

Meet the member



David Linford-Smith

is an integrative psychotherapist, psychologist, coach, and supervisor, and he runs a successful private practice here in the UK and internationally.

David previously worked for 25 years in television broadcasting, primarily as a film editor, specialising in current affairs, documentaries, and investigative journalism. A media psychology researcher, David combines his special interest in complex psychological trauma and his passion for the media industry.

davidlinfordsmith.com
hello@davidlinfordsmith.com

How would you describe your journey from therapist to coach?

Having previously trained as a documentary filmmaker, I spent 25 years working in media and television broadcasting, specialising as a film editor in factual programming. As a principal editor, I trained other editors and video journalists, which involved a large amount of coaching and mentoring to support them in their professional development. Outside the workplace, I was a training officer with an international volunteer urban search-and-rescue team, whose members were typically already working professionally in emergency services. We saw an influx of members from non-emergency backgrounds, so in addition to the core training, there was an increased need for coaching and mentoring, as trainees worked towards our three-year qualification in urban rescue work.

A personal interest in psychological wellbeing and mental health, as well as my own commitment to personal therapy, led me to train as a psychotherapist with the intention of ultimately dividing my working week between editing and therapy work. Alongside my primary editing work, I managed a small private therapy practice. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had the opportunity to take voluntary redundancy from my editing job, which allowed me to develop and expand my therapy practice. I really wanted to diversify and include coaching in my work, so I undertook additional training and worked towards accreditation as a coach and mentor.

I love the diversity I now have in my work by adding coaching to my practice, and I'm now further developing my role as a supervisor for coaches, therapists and other mental health professionals.

Do you have a coaching niche?

My work tends to be split across two main areas – media and the arts, and healthcare. I love working with creative professionals from media and broadcasting because it keeps me connected to the industry in which I spent most of my career. I never specifically intended to, but I began working with musicians, artists and actors too. I find being a musician myself helps, as does coming from a theatrical family. In the healthcare sector, I tend to coach executives and clinical leaders in the NHS, very often those working in mental health or emergency medicine. I find my background in rescue work and psychotherapy supports me with this type of work. However, I am passionate about working with small business owners who may be launching a new product or expanding their business into new areas, and last year I coached a team of five rowers who crossed the Atlantic Ocean, so maybe I don't have a niche at all. The bottom line is that I love working with people who are passionate about what they do – whatever that

might be. I love the energy that is created in the work we do together.

How has becoming a coach changed you as a person?

Coaching has made me look at how I can communicate with others and how I can implement positive change in my life. I did learn a huge amount about myself during my psychotherapy training but also had some big personal insights while working with coaches. I find that my psychological background helps me understand the root cause of any issues I might be struggling with, but it is the voice of my inner coach that supports me to act when I want to make positive changes in my life.

Where do you practise?

I work out of a couple of therapy centres in Hull, although the majority of my coaching work is conducted online using video platforms. My coaching business really grew during the COVID-19 lockdowns and using video technology meant that I could expand my client base across the whole of the UK and around the world. I might start my day with a coaching client in Singapore and end with a session in California, with clients in Europe and the UK in between. I love the diversity that brings to my working week. When I coach a local business owner or entrepreneur, I like to visit their premises to get a feel for the operation, although I know my clients often appreciate the opportunity to get away from the office. I currently supervise a few coaches who work outdoors, and I am considering adding this approach to both my therapeutic and coaching practice.

Do you have a typical client?

The people I work with are highly driven and passionate about their work, and really want to make a difference; either to their community or the wider world around them. So, no matter what we are focusing on, a sense of how they can contribute to the greater good, whatever that means to them, is always underpinning the work. Therefore, our work together often takes on a philosophical and spiritual dimension as a result, which allows me to lean into my own spirituality.

How would you describe your particular approach to coaching/therapy?

The fundamental theoretical context for my work is primarily transactional analysis (TA), mainly from a relational and integrative perspective, and I also like to incorporate existential and Gestalt coaching perspectives

into my approach. I have a master's degree in psychology and have a strong interest in neurobiology, social psychology and developmental psychology. Psychotherapeutically, I work a lot with complex trauma, so my style across my entire practice is trauma-informed and holistic in approach.

