

# Dr Victoria Pile

Kings College London

Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Online



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INSTITUTE

Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment

# Working with mental imagery in CBT and other psychotherapies

## Introduction:

Emotional mental imagery is a powerful part of our mental landscape. Given its capacity to depict, process, and generate emotional events, mental imagery can have an important role in psychological therapies. Using psychological techniques to work with mental imagery – including distressing past images or a lack of positive future imagery – can be highly effective. Yet, techniques using mental imagery are often neglected in routine practice, in favour of verbally based techniques. This might be for several reasons, including concerns that mental imagery can be highly distressing for the client or lack of confidence in using imagery-based techniques. This workshop will provide an introduction to working with mental imagery in CBT and other psychotherapies. It aims to increase understanding of when and how to explore mental imagery with clients. There will be opportunities to formulate the role of imagery in client's presenting difficulties as well as practice imagery-based techniques, for example imagery rescripting.

## Content

The workshop will consist of two parts. The initial part of the day will focus on increasing participants knowledge and understanding of emotional mental imagery and how it has been used therapeutically. This will include exploration of the evidence base and insights from people with lived experience. The second part will involve learning and practicing principal therapeutic techniques to formulate and work with mental imagery. This will include drawing on participants clinical and personal experiences to understand when and how mental imagery interventions could be helpful.

## Learning objectives:

- Define emotional mental imagery and consider the importance of addressing mental imagery in treatments
- Understand the range of imagery-based intervention techniques available and the relative promise of using these techniques in treatments (or as standalone interventions)
- Be able to produce a micro-formulation of a problematic image
- Identify when metacognitive techniques might be helpful and be able to deliver them
- Be able to understand when to consider imagery rescripting and be able to deliver imagery rescripting
- Appreciate the role of positive future imagery and techniques to enhance future imagery



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## Training modalities

The workshop will be interactive and include both experiential and didactic teaching. Case material will be used to illustrate the teaching. Participants will have a chance to discuss their own cases.

## Key references:

1. Pile, V., Smith, P., & Lau, J. Y. F. (2021). Using Imagery Rescripting as an Early Intervention for Depression in Young People. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 12*(August), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.651115>
2. Pile, V., Smith, P., Leamy, M., Oliver, A., Bennett, E., Blackwell, S. E., Meiser-Stedman, R., Stringer, D., Dunn, B. D., Holmes, E., & Lau, J. Y. F. (2021). A Feasibility Randomised Controlled Trial of a Brief Early Intervention for Adolescent Depression that Targets Emotional Mental Images and Memory Specificity. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*.
3. Pile, V., Williamson, G., Saunders, A., Holmes, E. A., & Lau, J. Y. F. (2021). Harnessing emotional mental imagery to reduce anxiety and depression in young people: An integrative review of progress and promise. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 8*, 836–852.
4. Pile, V., Winstanley, A., Oliver, A., Bennett, E., & Lau, J. Y. F. (2021). Targeting image-based autobiographical memory in childhood to prevent emotional disorders: Intervention development and a feasibility randomised controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 144*(June), 103913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2021.103913>

## About the presenter:

Victoria Pile is a Clinical Psychologist and Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London. Victoria has received a series of clinical fellowships from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and she currently holds an NIHR Advanced Fellowship. She has also been successful in grants from the Wellcome Trust and British Academy. Her programme of clinical research focuses on addressing the urgent need for effective early interventions for adolescent depression. These accessible psychological interventions are co-designed with people with lived experience and practitioners. In particular, she has co-designed IMAGINE which is a brief intervention that harnesses emotional mental imagery techniques to reduce depression in young people. She has worked in CAMHS services for eight years, including national and specialist services and CYP-IAPT. Victoria has extensive experience in both teaching and supervising CBT, as well as supervising PhD students and trainees on the doctorate in clinical psychology. In addition, Victoria co-leads a multi-disciplinary special interest group for adolescent depression, funded by Emerging Minds (UKRI).

For further information contact the Charlie Waller Institute:

[cwi@reading.ac.uk](mailto:cwi@reading.ac.uk)

Tel: 0118 378 7537

Charlie Waller Institute, School of Psychology and Clinical Language Science  
University of Reading  
RG6 6AL

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/charliewaller>

All workshops, unless otherwise indicated are intended for a cross/mixed ability audience, and are delivered online



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