

Research Committee of the Sociology of Mental Health & Illness Newsletter January 2026

Welcome

Dear RC49 Members,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026.

I am pleased to announce three forthcoming events in 2026. The first two events focus on social trauma. The first of these is an online panel session on 'Social Trauma' which has been organised by Mandy Lee, Professor Monika Frąckowiak-Sochańska, Richa Goenka and will take place on the 19th of February. Following this, Dhaneswar Bhoi will host an event on 'social trauma and everyday interaction' 28th April. There is a call for abstracts out currently, which will close on 15th January. Following a successful Mad Studies Forum in 2025, Dr Rachael McMahon has organised a second Forum which will take place on 5th May 2026 and will focus on 'Knowledge-Making Processes within Mad Studies'. Our speakers this year will be Professor Jasno Russo and Dr Joesph Ameil. Further details of all events can be found below.

We are launching a grant scheme for RC49 members this year and are offering three grants of up to \$500USD. We particularly welcome applications from early career scholars. Please see the newsletter for details and deadlines.

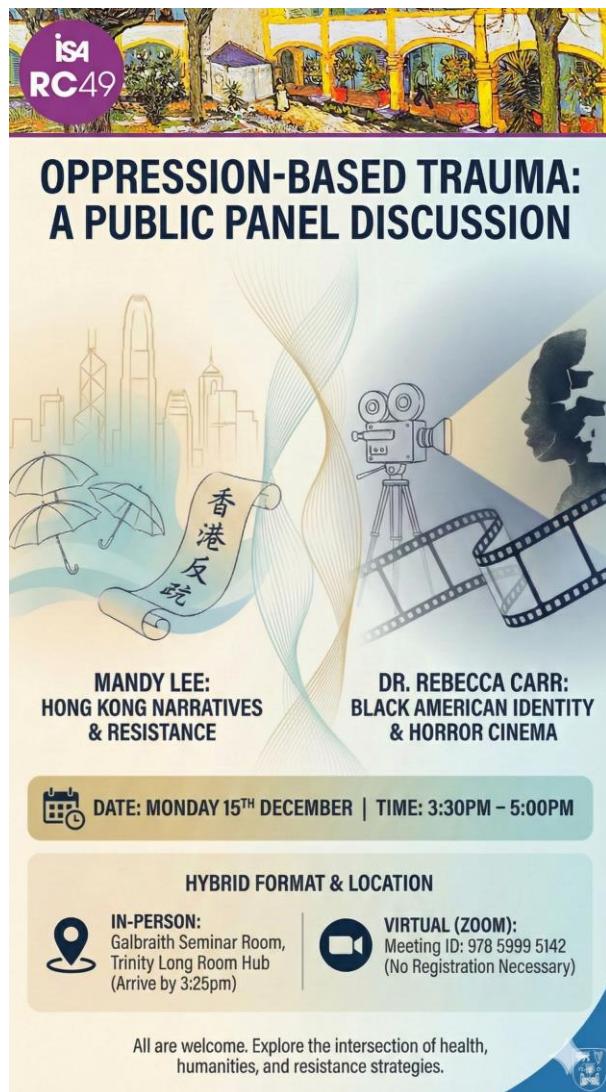
We are always happy to run events with members. Please do get in touch with me at Dixonj7@cardiff.ac.uk if you would like to run an online event in the second half of 2026.

Best wishes,

Jeremy Dixon (RC49 President)

RC 49 Forthcoming Events

Online Panel Session: “Social Trauma”



Date: Thursday 19th February 2026

Time: 11:30am-1pm (Ireland/UK); 12:30pm-2pm (Poland/Continental Europe); 5:30pm-7pm (India), 1.5-hour duration

Organisers and Panellists:

Mandy Lee (Ireland/Hong Kong), Monika Frąckowiak-Sochańska (Poland), Richa Goenka (India)

Contemporary societies operate in the shadow of present and past collective traumas that transcend individual experiences of suffering. Wars, the rise of authoritarian repression, forced migration, climate and health crises, growing social inequalities, and the growth of racist and misogynist populisms leave long-lasting marks on the social fabric. Eyerman (2019: 23) points out that cultural trauma concerns “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear

in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion.” In clinical practice, social trauma describes groups targeted by organized societal violence or ethnic persecution, with high levels of posttraumatic stress (Hamburger, 2021). Therefore, social trauma becomes a key category for analyzing today’s challenges to democracy and social cohesion.

