



# Working across languages and cultures

Clients, whose first language is not English, are often doubly disadvantaged by their reliance on others to provide their voice and to mediate their communication. How can counsellors ensure that they are able to work effectively with appropriate interpreters in their practice? And what if a client doesn't need an interpreter?

The training session also considers how we can facilitate the exploration of clients' (and counsellors') multilingual and ethnic/cultural identities and heritages in therapeutic work.

- **The experiential day's training covers the following:**
- **The multilingual therapeutic frame**
- **Working effectively with an interpreter face-to-face and online**
- **Maintaining clinical authority when you don't understand the language(s) spoken in the room**
- **Processing of trauma in different languages**
- **The relational and embodied aspects of multilingualism**
- **Multilingualism as a therapeutic asset**
- **Managing the tensions between cultural sensitivity and safeguarding concerns**

We will also consider how multilingual identities impact on emotional expression, memory recall and a sense of belonging. Why is it, for example, that children choose their friends based on whether or not they sound like them?

Drawing on research findings we will consider the issues of assumptions, loss, anxiety, agency, insider and outsider status, all from the multilingual perspective. Throughout the interactive workshop amalgamated case examples, films, scripts, as well as findings from research, will provide illustrations and promote discussion.

Dr. Beverley Costa is a, a psychotherapist and a Senior Practitioner Fellow, Birkbeck, University of London

<https://www.bbk.ac.uk/departments/linguistics/our-staff>

She set up Mothertongue multi-ethnic counselling service [www.mothertongue.org.uk](http://www.mothertongue.org.uk) in 2000 and she founded The Pásalo Project in 2017 [www.pasaloproject.org](http://www.pasaloproject.org) to disseminate the learning from nearly two decades of Mothertongue's service.