



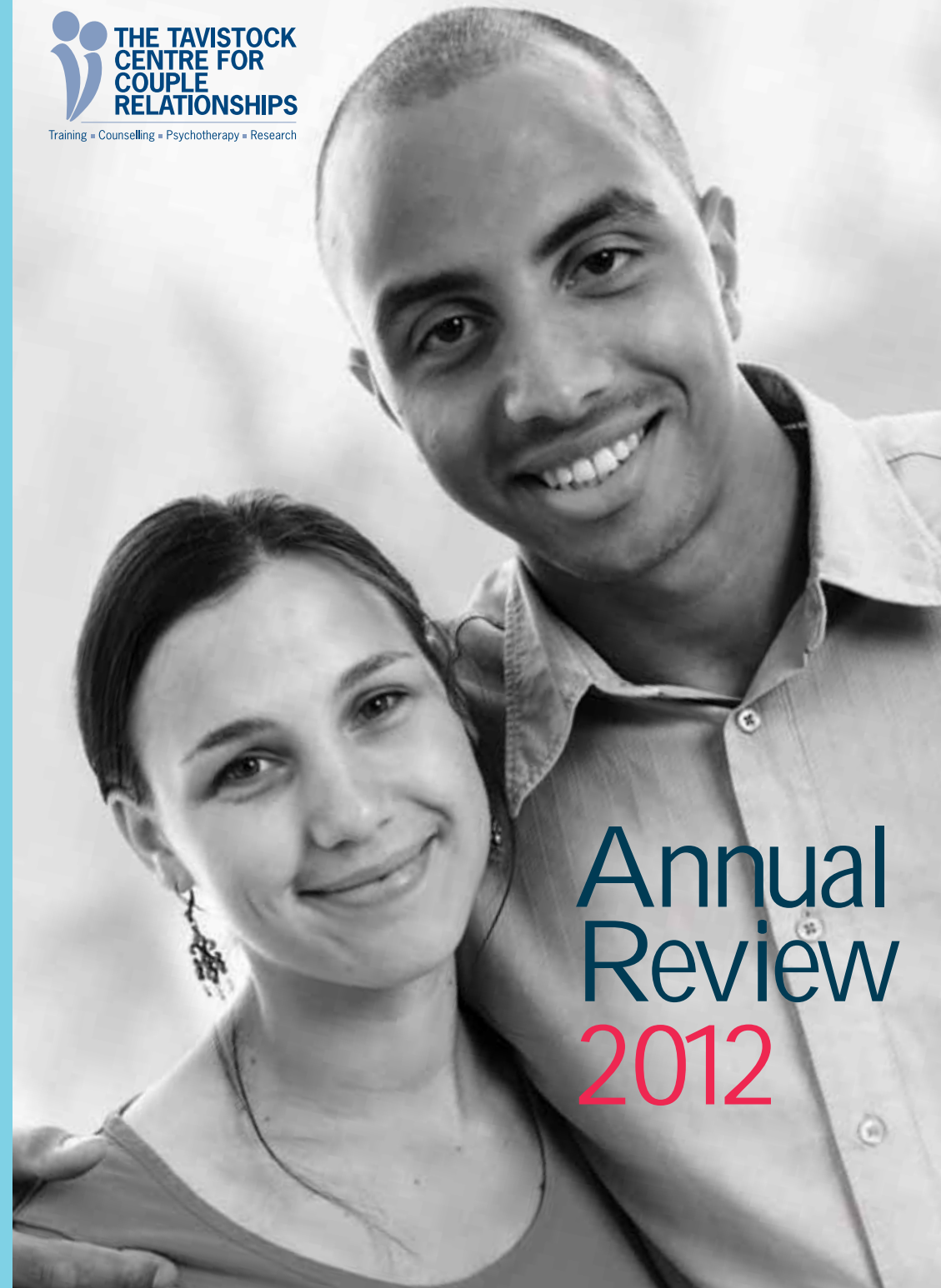
THE TAVISTOCK  
CENTRE FOR  
COUPLE  
RELATIONSHIPS

Training • Counselling • Psychotherapy • Research



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# Annual Review 2012

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“Our counsellor was wonderful. We have so much to thank her for – not least finally being able to have a baby. I cannot praise her, or the fantastic work that TCCR does enough.”