To speak of social trauma is to speak of the fractures that run through the shared life of communities — injuries that do not belong to one person but to a collective. These wounds inhabit silence and everyday life alike, carried forward through generations in both bodies and institutions. Such trauma reveals how private suffering is intertwined with both social history and the societal present. It moves through language, norms, and moral worlds, altering how people trust, belong, and make meaning. From cultural dislocation to ecological grief, the reverberations of collective injury remind us that the boundaries between the personal and the political are porous. The political decisions have direct and indirect impacts on personal wellbeing and interpersonal relations, as well as on social cohesion as a whole, which is why it is vital for sociologists to contribute to our understanding of social trauma.

This seminar brings together scholars studying various dimensions of social trauma: its origins, manifestations, coping strategies, and transformative potential. We will reflect on how communities remember, transmit, and transform collective suffering, and explore how historical and contemporary traumatic experiences shape social relations, trust in institutions, conflicts, exclusion, and political attitudes, as well as their impact on collective mobilization, solidarity, creating spaces for collective healing, and maintaining the memory of communities that are meaningful to identities. In exploring these processes, we ask how social trauma may also become a site of moral resistance, solidarity, and renewal — a social space where the work of healing meets the work of justice.

The seminar will include presentations on:

- Conceptualising “Authoritarian trauma” as a form of oppression-based trauma: illustrative cases of Palestine, Hong Kong, and Trump’s America.
- Emotional distress of women protesting against tightening up the abortion law in Poland
- Moving from Psychiatric to Sociological Explanations of anxiety disorders in psychotherapy practice in India.

We are aiming to build a community of inquiry on this topic and would like to invite interested scholars to get in touch with us if they would like to collaborate further on this.

Panel Biographies

Monika Frąckowiak-Sochańska is a sociologist and psychologist. She works as a professor at the Faculty of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) in Poznań. She is a practicing psychotherapist at the Poznań Center for Psychotherapy and Mental Health. She specializes in the sociology of mental health, trauma studies, and gender studies, and is the author of over 60 scientific publications on these topics. From 2020 to 2024, she served as the faculty coordinator for both mental health and people with disabilities. She participates in the work of the program council for the annual Mental Health Day at AMU.

Mandy Lee is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Health Policy and Management, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin. A sociologist of health and illness, her research interests include narrative medicine, trauma studies and research ethics. Mandy is the Health Sciences Co-Chair of the Trinity Medical and Health Humanities network, and a member of the Trinity Centre for Resistance Studies. A Hongkonger by heritage, her current research explores trauma, resilience and resistance of the Hong Kong pro-democracy community since 2019. She is a co-convenor of the TCD-UG Research Ethics Conversation Series. As an activist scholar with the Hongkonger community, Mandy also collaborates in solidarity with a number of communities in Ireland, including Palestinians and Uyghurs. She is a member of the Ireland-Palestine Mental Health Network and Academia for Palestine, and works in civic engagement with the Irish Uyghur Cultural Association. She serves on the Steering Committee of Arts and Culture Hong Kong International (ACHKI), a collective of artists, scholars and activists focused on Hong Kong.

Richa Goenka is a counselling psychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Rishihood University, India. Her work sits at the intersection of mental health, sociological critique, and critical psychology. She integrates therapeutic practice with frameworks such as the Power Threat Meaning Framework, theories of labelling and structural power. She has analyzed over thirty therapy cases through these lenses to foreground moral resistance and the sociocultural roots of distress. She regularly presents her work at international conferences, including the ISA Forum of Sociology and the APA Convention, and is currently developing Mio Emocione, an initiative focused on emotional literacy and well-being.

