been covered. As I read Joy's book every chapter rang true - and I was able to admit I was not okay. At last, I begin to emerge from behind the shield I had created to survive the psychological trauma of boarding. I will be forever grateful for Joy opening the door for further understanding of my inner world, so that I could begin the process of moving from a position of surviving to living. I went on to specialise in working with former Boarders where yet again Joy's work and insights have been invaluable. I have no doubt

Joy's work will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of many for years to come. I will always be indebted to her for all her tireless and inspirational work."

Pippa Palmer, Director BSS-Support and
Research Director **LSBU's 'Boarding School Research Hub'**

It feels important to acknowledge the profound impact of Joy's work. She brought such a unique mix of curiosity, clarity and compassion. Joy didn't just speak about us, but to us - and for us. I vividly recall the lightbulb moment at my first BSS-S conference, as Joy went through the ABCD: Abandonment -Tick. Bereavement -Tick. Captivity -Tick. Dissociation -Tick. Her one-hour talk peeled back 50-plus years of grief and hiding from myself. It was the start of a reset, of finding my compass, of starting to heal. Years later, Joy gave me the nudge to use my academic research skills to further the cause, which resulted in my setting up the Boarding School Research Hub at London South Bank University. I am deeply proud that Joy's legacy will live on in this work."

Mike Dickins, Director of BSS-Support.

"I first met Joy in 2009 during one of Nick Duffell's counsellor training sessions. She spoke with such authority and humility, delivering a message that proved of lasting importance. Alongside Nick Duffell, Joy brought vital credibility to this movement. Her talks at our conferences were treasured. I particularly remember her insistence that the trauma of boarding was compounded by repeated abandonments - those endless goodbyes across a decade of enforced separation. There is truth that she will live on in us and subsequent boarders seeking to understand their own predicament - because her work is, to my mind, nothing short of the truth."

A Lasting Legacy - and reflections at our conference

Joy Schaverien's influence reaches far beyond the therapy room or the pages of a book. Her pioneering research gave legitimacy to what many had struggled to name. Her presence at our conferences shaped many, many lives. Her words will echo for generations.

As a community, we honour her memory not only with sorrow, but with renewed commitment - to continue sharing, researching, and healing.

Her legacy lives on in the lives she touched and in the work we continue.

If you have personal reflections or stories about Joy's impact, we will be dedicating a session at the conference to her memory, with memories from Nick Duffell, with whom she worked closely for many years. We invite you to write to info@bss-support.org.uk so we can share your own reflections on the day.

Boarding School Survivor's Conference

When and where

Saturday 1st November - 9.30am to 5pm

The Light Auditorium, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Tickets: £105 (including a hot fork lunch and refreshments)

[Click here to register](#)

All are welcome

The conference is a space for learning, connection, and community and is open to former boarders, partners and family, care professionals, and those simply curious to understand more.

Support on the Day

While the day is often empowering, we recognise for some it can also trigger painful memories and deep feelings. Our conference team always includes qualified therapists who are on hand to support anyone who feels overwhelmed. If you are unsure about attending, [please reach out](#) so we can ensure your safety.

Help with Costs

As a non-profit organisation, we always subsidise a large part of the conference costs and thanks to our generous supporters, aim to keep ticket prices low. We also have a scheme in place to help those who would still find it financially impossible to attend. [Details are on the registration form.](#)

Pay it forward

This year, for the first time, we have made it possible for those in a more fortunate position to 'pay it forward' and offer a donation to enable someone less financially able to attend. We're delighted that our "Pay It Forward" scheme has already unlocked subsidised places for **8 former boarders**.

Thank you to all whose generosity has helped make this space inclusive and accessible. We hope the donations keep coming - this is community in action.

Creative Grant Spotlight



Mummified at Brighton Fringe

May 2025

BSS-S is proud to announce that the first of our small creative grants has supported *Mummified*, a powerful new play exploring boarding school survivorship. Written and Directed by Marcus Pollett and shown at Brighton Fringe in May, Marcus reports that the BSS-S £500 grant:

- Validated the project, giving the team the confidence to move forward
- Helped fund rehearsal space, costumes and promotional materials
- Allowed the production to break even instead of ending in debt
- Prompted **six individuals to disclose childhood abuse** to the therapists present

"Lives may have been saved" Marcus tells us

What's next?

Filming has begun for a showreel, with plans for an extended Brighton run in October and hopes to tour nationally. *Mummified* shows what's possible when lived experience meets creative expression - and BSS-S are proud to have played a part.

Upcoming Screenings: Boarding on Insanity

We're delighted to see **Boarding On Insanity** going from strength to strength.

West Yorkshire Screening

Friday, 27 June | 6.30pm to 9pm

Soul Wellness Hub, Sowerby Bridge

Followed by a Panel / Q&A with Director Ben Cole, Coach Zena Me, and Producer Piers Cross

[Tickets here](#)

Can't make it in person?

