

D. Stepping into the Realm of Distress with Nisheeta Shah and Amy Stoddard-Ajayi

"It's okay not to be okay." - Maya Angelou

As coaches we are often seen as safe space. We build deep, trusted relationships, and are invited into inner worlds, meeting the real, unfiltered thoughts and emotions of the people that we work with. It is both a privilege and a responsibility, and we bound the role to ensure that the work we do respects our limits, and is psychologically safe, clean, contained and purposeful.

But within these boundaries, where and how can we better support the mental health and wellbeing of those we work with, particularly in an age of disruption, where our sense of certainty, security and control is being eroded, and the perception of threat intensified?

In this session we will look at the cross-over between psychology and coaching and how we can safely engage with dysregulated emotion to provide much needed support in the growing realm of distress.

- We will explore the ways in which we can hold space near the edges, and what more might be needed by way of education and support for coaches.
- This reflective process will provide coaches an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the complex realities of psychological distress in the executive workforce. Drawing on contemporary research and lived experience, the session will explore the prevalence, embodiment, and impact of psychological trauma within high-pressure organisational contexts.
- Participants will be invited to consider how distress and trauma may present within coaching relationships, and to reflect on their own professional boundaries, competencies, and ethical responsibilities when working with affected clients.
- You will be invited to examine the training, supervision, and support structures required to sustain effective and psychologically informed coaching practice, alongside an exploration of when and how clinical expertise may appropriately intersect with executive coaching work.
- This event aims to foster a deeper understanding of the human dimensions of leadership and performance, encouraging thoughtful dialogue at the intersection of coaching, wellbeing, and trauma-informed practice.

The session will be led by Amy Stoddard-Ajayi and Nisheeta Shah.



Amy is one of the UK's leading experts in trauma-led psychological coaching. Her perspective has been shaped by her exposure to a wide variety of provisions to mental well-being, inspiring her to seek a more holistic approach, integrating both Western and non-Western approaches on managing distress. This led her to create Origami – an expert, trauma-specific corporate mental wellbeing service that helps businesses and professionals thrive. [Origami | Shaping Your Success](#)

Nish is an experienced Executive Coach and Partner at Catalyst14. With over 20 years' experience supporting established and emerging business leaders, she is acutely aware of what people hold and how much it takes to function under stress and distress. Systemically trained, Nish works with honesty, compassion and a deep appreciation of relevant theory to enable sustainable change in a way that is safe and expansive. Nish's full profile can be viewed here: <https://www.catalyst14.co.uk/nisheeta-shah>