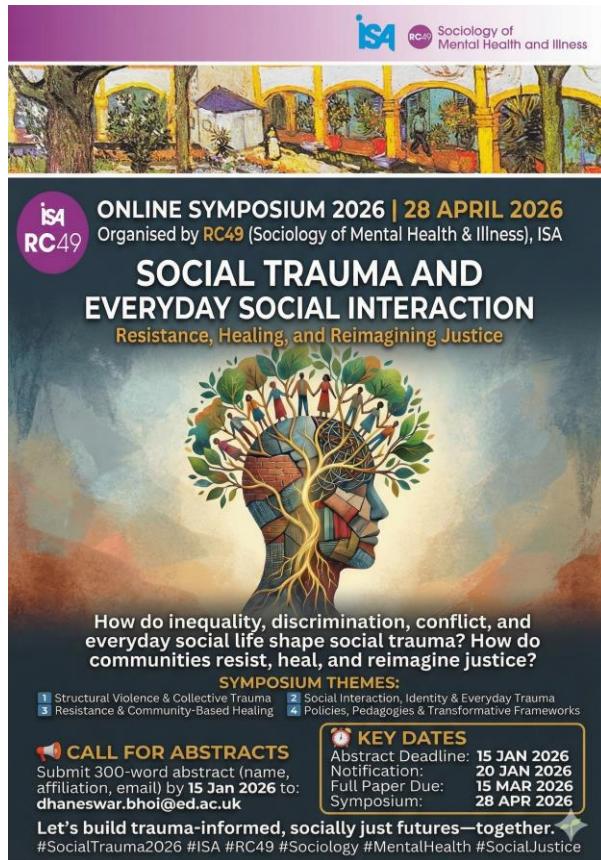
Session Zoom Details: Zoom Link: <https://tcd-ie.zoom.us/meeting/register/NH6odVaoTnCmFxWR4GhKYg>

Zoom Meeting ID: 991 1118 2952

Zoom Passcode: RC49

Call for Abstracts for the Online Symposium - 'Social Trauma and Everyday Social Interaction'.

Date: 28th April 2026 (Tuesday)



Concept Note and Event Overview

The Research Committee 49 (RC49: Sociology of Mental Health and Illness) of the 'International Sociological Association' provides a global platform for the sociological study of mental health, mental illness, and the social systems that shape them. It brings together scholars examining the social conditions that influence mental well-being, the lived experiences of mental distress, and the evolving landscapes of mental health institutions and practices. Building on this mandate, RC49 is organising an online symposium on "Social Trauma and Everyday Social Interaction" to explore how social structures, inequalities, and daily social life intersect with trauma and well-being. The symposium will focus on social trauma, its origins, everyday manifestations, and consequences across diverse cultural and structural contexts. It aims to foster international and interdisciplinary dialogue on how inequalities, institutions, and social environments shape both trauma and resilience in contemporary societies. In the present context, communities and individuals around the world continue to face the long-term effects of inequality, discrimination, conflict, social and political isolation, and indignity in everyday interactions. These conditions create social trauma as a collective and structural phenomenon, impacting both individuals and groups (Erikson, 1976; Alexander, 2004). In contrast to psychological trauma, social trauma becomes

embedded in the fabric of everyday life, shaping emotions, social interactions, aspirations, bodily experiences, expression, behaviours both individually and in communal way and encounters with institutions (Kleinman, 2006). In contexts marked by social exclusion, racial injustice, caste- and tribe-based discrimination, gendered violence, and socio-economic marginalisation, these harms are often normalised and rendered invisible through cultural practices, institutionalised norms and practices, social hierarchies, and bureaucratic routines (Guru, 2009; Bhoi, 2025; Farmer, 2004). As contemporary crises, including war and climate-related displacement and rising authoritarianism, continue to intensify, it becomes essential to examine how social trauma is produced, reproduced, lived, negotiated, and contested in everyday life (Muldoon et al., 2019).

The RC49 online symposium, “Social Trauma and Everyday Social Interaction,” invites scholars, researchers, practitioners, educators, activists, artists, and students to submit contributions examining how social trauma intersects with daily social life. Submissions may focus on historical and collective trauma, structural violence and inequality, education and youth experiences, embodied and affective dimensions of harm, the social dynamics of algorithmic and collective violence, and identity formation through social interaction. Contributions may also explore policy interventions, community-based healing practices, and creative or participatory research approaches that address, resist, or transform social trauma. The symposium welcomes theoretical analyses, empirical studies, methodological reflections, and community-based perspectives on social trauma. Through this collective conversation, the event seeks to advance sociological understanding of how trauma is produced in everyday contexts, illuminate strategies of resistance and solidarity, and envision new pathways toward trauma-informed, socially just futures.

