



ICCT2025 Antwerp 27-28-29 October 2025

International Conference Contextual Therapy

The need for connection. Relationship challenges in today's world.

Workshop session 6a (E) – 14.00hr.-15.00hr.

**Grant Morales, Gabrielle Malloney, Rikki Patton
& Phyllis Swint**

**Using contextual therapy in couple therapy with partners
who have a history of intimate partner.**



Summary:

Intimate partner violence (IPV) remains a critical issue affecting relational and individual well-being (Lagdon et al., 2023; Meyer et al., 2024). While existing research highlights risk factors such as substance use history and forms of IPV perpetration and victimization (Spencer et al., 2022), less attention has been given to the role of relational ethics, intimate justice, and family-of-origin processes in shaping IPV dynamics. In the couple and family therapy field, there have been minimal clinical models to guide strategies when working with couples with historical IPV. Additionally, other variables, such as contextual factors and intersectionality, have been ignored when working with this population (Baird et al., 2021). To further address this gap, an integrative framework such as contextual therapy, may acknowledge and address the complex layers of systemic inequalities that IPV exists in some romantic relationships. Moreover, the lack of considering how to approach contextual factors such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality in IPV cases reinforces the injustices that many individuals experience.

In this context, integrating relational ethics, intimate justice, and intersectionality may offer a crucial addition to couples therapy, particularly for relationships where one or both partners have a history of IPV in previous relationships. Intimate justice, which has contextual therapy roots, highlights the importance of equality and fairness regarding larger social justice factors, such as gender power differences, and is applied to couples with current situational violence by focusing on perpetrator accountability (Jory et al., 1997). Whereas relational ethics often considers family of origin and past romantic partnership experiences (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Therefore, relational ethics and intimate justice may be integrated into a contextual therapy model to promote relational safety and trust in couples therapy with partners who have a history of IPV in previous relationships.

This presentation introduces a conceptual model that applies contextual therapy to a case vignette, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the client's cultural and ethnic identities and promoting the use of relational ethics and intimate justice during case conceptualization and throughout treatment with couples. Lastly, we address how future empirical research can explore contextual therapy and intimate justice frameworks that may be applied to couples to promote relational healing and recovery from IPV experiences in clinical practice.

Objectives

- Participants will be able to use the contextual model to conceptualize relational violence.
- Participants will be able to apply conceptualization to a case vignette.
- Participants will be able to apply the contextual model and understand systemic contextual factors that are specific to working with clients impacted by IPV

Presenter:

Grant Morales, MA, MFT (co-presenter) - PhD student Drexel University

Gabby Maloney, DCFT, MFT (co-presenter) - PhD student Drexel University

Rikki Patton, PhD, IMFT-S, AAMFT-AS Research Professor, PhD Program Director Drexel University

Phyllis Swint, PhD., LMFT Assistant Clinical Professor, Director of Clinical Training Drexel University

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Workshop session 6b (E) – 14.00hr.-15.00hr.

Kees Verduijn & Danielle van de Koot

Loyalty and family ties in kinship foster careers.



Summary:

The two-year research project 'Family concerns: Strengthening family ties in kinship foster care' started in January 2025, at Ede University of Applied Sciences (CHE), in collaboration with consortium partners: Jeugdformaat, EntreaLindhout, Salvation Army Midden-Nederland, Arnhem and Nijmegen University of Applied Sciences (HAN), The Hague University of Applied Sciences and the University of Groningen (RUG). The study is funded by SIA NWO.

Background and Rationale:

In 2022, in the Netherlands 17,652 children live in foster families, of which 46% in kinship foster care arrangements, mostly within the family. Kinship foster care offers several advantages providing foster care, the state must take into account the child's culture, religion, ethnicity and language (Article 20.3, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990), which is more likely to occur in kinship foster care. In addition, the geographical distance to the birth family is often shorter (Holtan et al, 2005), there is more contact with siblings and other relatives (Farmer & Moyers, 2008), as well as with the birth parents (Linares et al, 2010; Metzger, 2008; Palcias & Jimenez 2009). This is in line with a central idea from the United Nations' foster care guidelines: "keeping families together" (Van der Zon, 2020). More recent studies also show that network placements are more stable, as placements are less likely to end prematurely. These 'breakdowns' are a major concern for the well-being of foster children (Konijn et al, 2019; Rock et al, 2015; Winokur et al, 2018).

