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COUNSELLING AUSTRALIA

Australian Counselling Association Journal



**Exiting the
Faith: The
Dynamics of
Spiritual
Abuse**

**Bouncing
Babies –
Bowlby,
Burdens and
Brains**

**Families of the
New
Millennium.
Designer
Babies, Cyber
Sex and
Virtual
Communities**

**Being There:
The Real Time
Value of
Attending Your
Local ACA
Meeting**

Australian Counselling Association 2003 Annual National Conference & Awards Night

7, 8 and 9 November 2003
Sydney – NSW

Call for submission of Papers by May 31st for 3, 2 and 1 hour presentations

Day 1 Keynote speaker **Rev Bill Crews**, founder/director of the “Exodus Foundation” — Uniting Church Minister — past awarded “Father of the Year”.

Followed by an open forum with selected speakers discussing the subject of “should counselling be a regulated profession”.

Followed by a panel discussion on the issue of ADD/AH “is this condition as prevalent as we are led to believe or is it more a case of poor parenting”

Day 2 Is a series of 3 hr workshops. There will be 2 strands of 4 workshops, delegates will be able to choose 2. Topics and presenters TBA.

Day 3 Is a series of 4 strands of 4 workshops, topics and speakers TBA.

Monthly payment plan available for ACA members. Pay as little as \$45 a month starting from March and by November you will have paid your fees, pay \$55 and you will have paid for the awards night as well. Conditions apply.

For further information on submission of papers and/or payment plan please contact ACA by phone on 1300 784 333 or email on aca@theaca.net.au

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	Dinner & Annual Awards per person	\$88	\$88
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NON ACA MEMBER	Conference for 3 days	\$525	\$575
	Conference per day	\$175	\$195
	Dinner & Annual Awards per person	\$99	\$99



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Editorial By Phillip Armstrong



The year has started off where we left it last year and the momentum has not slowed down. We had 34 new members in January alone which, when one considers it is in the middle of the holiday season, is not too bad. Our priorities this year are similar to those of last year in that we

will continue to hound the private health funds until our members are eligible for rebates. We will also continue to develop services and benefits for our members as well as continuing to ensure ACA standards are met by counsellors. On a more global level, the news seems to be grimmer.

The whole world seems to be on tender hooks, with the issues in Iraq and North Korea coming to a head. It would seem some are convinced immediate war with or without the UN is necessary, others feel that war needs to be sanctioned by the UN before we commit to it and others are saying war is not necessary at all. I get very scared at times, knowing that events that I have no control over may impact on my country and family. It is even more disconcerting when the Prime Minister of your country, which is a Democracy, states that he will not be swayed by public opinion. I wonder how long ACA would last as a professional body if we were to ignore our members and make policy as we see fit, contrary to the members' wishes. I guess the difference is it is a lot easier to resign from a professional body than from your country.

In relation to what members think, we are in the process of correlating the returned surveys and the outcomes will be printed in the June edition of Counselling Australia. The response was not as good as we had hoped for, with 10% of surveys being returned. We can only assume that those who did not return their surveys are content with things the way

they are. We thank all those who did take the time out to fill in and return their surveys. If you still have not returned your survey and do have something to say, it is not too late. We will continue to add returned surveys to the final analysis until the end of March. If you have misplaced your survey, just drop us a line and we will send you out another one. It is important to us, as a member-led association, that we know what members think about us and what we can do to continue to improve our services to members.

We will be adding an extra page to the journal, which will carry a calendar of events. This calendar will advertise workshops, seminars and ACA activities. The calendar will only advertise activities that are run by non-profit associations. Activities that are organised by for-profit organisations will need to advertise through the journal's advertising facility. We hope that the calendar will help members to achieve their OPD points without incurring extra costs. If any readers know of workshops or seminars that are being planned, please contact us on 1300 784 333 or email on aca@theaca.net.au so that we can follow them up.

The ACA is going to be very active again this year, with state conferences being held in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide. The National Conference, which will be hosted by the NSW Chapter, will be held in Sydney in November this year. The conference will go for three days and have something for everyone. To ensure we give every member a chance of being able to afford to attend the conference, we will be organising payment plans that can be paid off in instalments over a six-month period. This would simply mean that by putting away less than \$60 a month you would be able to attend the whole three days without putting any further undue financial burden on yourself.

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ACA Member Issues

Record (Log books) All members are now aware that each full member (qualified, professional & clinical) must complete a minimum of 5 hours professional supervision and accrue 40 points worth of Ongoing Professional Development annually to renew their membership and maintain their current level of membership. The new points system now gives members a broader base from which to accumulate their OPD points. The introduction of peer supervision has helped members, particularly those who are in private practice and still establishing themselves, to accrue hours of professional supervision in a more cost-efficient scenario.

To help facilitate the recording of OPD and Professional Supervision (PS), ACA has now introduced a record book that all members can take with them when they attend OPD or PS. Members simply need to fill in the relevant information and have the appropriate person sign off the activity. When membership renewal is due, all the member needs to do is to send in the record. This new system

will see the end of the need for members to accumulate certificates of attendance and receipts to prove OPD and PS. The Record also lists on the back how points for OPD are gathered and what activities' point values are. In regard to OPD, it is not necessary for workshops, courses, seminars or presentations to be ACA approved to accrue points. ACA-approved activities will accrue double points' value, as will all Chapter venues.

We are aware that those members who are geographically isolated may not be able to make up the required amount of OPD due to a lack of appropriate activities in their area. Members who have this issue can approach us for individual assessment.

Private Health Funds A large proportion of our members who are in private practice have concerns that rebates are not available to clients from private health funds. ACA has approached all of the major health funds in relation to this issue. We have to date been successful in Western Australia only. The

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response from all of the others has been the same - they are happy with ACA and its standards and would be happy to consider rebates if there was a demand by their members. However, most of them have not been approached by their members to have counselling rebates and therefore the issue of rebates for counselling is not a priority.

In my own experience, and I also know from many of our members, this is not the case. The problem seems to lie in the fact that most health-fund members think they have access to counselling because they have access to psychological services. This is a common misconception by members of the public. The only way private health companies are going to accept counselling for rebates is to be lobbied by their members, not ACA.