Themes for Abstract and Paper Submission

Theme 1: Structural Violence, Inequality, and Collective Trauma in Global and Local Contexts

Theme 2: Social Interaction, Class, Race, Ethnicity, Tribe, and Everyday Experiences of Social Trauma

Theme 3: Resistance, Community-Based Practices, and Pathways of Healing Social Trauma

Theme 4: Policies, Pedagogies, and Legal Frameworks for Addressing and Transforming Social Trauma

Key Dates

4. **15th January 2026** – Submission of Abstract

(300 words; include author name, affiliation, and email address)

2. **20th January 2026** – Notification of Acceptance

3. **15th March 2026** – Submission of Full Paper

(6,000–7,500 words; MS Word; 12-point font; 1.5 spacing)

4. **28th April 2026** – Online Symposium

Abstracts and full papers may be submitted to: dhaneswar.bhoi@ed.ac.uk

Symposium Organiser:

Dr. Dhaneswar Bhoi, Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh, UK, Lecturer, Social Psychology and Mental Health, London School of Science and Technology, partnering with University of West London, De-Montford University, UK & Buckinghamshire New University, UK

Zoom Link

Time: Apr 28, 2026, 09:30 AM to 5pm London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ed-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/81925917192>

Meeting ID: 819 2591 7192

Passcode: Social2026

References

Alexander, J. C. (2004). *Toward a theory of cultural trauma*. In J. C. Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen, N. J. Smelser, & P. Sztompka (Eds.), *Cultural trauma and collective identity* (pp. 1-30). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bhoi, D. (2025). Caste, mental health and self-harm: emotive experiences of Dalit students at the Indian University. *Contemporary South Asia*, 33(4), 681–702.

Farmer, P. (2004). *Pathologies of power: Health, human rights, and the new war on the poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Guru, G. (2009). *Humiliation: Claims and contexts*. Oxford University Press.

Erikson, K. (1976). *Everything in its path: Destruction of community in the Buffalo Creek flood*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Kleinman, A. (2006). *What really matters: Living a moral life amidst uncertainty and danger*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Muldoon, O. T., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Kearns, M., & Jetten, J. (2019). The social psychology of responses to trauma: social identity pathways associated with divergent traumatic responses. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 311–348.

Mad Studies Annual Forum 2026 – Knowledge-making processes within Mad Studies.

Organised and hosted by Dr Rachael McMahon.



MAD STUDIES ANNUAL FORUM 2026

KNOWLEDGE-MAKING PROCESSES WITHIN MAD STUDIES

**DATE AND TIME: 5TH MAY 2026 –
13.00-15.00 LONDON TIME (12.00-14.00
UTC).**

**Speakers: Professor Jasno Russo
and Dr Ameil Joseph**

Date and Time: 5th May 2026 – 13.00-15.00 London Time (12.00-14.00 UTC).

Connecting marginalised ways of knowing – Professor Jasna Russo

Madness cannot be studied independently of the many social realities and structures with which it is intertwined. Moreover, understanding madness is inseparable from the question of how we respond to it. Working towards a knowledge base capable of transforming dominant social responses is therefore not merely a matter of methods or of expanding the range of perspectives involved. Research that integrates social justice into its very process must critically engage with its entire approach, include questions of where we locate madness and how we understand roles and tasks in knowledge production.

Bringing suppressed ways of knowing into academic discourse inevitably involves an ongoing dialogue with hegemonic paradigms across different disciplines. This is a familiar dynamic within scholarship emerging from the liberation movements of Black and Indigenous people, women, disabled psychiatrised, queer and trans people. As scholars with strong links to our respective communities, we are engaged in ongoing struggles to secure space for our collective knowledges within the structures of official knowledge production, while remaining caught in a continuous dialogue with Western concepts of social science and research. Yet we rarely come together to explore what our struggles have in common.

In my contribution, I reflect on the implications of this fragmentation for Mad Studies. I critically engage with the concepts of “lived experience” and “allies” in research and explore how knowledge-making might be reorganised beyond disciplinary and identity boundaries.