On the other hand, in kinship foster care more conflicts and tensions between birth parents and foster parents are reported, as well as feelings of guilt, anger and grief (Bulsink, 2023; Chateauneuf et al, 2018; Kiraly & Humphreys, 2013; Vanschoonlandt et al, 2012; Wilson et al, 2013; Farmer & Moyers, 2008; Vanschoonlandt et al, 2012). In kinship care, children are more likely to face loyalty conflicts and other conflicts (Dolbin MacNab & Keiley, 2009; Koet, 2023; Linares et al, 2010). Nagy, founder of contextual approach, defines loyalty conflict as follows: 'The child is torn between mutually mistrustful parents or other caretaking adults' (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 2020, p. 35, translation DvdK). Children in loyalty conflict struggle with emotions, attitudes and behaviours necessary for their own mental health and well-being and for a stability in foster care (Dansey et al, 2018).

Objective:

The research aims to gain insight into the experiences, needs, and challenges of all parties involved in family foster care arrangements. This includes foster children, foster parents, biological parents, and foster care workers. The ultimate goal is to develop a toolkit that enables foster care workers to support family placements more effectively, making them more sustainable and stable.

Central research question:

How can foster care workers guide foster children, foster parents, biological parents, and other involved family members in such a way that the child can remain loyal to all important family members?

In this paper we present one the research questions: how do foster children, foster parents, and biological parents experience their relationships and loyalties during a family placement?

Workshop ICCT 2025:

During the workshop, we will present the experiences of the mutual relationships and loyalties of foster children, their parents and family foster parents. We focus on their loyalty expressions and possible tensions, based on semi-longitudinal qualitative research, consisting of interviews among 63 foster children (n=21), their birth parents (n=21) and foster parents (n=21), with elements of PhotoVoice (Duijs et al., 2020) and applied conversational analysis (Noordegraaf et al, 2018?). The analytic framework on loyalty is based on a research paper of loyalty expressions of former foster children (Van de Koot-Dees et al., 2025).

Presentation Format:

Presentation of the research design, the results of the preliminary study, and the initial findings of the research, followed by a discussion with attendees to open further perspectives on loyalty in family foster care.

Presenter:

Dr. Danielle van der Koot, associate professor of Applied Sciences, and Kees Verduijn MCH, senior lecturer Contextual Therapy & Researcher, Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences.

References:

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Workshop session 6c (NL) – 14.00hr.-15.00hr.

René Knip

Ring the bells that still can ring.

On the road with texts and music by Leonard Cohen.



Summary:

Amidst the many presentations and lectures offered by this conference, this workshop aims to be a moment of rest. For a small hour, we will let us guide by the texts and music of Leonard Cohen (1934 – 2016).

After a brief biographical sketch, we will listen to some music fragments from this Canadian singer and poet. We will read the song lyrics and reflect on what the music and lyrics evoke in us. With a small exercise, we will give a personal response to the stories that comes to us through his texts and music. We will share some responses with each other and meanwhile reflect on the question of the way music and poetry can serve as resources in our lives.

Link to the contextual approach and narrative perspectives.

The link with contextual and narrative thinking is threefold:

- The influence of the biography of the poet and singer on his work
- Music as a non-relational resource. See also: Heyndrickx, P., De Loof, L., Knip, R., Van Herck, A. & Klaveren, W. van, (2022). Handboek Contextuele Hulpverlening. Op verhaal komen in de dialoog. Pelckmans p.167 – 170) en Knip, R. (2014). Misschien is mijn fiets wel mijn beste hulpbron. Vakblad voor Contextuele Hulpverlening. Themanummer Hulpbronnen, 19(4), 24-29
- A working method in which a personal response is given to a provided text/music fragment. A story that invites another story.

Presenter:

Gedragdeskundige Jeugdbescherming Gelderland verbonden aan Jeugdbescherming Gelderland.

