



THE
Compassionate Mind
FOUNDATION

8th International Conference

*The Compassionate Mind in Its Social
Context: From the Body to the Social
World*

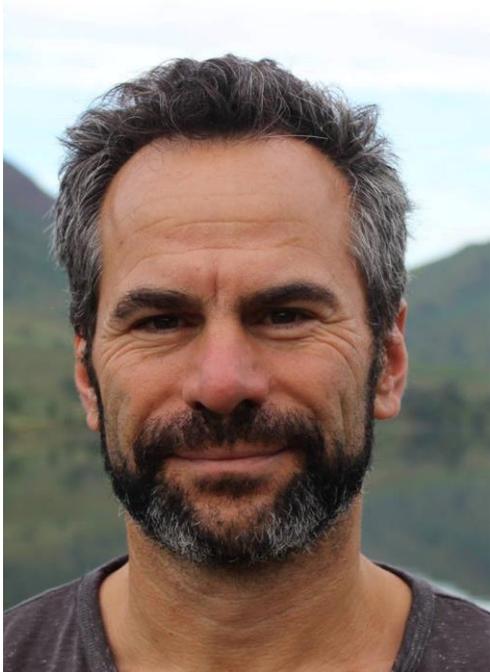
8-11 October 2019 in EDINBURGH

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Directionality: Implications for Compassion Focused Therapy

PROF MICK COOPER

This talk introduces a new framework for conceptualising the relationship between psychological and social change, rooted in existential and humanistic principles and highly compatible with a compassion-focused perspective. Building on [*Pluralistic Counselling and Therapy*](#) (Cooper and McLeod, 2011), the framework starts from the assumption that human beings are directional—agentic, future-oriented, and towards-their-world—and that psychological difficulties emerge when people are unable to ‘actualise’ their deepest directions (such as the desire for relatedness, self-worth, or spiritual fulfilment). This may be because they are trying to move in conflicting directions, or because they have yet to develop effective means of actualising their directions. From this perspective, different therapeutic practices can be seen as ways of helping people ‘get back on track’. However, from the perspective of this framework, people can also fail to actualise their directions because their worlds do not provide them with the resources to do so. In this way, the framework integrates both psychological and social sources of distress into a single model. The concept of directionality can also be transposed to the dyadic, group, or community level: helping us understand the deep synergies—and ‘dysergies’—that can take place in the world around us.



Prof Mick Cooper is an internationally renowned author, trainer and consultant in the field of humanistic, existential and pluralistic therapies. He is a Chartered Psychologist, and Professor of Counselling Psychology at the University of Roehampton. Mick has facilitated workshops and lectures around the world, including Australia, Lithuania and Florida. Mick's books include [*Existential Therapies*](#) (Sage, 2017), [*Working at Relational Depth in Counselling and Psychotherapy*](#) (Sage, 2018), and [*The Handbook of Person-Centred Psychotherapy and Counselling*](#) (Palgrave, 2013). His principal areas of research have been in shared decision-

making/personalising therapy, and counselling for young people in schools. In 2014, Mick received the Carmi Harari Mid-Career Award from Division 32 of the American Psychological Association. He is a Fellow of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the Academy of Social Sciences. His latest book, [*Integrating Counselling & Psychotherapy: Directionality, Synergy and Social Change*](#), will be released by SAGE in May 2019. For more information about Mick and his work, please [click here](#).