21-24 FEBRUARY 2013

APS Counselling Psychology Conference

Evidence-based Approaches to Practice

MELBOURNE

APS Australian Psychological Society

2013 APS Counselling Psychology Conference Abstracts

Conference Chair

Michael Di Mattia

Abstracts

The abstracts provided below appear in program order.

To view the Conference program click here.

An author index is available here.

Keynote, Individual Research Papers, Symposia, Professional & Practice Forums, How To Session, and Mini Workshop Abstracts

Friday 22 February 2013

9am – 10am

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Professor Mick Cooper (University of Strathclyde, Scotland)
"Psychotherapy research findings: What the evidence is telling us"

How effective are humanistic therapies compared against CBT? Does supervision lead to better client outcomes? How can therapists boost the effectiveness of their practice? This lecture will present a practitioner-friendly summary of research findings in the psychotherapy and counseling research field, addressing these questions and many more. It will look at the overall outcomes of psychotherapy; and the role of therapist, client, relational and technique factors in producing positive outcomes. The talk will discuss the concrete, practical implications of these findings for counseling psychologists, and how it can help them to develop their work.

10:30am – 12pm

Professional/Practice Forum (90 mins)
Loss & Grief caused by mental illness, suicide and missing persons: How professionals can support the families and friends left behind
COKER, S. (SANE Australia), GLASSOCK, G. (Australian Psychological Society),
O'DOWD, G. (Mercy Western Grief Services)

It is a sobering fact that suicide is one of the main causes of premature death among people with mental illness. In addition many of the 35,000 people who are reported missing in Australia each year are thought to live with mental illness. Loss caused by suicide and missing persons has a profound effect on families and friends and when mental illness is involved, the bereaved often contend with an additional layer of complex emotions. People bereaved by suicide are at a much higher risk of a range of heath problems and even of suicide themselves.
This forum will present how complex grief reactions to suicide can be impacted upon by the (often unprocessed) grief around the mental illness. The unique loss experience associated with people going missing will also be discussed along with techniques that professionals can use to work with the families of long-term missing persons. Finally the SANE Bereavement Guidelines will be presented that give organizational structure to responding to the families and friends of clients who die by suicide or who are missing long-term.

This forum with be structured around three brief presentations in the format of PowerPoint and also a DVD that shows the experiences of families that have been bereaved through suicide or missing persons. Each part the presentation will be followed by a question and answer discussion with the audience.

- Introduction – Sarah Coker (5m)
- Grief and mental illness – Garrett O'Dowd (25m)
- DVD (25m)
- Questions with Garrett (10m)
- Grief and missing persons – Geoffrey Glassock (25m)
- Questions with Geoffrey (10m)
- SANE Bereavement Guidelines – Sarah Coker (10m)
- Questions with Sarah (10m)

How to Session (90 mins)
Reparative moments in Counselling and Psychotherapy – developing capacity for internal witnessing
TILLINGER, E. (The University Of Melbourne)

Issue to be discussed:
This workshop will examine the healing process of witnessing in counselling and psychotherapy through the dynamics of reparative moments. Human beings, when traumatized, often become debonded from other human beings and alienated from their own experiences. The process of being witnessed can facilitate a process of rebonding with others and help restore the internal capacity to be a witness to oneself. This process of witnessing trauma has been described as the empathic listener going to the scene of horror first so he (the trauma survivor) won't have to visit the place of terror alone. Reparative moments are proposed as the building blocks of human rebonding after the shattering or numbing effects of trauma. They can be seen as profound moments of contact – being known from the inside out. An observational, instrument especially designed to map and track these moments will be introduced and applications of these concepts to counselling and psychotherapy will be explored.

Aim of workshop/session:
1. define the concept of reparative moments and its roots in infant observation
2. Identify the indicators of reparative moments
3. explain how internal witnessing links to trauma integration contributes to resilience
4. introduce the Dynamic Interactive Patterning of Disintegration and Integration of Trauma (DIPDIT) tracking instrument
5. explore applications of the DIPDIT and the concept of reparative moments in counselling and psychotherapy

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Ethel Tillinger is a Counselling Psychologist and Psychotherapist who has completed a Masters in Psychoanalytic Studies Thesis using the concepts of witnessing and reparative moments in interviews with Holocaust survivors. Survivors were interviewed in relation to their experience of giving interviews about their traumatic experiences to Holocaust testimony archives. Reparative moments were identified in these interviews as moments of trauma integration and the restoration of the internal capacity to be a witness to oneself. An observational, instrument was especially designed to map and track these moments.
Ethel has worked in the field of counselling and psychotherapy for over twenty-five years and has found the tool developed in her thesis to be revealing of the profound moments of contact and change in counselling and psychotherapy.

CONCURRENT SESSION 1C (STREAM 3)

How to Session (75 mins)
The Angry Brain
DENNING, N. (East Melbourne Psychology)

A how to session focusing on therapy with men who use violence, control or abuse in intimate relationships. The workshop will offer a working definition of family violence and will draw upon current neuroscience research into the way anger is processed and mitigated in the brain. The session will cover anger and its management as well as control and violence. The session will provide therapeutic tools for working in these situations.

The workshop will cover:
• Working directly with anger and narcissism
• Dealing with complicating factors in poor self-regulation such as past trauma, past infidelity, and mental illness.
• New models of brain organization and processing

Please note the workshop will focus on working with couples experiencing domestic violence as well as men who experience difficulty in anger regulation.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Polyamory: Recent Themes and Developments
ANDREW, S. (La Trobe University)

Polyamory is a form of relationship that involves consensual, non-monogamous, emotional and/or sexual intimacy. The study of polyamory has seen a steady increase in academic interest since the first scholarly publication on the topic in 1997. This paper charts the rise of academic research in this area with a particular focus on the thematic developments in the literature over the last three years. These themes include a more critical use of relational language, the role of queer theory in couple counselling, and the place of non-academic writing in the understanding of polyamory. Possible future research directions are also discussed. This paper is drawn from research currently being undertaken as part of a Professional Doctorate thesis on the experience of polyamory and its relation to psychotherapeutic practice. It seeks to continue and support the development of the fledgling evidence base around working with polyamorous clients and as such has direct implications for counsellors working with couples.

How to Session (90 mins)
How to Adapt Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) for Individual Therapy in Private Practice
STOLZ-GROBUSCH, B.

Issue to be discussed:
Some of the main therapeutic strategies used in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) involve dialectical positioning, emotional validation, and specific cognitive-behavioural approaches, including skills training in core mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance (Koerner, 2012; Linehan, 1993a, 1993b; Linehan & Dexter-Mazza, 2008). Linehan's (1993a, 1993b) biosocial model of Bordeline Personality Disorder (BPD) proposes that for these DBT strategies to be effective, five structures of treatment are necessary (Koerner, 2012). These structures aim to 1) improve client motivation for change through individual therapy, 2) enhance client behavioural skills through skills training groups, 3) ensure client generalization of skills through phone coaching or milieu therapy, 4) enhance therapist capability and motivation through regular DBT supervision and weekly DBT consultation team meetings, and 5) structure the environment to enhance both client and therapist capability through contingency management at an administrative or managerial level (Koerner, 2012; Koerner, Dimeff, & Swenson, 2007; Linehan 1993a, 1993b). The main literature on DBT suggests adopting the entire Standard Comprehensive Model (SCM) of DBT rather than adapting any of its therapeutic strategies or structures per se (Koerner, 2012; Koerner, Dimeff, & Swenson, 2007).

Aim of workshop/session:
 In private practice, it may not always be possible to supplement individual treatment with additional treatment structures in DBT. Some clients may not be suitable for DBT skills training groups, phone coaching, or milieu therapy. Some therapists may not be able to facilitate these, nor have access to a DBT supervisor or consultation team. The DBT environment may not always have contingency management procedures in place to enhance both client and therapist capability. Sometimes, BPD treatment has to be "good enough" (Gunderson, 2011). Recent evidence suggests that individual therapy in DBT is just as effective as the SCM (Andión et al., 2012). Therefore, improving client motivation, enhancing client behavioural skills, ensuring generalization of these skills, and enhancing both client and therapist capability can rely on structures in individual therapy to create change. The workshop will explore how DBT uses the SCM, asking what is necessary and what is possible for adopting DBT in individual treatment. It will cover the necessary DBT strategies required for effective treatment, and consider how it is possible to adapt DBT's SCM for individual therapy and continue to call it DBT.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Bradley Stolz-Grobusch is a Clinical and Counselling Psychologist. He has completed Masters Degrees in both Clinical Psychology and Counselling. He has also worked as a nurse in inpatient & community mental health settings, drug & alcohol settings, medical & surgical settings, and aged/palliative care. Since becoming a psychologist, Brad has worked in private practice and in a specialist Personality Disorder Service. Brad currently consults as a clinical and counselling psychologist in a private practice setting offering a Standard Comprehensive Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) program. He recently gained certification as a Dialectical Behaviour Therapist with the DBT National Certification and Accreditation Association (DBTNCAA) in the USA.

