

# Dr Pooky Knightsmith

*Changing lives, one talk at a time*



## About Pooky

Pooky is a prolific keynote speaker known for inspiring change with her engaging, straight-talking style and next-day practical ideas. As well as drawing on the wider evidence base; Pooky's talks weave in elements of her personal journey, where a late autism diagnosis took her from a psychiatric hospital bed, at imminent risk of death from anorexia, to a thriving company director with a penchant for climbing and paragliding.

Pooky has a PhD in child mental health from the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. She is the author of several books, and is a former chair of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition and she has had the privilege of working with and learning from hundreds of schools and settings across the UK and around the world.

## What to expect

No matter what the topic, you can expect the following from Pooky:

- 1 - Your needs and ideas woven into a tailored (or brand new) talk
- 2 - Increased reach and impact for your event via Pooky's 40k Twitter followers
- 3 - Guiding principles and new ways of thinking to inspire top-down change
- 4 - Next-day practical, high-impact ideas that enable bottom-up change
- 5 - An evidence-inspired talk brought to life with personal experience
- 6 - On time, to time and a valuable use of your attendees' time
- 7 - Brilliant visuals that say a lot in few words (and you can keep them)
- 8 - Recommended resources for attendees to continue their learning
- 9 - A talk that gets people talking

## Online Presence

As well as a popular keynote speaker, Pooky has a strong presence online. Her YouTube channel has had more than a million views, she has 40k Twitter followers and 7k LinkedIn connections. And it's more than just numbers; Pooky's network are so responsive and engaged that her recommendations have been known to catapult books to the best-seller spot on Amazon.



@pookyh



## Conference Experience

Having spoken at hundreds of conferences all over the world, as well as having organised a few, Pooky is easy to work with and will endeavour to provide everything you need, when you need it. On the day, she'll help you keep to time, have a close handle on the tech and she'll share both her slides and a range of related resources with everyone in the room.

Pooky will make an effort to get to know attendees and will happily continue the conversation via social media long after your event.

## Book Pooky for Your Next Event

*Email* – [ellie@speakingofbooks.co.uk](mailto:ellie@speakingofbooks.co.uk)

Ellie Powling is Pooky's agent and will make the magic happen. She'll take the time to explore your requirements in depth before arranging for you to meet with Pooky. Ellie will support in all aspects in the run-up to your event so you can be sure things will run smoothly.

# Testimonials

*Pooky is an inspirational speaker. From the minute she started, everyone was hooked and the engagement continued well after the session, with colleagues continuing to discuss what they had heard.*

*Hannah Easthope, Headteacher St Luke's C of E Primary School*

*From the start, Pooky had the audience gripped. Her qualifications, knowledge and personal experience place her well for such events but it is not just what you know it is how it is delivered and, on both counts, Pooky scores top marks.*

*Mr Mike Piercy, Headteacher, New Beacon School*

*Pooky exudes passion and also plans well and ensured that her talk was directly related to the target audience. She has a wealth of experience, is amazing at engagement for large audiences and is personable.*

*Sarah Johnson, President, PrusApp*

*Pooky's passion for supporting young people is thoroughly infectious... partly due to the depth and breadth of her knowledge and also due to her ability to relate theoretical knowledge to real, tangible examples.*

*Gray Foster Felton, SEND lead, Girls Day School Trust*

*After a number of visits to Gibraltar, Pooky has become very much part of the family with colleagues requesting numerous follow-up visits in support of our strategic vision. Her life experiences and expert knowledge provide an ideal platform and she's a pleasure to work with.*

*Wayne Barton, Practice Lead, Government of Gibraltar*

# Pooky's Talks

## **Practical Principles for Trauma-Informed Leadership**

Leaders who care will take a lot from this keynote. We'll explore how we can adapt and adopt the five principles of trauma-informed care and apply them in the everyday leadership of our students, our staff and our wider communities. Inspired by the evidence base but taken way beyond the theory, you'll leave inspired to act and armed with a range of practical ideas to complement and enhance your current leadership style.

## **Leading Well, Staying Well**

Together we'll explore a range of practical ideas to enable you to be an empowering and authentic leader during uncertain times. We'll consider why and how leaders who care must care for themselves first. You'll have a chance to reflect and share, as well as take your pick from a range of simple but highly impactful ideas that can be put into practice right away.

## **The Mentally Healthy School: a Framework for Change**

Determine how well your school is currently meeting the mental health needs of students and staff and explore practical next steps to build on current strengths and address areas of challenge. Designed to act as a springboard for school improvement, this session works best when leaders come with an open mind ready to celebrate what's working well and challenge what isn't.