All quotes within this document have been taken from end of session client questionnaires unless otherwise stated.

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## Report from the Chief Executive

2011/12 was a game changing year for TCCR with a host of new developments and initiatives. The investment made by the coalition government into relationship support enabled the organisation to broaden and grow its services, reaching more people than ever before. With increased government funding together with a rapid rise in demand for training, the organisation was able for the first time to properly resource our policy, communications and research functions.

These new resources led to exciting activities and developments, some of which are outlined in these pages. Most importantly, however, during this year it seemed as though TCCR could finally articulate its particular perspective to a growing audience of policy makers, practitioners and other influencers in order to begin to turn the socio-cultural direction away from an individualistic approach and toward a systemic understanding of the importance of relationships.

This key value in the centrality of our close human attachments drives the work of the organisation and we continue to strive to show the inter-relationship between the difficulties and needs of an individual and their families, an inter-relationship that is very frequently ignored. Our blindness to the importance of relationships is nowhere more in evidence than in the way we treat older couples.

To raise consciousness about these issues, this year we published the ground breaking book "How Relationships Shape our World. Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspectives", a book which bridges the inner and outer worlds, showing how our most intimate relationships have vital importance at all levels.

TCCR substantiates its impact through rigorous evaluation of its services and this year we have been able to evidence our value further by commissioning a report from the New Economics Foundation on the "Return on Investment" that TCCR's counselling and psychotherapy services produce. We are gratified to be able to report that for every £1 spent on our services, we return £4.58 back to the country in savings, through our clients' decreased use of other services and their increased engagement in the workplace. Further evidence of our "Value for Money" is demonstrated by the fact that because TCCR's clinical services are also paid for through its training programmes and the income it generates from client contributions, each £1 of government investment reaps £14.18 of return.

At TCCR we believe that supporting the adult relationship has the potential to make a real difference to childrens' life chances, to adult wellbeing, to social justice and to the emotional and economic wellbeing of the UK. This report details the services and activities that have made this difference and which we hope will continue to attract support, so that they grow and develop and reach out to all those who need them in the future.

Susanna Abse, Chief Executive



Fred and Mabel had been married for over 65 years. Fred was unable to walk on his own and relied on Mabel to help him move around. She was blind and used her husband as her eyes. They were separated after Fred fell ill and was moved into a residential care home. Mabel asked to come with him but was told by the local authority that she did not fit the criteria. Speaking to the media, Mabel said, 'We have never been separated in all our years and for it to happen now, when we need each other so much, is so upsetting. I am lost without him: we were a partnership'.

(British Institute of Human Rights Case Studies)

### Highlights 2011-12

- For every £1 spent on TCCR's services, we return **£4.58** back to the country in savings
- Publication of "How Relationships Shape our World. Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspectives"
- Because TCCR generates income from services, each £1 of government investment reaps **£14.18** of return
- Highest ever increase in counselling and psychotherapy sessions delivered, with 5% increase on previous year
- Policy briefings launched to drive understanding of the importance of relationships to improving individual, family and society's health
- Parents in Conflict research venture launched to reduce post separation conflict around the care of children
- Wellbeing Service for Couples – an innovative brief and early intervention service launched
- **35%** increase in students enrolling on our expert practitioner trainings.



# Innovation and research: a quantum leap

TCCR has for many years undertaken a mix of qualitative and quantitative research projects into understanding couple relationships and how best to support them.

We re-affirmed our ongoing commitment to research in the field of couple relationships in several ways this year. In particular, we strengthened the research team through the appointment of a full time Research and Trial Co-ordinator.