12pm – 1pm

Professor Pam James
"Counselling psychology in the U.K. over a 30 year passage"

Counselling Psychology was established as a British Psychological Section in 1982. Contextually, it arose at a time when the subjective view of the other had less emphasis in therapeutic casework. Now, as a Division, it is a professional body with its own specialist field of knowledge, professional training courses and career structure. However, currently, there have been changes in the way mental health issues are cared for in the workforce.

Counselling Psychology brings together two basic traditions in psychology. Firstly, it appreciates subjectivist, phenomenological traditions emphasising the uniqueness of each individual human experience. Secondly, it is experimental and positivistic; appreciating that it is possible to be objective, particularly in considering underpinning research. Those in the discipline are described as academic practitioners. Concurrent with this description is the term reflective practitioner which concerns their phenomenological stance.

Initially, the presentation will take a developmental view of counselling psychology. The second part will assess the current situation and look ahead to future prospects, taking the metaphor of evolution to see the variety of types of counselling psychologists that have developed under its wide umbrella. There is economic and political change in the current environment - choices are possible including adapting and developing; objecting and resisting may not be viable propositions. The debate can be had as to whether the underpinning philosophy of counselling psychology, together with research evidence can support its survival in the years to come.

2pm – 3:30pm

How to Session (60 mins)
Infertility and IVF treatment: Working therapeutically with disenfranchised grief
ALESI, R. (Monash IVF)

Issue to be discussed:
The diagnosis of infertility and subsequent IVF treatment is a physical and psychological challenge for many people. Although treatment may cease the experience of infertility is permanent. The impact on an individual and couple can be extensive; including consequences to their financial, physical, and psychological well being. Who am I if I can't be a mother or father? How do I grieve for someone who isn't even real? The aim of this presentation is to provide treating health professionals with an insight into the psychological stressors associated with the experience of infertility and provide strategies for those managing patient care during the various stages of this difficult life journey.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Being Childfree: Canonical and Personal Narratives
COUGHLAN, S. (La Trobe University)

Aim: The study explored the canonical and personal narratives around the issue of being childfree. The canonical narrative is the dominant story of an issue in a culture. There were three aims; to examine the discourse on voluntary childlessness as depicted in Victorian newspapers, to examine the narratives of childfree couples, and to identify a possible canonical narrative from the findings of the discourse and narrative analyses.

Method: The study adopted a multi-method approach, using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse newspaper articles that addressed the issue of voluntary childlessness, and a narrative approach to analyse interviews with 3 childfree couples.

Results: The CDA revealed a dominant pronatal discourse, but also an alternative discourse that challenged this. The interviews added to the CDA findings, capturing the complexity of reproductive decisions and reasons why people choose to be childfree, and also supporting the existence of a dominant pronatal discourse.

Conclusions: While voluntary childlessness exists in our society, it is yet to be seen as a legitimate and acceptable choice. Continued challenges to the dominant pronatal discourse through the media and other avenues may help to legitimize the childfree choice, which may then encourage more childfree people to disclose their status, thus decreasing their experience of discrimination, isolation and exclusion. This study contributes some useful information to the field of Counselling Psychology. Decisions about reproduction are inherent in the narratives of individuals and couples and can be influenced by many factors. This study identified a number of themes that may come up in therapy, such as isolation, ambivalence, and social perceptions about acceptable behaviour. The experiences of childfree people described in the research and the themes identified within the personal and canonical narratives can provide important insights for therapists working with childfree people or couples in the process of making reproductive decisions.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Fathers as presenting parents for child counselling after conflicted parental separation
LEE, J. (Relationships Australia (SA))

Aim: The research aimed to distinguish any differences between fathers and mothers as 'presenting parents' at a service specialising in child counselling with families after conflicted parental separation. This is important because recent Family Law Act amendments and government initiatives like the establishment of Family Relationships Centre have promoted fathers' involvement in parenting, possibly resulting in fathers increasingly becoming presenting parents or wanting involvement when their former partners are presenting parents. This may challenge services familiar with mothers' reports of children and informed by research and normed assessments weighted by mothers' views of family relationships or child mental health (eg Parenting Stress Index, Abidin, 1995).

Method: 102 recent case files were reviewed to generate data about demographics, family history and presenting concerns about the child from the presenting parent (and other parent where possible). A subset of 31 cases files were further examined where both separated parents were involved in their children's counselling and had both completed a child mental health screener, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997).

Results: Data revealed that though fathers were much less frequent than mothers as presenting parents (23.5% to 76.5%), parents were nevertheless statistically similar (at 95% confidence levels) in terms of: gender of child presented; age of child presented; time since separation; and responsiveness and involvement after hearing about the other parent initiating counselling. The subset of 31 joint parental involvement files showed that fathers tended to under-report problem behaviours on the SDQ but nevertheless their SDQ ratings were still significantly correlated with mothers SDQ ratings except for internalising behaviours (emotional distress).

Conclusions: These results suggest that fathers compared to mothers as presenting parents in child counselling after conflicted separation differ primarily in quantity of presentations for counselling, but not in quality of presentations. In other words, fathers tend towards consistency in their views of their children compared with their former partners (ie children's mothers). However fathers may different personal, gender and service barriers to help seeking.

Mini Workshop (60 mins)
Unlocking and exploring deep meanings to facilitate change, using Personal Construct Therapy, the quiet achiever
CARTER, C.

Sometimes in therapy, despite the careful development of a respectful and empathic therapeutic relationship, despite the employment of a range of elegant therapeutic techniques, progress seems to have stalled. Something seems to be impeding your client's ability to change.

Personal Construct Therapy, based on George Kelly's Psychology of Personal Constructs (PCP)(1955) is based on the therapist's fundamental assumption that their client is making the best sense that they currently can of events in their world. That sometimes their deeper meanings and their meaning-making processes are blocked and their behaviours, based on these blockages, are therefore proving unhelpful to them. Through unlocking and elaborating their deep meanings (core constructs), clients are then more able to experiment with changing the behaviours that are contributing to blocking their meaning-making processes and inhibiting their progress. PCP offers therapists creative therapeutic methods to enable them to engage collaboratively with their clients in eliciting and elaborating their meanings, as well as exploring a range of behavioural experiments they may employ.

The aim of the session is to share with participants:
► An introduction to Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) Theory
► Insights into how working with Personal Construct Psychology ideas and techniques in counselling and psychotherapy can facilitate movement and change in clients through:
► A PCP model which enhances understanding of the processes in therapy that can both impede and facilitate change
► Methods for uncovering, exploring and elaborating clients' deep underlying meanings
► An introduction to some PCP therapeutic experiments aimed at facilitating change in clients, enabled by their elaborated meanings.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Research into psychotherapists' integration of Buddhist inspired techniques and teachings
BOMAN, E. (Monash University), SIMMONDS, J. (Monash University)

Aim: The research and practice of mindfulness based therapies continues to be a broadly appealing topic within psychology. Interest in other Buddhist informed practices such the generation of positive emotions, or Metta, is also burgeoning. Research evidence generally supports the efficacy of these interventions in addressing client problems such as depression and anxiety. Prominent theorists contend that further stages of integration between East and West are possible. They argue for a mutually beneficial transformative dialogue between Buddhism and Psychology. However, a number of challenges need to be overcome for real integration to take place, not least of which are the many cultural biases that distort attempts at understanding Eastern philosophies and practices. The task of integration is further complicated by the tensions between the goals and world views of each set of traditions. This research project aimed to provide insights into the benefits, challenges and opportunities of integrating Buddhism within psychotherapy.

Method: Buddhist informed psychotherapists living in Australia were invited to participate. Nine psychotherapists completed both an online questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Participants reported a diverse range of experiences within different traditions of psychotherapy and Buddhism. The qualitative research methodology of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) aided the identification of both a richness and commonality of themes.

Results: In general, the participants reported that involvement with Buddhism had enhanced their delivery of psychotherapy. Whilst mindfulness was the most common overtly integrated Buddhist practice, several others were also reported. Maintaining the integrity of mindfulness as originally conceived in its Buddhist context emerged as a key issue. The process of integration was also illuminated by the experiences of participants.

Conclusions: Though limited in generalizability, these findings can inform practical applications such as the training of therapists in mindfulness and other Buddhist informed practices. The results are situated within the broader theory of East-West integration and the potential benefits of continued dialogue.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Change processes in therapy: Case studies in Process-Experiential/Emotion-Focused Therapy
HARTE, M. (La Trobe University)

Aim: This aim of this research was to investigate in-therapy experiences and treatment effects for four depressed young women counselled with Process-Experiential/Emotion-Focused Therapy (PE-EFT). It was also designed to investigate change processes and help reduce the research-practice gap.

Method: The study used multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence including established quantitative instruments, assessment of the client's perspective, using Change Interviews, and careful observation of work with the four young women in twelve-counselling sessions in a naturalistic setting. The expanded single case design took an interpretive approach to examining client change and its causes, seeking client and therapist viewpoints. The participatory and collaborative approach to the collection of data and the documentation of the young women's experiences was in line with the person-centred values underpinning PE-EFT. A thematic analysis of the qualitative data elicited propositions about the changes that occurred as a result of therapy from the four young women's perspectives. The clinical significance of these changes was also examined.

