

Workshop title: Learning the Ropes: An Introduction to Kink and BDSM Play from a Gestalt Perspective

Facilitator: Nika Jelendorf

Facilitator Biography: Nika is a Gestalt psychotherapist and counsellor working in private practice in London. She is currently undergoing additional training in psychosexual therapy.

Capacity: maximum 25

Outline/Aims: Those who practise BDSM often experience stigma, therapeutic bias and a lack of understanding by mental health practitioners. ¹

The workshop will offer a sex-positive introduction to the practices of Kink and BDSM for therapists through the Gestalt lenses of contact. The attendees will be able to ask questions, learn terminology, map and attend to their own phenomenological responses to the topics of Kink and BDSM, and give some tips on including non-pathologizing safeguarding into their client work.

Alignment: “Play” is a term often used in kink and BDSM spaces to describe particular activities (“impact play”, “Ageplay”), relationships (“play partner”) or spaces (“the munch is a social event – strictly no play allowed!”). While sometimes controversial, it describes the elements of fantasy that can be brought to life and explored through the practice of Kink and BDSM. This workshop is an opportunity for practitioners to move beyond *Psychopathia Sexualis* and hear more contemporary takes on BDSM and Kink.

¹1. Thomas, D. (2024) *The Deep Psychology of BDSM and Kink: Jungian and Archetypal Perspectives on the Soul’s Transgressive Necessities*. Routledge: Oxon, p. 13