## **Heard, Held, Healed: Enabling Today's Children to Flourish**

Drawing together guiding principles of inclusion and trauma-informed practice, this session answers the question 'Who do I need to be?' for all leaders and practitioners hoping to enable children to thrive in the current context. With themes including listening, belonging, safety and pride you'll go away with a framework of best practice and a range of ideas to make it happen.

## **You Matter Too! Happy, Healthy Habits for Busy School Staff**

This session is all about exploring little things that will make a big difference. Habits can be easy to develop and hard to break, so we're going to use that to our advantage and consider tiny habits which boost wellbeing, connection, belonging and joy. Everyone can cherry-pick their personal favourites to take away and we'll also explore how some of the habits could work across groups and teams.

## **Maslow's Toolbox: Creating Classrooms Where Every Child Thrives**

Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a scaffold for inclusive practice, Pooky will walk you through a toolbox of ideas to transform the experience of every learner every day in your classrooms. Leaders will leave with a framework for change and practitioners will be able to cherry-pick from a range of next-day practical ideas. Inexpensive, easy to implement and designed to be win-win; the ideas in this session will make a significant difference to those who most need the support without disadvantaging (and often benefitting) the rest of the class.

# Promoting Resilience Using Pooky's 4Ps Framework

During this session, Pooky will summarise a simple, evidence-based approach to promoting resilience, developed by exploring what enables some children to thrive in the face of adversity. Exploring each of the 4Ps in turn, you'll learn why Parents, Peers, Problem-solving and Passion matter and how we can use the 4Ps as a framework for promoting resilience in children that both builds on existing strengths and develops areas of challenge.

## Behaviour that Challenges: Understanding, Responding, Supporting

Take a fresh perspective on behaviour that concerns, distresses or challenges by stepping into the shoes of the child with Pooky during this keynote talk. You'll learn how to respond calmly during crisis moments before getting curious about the 'Why' behind behaviour. This is crucial because without the 'why', we might get the 'what next' wrong. We'll explore a wide range of 'what next' strategies for sustainably supporting children and enabling them to support themselves and we'll end by considering how to turn the moments when it all goes wrong into opportunities for role modelling and relationship building.

## Unlock the Potential of Autistic Students

In this talk, Pooky will walk you through a strategic framework for unlocking the potential and promise of your autistic students. Simple and inexpensive to implement; these ideas will be transformative for your autistic learners with knock-on benefits for every member of your community. You'll leave excited to unleash the promise of autistic learners with everything you need to start making a difference tomorrow.

## **Self-Harm: Breaking the Cycle**

Self-harm is increasingly prevalent, yet many colleagues report not really understanding it and worrying they'll make things worse if they try to support a student. During this keynote, Pooky will answer the many questions you have about the 'What', the 'Why' and the 'What next' of self-harm, whether you're looking to lead an organisation-wide approach or you have an individual in mind you want to make a difference to.

## **Eating Disorders: Recognising and Responding**

During this session we'll explore the world through the eyes of children with eating disorders to gain an understanding of why they develop and why they persist. You'll learn when to worry (and when not to) and discover a range of practical steps you can take to prevent the onset of eating disorders or support recovery. You'll leave the session empowered, informed and enabled both to support individuals and develop your whole school approach.

## **Anxiety: Helping Students to Help Themselves**

This fast-paced talk will deepen your understanding of anxiety. You'll learn how to spot it, how to break rather than reinforce the cycle and how we can support students to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to support themselves. A wide range of next-day practical strategies will be shared as well as a framework for cascading understanding and practice across whole staff teams.

## **Emotionally Based School Avoidance: Understanding and Supporting**

"Why do some children struggle to come to school and what can we do about it?" is the question that sits at the heart of this keynote. You'll learn how to get to the heart of the issue and how to develop sustainable child-centred action plans to enable school attendance, engagement and enjoyment. Pooky's simple framework can easily be used to develop a whole school approach or tailored to support individuals and will leave you inspired and empowered to support children who had, until now, felt unreachable.

## **Suicide: Skills and Scripts to Save a Life**

This talk saves lives. You'll learn to recognise the signs that someone is suicidal and you'll develop a toolbox of skills and scripts you can use to keep them safe. The biggest gift this talk will give you is the confidence to step up and take action when it matters most instead of allowing the fear of getting it wrong to hold you back.

## **Bespoke Talks**

In addition to her listed talks, Pooky can develop a talk bespoke to your event. Every one of her regular talks started as the dream child of a conference organiser and she's highly skilled at taking your hopes, aims and challenges and turning them into a high-impact talk.