Most excitingly, we took a quantum leap and began a new research venture which compares two different approaches to reducing post separation conflict around the care of children. The research is a randomized controlled trial which will look at the comparative effectiveness of our Parenting Together service and a nationally available psycho-educational group for parents. This research has been jointly funded by the Department for Education and TCCR. It has begun taking parents into the study and is due to report in March 2015. Professor Mary Target from UCL is the Chief



Principal Investigator, with the intervention developer and clinical lead, Leezah Hertzmann working with Head of Research Dr David Hewison, as Co- Principal Investigators. The trial is supported by a Steering Group of experts in the field, including Professors Julian Leff, Peter Fonagy and Gordon Harold, together with intervention co-developer, Susanna Abse, Dr Christopher Clulow and Dr Bob Jezzard.

## Innovation

New innovations this year have included the development of the Wellbeing Service for Couples, which is designed as a 'light touch' service, with a particular emphasis on the value of intervening early to prevent more entrenched problems from occurring. The service offers a brief intervention of up to four sessions to couples who are wishing to improve their relationship or who are looking for help in addressing concerns that have recently arisen.

In thinking further about the design of the service, it was felt that, given the focused nature of the intervention, a homework element between sessions could be helpful in enabling couples to develop the capacity to reflect on their relationship together. To that end TCCR commissioned the production of a DVD depicting three couple scenarios which are used as part of the intervention. Initial evaluation of the service indicates that the couples find the DVD a powerful tool, helping them to address problematic areas of their relating in an active engaged way.

## Return on Investment

During the year, TCCR received additional funds from the Department for Education to commission some detailed research to identify a notional Return on Investment (RoI) and to assist the sector to make a Value For Money case for continuing to fund this area of work.

After commissioning the New Economics Foundation to undertake this analysis, TCCR produced a "Theory of Change" paper and offered NEF access to anonymised clinical outcome data. We worked closely with NEF as

they shaped a paper looking at the savings that could realistically accrue to government departments on the basis of the improvements made by TCCR's clinical services. The largest savings areas were found in relation to increased employment and improved emotional health. Strengthening the couple relationship also has clear evidenced benefits in better overall outcomes for children. The New Economics Foundation found overall that TCCR work conservatively produces £4.58 of savings for each £1 spent. Further work to refine the collection of relevant economic outcomes is now underway.

## Parenting Together – Mentalization Based Therapy for Inter-Parental Conflict

Our ground breaking service for parents in conflict around the care of their children continued to grow during the year with 105 parents seen in the service. Many of these parents are separated and have been in chronic sustained disputes around contact and care, making the work challenging and requiring expert well trained and supported therapists. Alongside the clinical work, the Parenting Together team ran two 3-day trainings in the intervention, which were the first trainings open to practitioners external to TCCR.



# Couples in trouble: our counselling and psychotherapy services

**“TCR counselling has been of immense benefit to me and my relationship and I am very glad that we made the decision to come here”**

2011-12 saw the highest ever increase in the volume of our clinical work, a rise of nearly 5% on the previous year. 2,378 people used our counselling and therapy services, accessing help for a huge range of difficulties with their relationships. Some people come to TCCR because they are new parents struggling with a baby, or because their relationship is in trouble following an affair. At times they come because they are on the brink of making a more serious commitment but feel unsure if this is the right thing for them.

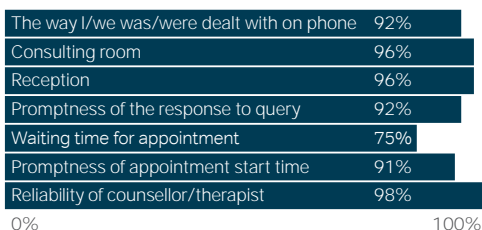
Many people who access our services are in quite serious difficulties with complex mental or physical health needs such as depression, drug abuse, violence or serious challenges around the care of their children. At TCCR our experience is telling us that these complex problems are increasing, requiring us now more than ever, to have a well trained expert workforce with excellent supervisory arrangements to ensure our work is safe and effective.