Results: In general, the young women reported in their Change Interviews that there was a decrease in their presenting symptoms. They also described improvement in their interpersonal relationships, increased inner awareness, improved emotion regulation, decrease in confusion and more compassion and acceptance for self and other. Analyses of these data suggested these changes resulted from the combination of an emphatically attuned working alliance and the PE-EFT therapeutic tasks. A key to the task success was the facilitation of the felt-shifts in experience when the emotion scheme was successfully activated and reprocessed.

Conclusions: This research adds to the growing understanding of what happens in therapy.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2C (STREAM 3)

How to Session (90 mins)
Working with Domestic Violence – Reflections over 25 years
MISSO, D. (Misso Psychology & Consulting)

Issue to be discussed:
Domestic violence can be one of the most complex and challenging areas to work with. Therapists often report feeling confused, frustrated and doubtful about how best to deal with this issue. Many of the challenges come from trying to negotiate the demands from the various contexts, that therapists often find themselves in, when working with domestic violence. These can include the needs of survivors, perpetrators, criminal justice system and the systemic issues inherent for counsellors working within organisational contexts. Often therapists feel restrained in the type of interventions they can employ and, at times, must negotiate the impact on the therapeutic alliance, particularly where the client's goals may be at odds with what is culturally and legally acceptable. It is here that the contributions of trauma work and neuroscience add a further level of analysis that may help broaden our capacity to respond more effectively, therapeutically, but which may meet resistance from a socio-policital context. Domestic violence also confronts us with our own assumptions, values and, at times, our personal experiences. It is imperative to be aware of how these impact on the way we interpret the facts that are presented so that we can maintain therapeutic integrity.

Aim of workshop/session:

1. to provide an overview of the current models of intervention and what the author has identified over the years as being the restraints to effective intervention;
2. how to identify and evaluate potential biases that might influence the interpretation of facts and the making of decisions in domestic violence cases;
3. to identify where therapy is useful and where it is not;
4. to explore how domestic violence can challenge the congruence between our professional and personal frameworks;
5. to explore recent developments in neurobiology and mindfulness and how these may be applied in the context of violence;
6. to explore a trauma-based model for working with domestic violence incorporating narrative therapy, sensori-motor approaches and cultural & political analysis through the presentation of case study material.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:

Dave Misso is a counselling psychologist with over 30 years experience in personal, family relationship & domestic violence counselling and is one of the Directors of Misso Psychology & Consulting which offers counselling, training & consultancy to a range of individuals, groups and organizations. In addition to his clinical experience, Dave has managed one of Australia's largest not-for-profit counselling agencies and has occupied key advisory positions for Australian state and federal governments, including membership on the Queensland Domestic Violence Council. He has been a regular presenter to the Queensland Police Service and was instrumental in developing their training package on perpetrator behaviour. His knowledge and experience in the field has led him to conduct training seminars and workshops both in Australia and overseas.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2D (STREAM 4)

How to Session (45 mins)
From Clinician to Manager: The Counselling Psychologist as Leader
NORTON, J. (Victorian Institute Of Forensic Mental Health)

Issue to be discussed:

Many practicing psychologists attain leadership roles within organisations on the basis of clinical seniority, rather than as an expressed career goal or because of a keen interest in and attraction towards management itself. Whereas management and administration is often considered a dry activity, and in this sense is perceived as antithetical to the motivations of those practicing in help seeking professions, it will be argued that in fact competently leading and managing is a learned art focused on people, informed by evidence, and deepened by systemic perspectives – qualities that are the bedrock of psychological and psychotherapeutic practice.

Aim of workshop/session:

This session will consider skills and strengths psychologists bring to leadership, challenges in transitioning from practice to largely management responsibilities, the role of self awareness, managers as "change agents", and promoting management as a legitimate career path for counsellors. Bolman and Deal's (1991) model of "frames" with which to view and understand organisational environments, encompassing structural, human resources, political and symbolic perspectives, will be used to draw out the detail and nuance of the scope for the contribution of counselling psychologists in management positions.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:

Jonathan Norton has two decades of experience as a practicing counselling psychologist, and over ten years as a manager of mental health services in the public health, higher education and NGO sectors.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)

Emerging adulthood in Australia

LEDERMAN, L. (Swinburne University of Technology), GALLIGAN, R, (Swinburne University of Technology)

Aim: Emerging adulthood, the period bridging adolescence and young adulthood, was examined 323 Australian university educated 20 to 29 year olds without children.

Method: Based on responses to a self-report questionnaire, six groups with different profiles on the dimensions of emerging adulthood were identified using a clustering procedure.

Results: The six groups, labelled Emerging Adults, Idealist Achievers, Adults, Calm Carers, Foreclosed, and Conflicted Diffused, were compared for differences in their psychological distress and well-being as well as their loneliness. In line with emerging adulthood theory, those classified as Emerging Adults experienced this life stage not as a period of settling into adult roles but as one of identity exploration. They endorsed their preference for a period of single life and were the youngest in the sample. Similar to the Emerging Adults, the Idealist Achievers also felt in between adolescence and adulthood. However, unlike the Emerging Adults, the Idealist Achievers demonstrated a unique combination of focus on self and others, being likely to share their self exploration with a romantic partner. In contrast to the Emerging Adults and Idealist Achievers, the Adults, Calm Carers, and Foreclosed perceived themselves as having reached adulthood. The Adults were the closest to achieving full adult status and were most likely to have formed an identity, which is consistent with this group being the oldest in the sample. The Calm Carers were unique as they tended to be other-focused rather than self-focused and more likely to be married and to have the greatest religious affiliation. The Foreclosed were likely to have developed an identity without extended exploration and were least likely to report instability or psychological distress. Finally, the Conflicted Diffused found it difficult to manage the tasks of this period and experienced not only high anxiety and stress over the instability and identity challenges in their lives but the highest levels of depressive symptoms and loneliness of all the groups.

Conclusions: Implications for counselling during this life-stage are discussed given the range of experiences during the transition to adulthood with some young people being depressed and many feeling anxious about their future

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)

Counsellor Self-Awareness and Counselling-Related Outcomes: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations

PIETERSE, A. (Monash University)

Counsellor or therapist self-awareness is generally understood to be an essential factor in the provision of effective counselling and psychotherapy (Baldwin, 2000). Although self-awareness has not been consistently defined in the literature, the ability to engage in reflective practice and possess insight into one's own psychological processes is viewed as important aspects of the counsellor's self-awareness (Nutt-Williams, 2000) Irrespective of the larger literature focusing on common factors in psychotherapy, including therapist variables such as warmth and genuineness (Hillsenroth & Ackerman, 2003), surprisingly little empirical attention has been given to examining the role of therapist self-awareness. The current presentation therefore will describe the findings of a quantitative examination of the relationships between therapist self-awareness, working alliance, counseling skills, counsellor self-efficacy and counsellor empathy. In this study a pragmatic understanding of self-awareness was employed, in which self-awareness referred to knowledge and understanding of personal cognitive, affective and behavioral processes (Hansen, 2009). Ninety-four counselling psychology and counsellor education students completed self-report measures of insight and self-reflection, empathy, working alliance, counselling skills and counsellor self-efficacy. Results of a Multivariate Multiple Regression indicated that insight and self-reflection were significantly associated with, empathy, counseling skills and working alliance. Furthermore, none of the variables were associated with a measure of socially desirability. In discussing these findings the presenter will emphasize the need for a more intentional and systematic approach to self-awareness development among counselling psychology trainees and will briefly describe the Integrated Model of Self-Awareness Development in Counselling Psychology training.

Motivational Interviewing and Female Sex Workers' Change Talk: Issues associated with Exiting the Sex Work Industry
MONFRIES, M. (La Trobe University), Kamalesh, T. (La Trobe University)

While it is known that the majority of female sex workers in Melbourne brothels desire to exit the sex industry, it is poorly understood what factors facilitate or impede their exit. Motivational interviews (MI) were conducted with 3 female brothel based sex workers who had expressed a desire to exit the industry. Transcripts were analysed for participants' change talk that was indicative of their commitment, desire, need, ability, reason, proactivity and passivity in taking steps to leave . An increase in the strength of 'committing' language over the course of the MI session was interpreted as the best predictor of behavior change and identified in the transcripts of two of the three participants. Using the State of Change (SOC) Model, one participant appeared to be in the Action stage while the other appeared to be in the Contemplation stage. The interviews revealed that in the context of this study a sex worker's motivation to change was heavily influenced by perceived costs and benefits of lifestyle and work flexibility offered by contexts outside of sex work. These findings indicated that the SOC Model and MI are useful tools in assessing sex workers' readiness to exit the industry.

4pm – 5pm

INVITED ADDRESS

Rosalie Pattenden

"Evidence based approaches to couple therapy—not for the faint hearted!"

