



Repetition (interruption) and return: finding one's Ithaca on the parenthood journey

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As therapists, we are called to hold safe and containing spaces for our clients (Yalom, 2011). Yet, when we step into the role of parents, personal boundaries are often profoundly reconfigured. The process of returning to ourselves—and to our professional identity—can resemble a personal odyssey: a complex, meandering journey shaped by shifting demands and evolving internal landscapes.

Drawing on Sesame drama and movement therapy, as well as life coaching approaches, this workshop will offer a confidential and playful space in which to reflect both individually and collectively on the ways parenthood influences therapeutic practice. Participants will be invited to engage with these reflections through movement, language, and imagery.

Does parenthood enrich rather than solely deplete our clinical capacity? Can the repeated experience of interruption refine our ability to focus more precisely? Might the constant state of heightened alertness enable us to access relaxation more fully when the opportunity arises? Can the pervasive feeling of never quite being 'on top of things' create fertile ground for embracing the notion of being 'good enough'? And can letting go of perfectionist ideals foster a deeper presence with our clients? Might the cyclical motion of the parental experience act as a bridge, deepening our therapeutic roots even amid exhaustion and the relentless repetition of daily tasks? Will any answers that arise be siren calls or wise echoes?

Jung's (1953) concept of the *tension of opposites* will guide participants in exploring perspectives that may lie beyond their usual horizon. Rather than igniting internal conflict, might the multifaceted demands of parenting—its competing priorities, shifting boundaries, and inner tensions—be invited into dialogue, or even harmony?

Participants will be encouraged to explore creative ways of returning to their personal *Ithaca*, whatever form it may take.



Bibliography

Jung, C.G. (1953). *The collected works of Carl Jung*. Pantheon.

Yalom, I.D. (2011). *The gift of therapy* (revised and updated edition): An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients. Hachette UK.

Biography

Sarah Speziali is a dramatherapist, a psychologist and researcher at King's College London. Her PhD explores a whole university approach to mental health for students, staff and faculty, fostering a systemic approach to positive mental health.

Her PhD coincided with her becoming a mother of two, and peer support channels supported her in navigating the many challenges parenthood brought to her therapeutic practice. Sarah continues to develop psychoeducation training, while learning how to convert her work into research. In 2025 her work at CERN resulted in a publication on 'Assessing the mental health state of LHC scientist'.

Recent Publications

Jonas, F., Bossi, H., Rasanen, S.S., Speziali, S., Reetz, C.A., Quaglia, L., & Coldham, K.W. (2025). **Assessing the mental health state of LHC scientists** (No. CMS NOTE-2025-001)

Speziali, S. (2024). **Building Thriving Academic Communities: Implementing Coaching and Mental Wellbeing Tools for Students, Educators and Staff**. In *Conference Proceedings. The Future of Education 2024*

Speziali, S. (2025). **Holistic Faculty Development for University Mental Wellbeing: a Narrative Review**. In *Conference Proceedings. The Future of Education 2025*