INDIVIDUALS FROM A LOW SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) BACKGROUND, REACHING LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WITHIN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY. A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

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RATIONALE FOR STUDY

A diverse workforce has numerous advantages.

SES is a predictor of a variety of different outcomes across all stages of development.
Clinical psychology in the UK is a relatively high-status profession, which has received criticism for failing to increase diversity (DCP, 2012).
REFLEXIVITY

My own lived experience and the narrative I hold of myself is one where class has been instrumental in providing the direction for my journey.

Working with a primary supervisor who met the inclusion criteria, offered a lived experience component to the empirical research process.
AIMS

To explore the first-person narratives of individuals from working-class backgrounds, who have reached leadership positions within Clinical Psychology.
ELIGIBILITY

Professionals meeting SES criteria, in the NHS and/or a university institute, currently working as a Consultant/Clinical Psychologist or within a Clinical Psychology department & Senior Lecturer.
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DATA ANALYSIS

NA is an interdisciplinary method with no single approach to analysis (Reissman, 1993). For the purposes of this study, Fraser’s (2004) seven stages was selected for guidance.
The findings have been presented through a synthesized grand narrative, whereby all twelve interviews have been amalgamated.
The first Act involves experiences which highlight a working-class narrative. Striving to move beyond class expectations and conforming to gendered stereotypes, all participant’s recognise education as an escape route.
ACT II- CLASH OF CULTURES

They arrive at university, focused, goal-orientated and determination to undertake the challenges necessary to succeed. However, we see awareness growing in relation to a clash of class cultures. For instance, a sense of difference in the level of projected self-confidence.
ACT III- FINDING A WAY TO INTEGRATE ROOTS WITH PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

The journey includes: (a) reclaiming their relationship with power, (b) being strong advocates for the vulnerable and social justice, (c) working to their values, (d) fighting against the narrative of being a ‘trouble-maker,’ (e) role modelling authenticity and vulnerability, (f) finding a tribe and (g) integrating their new relationship with class.
DISCUSSION

**Identity** - Cultural Mismatch Theory.

**Values** - Class-specific patterns of traits, cognition, and behaviour (Kraus & Stephens, 2012).

**Intersectionality** - Class intersecting with gender and race.

**Power and Vulnerability** - Reputation as a ‘troublemaker’. Leadership ‘traps’ (Berger, 2019).
CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

Lack of discourse about class which contributes to a lack of class consciousness.

Inspiring students from working-class backgrounds to potentially pursue a career in psychology.


THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!