

Recommended reads

From contemporary classics by Casement and Yalom to self-help books on co-dependency, eating disorders, and sex and relationships, **Julia Bueno** asked 13 therapists for their top three recommended reads for colleagues, supervisees and clients. See if your favourites are on the list





Linda Aspey

***More Time to Think: A way of being in the world* by Nancy Kline (Fisher King Publishing, 2009)**

This is Kline's second book on the 'thinking environment' – a unique way of being with and listening to people that helps them to think well, independently and creatively. In it she explores leadership, assumptions, equality, appreciation and other components that lead to rich, productive and respectful conversations. A book that will change how you listen and one that you will never forget.

***Facing Co-dependence: What it is, where it comes from, how it sabotages our lives* by Pia Mellody (HarperOne, 2003)**

This is immensely useful for clients struggling with low self-esteem or addictive behaviours resulting from abuse during childhood. Authored by an acknowledged expert on co-dependence, it is insightful, supportive and honestly written, and explores complex areas with great skill and care.

***Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office: 101 unconscious mistakes women make that sabotage their careers* by Lois Frankel (Little, Brown & Company, 2004)**

This is a book about the small behaviours that can undermine us. The author focuses on women but either sex can make the same mistakes. For example, not asking questions for fear of sounding stupid, apologising too much, or smiling all the time to gain approval. Frankel's style isn't for everyone but I've used this book with scores of senior women leaders (and some men – with care) and seen them transform from feeling apologetic, hesitant and unsure to clear, decisive and confident – without becoming tyrants. This book's catchy title belies how useful it is.

Linda Aspey is a coach and counsellor

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Thomas Larkin

***Character Styles* by Stephen M Johnson (WW Norton & Company, 1994)**

This was my bible through my therapy training and a transition object from trainee to a more confident therapist. The depth and breadth of the book was reassuring and gave me a good base to tackle many issues presenting in therapy. It explores the emotional, psychodynamic, physical and energetic descriptions of the main character structures.

***The Freud Reader* by Peter Gay (Vintage Classics, 1995) and *The Carl Rogers Reader* by Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson (Houghton Mifflin, 1996)**

These give a strong flavour of these pioneers, and I think every trainee therapist needs to connect with them, to understand their roots and the roots of therapy. I would also recommend them to clients, as, at the very least, Freud and Rogers are important historical figures who have contributed something fundamental to humanity.

***On Learning from the Patient* by Patrick Casement (Routledge, 1985)**

This gives a wonderful picture of the unconscious and how to work with it in a psychodynamic way and is a classic for therapists. I found it helped me to sit in the painful silence that can be so difficult for clients and therapists alike. It is about space, both for your own internal supervisor and the client's 'self'.

Thomas Larkin is an integrative psychotherapist and counsellor

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Susan Utting-Simon

***Counselling For Toads: A psychological adventure* by Robert de Board (Routledge, 1997)**

This was recommended to me when I first began my training as a counsellor. The story of Toad's experience of counselling was illuminating and I have often recommended it to clients, who seem to find the TA concepts easy to grasp, and also fellow therapists, who find it similarly engaging and informative.

***Creating Loving Attachments: Parenting with PACE to nurture confidence and security in the troubled child* by Kim Golding (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012)**

I have recommended this book on several occasions to clients parenting children with trauma and attachment difficulties. I was both moved and impressed by the compassionate approach used by the authors in their work with children. The principles described fit well with humanistic

therapeutic work, and several colleagues and supervisees have also found it very helpful.

***Freedom to Practise: Person-centred approaches to supervision* edited by Keith Tudor and Mike Worrall (PCCS Books, 2003)**

This is an accessible book that answered many of my questions about supervision, particularly around person-centred theory as a model, as well as my role in resolving issues and dilemmas in my capacity as a supervisor in various settings. It continues to help me clarify things and I have recommended it on many occasions to colleagues wishing to take up the role of supervisor using a non-directive, non-policing approach, but retaining ethical authority and professionalism.