It is in all our members' best interests to urge anyone they know who is a member of a private health fund to send letters to their fund demanding that rebates be made available for counselling as opposed to psychological services. I am not suggesting counselling be made available instead of psychological

services, but to have counselling made available as well as psychological services. Should the funds receive enough letters from members, they will possibly respond to lobbying from ACA to have its members recognised for provider numbers. Please note - do not send letters to health funds if you are not a member unless you are sincere in that, should they have this service, you would contemplate joining. This issue is pretty much in the hands of ACA members, not ACA management.

Member Survey The results from the member surveys will be published in the June edition of Counselling Australia. Returns are still coming in. If you have not returned your survey, please do. If you have misplaced it, let us know and we will send you another one. Remember, these surveys are your opportunity to let us know how we are going and what, if any, changes are needed. We cannot be a member-led association if the members do not let us know what their priorities are.

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“Exiting the Faith: The dynamics of spiritual abuse”

By David Ward

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The notion of abuse has regularly been explored in the literature in recent years. The therapeutic community's knowledge of physical, sexual and emotional abuse has expanded enormously and with it, subsequent counselling models. Spiritual abuse, while gaining increasing prominence as an issue in therapy, nonetheless lags behind in research and appropriate treatment options. This paper will outline some dynamics of spiritual abuse, the effects of such abuse and considerations for counselling victims of such abuse.

The dynamics of spiritual abuse

Spirituality is a broad concept that includes ‘...the acknowledgement of a transcendent being, power, or reality greater than ourselves’ (Miller & Martin 1988 p.14). When spirituality becomes toxic or abusive, many dynamics found in other forms of abuse are also experienced as Wehr (2000 p.49) points out:

Spiritual abuse is a misuse of power in a spiritual context...[it] involves a confusion of kinds of power because it is a use - really a misuse - of *social power* (status automatically conferred by virtue of one's gender, race, or class) and/or *political power* (status and authority because of one's position at the top of a hierarchy) in a *spiritual context*. This social or political power then parades as *spiritual power* and carries spiritual weight and authority (emphasis original).

The difficulty of course is deciding by what rule of thumb do we label a group or spiritual leader ‘abusive’ or ‘deviant’? Some writers such as Hume (1996) look for specific ‘danger markers’ such as charismatic leadership, separatist practices and apocalyptic cosmology. Other frameworks have explored toxic systems from a political context (Lifton 1961) to more contemporary religious systems (Singer 1995a, Hassan 2000). The frameworks these researchers offer are typically utilised in gaining an understanding of the so-called ‘cults’ in society which have steadily increased in numbers over the last thirty years (Schwartz & Kaslow 2001). My experience has been that it is not uncommon to meet a parent who is concerned about the ‘brainwashing’ that their child is experiencing in the ‘cult’. As I have sometimes discovered, the group might be a charismatic, unorthodox group but benign. My thesis in this paper is that the individual belief system should not be the point of concern. The community is free to accept or reject any system of religious beliefs it chooses.

The *behaviour* of the group or leader and the effects are more relevant to a counsellor. Unfortunately even the concept of ‘behaviour’, however unorthodox it may appear, remains an intangible concept. Nevertheless, one variable that can act as a general therapeutic guide is that of ‘control’. Admittedly, where one draws the line is impossible and like many areas in the therapeutic professions, there are many ‘grey areas’. Nonetheless, when the therapist can identify a number of controlling elements, it should be a warning sign of possible psychological and spiritual abuse.

Hassan (1988; 2000) has researched such control processes and has distilled the spiritually abusive experience into four components of control;

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“Exiting the Faith: The dynamics of spiritual abuse” (continued)

Behaviour control, Information control, Thought control and Emotional control. While the word ‘control’ is used, the term does not imply that the mindset of an individual caught up in a destructive group parallels that of a robot with little or no capacity to think for oneself. Individuals react to spiritually abusive dynamics in diverse ways, interacting with their own unique personality and personal history.

Past clients who have experienced behaviour control have reported practices such as being expected to withdraw from family and friends while equally being expected to spend increasing amounts of time selling products or going door-to-door proselytising. This included dropping out of University if demanded by the group.

In terms of information control, I have met many individuals who were forbidden to read anything critical of the group and forbidden under threat of expulsion if they were to converse with ex-members. They have also informed me that personal information is often gathered during the initial stages of recruitment, and later used to induce guilt or fear.

I have found that the thought control dynamic involves the internationalisation of the group’s doctrine through thought stopping techniques (chanting, meditating), and a re-defining of terms according to group dogma. For one such sect, ‘Gentile’ was the name given to anyone outside of group and ‘theocratic warfare’ was the term used to make lying to outsiders permissible. No critical questioning of the group is allowed and only thinking that is in line with group ideology, is encouraged.

These facets of control consequently lead to an emotional control where an individual’s feelings are manipulated according to the group’s demands. I have recognised that two emotions, guilt (not measuring up, past affiliations) and fear (of those outside, fear of losing one’s ‘salvation’) are particularly common and emotionally harmful components of this facet of control.

Spiritual abuse can be a rather elastic and imprecise notion. While one can draw parallels with some ‘mainstream’ faiths or religious movements, again the barometer is the notion of control. Discouraging the use of TV and radio is one thing; deciding whom one is to marry and when to have children is another. Discouraging the eating of meat is one thing; not allowing a life-saving blood transfusion is another. Deikman (1996 p.321) has noted this point:

Identifying these basic behaviours permits one to replace the question, “Is this group a cult?” with the more practical one, “To what extent is cult behaviour present?” The latter question is more useful because in the field of the transpersonal, as elsewhere, there is a continuum of groups ranging from the most benign and least cult-like to the most malignant and destructive”.

Spiritual abuse then, is the unethical manipulation and exploitation of individuals within a spiritual context. It is also suggested that spiritual abuse may contain a number of facets incorporating the physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive domains with an overall spiritual configuration. As such, when the

configuration becomes toxic, the effects can truly be polyfaceted. The consequent need for a wide technical repertoire for victims of spiritual abuse is reflected below in the effects of spiritual abuse.

