

BOARDING SCHOOL SURVIVORS A GUIDE TO THE 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, but because the workshop experience can be very intense, we strongly recommend therapeutic support. We can often help with a referral to one of our specially trained therapists.

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. Details of our facilitation team are available on <https://www.boardingschoolsurvivors.co.uk/about-us/> The exact staffing is available on application.

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.

Venues

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) - 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 workshop's 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 <https://www.bss-support.org.uk/>, may be available for those in need, but this delays 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

For referral to a specially trained psychotherapist please visit 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

For our programme of other courses for men, women and couples, for professional training in couple-work and psycho-sexuality please visit www.genderpsychology.com

Reading

Available from Lone Arrow Press Ltd. via www.boardingschoolsurvivors.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, 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.