Susan Utting-Simon is a senior accredited counsellor/psychotherapist and supervisor in private practice

Jacqueline Palmer



***Love's Executioner and Other Tales of Psychotherapy* by Irvin Yalom (Penguin, 1991)**

This is an inspirational book for clients and therapists. Yalom explores 10 case studies while revealing his transparency, compassion and humanity. Beneath their differing stories, he identifies the communal struggle with the givens of human existence: death, loneliness, meaning and freedom.

***The Wizard of Oz and other Narcissists: Coping with the one-way relationship in work, love and family* by Eleanor Payson (Julian Day Publications, 2002)**

I recommend this book for clients living in the shadow of narcissistic partners or parents. Payson investigates the primary characteristics of this personality disorder and its impact on others, which can be a wake-up call to co-dependents in their grip.

***Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on love and life from someone who's been there* by Cheryl Strayed (Atlantic Books, 2013)**

I suggest this book for those who have done a lot of personal work. A collation of responses to the 'Dear Sugar' letters on Strayed's blog, it offers a unique mix of challenge, experience, compassion and heart.

Jacqueline Palmer is an integrative and transpersonal counsellor and psychotherapist

Sandra Zecevic-Gonzalez



***The Importance of Suffering: The value and meaning of emotional discontent* by James Davies (Routledge, 2011)**

Davies offers a positive perspective on suffering: how it is part and parcel of what it means to be human, and if managed correctly, can serve as a catalyst for individual and/or social transformation. In today's world of quick-fix therapeutic and psychotropic interventions, I recommend this book to colleagues, supervisees and clients for a reality check – particularly when addressing unrealistic expectations of therapeutic treatments.

***The Compassionate Mind* by Paul Gilbert (Constable, 2009)**

This is a comprehensive resource for those wishing to develop a healthier and more compassionate relationship with oneself and others. Part I is devoted to theory and the science of compassion, and Part II incorporates skills and exercises for clinical practice.

***Depressive Illness: The curse of the strong* by Tim Cantopher (3rd edition, Sheldon Press, 2012)**

A relevant read for most depressed clients, as it provides a well-presented, encouraging but also realistic perspective into the nature of their illness and how to gently begin the healing process. This book's greatest achievement is its redefinition of depression as an illness of the strong. Those suffering from depression often label themselves as weak, useless and a failure; however, Cantopher thoughtfully delineates the trajectory that many strong, capable and talented individuals follow which leads to burnout and depression.

Sandra Zecevic-Gonzalez is a counselling psychologist and CBT therapist in private practice

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Jane Edwards



***The Making of Them: The British attitude to children and the boarding school system* by Nick Duffell (Lone Arrow Press, 2000)**

This is a good book to recommend to clients who were sent away to boarding school at a young age. We all have clients who dwell on whether they have a right to feel psychic pain when compared to the more obvious suffering in the world, none more so in my experience than those sent away to boarding school at a young age. Clients express amazement and relief at seeing something of their own experience reflected back.

***Between Therapist and Client: The new relationship* by Michael Kahn (St Martin's Press, 1997)**

This book helped me to chart a way forward between humanistic psychology and psychoanalysis. Coming to the end of my training, I had the disconcerting sensation that I was trying to juggle spaghetti in my mind. I hankered for the certainty of an individual rather than an integrative model. The discovery of this book was therefore very timely.

***Healing the Male Psyche: Therapy as initiation* by Dr John Rowan (Routledge, 1996)**

This is a great starting point to begin to understand the male experience, particularly of therapy. During my training I was particularly nervous about the idea of working with men. The only solution therefore was to try and understand what this was all about. I sometimes wonder whether my conscious effort contributes to the fact that my practice is always made up of at least 50 per cent male clients.

