

Precision and Passion “The Skills of Academic Writing”

Times: 10am - 5pm

Dates: 23 January, 27 February, 27 March 2010.

Venue: bcpc

Fee: £210 (bcpc members £180). Cheques payable to bcpc by 8 January 2010

Places offered on a first come, first served basis.

Course Overview

Writing about psychotherapy and counselling needs to be like the subjects themselves: divergent, exploratory, reflective. It needs to communicate at many levels, drawing equally on left-brain logic and right-brain intuition. Yet within this, for purposes of academic assessment, it also needs to have as its core an original, clearly sourced and well defined argument founded in clinical experience and theory. For many of us the integration of all these strands can seem too daunting – especially those who already lack confidence in their powers of written expression.

In this three-part course, now running for the second time, Chris Mills aims to de-mystify the writing process, taking it back to its playful first principles. Using the training group as a collaborative resource, we will explore each individual's history as writer and reader, draw on each other's thoughts and opinions as stimulus for our own writing, and learn to distinguish the key components of good prose.

We will look at the academic process piece by piece, examining the skills of (a) stating your theoretical proposal, (b) framing and advancing your argument, and (c) illustrating and underpinning your conclusions. Input will be given on how and when to use quotes, how to source them properly, how to incorporate them without disturbing the reader's flow, and how to compile a coherent bibliography. Writing at its best will be seen as a hybrid of precision and passion, aimed at grabbing both the head and heart of the reader. The teaching tools will be encouragement, support and feedback, with the core emphasis on individual needs as they arise.

Chris Mills is an integrative psychotherapist working with couples, individuals and organisations. He originally worked in primary education, but it was as a BBC broadcast journalist that he gained his experience of writing professionally, producing written scripts that paradoxically only worked if they didn't sound written! He still believes the best measure of successful writing is how good it sounds out loud.