The 2011 November/December issue of the Psychotherapy Networker Magazine was titled "Who's Afraid of Couples Therapy? Ellyn Bader writes in her article that couple counselling can feel like "piloting a helicopter into a hurricane", so many therapists choose not to go there, preferring individual work. Couple therapy is complex and challenging, dealing with deep seated emotional scars for both the individuals and for the couple relationship. Relationship Counsellors are informed by an explosion of new information from neuroscience, and an ever increasing number of therapeutic frameworks and interventions. Much of the work is long term, yet the demands of external stakeholders (Medicare, AHPRA, APS, and government funders) are focusing on shorter term interventions that are evidence based, are manualized and can substantiate effective outcomes.

Saturday 23 February 2013

9am – 10am

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Professor Dale Larson (Santa Clara University, United States of America)
"Grief and grief counselling today: Controversy, evidence, and implications for clinical practice"

There is mounting debate with the bereavement field on several key issues, including determining which are the most accurate and clinically useful models of the grieving process, reconciling the grief work hypothesis with contemporary empirical findings, deciding whether a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder should be included in DSM-5, and establishing whether grief counselling is helpful, inefficacious, or possibily even harmful. Controversy concerning these issues is also swirling in the public realm, with harsh critiques of grief counselling and the bereavement field itself making headlines in the popular media. Recent empirical findings and conceptual developments offering new perspectives on these controversies will be presented, along with their implications for clinical practice.

10am – 11am

Mini Workshop (60 mins)
Shame and Relational Paradox: 'Terror of' and 'yearning for' connection
BECKER, A. (La Trobe University, Kaye Frankcom & Associates)

Description of topic to be covered:
Shame often presents in the therapy hour, and it is frequently implicated in the high prevalence 'disorders' of anxiety and depression which regularly lead clients to seek psychotherapy. Chronic and intense experiences of shame are associated with relational disconnection, and this disconnection further compounds symptoms of anxiety and depression. This workshop will consider both evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence for the notion of a 'dialectical relational struggle' associated with experiences of shame, especially where shame is intense and chronic. The dialectic (or paradox) involves simultaneous 'terror of' and 'yearning for' connection (Becker, 2011; Hartling, Rosen, Walker, & Jordan, 2000; Jordan, 2010). Clients often struggle with this paradox of fearing and yearning genuine connection, especially in the therapeutic relationship. The workshop will explore how this paradox is supported by qualitative research, which explored experiences of shame among Australian gay men (Becker, 2011). Furthermore, workshop material will also draw upon relational psychoanalytic theory as well as the various theoretical and research contributions of Relational-Cultural Theory.

Method or format used to present the topic:
Presentation of theory, research findings (Becker, 2011), and clinical vignettes. Discussion of clinical skills including how to respond to shame and associated 'relational paradox.' Interactive workshop with an opportunity for delegates to ask questions both during presentation and at the end.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Adam has completed doctoral research exploring shame experiences. His research proffered a relational model of understanding participant's shame experiences. Relational paradox comprised a key theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, Adam has a keen interest in relational theory, including relational psychoanalytic theory. Adam is currently undertaking further psychoanalytic training.

Mini Workshop (60 mins)
Treating trauma through applied creative experience
BURGE, M. (Australian College Of Trauma Treatment)

Issue to be discussed:
Recent research reveals that experiential methods (Elliott, Greenberg & Lietaer, 2003) such as psychodrama, can help the traumatised client develop better relationships with the self and rediscover lost roles. This is predominantly achieved during processing, by the creation of safety and containment through the setting up of boundary parameters and protective systems. This research is consistent with a Meta-Analysis of the effectiveness of Psycho-dramatic techniques. Here, twenty five experimentally designed studies showed an overall effect size that points to a large size improvement effect similar to or better than that commonly reported for group psychotherapy in general. The techniques of role reversal and doubling emerged as the most effective interventions (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003). These techniques may be applied to groups and to individuals. The emergence of the clients own capacity to move beyond dissociative symptoms through role development, spontaneity, self- calming and multiple perspective is paramount in this process. The workshop will involve discussion, demonstrations and experiential work.

Aim of workshop/session:
The aim of the workshop is to provide the opportunity for participants to enhance their clinical skills through applied, researched based, experiential and creative methods. In addition, drawing from an experiential intra-psychic role approach, the workshop aims to assist participants to enhance their knowledge in key conceptual frameworks that are integral to the recovery from trauma. For instance,

traumatic experiences such as war, rape, abuse and loss of significant relationships can leave the individual's identity fractured and disowned, leading to PTSD. Functional life-giving roles, such as self-appreciator, dignified powerful explorer and fun lover can be difficult or near impossible to find. Instead, less healthy roles such as fearful victim, defender, self-loather, isolate, zombie and violent actor may predominate. Research indicates that the perpetuation of these less healthy victim roles translates directly to the endurance of PTSD symptoms. It is also then, an objective of the workshop to enable participants to expand on knowledge that is important to that part of the assessment process which identifies associations between interpersonal characteristic features and PTSD symptom presentation.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
The Presenter has been working clinically in the area of PTSD for approximately 23 years. The Presenter has published both nationally and internationally in the field of PTSD, with a particular focus on psychosocial issues affecting Vietnam Veterans and their families. The Presenter introduced PTSD skills based short courses & workshops into Australia & as guest lecturer to most Melbourne Universities. In 2010 the Presenter was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to psychology and to the community through the development of training and treatment protocols for trauma.

CONCURRENT SESSION 3C (STREAM 3)

Mini Workshop (60 mins)
Legal, medical and industrial, not just psychological: Context matters when working with compensables
KAMATEROS, K. (Senior Clinical/Health Psychologist Royal Melbourne Hospital; Member APS)

Issue to be discussed:
This paper contends that the psychological difficulties reported by those injured in work or road accidents (e.g. anxiety, depression, chronic pain), and for which they seek psychologist's assistance, are to a significant degree the result of entrapment in legal, industrial, health and political systems. Clients often feel compelled to turn to medical and legal systems after injury but feel punished, threatened, helpless and inauthentic. Paralleling their clients experience, psychologists can feel ineffective, guilty, unskilled, angry and stressed. Furthermore, without resolution of the systemic difficulties, psychological progress is likely to be partial and/or short lived. Constructing these clients' difficulties as purely or predominantly psychological divorces them from their political context and perpetuates these pressures.

Aim of workshop/session:
The aim of this workshop is to help clinicians working with compensable clients to better care for their clients and manage their own countertransference reactions by:
1. Setting out the thoughts and fears of rehabilitees;
2. Raising awareness of how the legal, medical and political context impacts upon, shapes and perpetuates clients' presenting psychological difficulties; and
3. Workshop the limitations and obstacles that the context imposes on clients and psychologists in their work.

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Kon has worked as an Occupational Rehabilitation, Employment and Job Placement Consultant, and Manager in private, Community Health and WorkCover insurer settings between 1985 and 1997. Between 1999 and 2004 he operated a private practice specializing in compensable clients. Between 1997 and 2008 he worked in pain management programs with compensable clients in privately operated rehabilitation hospitals.
Since 2008 he has worked as Senior Psychologist at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, partly in the pain management program with non-compensable patients.

Mini Workshop (60 mins)
Working with ethical injuries and transgressions in couple and family practice
SHAW, E.

The aim of this workshop is to explore the application of research into ethical development in counselling people with relationship problems. It will explore the possibilities offered by traditions of moral philosophy in attending to problems from a relational ethics as well as contemporary systemic perspective. This includes a focus on relationships as a crucial element in the development and maintenance of a moral self and how couples and families construct an ethical platform together, both consciously and unconsciously. Couple and family work constantly gives rise to reflection on what it means to be "good" within relationships, as people regularly present having hurt the ones they love, and talk of betraying their own values at times. We will explore how ethical responsibility and accountability can be constructed as relational responsiveness in areas of injury and betrayal, facilitating more effective repair and assisting in intervening with highly defensive individuals. Despite our associations with morality as judgmental and rule driven, moral conduct and decision-making can involve imaginative, creative and aesthetic possibilities.

11:30am – 1pm

Symposium (45 mins)
A measure of the communication of understanding in psychotherapy
DENHAM, G. (La Trobe University),DEACON-WOOD, H. (La Trobe University),
BENNETT, G. (La Trobe University)

Symposium Description:
Habermas has developed the concept of the 'communication of understanding' in his development of a theory of communicative action. The theory recognises the contributions of conversational partners to their developing collaboration on whatever project they might happen to be working on. There has been no attempt to date, to put adapt these ideas to the working alliance in psychotherapy. In this symposium a theory of the communication of understanding is outlined, the operationalizing of the theory is described, and the first results in applying the model to the analysis of psychotherapy transcripts is presented. Findings indicate that the model can clearly distinguish 'good' from 'bad' psychotherapy. The training value of this model is discussed.

Paper 1
A speech act theory of the communication of meaning in psychotherapy

The developments in speech act theory are outlined including Habermas' reworking of some of the central notions of the theory. Illocutionary and perlocutionary effects are considered, and the value of these for describing psychotherapeutic dialogue are discussed. The shortcomings of previous attempts to harness speech act theory in the work of William Stiles, and Marianne Krause are briefly mentioned. The key features for the current research work are presented.