Despite the economic climate, in 2010-11 we had a 33% increase in couples registering for help and this year we have consolidated and increased that achievement with a 7.6% increase on last year's figure, giving us the highest number of registrations we have ever achieved.

Couples report a very high degree of satisfaction with our services as evidenced by the anonymous questionnaires we send to everyone as they finish their sessions. One area requiring further focus was the waiting time for an appointment. We continue to work hard to improve this as we know that some couples reject our offer of help when they have had to wait too long. However, we are really proud that by the end of the year we had reduced the waiting time from first registration to attending assessment down to an average 7.5 days.

## What our clients said about the service they received

Percentage of clients satisfied with aspects of TCCR's service

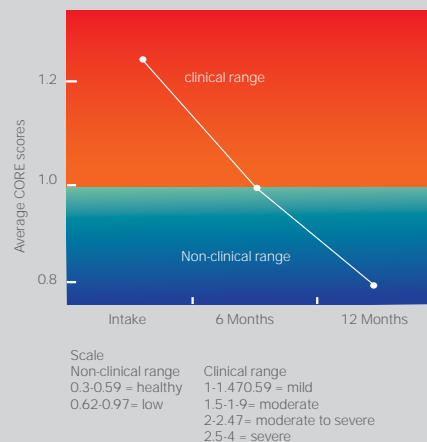


# Measuring our impact: making a difference to family life

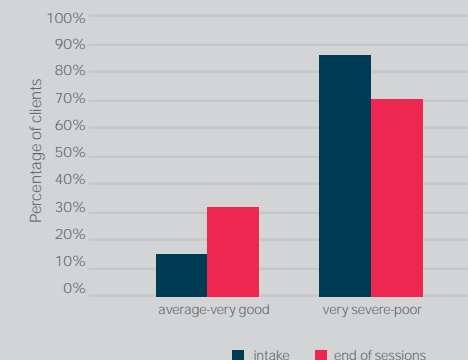
At TCCR clinical services we routinely evaluate our impact by administering clinically valid and reliable psychometric measures (CORE and GRIMS). All clients using our services are asked to fill in questionnaires measuring their psychological wellbeing and their relationship quality before beginning therapy and at three month intervals while undergoing treatment and as they leave treatment.

The data we have gathered has consistently shown statistically and clinically significant reductions in psychological distress as treatment progresses measured by CORE and in relationship distress as measured by the GRIMS.

## Average Core scores at Intake, 6 months and 12 months



## Relationship quality at Intake and End of Treatment\*



N\* = 109  
 Measured by the 'Golombok Rust Inventory of Marital State (GRIMS)

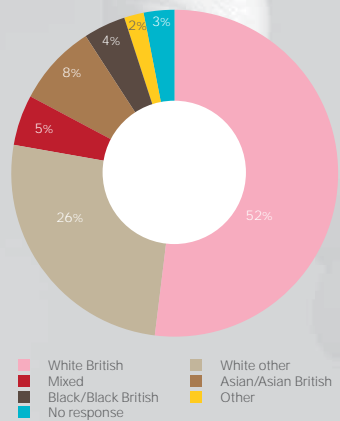
## Services for everyone

In 2011-12, TCCR continued to serve a highly diverse community, indicating that relationship difficulties can affect everyone whatever their race, religion, sexual orientation or economic circumstances. The economic climate was evident in that 8% of our clients were claiming job seekers allowance or statutory sick pay, with 11% describing themselves as unemployed. We continued to see a very even balance of men and women with 49% of our clients being male.

Only 4% of our clients were single, 27% were co-habiting partners and 43% were married. 2% were in civil partnerships and 9% were separated or divorced. The ethnic mix of our clients continued to properly represent London's diversity with many of our couples being in mixed race partnerships.