[Watch the documentary online here](#)

Piers and the team also have a **new 3 part film** about the retreat that was featured in *Boarding On Insanity*, which will be released on the 5th July.

These events are not run by BSS-Support, so we cannot take enquiries.

Brighton Meetup – 5th July 2025

Saturday 5th July | 9.30am to 1pm

The Loft Room, Cornerstone Community Centre, Hove BN3 2FL

Spaces are strictly limited. Please RSVP: gordonknott@btinternet.com

Agenda highlights:

- Steph Collins on privilege and pain
- Marcus Pollett on *Mummified*
- Charlotte Sharpe & Sara Warner: *Us Too: a Female Perspective*
- Tea, coffee, connection and closing discussion

This event is not run by BSS-Support so we cannot take enquiries.

Hello & farewell: change of directors at BSS-S



A grateful farewell – and bon voyage!

**Retirement wishes to Allison
Ujejski**

**Co-founder, Director
and Chair, BSS-S**

As many of you know, [Allison Ujejski](#) has stepped down as Director and Chair of Boarding School Survivors, to move abroad and start a new chapter in her life, replacing the cold of England for the warmth of Italy.

Allison steered BSS-Support for many, many years, with a cool, calm hand. As a testimony to her dedication, before she departed these shores, Allison took great care to recruit and welcome the [new generation of Directors](#), and steered the strategic review that has heralded a new era for the organisation. We are enormously grateful for her dedication and direction.

Mike Dickins, Director of BSS-Support reminisces

"Allison led Boarding School Survivors - Support for as long as I can remember - and I've been connected to them nearly 20 years now! Throughout she has been a source of calm, support and inspiration to me and while I wish her all the best, I will miss her greatly. Although not from a boarding background herself, Allison nevertheless had huge experience of working with boarders and her empathy and generosity knew no end. I always found it reassuring that someone from outside our experience continued to care deeply about the impact boarding

had had on so many of us. She was a real champion for our cause and I can't thank her enough for everything she gave to so many".

Farewell, Allison, we all wish you every luck in your new home and new life!



A warm welcome!

Charlotte Sharpe joins the BSS-S Board of Directors

BSS-Support is delighted to welcome **Charlotte Sharpe** as a Director. Charlotte joins the board of BSS-Support at an exciting time, as we refresh our new identity and expand our reach and impact.

An experienced and practicing psychotherapeutic counsellor, Charlotte will help support our team's vital work offering personal responses to enquiries from former boarders and their families, and will take over coordination of the break out groups at our annual conference. Charlotte will also spearhead a new endeavour for BSS-S - building relationships with professional bodies, such as UKCP and BACP, and spreading the message that boarding school can have a deleterious impact on clients that is often hidden or unrecognised.

Welcome aboard, Charlotte, we all look forward to working with you!

BIG NEWS: We're changing our name!



A safe haven & support
for all former boarders

New name - same commitment

**Boarding School Survivors
Support** will soon become
Boarding School Concern

As our work grows in depth and reach, and with a new intake of Directors, we felt it important to change our name to reflect our expanding mission. **Boarding School Survivors – Support** is becoming **Boarding School Concern**.

Our new name and logo reflects our renewed resolve to shine a light on the realities of boarding school - and our mission to provide a haven of safety and support for all former boarders. Our **annual conference** will remain the cornerstone of the Boarding School Survivor calendar - bringing our community of survivors together to hear the latest findings and thinking, and share personal stories grounded in lived experience.

We will keep supporting creative projects that enable survivors to share their stories. Aost importantly, we remain deeply committed to providing clear, evidence-based information that cuts through the noise, as well as guiding survivors and their loved ones toward safe, trustworthy professional help.

We'll be making the change on website, emails and newsletter over the next few months. So keep an eye out for our new name and logo.

We're here to lead with care and clarity - and we won't stop until every boarder feels safe, heard, and understood.



We're recruiting to grow our Board

- Director of Media & Communications
- Director of Fundraising

To help us grow our mission, and do more for the cause, we're looking for two new volunteer Directors:

- **Director of Media and Communications**
- **Director of Fundraising**

You don't need to be a former boarder, but you do need proven experience in a related field - and a passion for our mission.

Interested? Or know someone who might be?

Please contact [Tim](#) for a confidential chat in the first instance

If you need help with your own boarding school recovery

This newsletter has been sent by BSS-Support, a not-for-profit Limited Company, whose aim is to guide and support former boarders on their healing journey.

If you need support or direction on your boarding school recovery journey, you are invited to write in confidence to [BSS-Support](#).

A member of our team will respond personally, and guide you towards the resources that are right for you.

With warmest wishes from the BSS-Support Directors:

Caroline, Charlotte, Mike, Paul, Pippa, Sam and Tim

[Back to top](#)

Boarding School Survivors - Support

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All our 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 providing financial support to organisations or endeavours that share our agenda and aims.

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