What's your biggest challenge currently?

Moving away from my job as an editor was a tough decision to make. I feel as though I have unfinished business in the media and broadcasting industry, and it has been a struggle to let go of my identity as a media

centres where I practise; I find it a great way to connect, emotionally, to my community and neighbourhood, and it makes it easier to decompress at the end of the working day. In my spare time, I like to play the classical guitar and violin; I used to sing in a classical choir, but that all stopped when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. I really miss singing, so I need to find space in my schedule to return to choral singing. Most importantly, I have a wonderful, supportive wife, and a young daughter who helps me connect with my inner child, so there is always plenty of fun, colouring, stickers, and crafting, and recently, I even bought a pair of roller skates (a sturdy helmet, and plenty of pads!).

What advice would you give therapists interested in coaching?

A great start would be to lean into what you already know from your own therapeutic modality and transfer that knowledge to coaching. There is plenty of material available that looks at perspectives on coaching such as Gestalt, existential, psychodynamic, TA and cognitive behavioural coaching, so you can discover ways to apply your existing skills to coaching. There is also a wide range of training available that can give you a solid grounding in coaching techniques, and plenty of short courses to support your growth as a coach, including the events run by the BACP Coaching division.

What does being a member of the Coaching division give you?

I love having a network of support and information available to me. Working in private practice can be quite isolating, so having a community that I can be involved with is incredibly useful and nourishing. As a research psychologist, I find the BACP Coaching division a good source of information on evidence-based practice. ■

Get in touch

If you are a BACP Coaching member and would like to feature in this column, please contact the Editor at: coachingtoday.editorial@bacp.co.uk

The people I work with are highly driven and passionate about their work, and really want to make a difference; either to their community or the wider world around them

professional. I am interested in developing further in the emerging field of media psychology, so I hope to find research areas that bring together my experience working in the media and my growing specialism in psychological trauma. My challenge is how to turn that into reality while maintaining and developing my private practice in the next phase of my journey.

What do you feel most proud of having achieved?

On a personal level, I am proud of my continued development and healing from significant traumatic childhood experiences, which reinforce my belief that change is possible despite the struggles people endure in life. I also recognise there is a level of determination too, as I have transitioned my career and wish to develop it further to suit my changing needs and passions.

How do you resource yourself? What do you enjoy in your spare time?

I am mindful of how much work I undertake each week and I try to keep a healthy work-life balance. My daily meditation and prayer practice sustains me, spiritually and emotionally. Whenever I can, I walk or cycle to the therapy

BACP Coaching News



Network events

Coaching network meeting Tuesday 12 September, 6pm to 7pm 'Contracting'

Join Joanne Wright and Yvonne Inglis from the BACP Coaching Executive as they host another online networking event for members on Tuesday 12 September.

Our theme for this event will be 'Contracting'. How do we contract with our clients when we sit between the two disciplines of therapy and coaching? What works well and how do we navigate our way through this crucial stage of our work?

See our website for more information:

www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-divisions/bacp-coaching/networking-events-and-opportunities

Lucy Myers
Coaching.Chair@bacp.co.uk

Coaching for social impact update

Coaching for social impact or change is becoming increasingly relevant in contemporary coaching practice, as more coaches are being invited or commissioned to offer coaching to community groups and professionals, especially those of us working in the public or third sector.

The thirst for social change is growing, and alongside this, people are recognising the value of using coaching skills as tools for self-development, interpersonal working relationships and strategic development in grassroots and public organisations.

If you are coaching for social change, let us know via our new coaching for social impact community on the Communities of Practice platform. See:

www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/bacp-events/communities-of-practice

You can also visit our dedicated website for our new organisation, which evolved from last year's online conference on coaching for social impact:

www.coaching4socialimpact.com
coaching4socialimpact@gmail.com

Val Watson
Val@valwatsonconsulting.co.uk