Paper 2
How communication of meaning is identified in psychotherapy sessions

This paper describes the process of identifying the communication of meaning in psychotherapy session using transcripts of these sessions. Illustrative material will be presented that shows passages in psychotherapy where there is evidence of communication of meaning, and these are contrasted with other exemplars where there is little or no communication of meaning.

Paper 3
The measurement of the communication of meaning in psychotherapy

The indices of communication of meaning will be presented showing how they were derived from an analysis of transcripts of 'good ' and 'bad' psychotherapy. The application of these measures to a new transcript of psychotherapy will be presented. The value of this method of analysis for training interns will be discussed in relation to the importance of establishing a strong working alliance in psychotherapeutic work.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Training therapists in repairing ruptures: Lessons learned from the Vanderblit projects
KRYSZTOFIAK, A. (La Trobe University)

Aim: To examine the effectiveness of alliance-enhancing training in the Vanderbilt II Project, and make recommendations for future programs to train therapists in rupture repair

Method: In my Master's Thesis I reviewed a number of training programs aiming to enhance therapists'' alliance skills. This presentation will focus on one training program designed by a group of researchers from Vanderbilt University, using Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy. A systematic review of the literature was undertaken and specific criteria were used to select studies, such as the availability of detailed descriptions of the training methods used. A series of question were used to interrogate these studies, e.g. how was it determined what skills the therapists had acquired before the training started; or how did therapists or researchers judge that a rupture had been resolved?

Results: The findings of the Vanderbilt II Project showed that although therapists were able to adhere to Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy manual, in terms of alliance-building skills they actually deteriorated after training. Possible reasons for this include the ineffectiveness of manualised training, especially for therapists who are more experienced, and those who are hostile and controlling.

Conclusions: Research shows a need for more effective training methods, experiential in nature and focused on repairing ruptures as they occur, rather than in retrospect. It is recommended that training programs be tailored to trainees' individual learning needs, much like therapeutic interventions are tailored to clients' needs. In addition, evaluations of training models must take into account trainees' pre-existing skills and allegiances to particular therapeutic approaches.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Therapeutic alliance and Treatment Outcomes in an Internet Chat Therapy Service
MULLINGS, B.

Aim: This research directly compared psychological processes and therapeutic outcomes between therapies delivered face-to-face and over Internet chat.

Method: A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach was used to integrate findings from outcome measures with subjective reports. A group of 20 therapists provided psychological services to clients who self-selected either face-to-face or Internet chat therapy.. Both therapists and clients completed measures for symptom severity (BSI and SCL-90) and the therapeutic alliance (CALPAS) at the first and third session. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to identify themes in the experiences of clients and therapists following-therapy.

Results: Client-rated alliance increased significantly at the same rate in both treatment groups $(F(1,35) = 23.021, p < .001)$, as did therapist-rated alliance $(F(1,35) = 17.254, p < .001)$. Client-rated symptom severity decreased at the same rate for both groups $(F(1,35) = 15.191, p < .001)$. Comparison of treatment modalities did not identify statistically significant differences, with the exception of significantly higher alliances rated by clients receiving Internet therapy $(F(1,35) = 6.972, p = .012)$. Clinically significant change analyses indicated only minor differences between groups. There were few measurable differences between these modes of service delivery overall. Clients who chose Internet therapy described the value of therapeutic distance and private emotional experience during post-therapy interviews. Therapists identified the challenge of understanding emotions when relying on the written word. Clients and therapists also described the formation of mental images of the other party and the role this had in terms of constructing a sense of interaction.

Although this had an impact on the quality of the working alliance that developed, both clients and therapists were generally satisfied with the therapeutic relationship.

Conclusions: These promising results show that positive outcomes are possible over this mode of treatment. With meta-analytic reviews associating larger effect sizes to web-based interventions with greater therapist involvement (Barak et al., 2008; Spek et al., 2007), the present study raises questions about whether Internet chat could be better harnessed.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
The therapeutic alliance. Exploring the concept of "safety" from a neuropsychotherapeutic perspective
ALLISON, K. (University of Queensland), ROSSOUW, P. (University of Queensland)

The role of the therapeutic relationship in the counselling process has been extensively demonstrated in literature (Rogers 1980, Beck & Alford 2009). Less is known about the neurobiology of this relationship and the key role of facilitating safety to enhance therapeutic outcomes, compliance and relapse prevention. This paper explores the fundamental neurobiological markers that need to be addressed in the therapy process. Without effective down regulation of these (primitive) neurobiological markers, the therapeutic process may be jeopardised. Further, effective up regulation of basic neurobiological markers will enhance therapeutic outcomes (Cozolino 2010). The therapeutic relationship captures these key indicators. Clients who need counselling not only have difficulties with the presenting problem; they also need a safe space to effectively address these issues. This need for a safe space has deeply rooted neurobiological markers that are well described by cognitive – experiential self-theory of Seymour Epstein (1990, 1993) and the neuropsychotherapeutic model of Klaus Grawe (2007). Epstein demonstrated how the need for attachment and need for orientation and control are two of the basic human needs that need to be fulfilled to facilitate change. These mental conditions must be obtained in order for the human species to flourish. Grawe demonstrated how these needs play a vital role in the therapeutic relationship.

Alan Shore (2012) stated that the right hemisphere of the brain is generally responsible for appraising safety and danger of others and organizing the sense of emotional self. It is this appraisal of events that can result in the development of motivational avoidance or approach schemas that have been developed in the course of one's life to satisfy basic needs. Further Klaus Grawe (2007) posited that traumatic experiences could lead to a dominance of avoidance schemas, which impairs the possibility of positive need fulfilment and can therapy lead to a poor wellbeing and poor mental health. Distress can also lead to structural and functional damage in the brain, and thus, can limit the individual's ability to cope with difficulties later in life. These neural effects inhibit the process of facilitating change – pointing at the key function of the therapeutic alliance to establish new neural activation (the essence of change).

This paper explores how the therapeutic relationship link closely with these needs on neuronal level. The development of avoid patterns of neural firing, up regulation of stress chemicals and the development of patterns of dysfunctional cognitions, feelings and behaviours are explored. Key aspects of the therapeutic process are addressed and indicators to maximise therapeutic outcomes suggested.

CONCURRENT SESSION 4B (STREAM 2)

Professional/Practice Forum (45 mins)
Inspiration, renewal and the heart and soul of counselling in a time of challenge
CRISP, R. (CRS Australia)

The aim of this paper is two-fold. First, I ask what inspires and renews us, what is the heart and soul of counselling psychology. My answers to this are inspired by Arthur Bohart, a significant voice in contemporary person-centred literature, who argued that two general factors accounted for effective counselling and psychotherapy: (a) the active, problem-solving capacity of the client, and (b) the provision of a good therapeutic relationship. Moreover, Bohart emphasised courage and creativity – of his clients – as a source of inspiration and renewal for him: "it is because my clients are courageous that I am able to get away with being a pure Rogerian therapist much of the time" (Bohart, 2012, p.34). Second, I discuss the challenge of applying person-centred counselling in goal-oriented

programs in both clinical and non-clinical programs in various spheres of life. I locate these topics in the context of working as a person-centred counsellor confronted with an outcome-focused world that prizes time-limited services, specific symptom-reduction outcomes, cost-benefit accountability, and evidence-based standards. Regarding the latter, I argue that person-centered and experiential counselling is supported by evidence-based research that was pioneered by Carl Rogers and which continues to be actively pursued within the person-centered community (e.g., Elliott, Stiles, Cooper, Bohart, Watson, Greenberg, Cornelius-White).

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Training for Multicultural Competence in Counselling Psychology: Perspectives on Process and Outcome
PIETERSE, A. (Monash University)

Multicultural Counselling Competence has become an almost universally agreed upon goal within Counselling and Psychology. Largely framed within the context of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, multicultural scholars have presented numerous training models designed to provide a conceptual framework for the development of counselling competence. These models have been largely built on the tripartate model of multicultural counselling competence, i.e. knowledge of cultural diversity, awareness of personal biases and worldview, utilization of culturally sensitive counseling skills (see Sue and Sue, 2003). However, empirical investigations of student processes associated with multicultural training are scant, as are investigations designed to assess clinical outcomes associated with multicultural counselling competence. To that end, the current presentation will be outline the findings from a mixed-method investigation of student processes associated with multicultural counselling training in a sample of 130 United States (US) counselling psychology and counsellor education students. Themes generated from a grounded theory analysis included awareness of racial identity, the need for psychological safety, heightened affective reactions, and representing ones racial/ethnic group. Findings from a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) conducted on a self-report measure of student experiences in multicultural counseling courses mirrored the themes identified through the qualitative analysis. In reviewing the findings, the presenter will discuss implications for counselling psychology educators, and will also review the strengths and limitations of current approaches to training for multicultural counselling competence. In addition, the nature of training for multicultural counselling competence in relation to evidence-based practice will be briefly addressed.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Psychological Change and Growth Following Extraordinary Experiences
SIMMONDS, J. (Monash University)

Aim: What are variously called peak, or optimal, or extraordinary experiences, have considerable potential to promote psychological change and growth, but much is unknown about them, especially concerning their psychological uses and benefits. The available research is largely from a religious, rather than a psychological perspective, but many people who do not consider themselves religious or spiritual report such exceptional experiences. The effect of the experiences are worthy of investigation in part as a constructive alternative to experiences sought through risk taking and sensation seeking. This study draws on the research on personal growth and processes of psychological change and applies and extends it to investigate the role of various significant extraordinary experiences and their effects.