Some effects of spiritual abuse

Leaving a spiritually abusive environment is akin to a ‘rape of the soul’. It parallels a broken relationship with all the typical emotions of anger, grief, shock and denial. However, it may go much further. For those who have been burned at the lower end of the continuum, anger, mild depression and disillusionment may be the outcome. For others the consequences may be more far reaching. For these individuals, it is a collapse of a worldview, a cosmology. It is a collapse of all the answers you *thought* you had about why we exist and our place in the cosmos, only to find out it was a sham. Below are some of the more common difficulties experienced upon leaving a toxic group.

The sense of Self is wounded

Ofshe & Singer (1986) have differentiated ‘central’ elements of self as opposed to ‘peripheral’ elements of self in discussing spiritual woundedness. They posit that because cultic or spiritually abusive systems deal in the very ‘core’ issues of human existence, once the experience disintegrates, a psycho-spiritual fragmentation occurs. Likewise, related literature suggests that victims of prolonged emotional and psychological strain, brought about by such forces, undergo a personality transformation to cope with the self-fragmentation (Boulette & Anderson 1985). Terms such as ‘identification with the aggressor’ and ‘Stockholm syndrome’ have been coined to represent that radical transformation of personality in the face of trauma, as one individual describes:

Now I couldn’t sleep at night because my mind wouldn’t shut off. I heard multiple voices chattering, arguing, whispering, sometimes for days and nights. I felt I had fragmented into hundreds of “me’s”, each having its own perspective and arguing with one or more other “me’s” (Whitfield 1994 p.231).

A deep sense of grief and loss

As previously mentioned, spiritual abuse can be likened in some ways to a broken relationship though it encompasses much more. The loss may include issues such as the loss of family if the family of origin has disowned the person, the loss of being a member of the ‘elite’ or ‘God’s chosen ones’ and the loss of easy black and white answers to life’s questions. For others it may be the loss of spirituality/cosmology or the sense of loss of special customs/rituals particular to the group. The writer below gives some sense of this experience:

The loss of the best years of my life, the loss of the opportunity to have children of my own, and the loss of building a career are bitter pills to swallow. I can see now that in giving myself completely and unconditionally to the cult leader and his beliefs and practices, I gave myself up (Whitfield 1994 p.233).

More extensive psychological damage

For some individuals where the spiritual abuse extends to physical or sexual abuse, the trauma can be more acute. Formal diagnoses are not uncommon such as

These facets of control consequently lead to an emotional control where an individual’s feelings are manipulated according to the group’s demands.

post traumatic stress disorder (Leslie 2000), relaxation-induced anxiety disorders and psychoses (Giambalvo 1993). In one study by Lalich (1997), 40% of a female sample of ex-members experienced sexual abuse. A past client shared with me the following experience:

“Pam” joined an apocalyptic ‘doomsday’ group that had its headquarters in an American desert while on a holiday from her native New Zealand. After 3 years in the group, she informed the leadership that her workload was too strenuous and needed time away. She was told that those who cross a five mile radius of the groups’ home would be attacked by invisible forces deep from outer space and go insane. Six months later she was asked to leave when her psychological condition deteriorated. She was put on a plane back to New Zealand whereupon shortly after arrival she experienced a psychotic episode and jumped from a two-story building (Personal communication).

Triggering emotional states

In my caseload with this client population, I have found that an individual can experience unpleasant feeling states ranging from the mild to the terrifying. They can include a general sense of unease to a full panic attack upon exposure to stimuli that reminds the individual of the group. Below are some of these thoughts expressed by a past client of mine:

“Andrew” left an eastern religious sect with his parents and one of his sisters after growing up in the group. An older sister however stayed for some months after the rest of the family left. At that stage, they were both finishing High School and attending at the same campus. The very sight of his sister would precipitate a panic attack which were so common they eventually compelled him to move to a new school (Personal communication).

These brief examples give some sense of the variegated issues that this client population can bring to therapy. It is suggested that due to the diversity of issues this client population experiences, the therapy necessitates a pragmatic and flexible approach. As the client examples in this paper show, the therapist may need to address cognitive difficulties, family of origin conflict as well as existential themes in the one client. The challenge is to have a base knowledge of a range of counselling models and well as a fundamental proficiency in them. It is therefore fitting and necessary to examine what models we use to assess and intervene in cases of spiritual abuse. Research is increasingly pointing to the need for the therapist to align oneself with the clients’ theory of change if treatment is to be effective (Duncan & Miller 2001). It is also suggestive that early treatment gains are both necessary for, and predictive of, long-term outcome (Miller et al 2000). These factors alone encourage therapists to develop therapeutic elasticity with our clients. The following paragraphs shall now briefly survey three models that can be useful in addressing spiritual abuse.

Systems-oriented models

A systemic lens with a family therapy model can be useful (Becvar & Becvar 1996). One of the

advantages of a systems-oriented model is the premise that neither the individual nor the family are singularly blamed for any issue. Both family and individual are seen through a holistic lens and problems are understood via the interactions. In terms of spiritual abuse, this can certainly be advantageous. Singer (1995b) has cautioned the family therapist however, against the belief that there had to be something intrinsically dysfunctional about the individual or the family in order for someone to join a toxic spiritual group. This betrays an ignorance of the dynamics of spiritual abuse and may parallel a ‘blaming the victim’ for individual or family.

Positively, family therapy may increase helpful family communication, contain painful feelings and redirect the family member who has experienced spiritual abuse toward healthy developmental health (Sirkin 1990). It can help family members in expressing themselves and to respond with sensitivity and openness. My experience has been however, that this skill is rarely seen in families that have been affected by spiritual abuse. Outbursts such as, “Our son’s been brainwashed!” and “Your father’s health has worsened since you left!” will simply increase tension between family members. I have found that controlling emotions is particularly important, especially when the family member threatens to return to a toxic group. Many cults instill the belief that they will be persecuted for upholding group ideology and any perceived threat from the family will reinforce the ‘us versus them’ mindset and halt productive communication. This is therefore an opportunity for the therapist to model open, non-judgemental communication to the family. Reminiscing about happier times with the family member can remind the individual that not all experiences with the family of origin were bad; something the group may well have suggested (Ward 2002).

The Cognitive-Behavioural model

The cognitive-behavioural models are also useful, particularly when stories such as the one below is shared:

For a while I was bothered by triggers, things that reminded me of the group. The smell of incense for example, would trigger me to feel as though I were chanting again. Music was also a stimulus that carried me back to feeling connected to the Swami. While a disciple, I had been encouraged to direct all my emotional feelings toward him. No emotion toward another person or thing could be tolerated... Now while driving, love songs on the radio would send me into a crying jag (Kelly 1994 pp.89,90).