Jane Edwards is a UKCP registered integrative counsellor and psychotherapist



Trudi Dargan



***Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom (Sphere, 2003)**

This is a lovely story about the importance of having someone older, patient and wise to guide us in our lives, whether a grandparent, teacher or colleague. A young man reconnects with his former mentor who is now an old man, and shares his final days. It is warm and heartfelt and teaches life's great lessons.

***Lost and Then Found: Turning life's disappointments into hidden treasures* by Dr Trevor Griffiths (Paternoster Press, 1999)**

This is a real gem and one that I have loaned/recommended to many clients. It is about loss throughout the life cycle and the hidden losses in all life change. It looks at how our habitual emotional responses can often be affected by unrecognised losses and how we can get stuck in emotional whirlpools. It proposes a process of adjusting to change – shock/denial, anger/guilt, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

***Boundaries: Where you end and I begin* by Anne Katherine (Hazelden, 1994)**

This is useful for helping clients recognise the importance of maintaining a separate identity and selfhood within close personal relationships. Short case studies help depict a range of boundary violations that harm our wellbeing, including physical and emotional transgressions. A good book to recommend to clients confused about what constitutes true intimacy and togetherness.

Trudi Dargan is an integrative counsellor

Nikki Schuster



***I'm Coming to Get You* by Tony Ross (Andersen, 2008)**

This is a wonderful children's book that I use with both adults and young people who suffer with high stress or anxiety. A 'loathsome monster' devours all the planets and heads for earth as our fear builds, until we realise at the end that the monster is only the size of a mouse. I hope it illustrates that talking out our fears allows us to see that they are often very manageable.

***Narcissism: A new theory* by Neville Symington (Karnac Books, 1993)**

This has a very useful way of looking at a difficult subject and offers hope of change through the restorative effect of therapy.

***Eating Disorders: The path to recovery* by Kate Middleton (Lion Books, 2007)**

This is a very accessible book suitable for a client suffering anorexia, and I find it works well alongside therapy, as something to hold in between sessions. It also helps create a common language between therapist and client, which can be important where there is a painful avoidance.

Nikki Schuster is an integrative psychotherapist/counsellor and supervisor

Kathy Parsons



***The Words to Say it* by Marie Cardinal (Picador Books, 1984)**

This is a very powerful autobiographical description of one woman's psychoanalysis – a great read for therapists and robust clients.

***The Examined Life: How we lose and find ourselves* by Stephen Grosz (Vintage, 2013)**

A delightful, interesting, thought-provoking and moving description of one man's reflections on his own practice. This is the closest description I have ever read of what it is like to be a therapist.

***Families and How to Survive Them* by Robin Skynner and John Cleese (Cedar Books, 1993)**

A down to earth and easily accessible description of many psychological approaches and family/relational dynamics. I often recommend this to clients who find dipping into it very helpful, but it is also great for therapists to get back to simple, basic descriptions.

Kathy Parsons is an existential psychotherapist

Dominic Davies



***Rewriting the Rules: An integrative guide to love and relationships* by Meg Barker (Routledge, 2012)**

This book is loved by most who read it. Barker explores the interjected and internalised rules that constrain our development, as well as helping us to define a more personally relevant value system for how we feel about love, sex, relationships, our bodies, our gender etc.

***Keep Your Cool: How to deal with life's worries and stress* by Aaron Balick (Franklin Watts, 2013)**

This is a great book for young people managing the stresses and strains of growing up – really sound advice presented in a very open minded and non-judgmental manner.

***Growth and Intimacy for Gay Men: A workbook* by Christopher J Alexander (Routledge, 1997)**

This is an excellent workbook, full of practical exercises. It explores relationship to families of origin, self-esteem and shame, developing and maintaining relationships and so much more. It's brilliant bibliotherapy for gay men.