Method: A phenomenological approach was used, grounded in the perceptions of the experients to draw out personal meanings and use of such experiences. An online survey to tap breadth and variety of responses was developed, along with a smaller number of semi-structured interviews to gain a more detailed understanding of specific aspects of the experiences and their effects. The survey was composed of mainly open-ended questions, and included an invitation to a follow-up interview.

Results: Participants were asked to nominate for themselves exceptional experiences which were personally significant, and to describe the experiences and their effects in their own words. The topics, which were canvassed to some extent in the online survey, and then followed up in the interviews, included questions about the experiences themselves, their personal meaning, their effects, efforts to sustain them, and how they were viewed over time. The results to be reported include a thematic analysis of participants' responses.

Conclusions: Identifying which personal experiences have an impact, and in what circumstances, can be helpful in facilitating opportunities for promoting constructive experiences, and sustaining the beneficial effects of the experiences to optimise their benefits for mental health. This research in progress investigated extraordinary experiences which may contribute to psychological growth and change, and enhance resilience and physical and mental health.

Individual Research Paper (15 mins)
Perceptions of remorse in Forensic Patients and forensic mental health professionals
O'DONAHOO, J. (Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health)

Aim: The presence of remorse is often considered an important indicator of an offender's potential for rehabilitation. Media stories abound of offenders who are judged harshly for failing to show remorse for their transgression. However, remorse is a term that can be used by legal and mental health professionals without an informed understanding of its meaning or its validity as a clinical indicator. In the forensic mental health field, the demonstration of remorse might also be seen as an important sign of clinical progress, even in Forensic Patients who were psychiatrically unwell when they committed their offence and who have been found not guilty by the Courts on the grounds of mental impairment. No investigations have been undertaken into the impact that the presence or absence of remorse has on forensic mental health professionals' attitudes towards Forensic Patients or the importance that Forensic Patients themselves place on remorse. The aim of this exploratory study is to give psychologists some idea of the way in which Forensic Patients and forensic mental health professionals see remorse in relation to a Forensic Patient's index offence. It will shed light on the extent to which professionals' attitudes towards remorse influences their clinical decision making with Forensic Patients and whether expressed remorse shapes their views about a patient's likely rehabilitation. The research also aims to highlight how useful current interventions are in helping Forensic Patients work through remorse and related emotions.

Method: To date, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 11 forensic mental health professionals and six Forensic Patients at Thomas Embling Hospital, Victoria's secure forensic mental health facility. Once completed, the interviews will be analyzed and themes extracted using the qualitative approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Results/Conclusions: Material collected so far suggests that forensic mental health professionals place varying levels of importance on the expression of remorse, while Forensic Patients see addressing remorse as a central component of their treatment. Both groups evidently see it as vital for forensic mental health practitioners to develop a greater empirical understanding of the concept of remorse.

CONCURRENT SESSION 4C (STREAM 3)

Professional/Practice Forum (90 mins)
Counselling psychologist's professional practice forum: A case study: differing perspectives
J. Grant, M. Harte, G. Glassock, E. Hosie

Abstract unavailable at this time

How to Session (90 mins)
Child-led Play Therapy
SHORT, J. (Sydney Centre for Creative Change)

Issue to be discussed:
This workshop will provide a practical introduction to child-led art and play therapy. According to Violet Oaklander, a renowned leader in Play Therapy, toys are children's words and play is their language. To understand and help children, we need to allow children opportunity to express themselves in their language and learn to read the metaphors of play. Based on the work of international play therapy centres, and the presenter's own twenty years of clinical experience with children, a review of child-led play therapy will be presented and illustrated. Consideration will be given to the types of art and play media relevant for different ages and issues being addressed. The use of expressive play methods such as toys, puppets and art media with young children allows both assessment and therapeutic intervention in a way that is respectful, engaging and change oriented.
This workshop will provide an informative, practical and interactive opportunity to develop skills in working with children aged between 2-10 years. Relevant development principles and the current evidence base for this methodology will also be reviewed.

Aim of workshop/session:
- To identify the theoretical basis of working with art and play media
- To consider the evidence base child-led play therapy
- To see a demonstration of this method
- To allow participants the opportunity to practice child-led play therapy techniques

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Jacki Short is the Principal Psychologist at the Sydney Centre for Creative Change. She has over twenty years of clinical experience working with children, young people and their families. Allowing children the respectful space to communicate in their own voices and through the language of play is a central tenant to her counselling, supervision and training work. Her clinical background is in school counselling, drug and alcohol and crisis intervention. Jacki's work in schools, hospitals, charities and in private practice has kept her appreciating the passions and play of youth.
Jacki is also an experienced and Masters qualified adult educator and an APS Member of the College of Counselling Psychologists.

2pm – 3:30pm

Symposium (45 mins)
Refugee mental health: new paradigms of professional care
DENHAM, G. (La Trobe University), WHITE, K. (La Trobe University),WOLLERSHEIM, D. (La Trobe University)

Symposium Description:
If ever a group is amenable to the diagnosis of PTSD it is the cluster we collectively identify as either refugee, humanitarian entrant, or asylum seeker. It is commonly agreed among clinicians that around a third of this group exhibit the symptoms of either PTSD or present with the symptoms of both depression and anxiety. There are two fundamental research responses to this situation: a. one group of researchers have attempted to elucidate our understanding of those with significant symptoms and explore the diagnosis of PTSD with these groups (which in its formulation was based on the symptoms exhibited by Vietnam Veterans returning to the US from active duty in the Vietnam war) b. a second group of researchers have begun to explore resilience among these groups given that approximately two thirds do not exhibit symptoms. The first paper in this symposium presents what we know about the mental health of the three groups and provides a sketch of a model of service delivery; the second argues for the application of the contextual model of psychotherapy as a framework for investigating the nature of psychotherapeutic work with these groups; and the third

explores resilience among refugee women based on a mobile phone mediated social support research project which tapped the strength of community networks.

Paper 1
The mental health of refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants: toward a service delivery model

While health professionals increasingly identify symptoms of post-traumatic stress in these groups of people, the people themselves (when asked) focus on the business of family reunions, getting their children established in schools, finding occupation, and making a productive life for themselves in their adopted country. While there is little doubt that within these groups there are those suffering from ongoing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization, our thinking about the mental health needs of these groups and how they might best be addressed is caught between orthodox clinic-based treatment and targeted (and innovative) intervention. A model of service delivery based on the work of Arthur Kleinman and Judith Herman is described.

Paper 2
The relevance of the contextual model of psychotherapy to health service delivery to refugees

When refugees present for psychotherapy with complex and persistent difficulties, counselling psychologists can face challenges in providing appropriately therapeutic care. Cultural differences can create disparity in beliefs and expectations about mental health, illness, treatment, and recovery. As such, Western psychotherapeutic interventions may not always be suitable for refugee clients. Current research is focussed on identifying specific therapeutic approaches that have demonstrable efficacy with refugee groups. However, the psychotherapy efficacy research consistently shows that treatment differences are negligible; refugee psychotherapy is no exception. This paper will demonstrate the relevance of the contextual model of psychotherapy to practitioner work with refugees. The contextual model prioritises clients' acceptance of the therapeutic rationale over the adoption of and adherence to specific therapeutic approaches. In adopting a contextual model of practice, counselling psychologists will be better equipped to provide culturally- relevant care for their individual refugee clients.

Paper 3
Using social support to boost resilience among refugee women

Refugee women fare worse on psychological health measures than men. Although experiences of depravity, death and loss are similar, female refugees are commonly victims of sexual atrocities and violence. Post migration, women shoulder heavy resettlement responsibilities, often singlehandedly, due to loss of spousal support from death, transnational separation or physical and mental health issues. This mixed-method study aimed to explore the effects of a mobile phone mediated social support network on the resilience of 119 refugee women from Afghan, Burmese and Sudanese communities in south-eastern Melbourne. Social network and support were simultaneously generated from peer-listening training sessions and selected free-call mobile phones. Phone call logs contributed to the quantitative network mapping data while pre and post-intervention questionnaires measured participants' quality of life, self-esteem, self efficacy and social support level. Qualitative data were derived from 29 in-depth interviews. The quantitative data revealed frequent and regular communication among most of the participants, and showed a significant improvement in 9 out of 36 measures. Qualitative data suggested that the participants experienced greater social and practical support, increased self-esteem and efficacy, and improved wellbeing. The study provides a viable model for empowering refugee women to make their lives better.