This case example briefly demonstrates some of the cognitive difficulties that so many individuals experience upon leaving a spiritually abusive environment. Common triggers that individuals may experience can include:

- Language that was used by the group that now resurfaces distressing memories
- Dissociative states brought about by numerous stimuli such as sights, sounds or smells
- Difficulties with memory and reduced critical thinking
- Various anxiety states and depressive episodes

I have found that controlling emotions is particularly important, especially when the family member threatens to return to a toxic group.

“Exiting the Faith: The dynamics of spiritual abuse” (continued)

(Tobias 1994)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is often the treatment of choice for such problems and has been demonstrated to be clinically useful for a range of presenting issues, particularly depression and a range of anxiety disorders (DeRubeis & Crits-Christoph 1998). The work of Ellis and Beck is amongst the best well known (Meichenbaum 1995). Ellis' work (Ellis 1995) focuses on the irrationality of thinking and the consequent emotional/behavioural problems. Beck's model essentially addresses a range of self-defeating cognitive structures via a teaching model whereby the individual is taught more realistic and flexible thinking (Dobson & Shaw 1995). As mentioned, the victim of spiritual abuse may experience a number of issues for which the cognitive therapies have been shown to be valid and reliable treatments.

Psychodynamic models

Paralleling the other models, the psychodynamic paradigm also has something to offer. Another example from the author's past caseload will help illustrate:

'Mark' was thirty-two when I met him. He was born in an extremely restrictive religious group that forbade computers, birthday and Christmas parties, non-group friends and tertiary education. He was in the group for the first twenty-five years of his life before he could not tolerate it anymore and left. Upon leaving, he was ostracised by his family and friends who remained in the group to this day. Mark found it difficult to be a man in his thirties. He expressed a desire to go out and enjoy many activities that were forbidden in the group though he was considerably older than most of his younger friends. He also expressed a desire to find a partner and 'settle down' and yet the feedback he received from the occasional girlfriend was that he was 'too immature' and 'not ready for a serious relationship' (Personal communication).

The above illustrates a common scenario for those who have grown up in spiritually abusive environments. They report a home life that is rule-bound and shame-based. Family unity and happiness are based on performance. The family virtually lived in fear of God shortly judging the inhabitants of the Earth and feeling that they were not measuring up despite giving long hours to group-related activities. These group-related activities left little time for anything else such as hobbies and having fun with friends.

There are many facets to the psychodynamic model as well as important variations (Karon & Wildener 1995) that are valuable for this issue. Ego defense mechanisms were explored with Mark, such as denial of certain elements of his experience and reaction formation for repressed impulses from his earlier years. The psychodynamic notion of developmental tasks is also very useful. Erikson's theory (1963) in particular was valuable here in understanding the unfinished developmental business for Mark that manifested themselves in his relationship difficulties. Exploring and normalising these unmet developmental tasks proved very helpful. Attachment theory (Bowlby

1969) is also useful in assessing needs of such clients. There is increasing evidence to suggest that secure early attachment precedes individuation and identity later in life (Marcia 1988). Clients such as Mark may have experienced attachment difficulties and exploring the client's attachment history can then inform my work. This is particularly important given that for some individuals growing up in a spiritually abusive environment, a number of developmental and relational needs may have been given second priority to the demands of the group (Langone & Eisenberg 1993).

Conclusion

This paper has suggested that spiritual abuse is a genuine phenomenon that affects an individual deeply at a number of levels. It therefore requests a broad-based counselling approach. Three models of therapy that can be utilised in cases of spiritual abuse have briefly been explored. There are many other models for the counsellor to choose from in helping victims of spiritual abuse. Pastoral counselling, Humanistic approaches and Transpersonal models all have facets that could prove useful in counselling. Individuals who have experienced spiritual abuse often feel isolated and confused about their experience. This paper has touched upon some of some of these experiences in the hope of better informing counsellors.

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There are many facets to the psychodynamic model as well as important variations (Karon & Wildener 1995) that are valuable for this issue.

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Bouncing Babies – Bowlby, Burdens and Brains

By Ian Hay — (Part 1)

Ian Hay explains the impact of infant development on the future mental health throughout the lifespan.

How has our knowledge and awareness of child development changed over these last few years?

During the middle of the last century (sounds such a long time ago but we are really talking about fifty years or so), the psychoanalytic school told us that we cannot spoil a baby.

Then quite a different view was being put forward by another school of thought. Their way of seeing the world of infancy and childhood followed the ideas of one John Broadus Watson (1878-1958).

Behaviourism, as it became to be known, was rooted in the belief that the here and now – systems of rewards and punishments – were the determinants of behaviour.

Feeding schedules at strict times and a minimum of “mawkish sentimentality” were guidelines for child rearing. In terms of infant crying, he advised that by comforting a crying child the parent is rewarding crying behaviour and, therefore, crying increases.

While Watson’s views represent an extreme, the underlying concepts of rewarding “bad” behaviour through responding to infant needs remain. Take the extant view, encouraged by some “experts” in childcare, relating to infant feeding. As opposed to demand feeding (feeding when the baby wants it), mothers are still pointed towards the value of strict schedule feeding.

In relation to sleeping patterns mothers are sold the grail that babies and infants should sleep through the night. The research does not support the view that most infants “sleep through” (Blum, 1999). Most in fact, do not.

Controlled crying programs are recommended for infants who have sleeping difficulties. While the application of the controlled crying programs vary, the common denominator involves a non-response to baby and infant crying.

It is interesting to look at the research supporting controlled crying – only two published papers – neither of which are that convincing. Proponents of controlled crying indicate that it is well researched – but by whom, and where? Certainly exhaustive searches of the Medline, CINHAH and Poplit databases have not resulted in evidence of the stated and implied research.

The psychodynamic school emphasised the importance of early development. The first year of life was seen as particularly significant, as seen in the writings of people like Freud, Bowlby, Erickson, Klein and Benedict.

Each used a different term to signify the positive outcome of this first year of development but essentially they have the same theme – *the world is a good place and I can rely on my needs being met*. By way of contrast the behavioural school placed no special emphasis on the early years arguing that development is a life long process and each part of the process is as important as another.