**"I had excellent support with a difficult post marriage adjustment and help with bringing three children through a difficult time. Other benefits: a general ability to deal with troublesome situations, tools to cope with own emotions and scars, and help with the children."**

Breakdown of client ethnicity



## Focus: developing work with lesbian and gay couples

TCCR has always offered its services to every section of the community, but over the year, we made our work with lesbian and gay couples a particular focus.

Understanding that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are too often isolated, marginalised and under-represented in wider society, we committed to ensuring our services were better able to meet the particular emotional needs of this community. TCCR is successful in reaching LGBT couples, with 5% of our clients identifying themselves in this way. What statistics there are on the number of LGBT people in the UK, suggests that they represent between 5%-7% of the population.

PACE is London's leading charity promoting the mental health and emotional well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and TCCR worked with them to develop a charter mark designed to ensure that mainstream relationship services are providing high quality services which meet the needs of LGBT couples, increasing their confidence to access mainstream relationship support.

A series of seminars have also been held with TCCR senior staff over the last two years which focussed on our clinical work with the LGBT community. Out of this came two important events. Firstly, TCCR co-sponsored with other leading organisations the British Psychoanalytic Council's groundbreaking conference on Psychoanalysis and Homosexuality.

Senior Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist, Leezah Hertzmann gave a presentation – "Exploring the complexities of conscious and unconscious sexual orientation in the clinical relationship". This paper was later published in a special addition of the Journal of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy on "Psychoanalysis and Homosexuality". At our Abuse in the Couple Relationship Conference in December, Faculty staff member Damian McCann gave a groundbreaking paper on "Domestic Violence and Same Sex Couples – Is it Different?"





# Training: delivering excellence

This year has seen sustained growth within the organisation's training programmes with continued high levels of demand for our accredited and validated professional trainings, resulting in an impressive 35% increase in student enrolments.

The number of practitioners we trained this year through long-term trainings, short courses and conferences, together with training contracts and lectures at home and abroad was 2,979. This is an increase of 38% on the previous record breaking year and a considerable achievement given the economic climate.

Our data also showed that 66% of those we trained were senior practitioners, responsible for training, supervising or managing other staff, confirming our role as the "trainer of trainers".

A sampling of 168 of the 2,979 of the front-line workers attending our trainings showed that they work with over 3,675 couples or families each week. This shows that an impressive number of individuals and families are receiving help in the context of our professional support – an indication of how widely our influence is spread.

One new development during the year was the delivery of training to children's centre managers, 'Building Effectiveness and Value in Children's Centre Services: new ways of working with inter-parental conflict and how to measure the difference your service makes'. A total of 84 managers attended who supervise 128 frontline practitioners, with evaluation forms for the course showing an exceptionally high level of satisfaction (99% and 98%).

**"One of the most positive training days I have attended for ages. Speakers were thought provoking and diverse and were in such command of their topics."**

Children's Centre Manager



Indeed in feedback, 95% of our short courses received a rating of excellent or good with our new Parenting Together Mentalization Based Therapy training repeatedly achieving 100% with comments such as "All good – just want more".

Commissioned training was delivered through the UK and beyond, including psychosexual training in Finland, workshops to introduce couple therapy to Denmark, training for health visitors at City University and for health visitors at the Central London Community Health NHS Trust and training for senior practitioners from the school based counselling charity, The Place2Be. Our innovative development of contract training for NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) staff, which began last year, continued steadily, resulting in 44 trained practitioners being ready to enter the NHS workforce this year as practitioners of "Couple Therapy for Depression".

We continue to attract students from abroad including China, Australia, Israel, Russia, America, Portugal, Holland and Pakistan. These practitioners frequently voice their appreciation of TCCR as an international centre of excellence for couple therapy, and indicate a desire for even greater access to our trainings and expertise.

**"I know I've been provided with the best training available in the field of couple counselling/therapy."**

3rd Year PGDip student



## Practitioner Training Programmes

One of TCCR's prime activities is the training of expert practitioners and we offer courses from introductory to doctoral levels. In October 2011, student numbers on our clinical and academic trainings totalled 169, a 35% increase on the previous year which reflects improvements to the marketing and attractiveness of our high quality trainings.