Binnen deze functie bied ik ondersteuning aan jeugdbeschermers in complexe beschermingszaken, zowel ten aanzien van de casuïstiek als ten aanzien van hun persoonlijk functioneren.

Particuliere praktijk voor Contextuele Therapie Verhaal en Context. Als zelfstandig gevestigd psycholoog en contextueel therapeut VCW reg, verleen ik binnen mijn particuliere praktijk begeleiding en therapie aan cliënten binnen de volwassenenzorg en de jeugdzorg.

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Supervisor Christelijke Hogeschool Ede. Binnen de masteropleiding Contextuele Hulpverlening van de CHE geef ik groepssupervisie in het tweede jaar van de opleiding Opleider, supervisor en examenbeoordelaar

Leren Over Leven Opleidingsinstituut Contextuele Studies. Voor Leren Over Leven OICS geef ik supervisie in de basis- en de vervolgopleiding en verzorg ik trainingen in het lesprogramma of incompany.

Opleider NCOI. Voor het NCOI verzorg ik verschillende modules op HBO-niveau binnen de kennisgebieden van psychologie, maatschappelijk werk en sociaal pedagogische hulpverlening, waaronder de modules 'Psychologie en persoonlijkheid', 'Psychologie, coaching en beïnvloeding' en 'Professionele jeugdzorg'.

Particuliere praktijk voor supervisie, training en leertherapie Verhaal en Context. Als zelfstandig gevestigd psycholoog, leertherapeut VCW. reg. en supervisor VCW reg. en LVSC reg. voer ik ten behoeve van personen en organisaties activiteiten uit op het gebied van training, begeleidde interventie, supervisie en leertherapie. Opdrachtgevers in de afgelopen jaren waren ondermeer Bureau Jeugdzorg Overijssel, Stichting Samen DOEN, Hogeschool van Amsterdam, Wijkkracht Hengelo, Lumens Eindhoven, MEE IJsseloevers, Amerpoort en de Pameier Stichting.

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Workshop session 6d (F) – 14.00hr.-15.00hr.

Sophie Houben

**La responsabilité à l'adolescence dans le monde d'aujourd'hui:
quels apports de l'approche contextuelle?**



Summary:

Entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte ...Que pouvons-nous légitimement attendre d'un adolescent en termes de responsabilité aujourd'hui? Quelles responsabilités favorisent leur développement et quelles sont celles qui pèsent sur ces jeunes ? Quelle conscience ont les adultes du poids de la responsabilité qui repose parfois sur leurs épaules ? Si la responsabilité s'enracine dans l'échange à l'autre, comment l'activer auprès de ces adolescents qui sont parfois, eux- même, en attente que les adultes prennent enfin les leurs ?

Il arrive que les conséquences des manquements des adultes se manifestent chez l'adolescent par une hypersensibilité à l'injustice, un droit de revendication avec une absence de prise en compte des conséquences de ses propres actes sur autrui. La question de la légitimité de l'intervenant en terme de responsabilité questionne alors dans certaines situations de l'Aide à la Jeunesse.

Cet atelier tentera de montrer la complexité de faire ,de l'activation de la responsabilité, un levier constructif dans la prise en charge de ces jeunes plutôt qu'une injustice supplémentaire.

Ce thème sera déplié en prenant en compte les variables développementales de l'adolescent mais également en questionnant cette responsabilité en regard des attentes de la famille et de la société face à ces jeunes.

L'échange sera proposé notamment autour de témoignages audio/vidéo recueillis directement auprès d'adolescentes placées en institution de l'aide à la jeunesse. Une place pourra être laissée dans la discussion à des situations vécues par les participants faisant échos avec le thème.

Presenter:

Sophie Houben, licenciée en psychologie clinique, thérapeute de famille, formatrice et superviseuse au sein de l'Ardoise Pivotante, Institut de Formation et de Clinique Contextuelles. Elle travaille depuis plus de vingt ans avec des adolescentes en grandes difficultés au sein d'une institution de placement de l'Aide à la Jeunesse.

References:

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