The ten year time span incorporating the 1990’s was dubbed the “decade of the brain”. During these ten years much emphasis was placed on the development of knowledge in the area of neuroscience. The proliferation of research into brain function was facilitated by newer technologies that permitted scientists to look into the living brain.

The size of various parts of the brain could now be measured. The uptake of oxygen and glucose by brain cells could be observed, along with the activities of major brain chemicals referred to as neurotransmitters. Much of the research into brain function supports a rethink of how we approach babies and infants – a rethink that is highly consistent with the views of the psychodynamic school.

What evidence is there for the need for the suggested rethink? The need is probably summarised in this quote taken from an article by Michael Rutter: *Over the course of the last fifty years there have been tremendous improvements in the physical health of children and in the life expectancy of adults. It is chastening to realise that there have not been parallel improvements in psychological functioning or mental health. On the contrary psychosocial disorders have tended to increase in frequency over the last half century (Rutter, 2002, p15)*

Certainly the observation is supported by the higher incidences of attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity, conduct disorder, depression and anxiety based disorders that have been identified in the Western World.

The reasons for the increase probably cut across a number of complex and varied psychosocial and socioeconomic contributors. (I am prepared to accept that it is not just better identification of psychological problems.)

Knowing each contributing factor and being able to determine how much each factor contributes to poor mental health would be useful. At this time I do not think that we have done this but we have, nevertheless, made some progress in determining some basic risk and protective factors.

In terms of this we are looking at how children are made more resilient, or less vulnerable to, the risk for mental health problems. The questions to be addressed are:

- What are the factors that protect?
- And, how do we go about increasing them?

Two areas that have been researched in answering the two questions posed above involve the constructs of attachment and stress.

During the course of this article we will be looking at three related constructs. The construct of *attachment* will be considered in relation to the construct of *stress* and how these two things in combination impact on *mental health*.

In essence we will be examining the relationship between the formation (and quality) of the initial mother-infant bond and how the biochemical effects of stress give rise to various types of mental health outcomes.

The size of various parts of the brain could now be measured. The uptake of oxygen and glucose by brain cells could be observed, along with the activities of major brain chemicals referred to as neurotransmitters.

Attachment

The term attachment was coined by John Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) and has a precise meaning. The word means *wanting to be near to*. The emphasis is on the “wanting” and not necessarily on the “being near to”.

Attachment also implies a bond – a special love relationship between mother and child that forms as a result of contact. We know that both mother and infant are biologically wired to assist in the formation of this bond.

Both mother and infant have brain cells or neurons that are set to fire given the right external stimulus. The mother is pre-wired to things such as smiling, crying, and responding to sounds. The mother automatically changes her pitch and tone of voice in a way that extracts the best possible response from the infant.

The pre-wiring has but one purpose. That purpose is to bring mother and child together. It is the responding to each other in a way that “fires off” the specific receptors in each other’s brain that sets the scene for bond formation.

The development of the bond is a two way street in which both mother and baby play a significant part. The baby’s part is to signal its needs. The mother’s task is to be both responsive and consistent to those signals. One may even compensate for the other.

A baby with strong signals can make up for a mum who is a little insensitive. While a very sensitive mother can make up for a baby whose signaling is weak.

Once these variables are satisfied the next important one is that of consistency. Consistent and sensitive responding to the child’s needs gives the best outcome. Various patterns of bond formation have been identified and each of these patterns are a result of permutations involving consistency and sensitivity (Bacon and Richardson, 2001).

Thus, what we have described so far is that attachment involves a “wanting to be near to” as a result of the formation of a “special bond” between the mother and the infant. In other words we have an infant who loves mum and who feels a specific need to be near to mum at different times. The infant is then seen to be engaging in “attachment” behaviour.

The infant can also, despite loving mum, be “happy to be away from” her. This is the time that the infant is engaging in play or exploratory behaviour. Hence at any point in the infant’s waking hours he or she is involved in one of two activities: *attachment* behaviour or *exploratory* behaviour. These two states are mutually exclusive, that is, only one state is possible at any one point in time.

Now, when do infants want to be specifically near mum? The answer is when the child is tired, ill, hungry, angry, sad or threatened in any way, such as in the presence of strangers. In these circumstances the infant wants to cuddle, hold, or simply be close to mum. The period of attachment is followed by another bout of exploratory behaviour.

There are various categories and types of attachment that surround either security or insecurity. Security of

any sort simply means to be able to predict the future. A child with a secure attachment has a predictive capacity (it becomes an inner certainty) that mum will be available both physically and emotionally at the required times.

The child with an insecure attachment does not have this inner certainty and life involves considerable anxiety. Children with insecure attachments have attachment triggered by the most subtle of cues that suggest the child is going to be separated from mum. On the other hand children with secure attachments will not show any anxiety unless mum is virtually walking out the door.

The more time that the child is engaged in attachment the less time the child is able to play and explore their world. Children with insecure attachments simply do not have the learning opportunities available to securely attached children.

Attachment behaviour is established by the time the child is eight to nine months of age and is readily triggered through to year three. This is why Bowlby recommended that working mother’s access childcare early (in the first few months) or avoid full time work until the child is age three or more. Interestingly there is some recent research data on middle class mums in Australia that support Bowlby’s prediction.

How important is this first relationship to other relationships?

There are considerable differences in views here. Bowlby viewed the initial mother-infant bond as setting a template for all future bonds. Some more modern theorists are not so sure about how unchangeable poor beginnings can be (Rutter, 2002; Lopez et al. 1999; Panksepp, 2001).

Despite the difference in views, there is no doubt that children with insecure/avoidant and insecure/dependent attachment relationships have a poor start in life.

Unfortunately, there are children with more extreme disruptions to attachment (such as more extreme forms of deprivation) with an even poorer one. For these children the likelihood is that people will always be objects where emotion plays little part in life’s interactions with them. The ability to share an emotional world with others is referred to as affect attunement (Stern, 1995).

People with severe psychopathologies still develop relationships but these are far more likely to have the characteristics of a relationship based on dependency. These sort of relationships endure solely while a need is being met or where the need can be better met by someone else.

