

Deep Talk Research meeting No. 2 Minutes
30th September 2026, online, 9am - 10:30 am UK time

Present

Mary Carter, Tuula Valkonen, Diane Koehoorn-Koster, Shannon Schuster, Jane Jennings, Jo Beer, Helen Garrard, Kathryn Lord

Apologies

Dr Olga Boiko, Dr Juli-Anna Aerila, Aiveen Mullally, Judyth Roberts, Dr Cora O Farrell, Paul King, Dr Anne Collis

The meeting was recorded and the AI transcript was used by Kathryn Lord to create the minutes.

Introductions

Mary Carter from Suffolk - many years using Godly Play in schools and churches.

Tuula Valkonen from Finland - creator of Deep Talk.

Diane Koehoorn from the Netherlands - kindergarten teacher and school counsellor using Deep Talk / OutoftheBox and hoping to train other teachers in this, perhaps through a teacher college.

Shannon Schuster from Adelaide, Australia - retired school teacher, retired Godly Play trainer, retired OutoftheBox mentor, but still loves storytelling and creating stories.

Jane Jennings - journeying with families for 30 years, used to be a doula. Also an interfaith minister for the NHS, using OutoftheBox. Along with another chaplain who is trained in Deep Talk they will be starting a pilot project using this storytelling in mental health acute wards. She is also the children's chaplain for the trust and as more children come in she hopes to use it with the children too. She would also like to use OutoftheBox to train staff in nature prescribing for the NHS.

Kathryn Lord from Sheffield - has been involved with Godly Play, Stories for Soul, (adapting Godly Play for older people, including people with dementia), OutoftheBox (a form of Deep Talk) and now just involved with Deep Talk. Currently involved with a research project to use Deep Talk to hear the voices of children undergoing medical screening and who have a life changing medical diagnosis.

(Helen and Jo entered the meeting during the story session)

Helen Garrard from near Norwich - a full time hospice chaplain, also a Deep Talk guide, spiritual director, and various other things.

Jo Beer - Until the end of August, was a full-time senior lecturer at the University of Chichester, and trained primary teachers, with a focus on English and Religious Education. Before that she was a primary school teacher. She is looking to be able to research a little bit more into the things I'm passionate about, which includes story, which

includes spirituality, and finding that link between the subject of English and Religious Education. And seeing how that works in schools, particularly. I'm still interested in primary school education, and within the constraints that they have,

The Deep Talk story - The Party

Kathryn led the group in a Deep Talk story.

Here is an open place.

There was once a person who decided to throw a party. They prepared the place and they invited anyone who wanted to come to the party. And people came and they brought their gifts with them. The party was good and there was room for more people. And more people came and brought their gifts with them too. And the party grew and grew.



Image reconstructed after the meeting

Kathryn asked: What do you like or don't like about the story?

"Lots of room around the big table" "the table was prepared" "I love seeing all those different gifts that people bring". "Still enough room for more people, all the gifts that people brought, people came together to celebrate." "The person prepared the table, but didn't do everything. They relied on the people coming with their gifts. There were more and more people coming. They didn't have to spend all their time in the kitchen, maybe creating more and more food and getting more and more stressed, but people would have brought food"

Kathryn asked "How are you feeling today? What's your day like today?"

Road drawn in sand between two pine cones: "On a road between two cities, with a heart full of love, doing precious work",

Flowers: "lots of flowers that might be affecting my sinuses, painful at the same time as being beautiful"

Autumn leaf: "And I really like the season of rest, not so much gardening, a lot of parties, and family festivities. Candles lighted in the evening, the colours of the trees,

The road that has been drawn in the sand: "My day also includes a road taking an elderly neighbour out on a drive to a coffee shop."

Conker placed on the Autumn leaf: "I'm feeling, heartfelt this morning, because I delivered my first nature prescription session to staff yesterday, and it was such a glorious coming together of connecting to the Earth and to themselves, that it just is making me feel that I'm... I'm stepping deeper into my alignment with the Earth and with bringing people back to the Earth. So I'm having a lovely time sitting, drinking coffee, and looking at the countryside."

Three feathers were dropped and floated down onto the sand: "I went to a beautiful celebration of communion at Norwich Cathedral yesterday. I was very much kind of guided into being aware of angels and the song and the whisper and the silence and the presence of angels."

Red holly berries: "I love being with other people, networking, thinking about doing Deep Talk. So I'm feeling extremely happy. It feels like Christmas to me. I love Jerome Berryman's idea that the nativity sits at the focus of the Godly Play room because the incarnation of Jesus is the focus."

Kathryn led the Community Play with the question: What sort of a party do we want our network to be?

