

## **When does a memory start or finish? Looking at context and transgenerational trauma.**

### **Marian Liebmann**

This presentation will look at a variety of memories, noting particularly when they are deemed to have started and finished and how perceptions of this can change. It will include ways of narrating or portraying memories through art therapy and writing.

Examples from art therapy include work in probation with offenders using comic strips to describe crime events – when and where does the story start and end? Discussion of these can result in including a wider context and a greater understanding of the place of the event in their lives.

Examples from writing include some of the author's own work on a recent chapter for a book on the emotional impact of visits back to places connected to family history for 'second generation' Holocaust survivors (that is, people whose parents died in the Holocaust or fled as refugees). Work on the chapter started with memories of two visits to Berlin, but then led to several other memories and an unfinished story.

Memories can also extend to the next generation, as transgenerational trauma studies have shown. In this way memories may have starting points in the past and end points yet to be achieved.

This then leads to discussion of personal and historical memoirs - choosing where to start and where to end – also what to include, what to omit – and what to falsify. An example here will be the author's mother's memoirs of fleeing from the Holocaust.

Recording memories in some form is important, preferably a durable one – hence the particular contribution of verbal and artistic records – to demonstrate that events happened. And, even more importantly, to use them to strengthen 'Never again' for situations of oppression.

### **Biography**

**Marian Liebmann** qualified as an art therapist in 1979, and worked in art therapy with offenders, with women's groups and community groups, and for 19 years in the Inner City Mental Health Team in Bristol, UK, where she developed work on anger, also with asylum seekers and refugees. She has lectured on art therapy at universities in the UK, Ireland, Israel, Eastern Europe and Baltic countries. She also works in restorative justice, mediation and conflict resolution, and has run Art, Conflict and Anger workshops in many countries. She has written/edited 14 books, including *Art Therapy and Anger* and most recently *Arts Therapies and Sex Offending* (2021). In 2010 she was awarded her PhD by publications from Bristol University. In 2013 she was awarded OBE for contributions to art therapy and mediation. She currently works privately supervising art therapy and running art therapy workshops for various organizations including refugees.

### **Recent publications and conference presentations**

#### **Publications**

*From Exclusion to Belonging: Art Tables in Refugee Drop-in Centres* (co-authored with Gaie Delap and Chris Watkins) E-book 2020

*Arts Therapies with Sex Offending* (co-edited with Simon Hastilow), Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2021.

#### **Conference presentations**

2019: Workshop: 'Art Therapy and Anger'

International Art Therapy Conference, London, 11-13 July 2019

2019: Workshop: 'Using art with drama to bridge the gap of the unknown'  
EArTE conference, 11-14 Sept 2019

2019: Workshop: 'Art Therapy and Anger' Queen Margaret University, 12 Nov 2019