

# BOARDING SCHOOL SURVIVORS

*Therapeutic help for those affected by boarding*



## BOARDING SCHOOL SURVIVORS WORKSHOPS

### Introduction

Popular wisdom has it that boarding schools breed strength of character, self-confidence and the qualities of leadership. And yet there are other effects which many ex-boarders are able to recognise: the pain they experienced, the price they may have paid, and the shame they may still feel for apparently failing, despite their 'privileged' start.

In the security of these institutions many of us learned to do without our parents, but also to disown our fears and our needs. While excellence was pursued, many were bullied or intimidated; while individuality was encouraged, hierarchical structures produced conformists or rebels, and sometimes casualties. While physical, intellectual and religious values were professed, we learned to repress our feelings and fear our sexuality, thereby losing a sense of being whole.

Psychologically speaking, we may have learned to internalise the exhortation to build resilient and elite character, and act out our lives either in compliance or rebellion to that call. And yet there may be much more to our experience than that which we have been able to include in our daily lives. For example, we were taught, and have learned well, not to acknowledge our pain - the pain inherited from our families, of enforced separation, of humiliation and the fear of failure. We needed to survive; and as adults we may, unwittingly, still be driven by that need.

Now we may find ourselves experiencing problems in our lives - with our emotions, our relationships, our careers - which could have their roots in our school days. These difficulties may offer us an invitation to look back, to tell our story, and perhaps to redeem something from our childhood and help us move from *survival* to *living*.

### Scope

This programme is open to those who want to re-examine their experience of boarding school, consider the effects on their lives, and look for ways of healing the wounds. The 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. No previous workshop experience is necessary. There is no age limit. Being in psychotherapy is not a prerequisite, however, because the workshop experience can be very intense, we strongly recommend therapeutic support and can often suggest a referral.

### Methodology

In these workshops we will be drawing on the experiences and perceptions of the group as our prime source of material, in order to build a context for understanding the past and choosing the future. We use a variety of methods, including meditative, gestalt and cognitive techniques, but participants are not required to go further than they wish. We aim not only to point to the possibility of changing behaviour patterns, but also to the value of repression and of survival mechanisms.

## Boarding School Survivors facilitation team

Each workshop has two or more facilitators. In accordance with our aim of delivering the highest quality of therapeutic help, staff in training may sometimes accompany these experienced trainers.

**Nick Duffell**, who founded BSS in 1990, boarded in Europe & in the UK. After Oxford, with a degree in Sanskrit, he taught at a boarding school in India before becoming a carpenter. Retraining as a psychotherapist after his own breakdown, he became a family therapist & organisational consultant, and trainer. He writes & broadcasts on psychological issues & has two grown-up sons. Nick's first book, *The Making Them* received wide critical acclaim; he co-authored *Sex, Love & the Dangers of Intimacy*, translated into several languages. *Wounded Leaders* followed in 2014 and *Trauma, Abandonment and Privilege* in 2016.

**Caroline Burr**. In search of fulfillment after a 'successful' 10 years in corporate life, Caroline retrained as a coach - her work for the last 14 years. In 2005 she trained with the Centre for Gender Psychology and Revision to work with couples and has since specialised as 'Your Relationship Coach'. Coming from a family where boarding was normal as well as being married to an ex-boarder, it was eye-opening to become aware of the impact of her own boarding experience. She loves being a mum to three boys and is constantly seeing the importance and value of a mother's presence and children being at home as part of normal family life.

**Pippa Foster** is a clinical psychologist & psychoanalytical psychotherapist. Trained at the Tavistock, where she spent 6 years on the staff, she has over 30 years experience in the NHS, commercial & charitable sectors, & in private practice. Her work has taken her to many different countries, and, having spent much of her childhood overseas, she has a particular interest in cultural change. An ex-boarder, she is deeply committed to the therapeutic understanding of the trauma of boarding. Greatly fulfilled by her family & her sculpture work, she lives near Brighton.

**Marcus Gottlieb** is an accredited psychotherapist, with 15 years experience, who works from a holistic, mind-body perspective. He boarded from 12 to 17 and proceeded inexorably to Oxbridge and the Law, until the 'wheels came off the bicycle' in his mid-30s and he could then start becoming his own person.

**Darrel Hunneybell** is an accredited psychotherapist and supervisor with over 15 years experience. Before that he worked in the NHS and local government. He has counselled excluded adolescent boys in residential schools, and now concentrates on his own private practice and his work with men's groups. Darrel is interested in the impact of abandonment and institutionalisation inherent in the boarding school experience. Darrel brings to the team a 'normal' schooling along with his experience, commitment, and heart.

**Nicola Miller** has well over 20 years experience providing body psychotherapy & supervision to individuals & groups. She trained in Gestalt, Energetic Integration, & the Pesso-Boyden System. Nicola was a 3rd generation

boarder, who initially approached the BSS work with skepticism but has found it invaluable - personally and professionally. She brings a deep appreciation of the struggle to belong, to form loving bonds and to unravel the knots that inhibit our creativity and joy. She has adult daughters, 5 grandchildren and lives in Leeds.

