

# Emotions and Journalism

**Training journalists and programme makers to work effectively  
in emotionally challenging situations**

Those who need to attend include journalism educators from higher education establishments, trainers from journalistic and filmmaking organisations, senior mental health and disaster response professionals dealing with the media, and active, practising journalists.



The conference is the culmination of a 15-month joint research project between Bournemouth University and the Dart Centre, investigating how journalists and filmmakers in the UK are, and should be, trained to deal with sensitive and potentially traumatic material. Bringing together leading journalists, educators and psychology professionals, key presentations will consider how journalists and programme makers might be trained to handle the reporting and portrayal of trauma and other emotionally involving situations.

Other sessions will look go beyond that primary focus and ask whether being taught the advanced interviewing skills acquired by practitioners working with trauma might be of benefit to all journalists, whatever they report on and whatever form their interviewing takes.

## **Sessions on:**

**Training Fundamentals: Listening, and the Basics of Working with Trauma**  
**Reporting the Casualties of Conflict: Real People or Emotional Stereotypes?**  
**Interviewing Politicians: Is it a Journalist's Job to Make them Human?**  
**Rage in Cyberspace: Farewell to Dispassionate Journalism?**

**Venue: City University, London, 10 January 2008**

The event is free, but the remaining places are likely to fill up quickly. If you wish to attend, please email [info@emotionsandjournalism.org](mailto:info@emotionsandjournalism.org).

**Emotions and Journalism** is a project examining how contemporary journalism handles emotion and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Visit [www.emotionsandjournalism.org](http://www.emotionsandjournalism.org)

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# Programme

## 9:00 Registration

## 9:30 Opening session: Training fundamentals: listening and the basics of working with trauma

### Speakers to include:

**Vin Ray**, Director, BBC College of Journalism  
**Jean Seaton**, Professor of Communications and Media History, Westminster University  
**Adrian Monck**, Head of Journalism and Publishing, City University (TBC)  
**Dr Jonathan Bisson**, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, Cardiff University  
**Barry Richards**, Deputy Dean for Research and Enterprise, The Media School at Bournemouth University  
**Gavin Rees**, Research Fellow, The Media School at Bournemouth University

The results of a 15 month research project into journalism training in the UK. Being able to effectively report on trauma requires a high level of emotional awareness. How does the training currently offered to journalists reflect this? Can such emotional awareness be taught? And what impact might the teaching of empathic interviewing skills have on the practice of journalism as a whole - not just in the instance of reporting on people in distress?

## 11:30 Coffee

## 11:45 Session 2: Reporting the casualties of conflict: real people or emotional stereotypes?

### Speakers to include:

**Dr Stuart Turner**, President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS)  
**Allan Little**, Special Correspondent, BBC News  
**Gabrielle Rifkind**, Human Security Consultant, Oxford Research Group

Explaining the predicament of victims and survivors of tragedy and conflict is always challenging, but the story can be further complicated if it takes place in a country that audiences have little first hand knowledge of. Is there a tendency for the media to reduce the accounts of people from other cultures to a simplistic emotional shorthand? How ready are we to listen to such people in their own words and not the ones we fashion for them?

## 12:30 Lunch

Lunch can be purchased in the university canteen.

## 13:30 Session 3: Interviewing politicians: is it a journalist's job to make them human?

### Speakers to include:

**John Lloyd**, Contributing Editor, Financial Times  
**Edward Stourton**, Presenter, BBC News  
**Derek Draper**, psychotherapist and former Labour advisor

Political interviews are not just conversations between politicians and journalists. There is a third point to the triangle too: the public. But do current styles of interviewing make citizens feel involved in their own democracy? Or, is it true, as some have suggested, that political interviews, where unanswerable questions often bang up against non-replying responses, turn everybody off? Perhaps a more empathic approach to interviewing politicians might help re-engage audiences. But would that raise a risk that a new form of emotional spin might threaten the forensic, truth-seeking function of journalism?

## 14:15 Session 4: Rage in cyberspace: is it farewell to dispassionate journalism?

### Speakers to include:

**Vicky Taylor**, Editor: Interactivity, BBC News  
**Stuart Allan**, Professor of Journalism, the Media School at Bournemouth University

Reports on political conflict, sex abuse and violent crime have always stirred strong passions in audiences. Now with the internet, readers and viewers have new avenues for publishing their opinions and making their feelings plain to journalists. *Trolls* and *flaming* have become new words in the journalistic lexicon. Does the web amplify strong emotion, creating an ecology in which there is less space for more emotionally nuanced positions? And does this mean that journalists in the future will also need to bring more of their own feelings and stories into their reporting, if they are to be heard above the crowd?

## 15:00 Coffee

## 15:15 Workshops and closing session: Emotional awareness in training

### Moderators:

**Stephen Jukes**, Dean, The Media School at Bournemouth University  
**Mark Brayne**, Director, Dart Centre Europe

After breaking into discussion groups, the conference will reconvene to debate what implications promoting more emotionally aware reporting might have for journalism practice and training.

## 17:00 Ends

## Location

Cass Business School (City University)  
106 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TZ

**By tube:** The nearest underground stations are Moorgate and Barbican on the Metropolitan, Hammersmith & City and Circle Lines, Moorgate and Old Street on the Northern Line (City branch)

**By car:** Car parking for Bunhill Row is either in the Barbican Centre's car parks or in the National Car Parks in Aldersgate Street, London Wall and Finsbury Square.

**By bus:** Bus routes 4, 8, 21, 25, 43, 55, 56, 76, 100, 133, 141, 153, 172, 214, 243, 271, 501 and 521

**By train:** Nearest train stations are Kings Cross, Kings Cross St Pancras, Euston, Moorgate and Liverpool Street.