Professional/Practice Forum (45 mins)
Maintaining ethical practice in a complex counselling environment
SHAW, E.

Ethical conduct in professional practice is foundational in the work of psychologists. Many of us will have attended some form of training on rules and conduct, and will review at times our ethical code. However, often the challenges we face in counselling practice seem to sit between the lines of our ethics guidelines, leaving us uncertain about which way to act. We are regularly caught "off guard" within sessions and have to act immediately on an issue, behaviour or request. On top of this, providing services under the Better Access Scheme provides us with many more ethical challenges. In such cases, there is a stronger need to have reflected on oneself as a moral professional, to have a robust decision making model in mind to assist, and to have ensured that supervision provides space to look at contemporary ethical themes. Looking at a broader requirement to be ethical as well as act ethically is important. Being ethical sits within the broader skill set of both competence (knowledge and skill) and well as emotional competence. The aim of this forum is to bring to awareness key themes and requirements in achieving ethical maturity and ethical practice.

CONCURRENT SESSION 5B (STREAM 2)

How to Session (90 mins)
CoMET Model: Counselling Psychologists & Mediators working together to unblock post separation parenting impasses
BOYHAN, P. (CatholicCare Melbourne),BAKER, A. (CatholicCare Melbourne)

Issue to be discussed:
Among the most vulnerable groups in our society are children caught in post separation parenting conflict.   The emotional wounding that occurs for couples during failing relationships and separation can sometimes prevent parents from being child focused in the development and maintenance of post separation parenting agreements.   If parents do not develop a positive parenting alliance, their children's wellbeing and future development may be compromised.   Drawing on research by McIntosh, Wells & Long (2007) and Boyhan, Foster, Grimes & Jaffe (2004) this presentation will identify strategies, using the Conjoint Mediation and Therapy Model (CoMeT) to enable Counselling Psychologists to form partnerships with Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (Mediators) and Collaborative Lawyers to work with parents to avoid adversarial/conflicted negotiations by identifying and releasing impasses which conventional mediation may be unable to surmount.   These impasses may be due to unresolved emotional issues around the separation, the relationship itself, family violence, past abuse or childhood trauma.   Research by Boyhan et al has shown that a combination of Counsellors and Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners working together with conflicted parents, with both practitioners maintaining discipline purity, can gain movement in previously intractable disputes.

Aim of workshop/session:
The presentation will be of interest to both employed Counselling Psychologists and those in private practice, as there is an increasing focus on collaborative practices in the Family Law Sector.   The presenters will review research (1 & 2), however, the overall aim is to introduce the Conjoint Mediation and Therapy Model (CoMeT) and to demonstrate strategies which focus on 'stuck' clients with ongoing disputes, often originating in unresolved negative intimacy, emotional factors from family of origin , and unresolved (and sometimes unintended) hurts and conflicts from within the former couple relationship.

1. Boyhan P, Foster L, Grimes A & Jaffe R (2004). Conjoint mediation and therapy: Emergence of the CoMeT Model. Australasian Dispute Resolution Journal 15: 108-118.
2. McIntosh JE, Wells YD & Long CM (2007) Child focused and child-inclusive family dispute resolution: One year findings from a prospective study of outcomes. Journal of Family Studies 13 (1): 8-25

Presenters expertise on the issue to be discussed:
Patricia Boyhan is a Counselling Psychologist and Family Therapist with 18 years' experience working in the area of relationship counselling.   She has a particular interest and expertise in working with separated parents, and has been a co-researcher and writer of articles dealing with post separation parental conflict.

Alan Baker is a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner, with a background in Family Law.   He is currently Manager of CatholicCare's Post Separation Program.

CONCURRENT SESSION 5C (STREAM 3)

Symposium (90 mins)
How are Environmental and Ecopsychologies Relevant to the Practice of Counselling Psychology?
SIMMONDS, J. (Monash University),SNELL,T. (Monash University),MAWSON, F. (Monash University), SIMPKINS,D. (Monash University),KIMITISIS, L (Monash University)

Symposium description:
In this Symposium, the series of four research based papers illustrate the relevance of environmental and ecopsychologies which incorporate care for the environment and a wider view of the self, to the practice of counselling psychology. Two of the papers report on original, completed research, and the other two review current literature and describe research in progress. The topics covered here, all of which have direct implication for the practice of counselling psychology, include completed innovative research into peak experiences in natural and built environments which had important and long lasting effects on participants' wellbeing, and participation in time-honoured sweat lodge ceremonies, also with significant reported psychotherapeutic benefits. The first research in progress paper here reports on work in applying Prochaska and Norcross Transtheoretical Model, often used in psychotherapy to address readiness for, and the process of change, to Environmentally Responsible Behaviours. The final paper discusses ecotherapies, ecotherapies being therapies which use contact with nature to promote psychological change, and a proposed research study to investigate the practices of psychotherapists who incorporate eco-therapy methods into traditional consulting room psychotherapy.

Paper 1
Peak Experiences in Natural and Built Environments and Psychological Well-Being

The aim of this research was to investigate the psychological and behavioural outcomes of peak experiences in both natural and human-built environments. This presentation will focus on the differences between religious and non-religious participants concerning the relationship between peak experiences and long-term psychological well-being. The mixed-method design used a quantitative survey of 307 participants and qualitative interviews with 20 participants. The survey included demographic variables, such as religious affiliation, and an amended version of Hood's Mysticism Scale and the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. Whilst religious and non-religious participants reported similar levels of mystical experience, those experiences predicted psychological well-being only for participants who identified a religious affiliation. Qualitative analysis indicated that religious participants were more willing to discuss their peak experiences as meaningful and purposeful, whereas non-religious participants appeared to resist interpretations of these experiences beyond a pleasant or unusual psychological state. Individuals who have a religious affiliation may benefit more in psychological well-being from their peak experiences. Religion may provide a metaphysical framework or language through which peak experiences can make sense. Findings highlight the importance of taking peak experiences reported by clients seriously and assisting them in understanding their experiences within a wider metaphysical framework.

Paper 2
Stages of Change and Environmentally Responsible Behaviour

A body of research within environmental psychology has explored the area of environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB). Some researchers have begun to utilise constructs from the Prochaska and Norcross Transtheoretical Model (TTM) within the field of ERB. Important constructs within this model include stages of change, processes of change, self-efficacy and decisional balance. Stage-based models, such as the TTM, may prove useful in identifying individuals' stage of change with respect to an ERB and in providing stage-matched processes of change. This presentation will give an overview of the Transtheoretical Model and of the key measures which have been used to assess its constructs. The presentation will conclude with a review of the author's current PhD work in progress which will apply the TTM to the area of ERB, specifically energy use.

Paper 3
Sweat Ceremony: An Investigation of Subjective Health and Wellbeing Benefits

The practice of pouring water over heated stones to produce a cleansing steam bath is common in many parts of the world, including among the Temezcallie of Mexico, the Inipi of the Sioux and the Sauna of Scandinavia (Bruchac, 1993; McGarive, 2009). The aim of this research was to investigate the phenomenological experience of Spirit of the Earth Medicine (SOTEMS) sweat ceremony participants. An interpretative phenomenological research design was adopted to enable an investigation of the lived experience of sweat participants. Fifty five participants responded to online questions and 6 participants participated in a one hour taped interview. Ten themes emerged: altered state of consciousness, connection, focus, cleansing, coping, healing, self development, ordeal, transformation and affect. Reported adverse experiences included competition and bravado, poor focusing and physical discomfort. Reported psychological benefits included increased ability to focus and self develop, to heal past wounds and to cope with ordeals and difficult situations. Social benefits included an increased sense of connection to others, spiritually and ecologically. Spiritual benefits included profound experience and insights from altered states of consciousness and transformation. Further research to investigate the usefulness of sweat practice in relation to psychotherapy is warranted.

Paper 4
What do Ecotherapists do? The Current Literature and Work in Progress on a Research Study

'Ecotherapy' is an umbrella term for a gathering of techniques which aim to exert a positive effect on psychological health by exposing people to elements of the natural environment. Currently, there is a substantial amount of empirical research indicating that specific forms of ecotherapy can assist in alleviating symptoms of psychopathology. However, ecotherapeutic models still appear to be treated as secondary forms of intervention by clinicians within the domains of counselling and psychotherapy. This may be due to the inherent practical and ethical limitations associated with undertaking counselling sessions in outdoor natural settings. There is a need for research investigating the practices of psychotherapists who incorporate in-session ecotherapeutic methods. The research proposed will be qualitative to explore how and why psychologists use ecotherapy practices, and will use an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It is hoped that the research will provide further insights into the practice of ecotherapy, and have useful implications for incorporating nature into more traditional forms of counselling that takes place within the boundaries of the consulting room.

