

Practical Arrangements

The venue for the group is:

Amphlett House
114 Worcester Road
Droitwich Spa
WR9 8AW

Times:

Thursdays 10.30 - 12.30

(gather for coffee from 10.30, group commences at 11.00)

Dates:

February 10th
March 3rd, 24th
April 7th
May 5th, 26th
June 16th
July 7th
September 8th, 29th
October 20th
November 10th
December 1st

Cost:

Each member will be asked to contribute £10 per group session.

Participants are encouraged to consider claiming their CME grant to meet this cost.

The remaining costs of the group will be met by the diocese.

In case of genuine difficulty, please speak with Sarah Cooke.

Any enquiries about the Reflective Practice Group
please call Sarah on Tel: 01386 442253
Email: sarahcooke558@btinternet.com

A Reflective Practice Group for Clergy



**Would you like to join a mutually supportive group
where you can discuss your work and
its personal implications for you
in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust ?**



February - December 2022



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF
WORCESTER

Personal and Professional Support for Clergy

A Balint-style Reflective Practice Group has been meeting in the Worcester Diocese since 2011. The group is open to any ordained minister who holds the Bishop's licence, at any stage or indeed type of ministry. Group members may be drawn from the same Deanery but not from the same ministry team or partnership. Any boundary concerns can be discussed with Sarah Cooke on application. The group is open to anyone who feels they would like to get support from peers for their work, increase their understanding of and fulfilment in their ministry and increase their sense of personal well-being.

Up to eight members of clergy will meet for 13 sessions during term-time between February and December 2022. There are two group facilitators who combine experience of ordained ministry, group skills and psychoanalytic understanding. The style of the group is relatively informal with time for coffee before the sessions begin. It is made clear from the start that material brought and discussed is entirely confidential – the integrity of the group rests on this premise. Trust and depth of relating grow through a genuine commitment of each member to regular attendance.

The Clergy Covenant for Well-Being stresses that some form of regular pastoral supervision is one of the most pressing needs of clergy and of significant importance in supporting their welfare.

What is a Balint-Style Group?

Michael and Enid Balint were psychoanalysts working in London in the 1950's and 60's who developed a model of group work to support doctors and help them think about their work with patients, particularly its psychological aspects. This model has been adapted to assist those in other professional groups, including clergy, to think about their pastoral work. These are not 'therapy' groups as such, but meetings based around the practicalities of working in ordained ministry.

How a Balint-Style Group works

Two facilitators, one a member of the clergy and one psychoanalytically trained, facilitate the one and a half hour group sessions. Two participants each have forty-five minutes in which to bring to the group a challenging pastoral or work-related problem which has constellated strong feelings in them. Using empathy and their own experience the rest of the group, and the facilitators, help the presenter to explore their feelings and look carefully at what the problem has touched on in and for them. Usually some understanding is reached as to why this particular problem is causing this particular person difficulty and insight is gained both professionally and personally. Nearly always a situation which has seemed stuck loosens up.

Types of issues the group could explore ...

How does my work in a parish impact on me?

How do my parishioners make me feel?

How can I cope with people who disturb me so that I make matters better, not worse?

What is it like living with my work, my family, and myself?

How can I use my feelings creatively and with confidence?

What do I find rewarding and what difficult in ministry?

What are the creative and what are the destructive effects of my work on me?

An observation of a current Group Member

“Being part of the Balint Reflective Practice group is a deeply helpful opportunity to explore in a safe place with appropriate boundaries the challenges of being in ministry. There is a significance in knowing that we are heard and seen and I have learned how to hear and see myself in new ways - as well as how to hear and understand others as we ask “What is it in me that reacts this way?” There is an assurance that each meeting is held in skilled hands to help us focus on what is being brought to the group and in guiding us through the process of understanding who we are. It is a commitment well worth making and will bear fruit in our developing as people who are priests”

Biographies of Group Facilitators

Sarah Cooke is trained as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and Jungian Analyst and has worked in this field for over 20 years. She has a long-standing interest and involvement in working with clergy, not solely in a therapeutic and consultative capacity, but also in their training and professional development. Between September 2009 and August 2021 she was the Bishop's Adviser in Pastoral Care for the Diocese of Worcester.

David Haslam is a Methodist minister with many years experience both at local and national level. He has worked in local churches and community organisations in Coventry, Southampton and different areas of London, and nationally for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland on community and race relations. He has an M.A. in Consultancy and the Organisation from the Tavistock Institute, which has pioneered work in the psychoanalytic approach to groups and organisations.