Dominic Davies is a UKCP registered psychotherapist and director of Pink Therapy





John Rowan

***Escape from Babel: Toward a unifying language for psychotherapy practice* by Scott D Miller, Barry L Duncan and Mark A Hubble (WW Norton & Company, 1997)**

This is a radical book that says it is not the therapist who does the work, but the client. So doing research on what therapists do is a waste of time; we need to study what clients do. You might find that this gives you a good framework for how you want to work.

***Psychotherapeutic Change: An alternative approach to meaning and measurement* by Alvin R Mahrer (WW Norton & Company, 1985)**

This is of interest because it makes all the points about the uselessness of outcome research, but then goes on to recommend paying attention instead to in-session outcomes. These are actually observable and countable within the therapy session, and have relevance to both clients and therapists.

It's too hard to choose just one additional book but if I had to it would be one of the following: *One to One: Experiences of psychotherapy* by Rosemary Dinnage (Penguin, 1988); *Hard-earned Lessons from Counselling in Action* edited by Windy Dryden (Sage, 1992); *Consuming Psychotherapy* by Ann France (Free Association Books, 1988); *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* by Hannah Green (Pan, 1967); *Experiences of Counselling in Action* edited by Dave Mearns and Windy Dryden (Sage, 1990); *Therapist* by Ellen Plasil (St Martins Press, 1985); *Falling for Therapy: Psychotherapy from a client's point of view* by Anna Sands (Palgrave, 2000).

Dr John Rowan is a psychotherapist, supervisor and author



Julia Greer



***Necessary Losses* by Judith Viorst (Prentice Hall & IBD, 2003)**

A sometimes painful, often witty, but ultimately hopeful book about the human condition with a focus on loss and opportunity across the life cycle. I loved it so much that (unusually) I bought five copies for my closest colleagues and later a copy for my daughter. I tell clients about it and many have been moved by it.

***The Good Marriage* by Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee (Bantam Press, 1995)**

This provides the best recipe I know for successful adult couple relationships. I know and hear a lot about why relationships break down. After years of scholarly research these authors studied the factors that made relationships successful over time. I often give clients a handout with the nine psychological tasks of successful couple relationships, which effectively summarise the book.

***Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the dread of death* by Irvin Yalom (Piatkus, 2011)**

Yalom uses case studies from his practice and his own later life experience to think about the meaning and purpose of life and the inevitability of death. He sees much of the stress and anxiety that therapists work with as rooted in death anxiety and yet his book is uplifting, particularly for those who do not believe in an afterlife and who are asking 'Is this it?'

Julia Greer is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice

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Rosie Dansey



***In the Springtime of the Year* by Susan Hill (Vintage, 2012)**

Hill describes how Ruth struggles with the sudden accidental death of her husband after a year of marriage and she becomes isolated, burying herself in her cottage in the countryside. My first experience of therapy followed my parents' unexpected deaths and my wise therapist suggested I read this book. It was the sensitive description of Ruth's experiencing the seasons changing around her that gave me hope.

***Change is Boundaries Dissolved* by Jean Clark (Norwich Centre for Personal and Professional Development, 1988)**

This book helped me face life's transitions and opened up my creativity. The author, a retired therapist and poet, depicts so well the transitional 'in between' space where feelings of being lost, mourning, and the facing of challenges reside, and her book has resonated with me, with clients and supervisees. I would take this to a desert island.

***Still Alice* by Lisa Genova (Simon & Schuster Ltd, 2012)**

A beautiful novel that describes movingly a middle-aged woman's sudden descent into early onset Alzheimer's and the accompanying fears as she, family and friends observe her increasing forgetfulness. I have recommended this to carers because the description of how Alice struggles to live in the moment and keep her independence aids understanding. It also reads with authority because of the author's neurological research experience.

Rosie Dansey is a senior accredited counsellor and supervisor in private practice

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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My favourite books

We'd love to know what your favourite recommended reads for clients, colleagues and supervisees are. Email: privatepractice.editorial@bacp.co.uk