Epistemic Fugitivities: Storytelling, Refusal, and Collective Struggle in Mad Studies and Beyond – Dr Ameil Joseph

This paper discusses mad studies, decolonial, critical race theory, and gender-affirming research as fugitive epistemological projects that are currently in intensified regimes of surveillance, regulation, and epistemic control within institutions and society. Drawing on theories of fugitivity, these fields are understood as fugitive disciplines—sites of knowledge-making that persist even as they are interrogated, delegitimized, or politically targeted. Their fugitivity is not withdrawal; it is a strategic refusal to conform to demands for legibility, neutrality, and compliance.

Knowledge in these traditions is produced not only within academic spaces, but through survivor networks, community organizing, storytelling, embodied practices, and refusals of institutional authority. Mad studies epistemologies function as counter-knowledges that expose the epistemic violence embedded in dominant psychiatric and biomedical discourses, while also challenging the presumed neutrality of expertise. They disrupt modern Western binaries and distinction—reason/unreason, mind/body, health/illness—revealing how these borders are historically tied to colonial governance and the regulation of racialized, gendered, and embodied difference.

Situating mad studies alongside CRT and gender-affirming research illuminates how these fields are marked as dangerous or illegitimate precisely because they name structural violence and refuse depoliticized accounts of harm. Knowledge-making here is inseparable from ethical and political commitments to justice, accountability, and collective survival. As fugitive projects, these disciplines generate knowledge laterally, relationally, and sometimes clandestinely, sustaining intellectual life and resistance under conditions of constraint.

This work positions epistemic fugitivity as a lens for understanding how marginalized communities theorize, narrate, and enact practices of refusal and collective struggle, demonstrating that these contested epistemologies are not marginal, but vital infrastructures of knowledge and liberation.

Speaker Bios

Jasna Russo is a long-term activist in the European psychiatric survivors' movement. She is a Professor of Social Work at Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany, with a focus on emancipatory approaches and collaborative methods.

Ameil Joseph is an associate professor in social work at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. His research interests include critical mental health, postcolonial theory, critical race theory and critical disability studies.

To be held on Teams: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NWFhYWQ1NDAtMGJIMi00ZjMyLWIwNDAtYmFkOTNmZWFIYWFj%40th

[read.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22bdb74b30-9568-4856-bdbf-06759778fcfc%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fa92d818fea5-4aa7-95c8-b859b702b0ca%22%7d](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/355153866715?pwd=U2J5d2p5b2p5b2p5b2p5b2p5b2p5)

Meeting ID: 355 153 866 715 59

Passcode: 7Lp6D2wY

RC49 Grants

RC49 Grants

We are offering grants in 2026 to enable RC49 members to generate demonstrable outputs / outcomes for the Research Group.

Activities that can be funded, and which may overlap, are:

- Conference / travel
- Knowledge Exchange (includes impact and public engagement)
- Research SEED funding
- Professional development

We aim to allocate a total \$1500USD to cover three applications in 2026. Amounts up to \$500USD can be awarded. The initial deadline for applications will be 28.02.26. After this, any applications will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis, in cases where board members agree that the application proposes a worthwhile project or venture. Applicants must be paid up members of RC49 and ISA to be eligible to apply.

The fund will be used to work towards the following general principles:

1. To create benefit to RC49 that must be made explicit in the application. We would ask members to outline the benefits to RC49: e.g. that a conference paper or workshop will lead to a ‘high-quality’ output e.g. journal article, book chapter etc. We would particularly encourage outputs leading to journal articles and funding bids. Funding for activities can be argued in terms of establishing collaborations for funding or publications.
2. Making best use of funds: We will give priority to those without access to funding sources, particularly to early career students in Category B and C countries. We would welcome cost-sharing arrangement between the RC49 grant and other funding sources.

To request an application form please email: Dixonj7@cardiff.ac.uk.