These relationships are qualitatively different from an attachment-based relationship. The simple distinction is a relationship based on emotion rather than the satisfaction of need.

Mothers with poor affect attunement (insensitive to emotion) do not have the capacity to emotionally link with the child. As one researcher reported “its as if they do not hear the child cry” despite being very close, in terms of distance to the crying child.

The likelihood is that their babies will become insensitive mums and dads themselves. The scene is

Despite the difference in views, there is no doubt that children with insecure/avoidant and insecure/dependent attachment relationships have a poor start in life.

Bouncing Babies – Bowlby, Burdens and Brains (continued)

set for continuation of the cycle of insensitivity and abuse.

The bond component of attachment is most likely activated through early interaction with the newborn in the father as well as the mother. An outcome of this early interaction and bond formation is that crying acts as a signal for nearness and the provision of comfort and support.

Problems arise when mothers who have not bonded with their babies enter into a new relationship. The new “man” has no relationship with the infant or baby at all. In this instance neither the mother nor the “father” provide the protection usually afforded to the infant through the bonding process.

The tragedy is that where this bond has not been established the baby may be punished for signaling his or her needs. Instead of the crying resulting in comfort the child may be neglected or abused. This infant does not learn that the world is a good place where their needs are met.

Stress

This is one of the most universally misunderstood terms of all time. Stress is not an emotion or feeling state. One may be stressed but one can never “feel” stress. The term is used in many different ways but in scientific terms there are three main applications of the word.

The first is usually used in the context where someone is under a great deal of pressure or experiencing a bout of frustration or conflict. In this sense “stress” refers to some sort of cause. Something in one’s external world that is causing discomfort.

The second use is less frequent but here the word refers to an outcome rather than a cause. This use has its origins with people such as Hans Selye (1956) who defined stress as some sort of non-specific effect that occurred at cellular level. In this sense stress refers to the biological effect of someone who is experiencing conflict, pressure or frustration.

The third use of the word involves the difference between demands and coping. Stress here is a psychological event that occurs when someone appraises their current coping ability to be less than the demand made upon them.

The three uses of the term are really not that far apart. In a nutshell it goes something like this. People are exposed to stressors (causes such as pressure and conflict) which give rise to emotions, which in turn trigger changes in cell biochemistry. Of course high emotional states occur only when the person psychologically perceives the demand to be beyond current coping reserves. The individual faced with this situation is now “stressed”

Figure 1 explains the stress response as an outcome of a six stage process. The first stage of the process involves aspects of daily living where individuals are exposed to the blocking of a motive or goal (frustration), having to make choices between opposing motives or goals (conflict), or where their current resources are inadequate to meet some environmental demand (pressure).

The second stage involves the felt emotion as individuals become angry as a result of frustration or anxious as a result of conflict for example.

Stage three refers to the biochemical events (hormonal activity) in the body that accompany felt emotions, such as anger and anxiety.

Stage four involves the effect that these circulating hormones now have on complete body systems and the individual cells that make up those systems.

Stage five refers to the increase or decrease in activity that these cells undergo as a result of being exposed to the circulating hormones. Prior to this hormonal influx these individual cells had a set level of activity maintained by a relatively constant chemical environment. This relatively constant environment is referred to as a “same state”, or homeostatic state or balance.

Stage six involves “stress”. Stress then refers to the amount of change that the cell has to cope with following disruption to the homeostatic balance

The take home message here is that stress is not some sort of fuzzy thing that science cannot define. Stress refers to the biochemical adjustments that the body has to make in times of heightened emotion – whether that heightened emotion is a result of the good things or bad things that happen in our lives.

Good things and bad things happen to fetuses, neonates, babies, infants, and children as well as adults. These good things and bad things regulate changes that occur in everyone’s biochemistry that impacts on their health and behaviour across the remainder of the life cycle.

Stress and Attachment

So what is the relationship between stress and attachment?

To explain this relationship we need to explore a couple of other constructs often referred to as protective and risk factors.

Risk factors are those things in someone’s life that puts them in danger of having some negative outcome in their social and emotional world of the future. In other words how they get on with other people, the type and quality of relationships that can be shared and enjoyed with others in relation to social development.

The take home message here is that stress is not some sort of fuzzy thing that science cannot define.

Figure 1. Stress as a Biochemical Event

1. Life stressors – conflicts, pressures and frustrations as a function of daily living.

2. Conflict and frustration give rise to emotions such as anxiety and anger.

3. Emotions such as anger and anxiety release hormones.

4. Hormones such as adrenalin slow down or speed up cell activity across various body systems.

5. Cell activity increased or decreased. Increase/decrease in activity interrupts the usual level of activity (homeostatic balance) therefore changes the initial level of activity.

6. Extent of change to the homeostatic balance of individual cells reflects the level of the stress response.

In terms of emotional development, protective factors are those that guard against a lifetime of anxiety, anger, depression, sadness, misery and regret. Someone who is able to form long term relationships based on “wanting to be near to” rather than for the satisfaction of some need (as in a dependency-based relationship), and be appropriately angry and anxious when some crummy things happen, yet happy and content at other times, is well off.

This is particularly true when compared to someone whose life is full of unexplained or unresolved anger, anxiety and depression.

Protective factors are those that assist the person against the onset of social and emotional problems. The concept of protective factors is associated with a fellow concept referred to as “resilience”.

This involves the ability of individuals to bounce back from adversity without longer term sequelae of becoming isolated, filled with anger, depression and the capacity not to be able to move on.

Dicken’s character Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* serves as a perfect example of someone who lacked resilience. Those who have read *Great Expectations* remember Miss Havisham as a woman who, being jilted on her wedding day, kept everything the same from that day forward. This single life event resulted in social isolation and emotional devastation, with every day of her life tormented by anger and bitterness.

Perhaps the most significant forms of protection and resilience (and therefore reduction of risk) are developed through the quality of the initial mother-infant bond.

The quality of this bond determines the type of attachment relationship that forms between mother and baby. The best possible outcome is a *secure attachment*. Securely attached infants grow up to be able to integrate thoughts and emotions. These infants are able to rely on their thoughts and emotions to assist them to determine their reactions to particular situations. These children have a sense of control.

They are able to influence things when the world is both good and not so good. When things are not so good they can find significant others to help them find solutions. It is, in essence, the capacity to find a happy balance between dependence and independence.

