



# 11<sup>th</sup> International Metaphorum Conference: “Healing Organisations”

*An International Conference connecting Systems  
Theory, Health and Organisation*

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2017 - Liverpool, UK

<http://healingorganisations2017.org>

“Healing Organisations” is the topic of the 2017 Metaphorum conference. It is being held in conjunction with key representatives from the international Healthcare sector. It is an opportunity to connect the theoretical concepts of Management Cybernetics and other Systemic Approaches with the practical realities of Healthcare organisation. Equally, the conference will explore the wider connotations of organisational health and viability in institutions, businesses and government.

Against the backdrop of continued austerity in VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) environments, many businesses, and most national institutions of health, welfare and education are struggling to cope with limited resources and increasing complexity. Is the hope for viability naive? Are institutions condemned to muddle through every year, threatened by increasing environmental complexity, lack of resource, political interference, and managerial pathology? Where will it lead? How might cybernetics, as the science of “effective organisation” help?

The Metaphorum Group researches cybernetic approaches to organisation, including those of Stafford Beer, Enid Mumford, Frederic Vester, amongst others. Stafford Beer’s contributions to cybernetics and effective organisation included modelling a generic “Viable System” which he systematically applied to businesses, institutions and government. The model was based on the human body.

**T**HE human body has the capacity to heal itself, to remain resilient in the face of extreme adversity and to reshape its environment. Our institutions – particularly those of health and welfare – appear also to display many of these qualities, yet the dynamic mechanisms of healing are poorly understood.

- What healing processes are at work in organisations as they seek to mitigate the pathological effects of crisis?
- What healing processes can transform an organisation’s resilience?
- What are the healing processes at work within the organisations whose job it is to heal others?
- How do organisations manage risk?
- How do organisations deal with failure?
- What advantages can the Viable System Model and the tools of management cybernetics bring to bear on these challenges?

## Call for Participation: Key Dates

The conference invites **proposals for participation** as abstracts from **Systems Theory scholars** and **practitioners in health and other disciplines**. Full details and the conference submission system are on the website. Further information can be obtained from Dr Mark Johnson: [m.w.johnson2@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:m.w.johnson2@liverpool.ac.uk)

- Submission deadline is **20th July 2017**.
- Acceptance letters sent: **August 20th, 2017**.
- Registration deadline: **September 20th, 2017**.

## Speakers

- Prof. John Seddon:** leader of the Vanguard organisations, currently active in eleven countries. He is the originator of the Vanguard Method, the means by which service organisations change from a conventional command-and-control design to a systems design.
- Dr. Liz Mear:** Chief Executive of the NHS Innovation Agency. She is also Chair of the national AHSN Network, representing all 15 AHSNs in England.
- Prof. Gerald Midgely:** Former Director of the Centre for Systems Studies at the University of Hull, and past president (2013-2014) of the International Society for the Systems Sciences. He is known for his work on “Systemic Intervention”
- Prof. David Welbourn:** Visiting Professor at the Centre for Governance, Leadership, and Global Responsibility at Leeds Business School and founder of Eutopia, a niche consultancy specialising in the leadership and governance challenges of whole ecosystems, especially in healthcare.
- Dr. David Shiers, OBE:** David has led a radical service redesign for mental health. He became a key contributor to the WHO Early Psychosis Declaration (2004) and was joint lead with Professor Jo Smith of the UK’s National Early Intervention in Psychosis Programme (2004-10).