"The same as the party we want to live - with the same values."

"An interesting party that makes my heart and spirit sparkle."

"I want to hang out at the party because actually being with like-minded and lighthearted people sparks joy for me."

"We are in different seasons around the world but we are circulating and sharing around the table."

"As a new person it feels like there is a lot of wisdom here and I want to learn - to dive into the wisdom of the party."

"A party that brings something good and wholesome for neighbourhoods and for the world and that the party might spread out to other places."

"I need the party to be safe."

"I don't want to feel like I need to be doing things that are not my gifts. So I want this party to be one where we're each of us offering our strengths and gifts and not put into places that we don't really want to do or things that won't give us life. Some of us love singing, some of us want to dance, some of us love making food. and not being... So I suppose I want lots of people at this party who are very different as well, so we've all got different gifts."

"And to have a kind of structure somehow, so there is a kind of an understanding, as well as, you know, all the play and the wisdom and the discovery."

"And if the party is open enough, And safe enough. Then, probably... Probably then, all the skills and differences can bloom."

"If somebody makes food in a funny way, that's okay".

"Yeah, that acceptance is really important for me... and that safety that I can offer things, and it might not go down well with everybody. Some people might not like all my food, but it's okay, some people might and if I offer some food and it doesn't taste quite nice,

somebody else can suggest, oh, well you might want to put this a little less salt in it, or put a bit more of this, or so that we can actually share ideas and collaborate"

"I want the party to be beautiful, like when you share a beautiful thought. Beautiful thinking, I mean, something really beautiful because we see a human heart there. When they are really nice. When they make us sparkle."

"Yes - I'd like all of the relationships between us, and between us and the world, and the natural world, and everything, to be sparkly and beautiful. In a deep talk way, in a deep talk kind of way, so that the values of deep talk, which are centered on love and connection, are there amongst us."

Kathryn invited people to place ourselves and our inner child / other selves in the sand
People chose a seed head to put themselves in the sand.



Image taken at the meeting

This is good enough.
The story was put away

ACTION: Kathryn to create a document with the purposes and values of the Research in Deep Talk network meeting (including what was discussed at the first meeting in June)

Final discussion and AOB

Structures to help people to connect and Deep Talk to grow

Discussion on how to structure and grow their Deep Talk community and the Deep Talk Research community, with Kathryn explaining she uses a Google form to collect email addresses and contexts for networking purposes. Kathryn explained that administration is not her strength so we need structures to enable people to network.

ACTION: Everyone who wishes to be part of this network must fill in this googleform.

<https://forms.gle/3qhYoAcxUphDcLD77>

Everyone: Please share this form with anyone who wishes to be a part of this - or give them Kathryn's email address and she can contact them kathrynlord22@gmail.com

Also anyone who wishes to be part of the Deep Talk community and receive an e-newsletter with news and information they can sign up here <https://forms.gle/vLqRUJuregZSYM5r9>

We discussed the need to be able to network with people who have similar interests. We need a platform in which people can share their details. Perhaps a website could help with this.

ACTION: Kathryn and anyone who can help - ongoing search and discussions to create a website. Kathryn has bought the domain deeptalkstories.org (as the domain Deep Talk was very expensive!)

Pilot Project using Deep Talk in Chaplaincy

Jane explained some more about the pilot project and is happy to share the business plan with Helen Garrard.

Helen shared her work as a lead chaplain implementing Deep Talk in NHS mental health settings, and Jane offered to share her business plan model with Helen.

ACTION: Kathryn will send out contact details from this meeting to the group.
Helen Garrard and Jane Jennings will contact each other.

My View project

An update was given on the My View Research project - to use Deep Talk to hear the voices of children undergoing medical screening and who have a life changing medical diagnosis. The team are meeting in London in January, and Kathryn will be training the researchers from Poland, Portugal and Birmingham.

Deep Talk gathering in Finland in August

Tuula invited everyone to the Deep Talk gathering - Hanging out- in Finland August 10-12 and, in the same place, a retreat August 13-15. This will be a good party - lakes, saunas, walks, networking.

ACTION Kathryn to create a google form with the details and then to circulate.

Sharing Deep Talk on social media

The conversation ended with agreement to share a photo and video snippet of their session on social media to demonstrate the collaborative approach.

ACTION: Kathryn to share posts on social media

Date of next meeting: Friday, 13th November at 8am (this was based on the responses on the googleform)

ACTION: Everyone to let Kathryn know what they would like on the agenda by 29th October so she can circulate the agenda 2 weeks before the event.

ACTION: Everyone to let others know who might be interested in being part of the group.