It has also been shown that these securely attached children have a better facility with language to describe emotional and physiological states such as anger and hunger (Streeck-Fischer, van der Kolk, 2000)

By way of contrast, children with disorganised attachment patterns have difficulty with regulating either their own emotional states or organising significant others to help them. They respond in the only ways possible - and that is with alarm. To be able to flee or resist, flight or fight, are the only choices.

Avoidant infants deal with stressors through switching from an emotional plane to a cognitive one. In other

words, they rely on what they can observe and suppress their emotions. It has been observed that these children appear more independent than others – but this independence comes at a cost. The cost is an inability to be comforted by others and therefore become isolated.

While children with disorganised attachment patterns tend to rely on cognitions, children with anxious/avoidant patterns tend to rely more on feeling. The former ignore their distress while the latter ignore their perceptions and cognitions.

Driven by feelings these children fail to develop a cognitive appreciation of why their world – and the things that happen to them – occur in the way that they do. It is no wonder that this maladaptive mechanism for attachment is recognised as a marker for later social and emotional problems.

Children who are able to integrate thinking and feeling are in a better position to deal with life stressors. To begin with, children with this capacity perceive the world as less threatening. The world is less threatening for a number of reasons.

First, there is a better verbal facility to signal significant others about the nature and source of a threat.

Second, the child feels comfortable in signaling to significant others the need for help.

Third, there is an inner certainty that once the significant other is aware of the distress that comfort will be provided.

Without an excessive reliance on thinking or feeling, the child, who has a balance between the two, is able to have a better recovery from life’s misfortunes (resilience). This is really evident as the child grows and becomes more facile with language. With appropriate adult help children are better able to identify particular emotions and supply appropriate verbal tags to them.

What all this adds up to is the accumulation of coping skills. Sensitive and consistent mothering followed by appropriate adult modeling, and identifying various emotions and the verbal tags to describe them, forms the base upon which life’s problems can be dealt with.

Therein lies the link between attachment and stress. The initial bond and the nature of the attachment relationship provides a mechanism to cope with the external world. If the nature of the attachment relationship provides for an integration of thinking and feeling, the capacity to deal with life’s threats are that much better.

Secure attachment provides for the development of better general coping skills along with the prospect of better recovery when things do go wrong. The nature of the stress response is reduced through two mechanisms. First stress reactions are less likely to be prolonged through better coping. Second, fewer of life’s events are likely to be perceived as insurmountable threats in the first place.

(Continued in the June Edition)

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Internet and IT Resources Compiled by Angela Lewis



Hello fellow members!

I thought we might spend some time this issue looking at **'Screen Savers and Wallpapers'**.

First to the screen savers. A screen saver is an image (moving or static) that appears when your computer is on but not being used. They start after a time delay chosen by you. So for example, if I stop

typing on the computer and take a phone call, my computer screen comes up with a screen saver (images) of stars. This is because I have chosen this graphic from the list of what was available in my Control Panel and decided that if the computer is unused for 5 minutes that I would like to see shooting stars on my screen.

Originally the idea with a screen saver was to save a monitor from having static image ghosted onto its surface (e.g. you are typing a letter, you walk away for 5 hours and leave the letter on the screen, a long time a go there was a possibility those letters would burn into the face of the monitor. These days there is more for novelty value and security to some degree, as others cannot walk by and accidentally read what is on your computer.

Windows comes with a set of screen savers, some are moving and some are static. Set one by following these steps:

1. Click the **Start** Button
2. Click **Control** Panel
3. Double click on **Display**
4. Click the tab marked **Screen Saver**.
5. Click the down arrow next to current choice (which may well be 'none') and scroll through the available choices.
6. Click on the one you wish to use.
7. Fill in the time delay next to **'Wait'**
8. Click **OK** to finish.
9. Repeat these steps to take it off, making the choice 'None'.

Downloading Screensavers from the Internet.

There are many available, most for free. If you do a search on the Internet you will come across many. However a good one to try first is www.webshots.com. It is very popular and most importantly free! Once you reach the site you are guided through downloading their software – there are many themes, including animals, space, nature, etc. Once you have installed the software, down by clicking the download link which will appear once you have downloaded the software to your own computer it will launch automatically – however everything is clearly marked and you should not have any trouble once you read over the website instructions.

Wallpaper: Wallpaper is the image or images that you see on the desktop of your computer rather than plain colour. For myself I have "The Black Madonna of Czestochowa" on my computer screen. It cannot be seen when you are working on a program, only

when you are viewing your desktop. See example below - I have the image repeated multiple times on my computer screen.



Using my Black Madonna as an example: I located the picture I wanted by searching with the Google search engine (www.google.com), then I right clicked the image and chose "use as wallpaper". This sends a copy of the image to live with the existing wallpapers, and immediately puts it onto your own desktop.

To make changes – take on or off, or make it many images instead of one:

1. Click Start Button
2. Click Control Panel
3. Click Display
4. Click Desktop.
5. Scroll through the list of what is available (your one is called Internet Explorer wallpaper)
6. Choose another one or 'None' if you want nothing.
7. Choose Tile if you want the image repeated.
8. Choose OK to finish.

Jargon: This month's jargon is taken from www.webopedia.com.

Walled Garden: On the Internet, a walled garden refers to a browsing environment that controls the information and Web sites the user is able to access. This is a popular method used by ISPs in order to keep the user navigating only specific areas of the Web, whether for the purpose of shielding users from information — such as restricting children's access to pornography — or directing users to paid content that the ISP supports. America Online is a good example of an ISP that places users in a walled garden. Schools are increasingly using the walled garden approach in creating browsing environments in their networks. Students have access to only limited Web sites, and teachers need a password in order to leave the walled garden and browse the Internet in its entirety.

Please note that these Internet addresses were correct at the time of submission to the ACA. Neither Angela Lewis nor the ACA gain any benefit from the publication of these site addresses.

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Originally the idea with a screen saver was to save a monitor from having static image ghosted onto its surface



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FAMILIES OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM. Designer Babies, Cyber Sex and Virtual Communities

By Michael Gilding

In the 1970s and the 1980s nobody was quite sure what was happening to the family. The statistical trends were clear enough: less marriage, more de facto relationships, more divorce, fewer children, more children born outside marriage and so on. But social scientists struggled to make sense of the underlying dynamic that underpinned these trends.