**Ruth Tudor** had a rural upbringing in a Welsh speaking community in Snowdonia from which she was severed at the age of eleven by being sent to boarding school. She studied at Cambridge University and had 'successful' careers in education and policy-making at a national and international level, whilst struggling to sustain intimate long-term relationships, to experience real joy, troubled by a visceral sense of longing for something lost. Within the wider context of therapy, she found the BSS work enormously helpful in the struggle to accept her own vulnerability and her need for others. Married with two sons, Ruth is an accredited psychotherapist working from her farm in south-east Wales, where she is inspired and sustained by her contact with the natural world, including her horses and sheep.

**Ingo Vauk** is a psychotherapist working with individuals, couples and men's groups in his practice in Erlangen, Germany. He spent his early childhood in Rangoon in the 1960s, where his family was part of an international ex-pat community consisting mainly of British, before moving to Kabul, where he went to school until the age of ten. Though Ingo was not sent to boarding school, in the 1940s his mother had been, and from the age of 10 his brother was. With boarding normalized in his family system, Ingo witnessed it from the perspective of a younger sibling and retains an outside, as it were 'naive' position. Ingo trained in Gestalt and Body Therapies, as well as Process and Embodiment focussed Therapy (PEP), and Creative CoupleWork. He is part of a team who facilitate Sexual Grounding Therapy group workshops in Hungary, Germany, France and Russia. After living in London for nearly 20 years Ingo returned to Germany with his family in 2005, where they enjoy being closer to their families of origin.

**Paul Welcomme** is a BACP & Relate Registered Relationship Counsellor / Psychotherapist and Coach who has run a successful Bristol/North Somerset Practice for many years, seeing clients locally and across the South West & South Wales. Having boarded from 9 to 16, Paul attended the BSS workshops and subsequently undertook specialist training with Nick Duffell, Helena Løvendal & Joy Schaverien. He has facilitated workshops on the impact of boarding school for Relate and Boarding Concern. Paul's private practice covers many additional areas of distress, on relationships & many other issue, for individuals and couples.

## Programme details

The workshop consists of a therapeutic group in two parts, over two weekends, Saturdays 10 - 6 and Sundays 10 - 5.30. Participants must commit to both weekends. Dates and locations are regularly updated on the website. We run one or two workshops per gender per year and our groups are small. We often have to turn people away when the course is full, so early booking is strongly advised. If a particular course is full you can ask to be on the waiting list in case we have a last minute drop-out, as we sometimes do.

### Venue

Hampstead/Highgate area of North London, with good public transport links – full details on application.

### Application procedure

Places can be reserved by filling in an application form (downloadable from the website) and sending a deposit (transferable but non-refundable) for £100 - full details on the form. Applications are assessed by the BSS Team prior to acceptance on the workshop and subject to our impression of the workshops suitability to the applicant's expressed needs and situation. Sometimes we may ask to meet participants or schedule a phone appointment prior to the course. A limited number of bursaries, courtesy of Boarding Concern, may be available for those in need, but this may delay the application process.

### Please note

We reserve the right to reject applications and to cancel or postpone courses, if necessary, in which case full refunds will be made.

## Contact

For all questions about the courses please contact Lyn Jones on [info@boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk](mailto:info@boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk)

For referral to a specially trained psychotherapist please visit [www.boardingrecovery.com](http://www.boardingrecovery.com) or ask Lyn.

For professional training in psychotherapy with ex-boarders or for books and articles please visit [www.boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk](http://www.boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk)

For our programme of other courses for men, women and couples, for professional training in couple-work and psycho-sexuality please visit **The Centre for Gender Psychology** [www.genderpsychology.com](http://www.genderpsychology.com)

## Books

Available from Lone Arrow Press Ltd. via [www.boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk](http://www.boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk) or from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk):

*The Making of Them: The British Attitude to Children and the Boarding school System*, by Nick Duffell  
£20 + postage and packing. E-book and Audio book now available.

*Sex, Love, and the Dangers of Intimacy: A guide to passionate relationships when the "honeymoon" is over*, by Nick Duffell and Helena Løvendal-Duffell. £15 + postage and packing. E-book and Kindle now available.

*Wounded Leaders: British Elitism and the Entitlement Illusion, a Psychohistory*, by Nick Duffell  
£20 + postage and packing. E-book and Kindle now available.

Available from the publishers, Routledge or from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk), P.O.A:

*Trauma, Abandonment and Privilege: A guide to therapeutic work with boarding school survivors*, by Nick Duffell and Thurstine Basset, 2016. E-book and Kindle now available.

*Boarding School Syndrome: The psychological trauma of the 'privileged' child*, (2015) by Joy Schaverien.  
E-book and Kindle now available.