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# MARLENE DU PLESSIS

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

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Relocating to the UK from South Africa in 2020, I bring over two decades of experience as a counselling therapist and facilitator. My background included working under a clinical psychologist at a psychiatric step-down facility, supporting adults and young individuals with complex psychiatric diagnoses. Our therapeutic approaches combined traditional therapy with outdoor interventions like Equine and Nature-assisted Psychotherapy. I also held a senior therapeutic facilitator role in an Equine Assisted Life Skill program at a Remedial School and volunteered in group programs for Youth at Risk. Experience in leadership roles include my involvement in developing, growing and managing a Not-for-Profit school sport organisation.

In the UK, I have focused on more conventional methods of therapy for both children and adults.

I currently run a private practice, specialising in helping young adults and adults with complex trauma and dissociative presentations. I also support clients struggling with matters such as anxiety, depression, and ADHD. I facilitate small groups and workshops on a regular basis. I also serve as sessional therapist for an external organisation.

I have participated and contribute to the development and delivery of training programs and educational sessions on the neuro-biopsychology of trauma and its effects throughout life, animal and nature infused therapeutic approaches and projective creative approaches, for both colleagues and individuals interested in the subject.

### Skills summary

#### Development, Coordination, Organisational and Growth Skills

- Holistic approach to observing and integrating systems, recognising that neither humans nor nature function in isolation.
- Ability to work effectively independently or within a multidisciplinary team.
- Skilled at observing and analysing the big picture of a project.
- Keen attention to detail, identifying shifts, balances, patterns, and discrepancies.
- Proficient in applying creative problem-solving to achieve goals.
- Passionate about delivering quality solutions that support growth and development.
- Enjoy creating, sharing, and motivating others about my projects.

#### Leadership and Relational Skills

- I thrive in stimulating environments that encourage initiative and creativity.
- I enjoy working with people, co-facilitating their journey of self-discovery, helping them uncover their values, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses while finding hope, healing, meaning, and purpose.
- I am comfortable working across cultures.
- I love leading a team of enthusiastic individuals, combining benevolent leadership with creative problem-solving, motivation, and a strong commitment to delivering quality solutions

#### Values

- Honesty, fairness, integrity, and trust.
- Thrive in environments that allows flexibility and encourages initiative and creativity.

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## PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATIONS

\*\* NCPS (Reg: 21-00577) (Accredited) \*\* NCIP (Reg: 362222) \*\* BPS (544803) \*\* BACP (Reg: 391013)

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## ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office: Word | Excel | PowerPoint | Adobe Photoshop | Website builders | Content/Client Management Systems (CMS)

Fluent in both **English** and **Afrikaans**

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## WORK HISTORY

### Independent Counselling Therapist and Facilitator, 2010 - Current

#### The ReStorying Space (*incorporated equusLINK*)

- Specialise in trauma-informed pluralistic counselling and psychotherapy with special focus on experiential modalities such as equine, nature and animal-infused therapy and various creative approaches.
- Holistic, person-centered, and trauma-sensitive approach.
- Dedicated to empowering clients to make informed life changes.
- Designed and led workshops utilising equine and animal-assisted activities, nature, and creative arts, focusing on life enrichment, personal growth, and emotional support.
- Experienced in multi-disciplinary psychiatric settings and delivering psychosocial programs for neurodivergent students.
- Skilled in working with diverse, multicultural clients across various age groups and concerns, adapting easily to changing environments.
- Conducted both individual therapy sessions and group interventions.

### Sessional Therapist, Jan 2022 – March 2024

#### Integrate Families - Manchester

- Experienced counsellor with strong expertise in applying theoretical counselling approaches in real-world settings.
- Specialises in working with adults and young people (18+) facing complex trauma, dissociative presentations, anxiety, depression, relational difficulties, and psychosocial life skills.
- Collaborates with healthcare professionals to create holistic treatment plans.
- Conducted patient interviews to identify symptoms and gather comprehensive history

### Program Coordinator and Facilitator, 1991 - 2019

#### Self (*designLINKS/SANESA*) - South Africa

- Led projects with full responsibility, ensuring organised operational planning, control, and program development across business and non-profit sectors.
- Demonstrated strong research, planning, and organizational skills, along with critical thinking, analytical capabilities, complex problem-solving, and abstract reasoning.
- Assessed and proposed strategic changes to ongoing programs, providing clear direction to clients and stakeholders in a non-profit setting.
- Managed a diverse team of 140+ volunteers, aligning them with the organization's vision and mission, and delivering necessary training.
- Extensively liaised with stakeholders in education and political sectors within the non-profit arena.
- Implemented systems, procedures, workflows, and controls, ensuring compliance with legal and policy guidelines.
- Known for being creative, original, and innovative.

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## EDUCATION SUMMARY

### Certification: CCFT, 2023

Registered Forensic Test User (psychometrist)

*Advanced assessment of Personality, Psychopathology and Risk Assessment.*

### Master of Science: Psychology, 2022

University of Essex - United Kingdom - (distinction)

**Thesis: Your trauma - My trauma** *An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis exploring the Lived Experiences of Adoptive Parents of Children with Complex Trauma and Trauma-related Dissociative Behaviours.*

**Certification:** EMDR, 2022  
**London School of Clinical Communication & Hypnoses** - United Kingdom

**Level 4 Diploma:** Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, 2022  
**Fortis Therapy and Training** - Lincolnshire  
*NCPs accredited.*

**Level 5 Diploma:** Person Centred Psychotherapy and Counselling, 2022  
**Supporting Minds** - Lincoln

**Clinical Diplomat Level 7:** Logotherapy, 2016  
**University of South Africa** - South Africa - (distinction)

**Bachelor (Hons):** Landscape Architecture, 1988  
**University of Pretoria** - South Africa

#### **Some Additional Certification**

Understanding and Treating Disorganised Attachment and Dissociation (distinction)  
Dissociation in Children and Adolescents Assessment and Treatment  
Dissociation in Children and Adolescents: EMDR in children with complex trauma  
Rewind Therapy  
Working with Self-destructive Behaviours  
Working with Trauma in the Sand (Advanced)  
Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning (Advanced)  
Animal Assisted Activities and Therapy (Advanced)

#### **Current certification to be completed 2024-2025**

Initiatic Art Therapy Certification

*I regularly attend post qualification short courses and trainings as part of the required continual professional development of the registration bodies I belong to. More information on request.*

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## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Developed and presented a range of courses based on experiential focused training - engaging senses, visualisation techniques for clients and colleagues.
- Tutor for Level 5 Person Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy, Supporting Minds Training.
- Management, procedures and workflows, case management processes, data protection, on file authorisations, data input and advisory input in software development (CMS).
- Created marketing material - content and graphic design for printed media campaigns.
- Organisation Growth and Development.
- Presenter at conferences.
- President of NPO organisation SANESA (2007- 2015).

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## **INTERESTS**

- People - with a special interest in the neuro-biopsychology of trauma.
- Equestrian and nature - horse riding and working with groups in this setup.
- Traveling - exploring new countries and people.
- Reading and learning new skills Creative activities - especially when used within the learning environment.