4pm – 5pm

Professor Pieter Rossouw (University of Queensland, Australia)
"The Neuroscience of Talking Therapies: Implications for Therapeutic Practice"

The effect of counselling has been a central focus for scientific study and discourse for many years. Recently, neurobiological research provided a unique insight into the effect of enriched environments (among them – structured talking – counselling/therapy) in affecting the brain.
Since Nobel laureate, Eric Kandel proposed a New Intellectual Framework for Therapy in 1995, neurobiological research demonstrated the effect of talking therapies not only on behavioural change, thinking patterns or feelings but on neurochemical shifts, neural activity and even neuro-structural changes.

This keynote explores recent findings in neuroscience and how these findings shape the future of talking therapies. Neurobiological findings opened new perspectives regarding:

►The impact of the person of the therapist in the counselling process:

The role of down regulation of early developed (pre and post natal) fear systems in the brain are key to effective therapeutic interventions.

► The role of mirror neurons on the effects size of counselling:

Findings regarding the role of mirror neurons opened new perspectives into understanding what shape human behaviour.

►The nature/nurture debate:

The shift from the focus on genetic predispositions to genetic expression changed the landscape of understanding and addressing the human condition.

► The question whether the brain is essentially driven by chemical or electrical processes.
► How memory operates.

These perspectives have profound implications for talking therapies. Implications of these findings will be explored and how Counselling has become a central catalyst for change.

Research Posters

An investigation into the efficacy of a music based men's group for improving psychological wellbeing
IRLE, K. (Uniting Care Community Queensland), LOVELL, G. (Uniting Care Community Queensland)

Aim: Some men do not engage in mainstream psychological interventions despite experiencing low psychological wellbeing (Fields & Cochran, 2011). There is a need for alternative psychological interventions which target men who currently do not seek help (Branney & White, 2008). Research into alternative interventions is needed to guide evidence based practice models. This study examined the efficacy of a music based psychological intervention for improving psychological wellbeing.

Method: Participants (*N*=31) completed Outcome Rating Scales (ORS), measuring psychological wellbeing at session one, session six, and session twelve of a music based men's group. Measures of 'importance of music', 'perceived musical ability', and 'likelihood of engaging in a mainstream psychological intervention' were also collected at session one. A repeated measure multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted upon the ORS scores constituting the multiple dependant variable with time representing the repeated measure. Between measures of 'importance of music', 'perceived musical ability', and 'likelihood of engaging in a mainstream psychological intervention' were examined as potential factors impacting on the efficacy of the intervention.

Results: Thirteen participants that identified themselves as 'unlikely to attend a mainstream psychological intervention'. None of the between measures impacted significantly on the ORS scores. MANOVA main effect of time was significant $F(8,88) = 8.89$, $p < .001$. Post hoc tests demonstrated the ORS scores significantly increased from session six to session twelve but did not increase from session one to session six.

Conclusions: Results suggest music based intervention is an effective method for improving men's psychological wellbeing and that participants do not need to have a high interest in music or require musical ability to benefit from participation. The non-significant ORS changes from session one to session six may have been due to the presence of contemplative and pre-contemplative participants and the intervention's inclusion of altruistic acts after session six. The existence of participants that identified as 'unlikely to engage in a mainstream psychological intervention' demonstrates a need for alternative interventions for men. These findings aid the design of evidence based interventions for men.

The effects of the relationships with parents' in law on husbands' and wives' psychological adjustment :Using Actor Parter Independence Model
LEE, J. (Chung-Ang University)

This study examined the effects of father in law's and mother in law's acceptance-rejection on husband's and wive's psychological adjustment using APIM (actor partner interdependence model). Participants were 265 married couples living in Seoul, KyungKi-do, and JeJu Island, South Korea. Husbands' mean age was 39.16 (SD=7.39), and Wives', 36.45 (SD=7.36). The results of APIM revealed that in father in law's model, actor effects of husbands were more significant than partner effects of wives while partner effects of wives more significant than partner effects of husbands. In mothers in law's model, actor effects of husbands were more significant than actor effects of wives, but there were no significant differences between partner effects of wives and partner effects of husbands.
Key words: Fathers in law's Acceptance-Rejection, Mothers in law's Acceptance-Rejection, Psychological Adjustment, Actor Effect, Partner Effect, APIM , South Korea

Subjective and Subliminal Knowing: Process As Evidence of Value
LETT, W. (MIECAT, Australian Psychological Society)

Aim: The purpose of this research is to explore the perspective that the value of the counselling process may be identified in the processes of and the experiencing of the interactions. How new knowing occurs, through exploration of new unconscious or preflective ways of knowing, in collaboration with cognitive processes, provides the challenge of inquiry.

Method: The inquiry is made into interactions between two pairs of counsellors in research training. In each pair, one is assisted, by the other, as companion, to make an inquiry into aspects of her lived experience which are important for her. The inquiry has no specified format, is spontaneously constructed, and allows any modes of knowing to be included. These may be dialogal, art work, movement, story telling, poetic forming, as these become emergent, and as they arise intuitively in their processes, over two hours. They represent their experiencing, continue their dialogues over time in reflexive continuity, and then review their processes in fine detail, locating the movements into new knowings, understandings and meanings. These dialogues are continued into assessments of value and are placed in real life contexts of meaningfulness.

Results: In each example, it becomes clear that subliminal material can be observed as entering the fields of awareness and become accommodated into integrated knowing. The processes of meaning making are made visible, yet rely upon the trustworthiness of subjective reporting of experiencing. The value of new knowing is clearly made evident and owned by the participants.

Conclusions: There is not a customary behavioural outcome in this investigation. Rather there is evidence that if processes of experiencing in the pre-reflective modes can be made more transparent, a fuller description of human functioning can be achieved. The value of knowing or gaining new understanding often lies in reflexive building over time. This orientation indicates a different perspective on the importance of access to subjectivity in therapeutic interactions.

The Therapist's Hope
O'HARA, D. (Australian College of Applied Psychology),METEYARD, J. (Christian Heritage College, Brisbane), ANDERSEN, K. (The University of Abertay, Dundee),O'HARA, K. (Australian Catholic University)

Aim: This study aimed to explore what therapist qualities are related to therapist hope. Research has demonstrated an association between therapist hope and positive therapeutic outcomes in clients. What remains unclear are the functional dynamics of therapists' hope and also what therapist qualities influence therapist hope.

Method: The study employed a within subjects correlational design with the aid of regression. Three quantitative instruments were used, the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale, the Differentiation of Self Inventory, and the Therapist Attitude Questionnaire-Short Form. The Hope scale is made up of two subscales: Pathways Thinking and Agency Thinking. The Differentiation of Self Inventory contains four subscales I-Position, Emotional Reactivity, Emotional Cut-off, and Fusion with Others. The Epistemic Style was measured using the Therapist Attitude Questionnaire and identified two sub-scales of rationalist and constructivist.

Results: The results demonstrated a moderate to strong correlation between and the Differentiation of Self and Hope. Interestingly, I-Position accounted for the majority of the variance between the Differentiation of Self and the Hope Scale. Of note was the fact that the Agency Thinking subscale of the hope measure produced the highest correlation with the Differentiation of Self. Epistemic style demonstrated no significant correlations.

Conclusions: A clear association between the differentiation of self and hope suggests that therapists who are highly differentiated have a higher capacity for hope. Since there is growing evidence that therapist hope positively influences outcomes in therapy this study highlights the importance of one therapist factor that supports hope. Given these findings it may well be beneficial in future studies to explore how to encourage therapist self differentiation. Additional recommendations are made concerning further studies on hope and epistemic style.

Mindfulness, Stress, Affect and Procrastination in Healthy Individuals
TAN, C. (Monash University)

Aim: Mindfulness is widely accepted as an effective therapeutic approach in various mental health issues especially with regards to psychological distress and mood. Previous research findings utilising a mindfulness approach have consistently reported significant associations with a lower perceived stress, lower negative affect (NA) and higher positive affect (PA). However, there has been little research to investigate the idea of procrastination in relation to mindfulness, despite it being a well known form of self regulation failure. The present study examined the relationships between perceived stress, PA, NA and procrastination in non-clinical individuals.

Method: One hundred and thirty one participants aged 18 and above without a psychiatric history took part in an anonymous online survey. They were assessed by the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), and Pure Procrastination Scale (PSS). Scores were computed and tabulated; with relationships between variables analysed using Pearson correlation coefficients and a hierarchical multiple regression with the assistance of SPSS.

Results: There were significant relationships amongst all variables as predicted, except an insignificant correlation between PA and NA was found. Lower scores of mindfulness were accompanied by a higher score of perceived stress, higher NA and slightly lower PA scores, and a higher degree of procrastination. Higher scores of mindfulness were predicted by a lower degree of perceived stress as well as NA. No significant results were found for PA and procrastination as predictors of mindfulness scores.

Conclusions: The present study bolsters added support for the relationship between mindfulness and psychological factors in a healthy sample. Mindfulness can be beneficial for healthy individuals to cope with general stress and improve mood, and also possibly reduce the tendency to procrastinate. Individuals may learn mindfulness techniques to regulate their negative emotion(s) and cognitive appraisal(s) when they feel stressed.

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