

# SYMPOSIUM

## Innovation in CFT



Chair: Nicola Petrocchi

## Motivational Conflicts in Children: Costs to Compassion

**James N. Kirby, PhD**

Two core human motives are competitive and co-operative motivations, each having a different focus and goal. In a series of studies with children, we examined motivational conflicts to determine what factors may facilitate and inhibit compassion. In the first study, we examined whether children will act compassionately to a puppet when completing a series of tasks when there is a cost to themselves in doing so. In the second study, we examined the consolation behaviour of children towards a puppet who lost in a task. In the third study, we examined the influence of tribal groups when a child has a chance to imitate immoral behaviour. Collectively these studies shed light on motivational conflicts that occur for children, and we discuss ways we can help shape environments to help facilitate more compassionate motives.

**James N. Kirby, Ph.D.**  
**Lecturer & Clinical Psychologist**  
**School of Psychology**  
**The University of Queensland**  
Email: [j.kirby@psy.uq.edu.au](mailto:j.kirby@psy.uq.edu.au)  
Email 2: [jnkirby@stanford.edu](mailto:jnkirby@stanford.edu)  
Twitter: @JamesNKirby

# The Self Mirroring Technique (SMT): An In-Session Video-Feedback Procedure to Elicit Patient's Self-Compassion

**Piergiuseppe Vinai, MD, Psy.D.**

**SITCC- Italian Society of Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapy**

Many patients have difficulty in recognising their own emotions, but they can read the emotions on the faces of others. In fact, when reading others' emotional signals, they do not use their self-reflective abilities, related to the limbic system and frequently impaired in subjects affected by psychopathologies, but their automatic abilities related to the Mirror Neurons system (MNS), used to understand the thoughts and emotions of others. We know that the ability to direct our attention to distress/suffering signals in others and ourselves is one of the competencies needed to develop compassion, and impairments in the ability to read our own emotional content might hinder the emergence of compassion for the self. In this talk we'll show a new audiovisual recording technique, the Self Mirroring Technique (SMT), designed to improve patients' ability to recognise their own emotions through the neural network they use to read others' emotions. In the SMT protocol we first record the patient while he is recalling a emotionally significant episode of his life. Immediately after, we record his face while he is looking at his own image on the screen and finally, we show him the effects of seeing his own emotions in action. After a brief presentation of the theoretical basis of the method, we'll present a short video-taped example of a SMT session and preliminary data supporting the efficacy of this intervention with a group of depressed patients. Improving the ability to detect and connect with suffering of others and ourselves is a crucial aim of Compassion Focused Therapy, making Self Mirroring Technique (SMT) a potential new technique to facilitate the emergence of a compassionate motivation.