Students entering our Couple Psychoanalytic Masters Programme come from diverse professional settings including child and adolescent mental health services, social work foster care, child and family psychiatry and community and health sciences. This demonstrates the high calibre of our students and the considerable level of professional expertise they bring to the training.

TCCR's Introductory Course student numbers doubled this year, a result of introducing a new daytime course, while numbers on the Post Graduate Diploma in Couple and Individual Psychodynamic Couple Counselling and Psychotherapy increased by 55%.

100% of students on these practitioner trainings rated their learning experience as either good or excellent.

# Policy and communications

## Strong couple relationships: the key to individual, family and society's health

With improved funding from the Department for Education, TCCR was able to develop a policy department in order to increase the organisation's influence.

The first six months of this saw the researching and writing of policy briefings on:

- The impact of couple conflict on children
- Relationship difficulties: stopping them from starting, stopping them from getting worse

- What do couple relationships have to do with public health?
- Troubled families
- Parenting work which focuses on the parental couple relationship
- Strong couple relationships: the key to individual, family and society's health.



TCCR has identified four areas – couple relationships and parenting support, couple relationships and mental health, couple relationships and public health, and early intervention – as being of particular importance to the organisation's overall aims and objectives.

Poor quality relationships, and the chaotic lives that can result from them, have an enormous impact on society, and the quality of our closest relationships has demonstrable effects on our physical and mental health.

Our policy offer centres on the need for politicians, policy-makers and commissioners to make the couple relationship a central focus of all our social, health and family support work - such a sea-change in approach is crucial if we are to make serious attempts to improve the lives and life chances of those adults and children for whom we devise policy, and to whom we provide services.

As our policy briefings describe, such a focus is usually something of an add-on, often delivered by a professional who feels anxious about their competence to help adults with their relationship, or at the other extreme, by a specialist couple counsellor or therapist who tends to meet with a couple when problems are more severe.

More generally, however, there needs to be an acknowledgment by politicians, policy-makers and commissioners of the benefits, including a reduction in social isolation, from the introduction of relationship support at a stage when problems are emerging as well as when they are entrenched.

After all, an expansion in relationship support has the potential to not only alleviate much human unhappiness but also to reduce the need for expenditure on some long-term physical health conditions.

Throughout the year, TCCR has had a number of meetings with MPs and officials, for example with Andrea Leadsom MP (a leading campaigner for parent-infant psychotherapy services) and Secretary of State for Disabled People (with responsibility for families) Maria Miller MP and her officials from the Department of Work of Pensions. TCCR also once again attended the Labour and Conservative party conferences, holding a fringe event at the Conservative Conference where Graham Stuart, MP, and Deidre Sanders, Sun Agony Aunt, spoke alongside Andrew Selous, MP.

In March 2011, Susanna Abse presented at a high level consultation of invited delegates at St George's House, Windsor. The theme of the 2 day conference was 'Stable Relationships for a Stable Society?' The conference met to discuss the role of relationship support and relationship education within today's society. Invited delegates included members of both Houses of Parliament, representatives of six relationship support organisations, three government departments, an Anglican bishop, journalists and researchers. A report on relationship support has now been produced from the consultation, which is expected to be influential in shaping new government initiatives.



## Conferences and events

We held two conferences and our annual Enid Balint Lecture during the year as part of our ongoing commitment to engage with further thinking on difficult clinical and social issues.

Our autumn conference, *Could it Be Magic?: Identifying the Dynamics of Change in Couple Relationship Therapy* explored the evidence base around change and offered clinicians an opportunity to join small practice groups to think about their work. Later in the year we held a half-day conference, *Abuse in the Couple Relationship*, a topic of interest to both therapists and front-line workers in social care. Dr Judith Siegel, associate professor of social work at New York University, communicated some of the new findings from neuroscience that are revolutionising the way we think about relationships and human interaction in general.



