

## Levinas Conference Abstract

Working Title: "Far Away: Levinas and In-Patient Treatment"

Levinasian dwelling moves us towards the Other through giving us a space to share, and can be viewed as an event that creates the experience of attunement, allowing us to recognize the call of the Other. This movement towards attunement is not always welcomed, and our experience of dwelling and attempt at hospitality can come to represent hostility to the Other-in-need as our shortcomings and injuries limit our capacity of generosity. The attempt to encounter a shared sense of *home* becomes a persistent struggle working with high-needs patients, and the strong hand of hospitality which situates scenarios in in-patient treatment, can feel a totalizing fist. The difficulty of working with disturbed patients comes out of the pain that is experienced when a person, especially a child, demonstrates the weakness of my response by responding aggressively to my implicit recollection of hope and safety that they do not share. Their isolated suffering demonstrates my insufficiency of hospitality. It challenges notions of security, control and sense of purpose. How can Levinas help us understand the pain of the Other, not simply as a witness but, through my own mistakes and failures, as one who has caused the pain?