RC49 Publications

- Ahamad, V., Akhtar, S., Pal, S.K. and Bhagat, R.B., 2025. How migration and its types affect mental health in later life: a cross-sectional study among the older adults in India. *BMC psychiatry*, 25(1), p.446.
- Bark, H., 2025. Legal expertise and interprofessional dynamics: social worker negotiations of professional identity in English mental health social care settings. *European Social Work Research*, pp.1-15.
- Bhoi, D., 2025. Caste, mental health and self-harm: emotive experiences of Dalit students at the Indian University. *Contemporary South Asia*, pp.1-22.
- Craig, E., Leah, C., Dixon, J., Bergqvist, A., Brodrick, I., Best, D., Heyes, K., Duxbury, J. and Haines-Delmont, A., 2025. From mental health detention to health systems reform: Co-producing policy and practice recommendations with Black men, their communities, and health and social care professionals. *PLOS Mental Health*, 2(12), p.e0000457.
- Dixon, J., Bark, H., Fang, C., Laing, J. and Patsios, D., 2024. The use of mental capacity and mental health laws in the care of people living with dementia in residential and hospital settings: A systematic review of the literature. *Dementia*, p.14713012251367810.
- Dixon, J., Leah, C., Craig, E. and Haines-Delmont, A., 2025. 'I don't think there's many British African Caribbean men that talk positively about mental health services': Risk, trust, racism and the Mental Health Act. *Health, Risk & Society*, pp.1-19.
- Lasrado, R., Szulewska, K., Dixon, J., Maharani, A., Robinson, C., Cooper, M., Panagioti, M. and Blakeman, T., 2025. Understanding Safeguarding for People Living with Dementia: A Realist Review of Conceptualization and Practice. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, p.15248380251375488.
- Richter, D., 2025. Human Rights and Psychiatry. Prospects and dilemmas for abolishing coercion in mental health care. Cham: Springer. Online at: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-031-98635-2.pdf>
- Vicary, S., Davidson., McCusker, P. and Stone, K. (Eds). Social Work in Mental Health Settings: International perspectives on practice. Bristol: Policy Press.

Welcome to our new members

- **Pr. El Mostafa Rezrazi** is a Moroccan scholar specializing in crisis management, counterterrorism, and violent extremism. He teaches in both Japan and Morocco and

serves as Chair of the Scientific Committee at Morocco's national Moussalaha Center for deradicalization. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Policy Center for the New South. His interdisciplinary work bridges sociology, international relations, and psychological resilience in conflict-affected regions.

Member News

RS05 - Social Trauma in Times of Polycrisis

Coordinators: Monika Frąckowiak-Sochańska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland, monikafs@jamu.edu.pl, Outi Kähäri, University of Oulu, Finland, Outi.Kahari@oulu.fi, Mandy Lee, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, mslee@tcd.ie

Contemporary societies operate in the shadow of present and past collective traumas that transcend individual experiences of suffering. Wars, forced migration, climate and health crises, growing social inequalities, and the rise of populist movements leave long-lasting marks on the social fabric. Eyerman (2019: 23) points out that cultural trauma concerns “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion.” In clinical practice, social trauma describes groups targeted by organized societal violence or ethnic persecution, with high levels of posttraumatic stress (Hamburger, 2021). Therefore, social trauma becomes a key category for analyzing today’s challenges to democracy and social cohesion.

This session aims to bring together scholars studying various dimensions of social trauma: its origins, manifestations, coping strategies, and transformative potential. We will explore how historical and contemporary traumatic experiences shape social relations, trust in institutions, and political attitudes, as well as their impact on collective mobilization, solidarity, conflicts, and exclusion. We are also interested in the role of media and digital technologies—both in reinforcing traumatic narratives and in creating spaces for collective healing and maintaining the memory of communities meaningful for identities.

The session invites reflection on:

- socio-political origins and consequences of trauma from public and engaged sociology perspective;
- interrelations between social trauma and individual well-being;
- coping with trauma on individual and collective levels;
- trauma in social memory;
- theoretical approaches to social trauma;
- methods of empirical trauma-informed research.

Deadlines 2026

30 January: Abstract submission (via Conf Tool) deadline

Mid-March Notification of acceptance

March/April Opening of Participant Registration

25-28 August 17th ESA Conference in Warsaw, Poland.

Call for News Items

Please send any news items for the next newsletter to Jeremy Dixon at Dixonj7@cardiff.ac.uk.

Social Media

Please join the RC49 page to receive regular updates at: <https://lnkd.in/eEJTsGSK>