As part of our commitment to engage in debates which reflect the interests and concerns of the wider world, we collaborated with *Psychologies* magazine in 2011 to host two very successful public events at our premises in Warren Street. Speakers included philosopher Robert Rowland Smith and Authors, Tony Parsons and Rebecca Asher.

Staff of the centre gave numerous talks and lectures during the year to organisations across the UK as varied as the Wave Trust, Parenting UK, the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and the British Psychological Society.

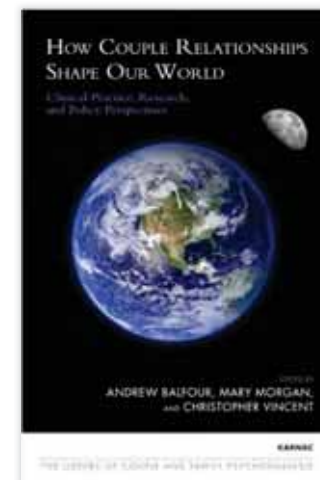
**“A truly excellent half-day conference. It opened up this difficult and important topic.”**

Abuse conference delegate

## Publications

TCCR staff contributed to a range of publications during the year and they are listed below, but the highlight of the year was the publication of our new book, *How Couple Relationships Shape our World, Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspective*. This important book, edited by Andrew Balfour, Christopher Vincent and Mary Morgan is written by distinguished couple psychotherapists, academic, researchers and social policy experts.

*How Couple Relationships Shape Our World* is about the importance of the couple relationship in the broadest terms. It draws on clinical research into the inner lived world of adult couples, empirical developmental research into children and parenting and surveys the legal landscape when relationships break down and bitter conflict ensues.



It aims to bridge the inner and outer worlds, showing how our most intimate relationships have vital importance at all levels, from the individual and the family, to the social setting – and explores the implications for practice and policy.

### Publications 2011- 2012

**Abse, S.** (2012) “Parents as Partners: how the parental relationship affects children’s development”, commentary on chapter two in *How Couple Relationships Shape our World, Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspectives*. Ed. Balfour, A, Morgan, M., Vincent, V. (Karnac London)

(2011) “Couples, Families and Angry Young People – An Unwelcome Truth” *Where now for Parenting, Perspectives on Parenting Policy and Practice*. Family and Parenting Institute, London

**Balfour, A.** (2012) ‘Couple therapy—social engineering or psychological treatment?’, in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) *How couple relationships shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives*. London: Karnac Balfour, A. and Lanman, M.

(2011) ‘An evaluation of time-limited psychodynamic psychotherapy for couples: A pilot study’ *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8341.2011.02030.x

**Clulow, C.** (2012) Commentary on Murch, M. ‘The role of the family court system of England and Wales in child-related parental disputes: towards a new concept of the family justice process’. In A. Balfour, M. Morgan & C. Vincent (eds.) *How Couple Relationships Shape Our World. Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspectives*. London: Karnac.

(2012) Commentary on Leff, J., Asen, E & Schwarzenbach, F. ‘Depression, couple therapy, research, and government policy’. In A. Balfour, M. Morgan & C. Vincent (eds.) *How Couple*

Relationships Shape Our World. Clinical Practice, Research and Policy Perspectives. London: Karnac.

(2012) 'Nommer' et 'faire honte' dans la thérapie de couples violents centrée sur l'attachement. In A. Nicolò & A. Eguier (eds.) La Violence dans la Famille et dans le Couple. Paris: In Press Éditions.

**Hertzmann, L.** (2012) 'Commentary on Pape Cowan, C. and Cowan P. A. Prevention: intervening with couples at challenging family transition points', in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) How couple relationships shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives. London: Karnac Books

"Lesbian and gay couple relationships: When internalized homophobia gets in the way of couple creativity." Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy 25(4): 346-360.

