

# Christopher James Shelton, MSc

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## INTRODUCTION

Chris Shelton is an educator, consultant, and expert in coercive control, with emphasis on destructive cults, controversial groups and movements. He has worked with many individuals and families having issues with undue influence and coercive control in both domestic and group situations in online as well as real world situations. Chris has done one-on-one consulting for victims of coercive control, intervention and recovery services, media appearances, researching and writing, videography, activism, and teaching. His expertise includes coercive or undue influence in one-on-one relationships, families, cyberbullying and cyberstalking, high-control or authoritarian groups of all kinds, human trafficking, extremism and other coercive situations.

## CREDENTIALS

### Masters of Science

University of Salford, School of Health & Society, Masters of Science in Psychology of Coercive Control with Distinction (2022). Dissertation: *Scientology Security Checking: The Confessional as Coercive Control*.

- Causes and anatomy of coercive control
- Coercion/undue influence in comparative contexts such as online stalking or cyberbullying, human trafficking, cultic/gang activity or domestic abuse
- Therapeutic approaches for survivors of coercive abuse and undue influence

## **Additional Professional Training**

ASIST suicide intervention first-aid training

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Shelton, Chris (2015). *Scientology: A to Xenu – An Insider’s Guide to What Scientology is All About*, Denver, CO.

Stewart J, Shelton C. YouTube and Critical Thinking: How Technology Facilitates Cult Recovery. *Technoculture* 2018; Volume 9. URL: <https://tcjournal.org/vol8/shelton-stewart/>

## **SELECTED PUBLIC SPEAKING/PRESENTATIONS**

Coerced Labor and Deprived Sleep in the RPF. International Cultic Studies Association Annual Conference. 2022. Online panel presentation with Dr. Stephen A. Kent and Dr. Phil Lord.

Coming to Grips with Being in a Cult. International Cultic Studies Association Annual Conference, 2018, Philadelphia, PA.

Second Generation Cult Survivors Panel with Christine Gordon and Aaron Smith-Levin. International Cultic Studies Association Annual Conference, 2018, Philadelphia, PA.

How Not to Be Culty. Paganicon Annual Conference. 2018. Minneapolis, MN.

Why Smart People Fall for Stupid Things. Skeptics of Oz Conference. 2017. Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.

The Lessons of Cults plus Q&A about Scientology. 2017. Minneapolis, MN.

My History in Scientology. Tri-State Freethinkers Association. 2015. Union, Kentucky.

## **MEDIA APPEARANCES**

Court TV (2023)

*Governing* (2022)

*The Independent* (2021)

Two appearances in *Scientology and the Aftermath* A&E series (2016-2019)

*The Irish Times* (2017)

BBC 4 (2016)

In addition to the above, Chris has also given interviews in over 100 podcasts and videos on YouTube and other social media, as well as conducting video interviews with psychologists, sociologists, neuroscientists and other professionals in cult recovery and exit counselling.

## **SELECTED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

*Research Assistant*, University of Salford, Manchester, UK. (2023-)

*Independent Practice* in consulting (Denver, CO) (2019-)

*Consulting producer*, Scientology and the Aftermath documentary series (seasons 1 and 2) (2016-2019)

*Consulting producer*, unaired Scientology cult documentary series (2017)

*Board of Directors*, Secular Hub. (2017-2019)

*Board of Directors*, Cause Over Life UK non-profit foundation (2024-present)