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BJPsych Bulletin

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Published on behalf of Royal College of Psychiatrists

Intelligent Kindness in Mental Health Care Themed Issue

19 Sep 2025 to 31 Oct 2025

Intelligent Kindness in Mental Health Care Themed Issue

BJPsych Bulletin is aiming to publish a themed issue on intelligent kindness in mental health care. Accepted papers will be published online ahead of print as and when they are ready, then subsequently gathered into a special issue.

Closing date for submissions: 31 October 2025

Guest editors

- Dr David Foreman, *King's College London*
- Dr Nagina Khan, *University of Kent*

Rationale for the themed issue and what we are looking for

Despite growing awareness of the importance of compassion in mental health care, systemic pressures, workforce constraints, digitalisation, and managerialist models have led to the erosion of relational practices. The concept of *intelligent kindness*, as proposed by Ballatt and Campling, offers a timely and urgent call to reorient services around humane, relational and values-driven approaches. This issue will explore how intelligent kindness can be conceptualised, implemented, and evaluated within contemporary psychiatric and mental health services. We welcome examples of systemic change that foreground kindness as both ethical imperative and evidence-based practice. We are interested in reflective and opinion pieces, original research and clinical practice papers, service evaluations, and lived experience contributions. Articles will be subject to peer review.

General enquiries – please email the editorial team: BJPBulletin@rcpsych.ac.uk (<mailto:BJPBulletin@rcpsych.ac.uk>)

To submit a paper for consideration

- Check the instructions for authors: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-bulletin/information/author-instructions/preparing-your-materials#preparing>
- Visit: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bjpsych-bulletin>
- Choose the **Cultural Reflections** article type during submission
- Mention in your cover letter that you are submitting to the themed issue
- If available, select 'Intelligent Kindness' when asked if your article is for a themed issue

Further information

Key themes

Theoretical foundations of intelligent kindness

- Historical and philosophical roots
- Ethical arguments for relational care
- Critiques of bureaucratisation and industrialised psychiatry

Practising kindness: clinical and organisational case studies

- Trauma-informed care
- Co-production and peer-supported models
- Examples of services embedding kindness into structures and practice

Measuring and evaluating kindness

- Methodological challenges in researching compassion
- Metrics for relational safety and staff/patient experience
- Mixed-methods and qualitative approaches

Barriers to kindness

- Burnout, fear, blame cultures, and defensive practice
- Risk management vs relational care
- The effects of digital transformation and AI in care delivery

Voices from practice and lived experience

- Practitioner reflections on reclaiming kindness
- Lived experience narratives on relational healing
- Creative and narrative forms of contribution

Policy and system reform

- Leadership for compassionate systems
- Workforce education and values-based recruitment
- International comparisons and policy perspectives



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Not likely at allExtremely likely

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