**Hewison, D.** (2012) 'Approaches to researching the evidence: an exploration of TCCR's research into couple relationships and couple therapy, past and present', in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) How couple relationships shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives. London: Karnac

(2011) "I thought he might be better now". A Clinician's Reading of Individuation in von Trier's 'Breaking the Waves'. In: C Hauke & L Hockley (Eds) Jung & Film II - The Return. Further Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image. London: Routledge. PP 35-48.

(2011) 'Couple Therapy for Depression' Healthcare Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal, 11(2), pp. 32-33.

**Morgan, M.** (2012) 'How couple therapists work with parenting issues', in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) How couple relationships shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives. London: Karnac books

**Rhodes, H.** (2012) 'Her Majesty's department of love? The state and support for couple and family relationships', in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) How couple relationships

shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives. London: Karnac books

**Seghal, A.** (2012) Review of Self within marriage: the foundation for lasting relationships, by Zeitner, R. M. Couple and Family Psychoanalysis, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 110-112.

**Shmueli, A.** (2012) 'Working therapeutically with high conflict divorce', in Balfour, A., Morgan, M. and Vincent, C. (ed.) How couple relationships shape our world: clinical practice, research, and policy perspectives. London: Karnac books

## The British Society of Couple Psychotherapists and Counsellors



The Professional Organisation for graduates of the full clinical training at the Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships continues to uphold high professional standards and promote couple psychoanalytic psychotherapy and couple psychodynamic counselling both nationally and internationally.

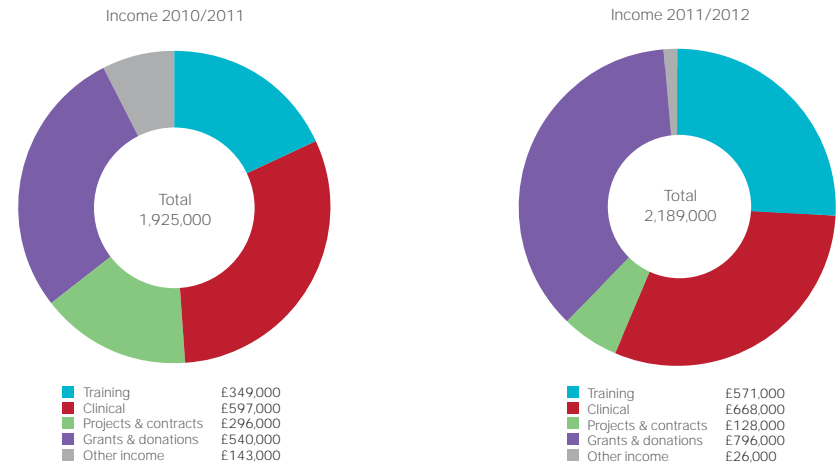
The organisation maintains a membership of over two hundred qualified couple mental health professionals and produces a bi-annual international journal "Couple and Family Psychoanalysis" that expands on theory and practice in couple work, advances research and development and informs policy and service developments.

The annual study day in May 'When Chaos Rules' was a lively and engaging event with senior figures in the field of psychotherapy including Francis Grier, Stan Ruszczyński, Dr Joyce Lowenstein, Susanna Abse and Professor Brett Kahr discussing 'psychotic and disordered relating in the couple dynamic'.

## Our finances

2011/12 saw another year-on-year increase in income generated from a wide range of sources. Income from the delivery of training increased by 34% and income generated from the delivery of clinical services increased by 22.3%.

This growth in income enabled us to train more therapists and front line staff as well as support more couples, regardless of their financial status. Total income including grants, donations, and interest was £2,188.6k, an increase of 13.67% on the previous year. This reflects our strategic aim to become less reliant on grants and donations while at the same time expanding the organisation.



## Council of Trustees

The Council of Trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

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Ms H K Wright, MA  
 Mr G Lane ACMA (Appointed March 2012)  
 Ms A Pleshette-Murphy (Appointed March 2012)  
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