

**Title:** “I think you’re mistaking me for someone who cares”:  
talking to academics about their role in offering academic  
and pastoral support to students

**Presenter:** Daphne Loads  
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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Gain insights in to current work at the University of Edinburgh to support colleagues who provide academic and pastoral support
- Consider the place of kindness and *care* in the provision of academic and pastoral support in their own contexts
- Explore the Drama Triangle as a way of making sense of transactions between academics and their students *and* between educational developers and their colleagues
- Identify actions that they can take to resist the *culture of carelessness* in their own contexts
- Consider whether academics in the 21st Century should be expected to, or required to, undertake personal development advising or pastoral support as a part of their role

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

The ways in which academics interact with their students can have a lasting impact for good or ill on individuals, on campus climate and far beyond. Yet we are often working with “a denuded notion of the academic role, with the caring stripped away: the resulting carelessness is harmful for us all.” (Clegg, 2010) This *carelessness*, historically a feature of university culture, has in recent years become ever more deeply entrenched in line with the “new managerialism.” (Lynch, 2010).

Within the theme of “exploring professional tensions” the aim of this session is to consider the support and development needs of one group of academics who – along with all their other responsibilities - are expected to offer academic and pastoral support to students. Participants will hear about current support and development work with Directors of Studies in one University and will explore the Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968) of Persecutor, Rescuer and Victim. The presenter initially used this model as a way of throwing light on transactions between Directors of Studies and their directees. However, it gradually became clear that these unhelpful psychological roles were mirrored in her own interactions with Directors of

Studies. Finally, participants will be introduced to the less well-known Winner's Triangle (Choy, 1990) offering a way of identifying caring and assertive actions for themselves.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

Welcome: Introductions and overview of session (10 mins)

Work in progress: What are we trying to do at Edinburgh? (15 mins)

Introducing the Drama Triangle (10 mins)

What's going on here? Considering a case study in the light of the DT (15 mins)

Introducing the Winner's Triangle (10 mins)

Changing roles: Considering a case study in the light of the WT (15 mins)

What can you do? Identifying actions (10)

Evaluation: What did you get from this session? Suggestions for improvement? (5)

### **References**

Choy, A. (1990) The Winner's Triangle *Transactional Analysis Journal* **20**(1) pp40-46

Clegg, S. (2010) *Academic Identities: Who Cares?* Keynote at the Academic Identities for the 21st Century conference at the University of Strathclyde, June 2010

Karpman, S. (1968) Fairy tales and script drama analysis *Transactional Analysis Bulletin* **7** (26) pp39-43

Lynch, K. (2010) Carelessness: a hidden doxa of higher education *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* **9** (1) pp 54-67