Some social scientists decided that there was no underlying dynamic – and what's more, perhaps no such thing as *"the family"*. They deconstructed the family and found that there was nothing there. The American feminist Judith Stacey put this view most eloquently: *"We are living, I believe, through a transitional and contested period of family history, a period after the modern family order, but before what we cannot foretell. Precisely because it is not possible to characterise with a single term the competing sets of family cultures that coexist at present, I identify this family regime as postmodern. The postmodern family is not a new model of family life, not the next stage of an orderly progression of family history, but the stage when the belief in a logical progression of stages breaks down"*. (Stacey 1990:18)

During the 1990s, though, there emerged a growing consensus that the dramatic changes in the family were one aspect of a much bigger set of changes that was occurring across western societies, and in many other parts of the world also. The most common way of talking about this bigger set of changes was in terms of *"the Information Age"*. Alternatively, some social scientists emphasised the broader sweep of technological innovation, through concepts such as *"the third industrial revolution"*, *"the knowledge economy"* and *"the weightless economy"*. The bottom line was the idea that it was the technological revolution that was driving the transformation of society and culture – not least the family.

Manuel Castells, a Spanish-born sociologist at the University of California, was the most prominent theorist of the Information Age. Castells spoke of *"a technological revolution, centred around information technologies"* reshaping *"at an accelerated pace"* the foundations of society. In this context, he described *"the crisis of the patriarchal family"*. As he put it: *"Thus, gender relationships have become, in much of the world, a contested domain, rather than a sphere of cultural reproduction. A fundamental redefinition of relationships between women, men and children has followed, and thus, of family, sexuality and personality."* (Castells 2000:2-3)

Similarly, the leading British sociologist Anthony Giddens emphasised the effects of the *"world-wide communications revolution"*, the *"new knowledge economy"* and globalisation. In this context many social institutions *"appear the same as they used to be from the outside, and carry the same names, but inside have become quite different"*. Giddens described such institutions as *"shell institutions"*. Marriage and the family were shell institutions – once overwhelmingly economic in their character; now

based on emotional communication or intimacy. Moreover, this was a global shift: *"There are few countries in the world where there isn't intense discussion about sexual equality, the regulation of sexuality, and the future of the family. And where there isn't open debate, this is mostly because it is actively repressed by authoritarian governments or fundamentalist groups."* (Giddens 1999:online)

Left-leaning social scientists were not alone in making a connection between the Information Age and the transformation of the family. The conservative American political scientist Francis Fukuyama explained the dramatic changes in the family – the *"Great Depression"*, as he described it – in terms of *"the information society"*. In his words: *"The changing nature of work tended to substitute mental for physical labour, thereby propelling millions of women into the workplace and undermining the traditional understandings on which the family had been based. Innovations in medical technology like the birth control pill and increasing longevity diminished the role of reproduction and family in people's lives. And the culture of intensive individualism, which in the marketplace and laboratory leads to innovation and growth, spilled over into the realm of social norms, where it corroded virtually all forms of authority and weakened the bonds holding families, neighbourhoods, and nations together."* (Fukuyama 1999:5-6)

This article is about the relationship between technological change (the *"Third Industrial Revolution"*) and the transformation of the family. In particular it considers three new expressions that highlight the connection between new technologies and family – *"designer babies"*, *"cyber sex"* and *"virtual communities"*. It explores what these expressions tell us about changing family forms, and how families might change in the future.

Technological determinism

Before anything else, a cautionary note. In this type of exercise, it is easy to fall into technological determinism, placing too much weight on technological events and not enough on social relationships.

Consider, for example, Fukuyama's account of the Great Disruption. Fukuyama drew attention to two aspects of technological innovation: first, the birth control pill, allowing women more control over their fertility; and second, labour-saving technology, enhancing the importance of skill at the expense of physical exertion. In turn, Fukuyama argued that women were the winners from technological innovation, whereas blue-collar men were the losers.

Yet the birth control revolution long pre-dated the birth control pill. It was driven by the changing relationship of children to the family economy. That is, prolonged education meant that children became more expensive, which meant that parents had fewer children (Ruzicka and Caldwell 1977:ch. 1). Moreover, the revolution was achieved for the most part through

The most common way of talking about this bigger set of changes was in terms of *"the Information Age"*.

long-standing birth control technologies (Gilding 1991: 65-73). In Australia the birth rate fell below replacement level during the 1930s Depression – 30 years before the pill.

Fukuyama's claim about the impact of labour-saving technology are also questionable. After all, women provided a large measure of back-breaking labour in agricultural and industrial societies. In the early twentieth century, for example, a Royal Commission on Female Employment in New South Wales did its best to push the view that women should be excluded from factory work because of its physical demands. The Commissioners, though, were frustrated and embarrassed by the young female factory workers who appeared as witnesses and insisted that they preferred factory work because it was less physically demanding than domestic service (Ryan and Conlon:72-5).

The general point here is that the relationship between technology and culture is a complicated one. It is easy to attribute too much to new technologies. In any case, new technologies (such as the birth control pill) are themselves the outcomes of social and political processes. That is, the restriction of fertility in the wake of prolonged education created the demand for new contraceptive technologies.

Timing

According to Castells, there were four main reasons for the dramatic changes in the family. First, there was *"the transformation of the economy, and of the labour market, in close association with the opening of educational opportunities to women"* (Castells 1997: 136). The growth of the "informational economy" favoured the employment of women, not least on account of their relational skills. In turn, women's employment undermined men's economic control of the family.

Second, *"the technological transformation in biology, pharmacology, and medicine"* promoted *"growing control over child bearing, and over the reproduction of the human species"* (Castells 1997: 136). The possibilities of *in vitro* fertilisation, sperm banks, surrogate mothers and genetically engineered babies opened up a *"whole new area of social experimentation"*. Above all, parenting no longer necessarily implied socialisation, severing the *"fundamental relationship between biology and society in the reproduction of the human species"* (Castells 1997:241).

Third, the development of the feminist movement further undermined *"patriarchalism"*, as Castells calls it. Feminism was one of a myriad of social movements from the 1970s onwards, characteristic of the network society. Social movements such as feminism were themselves the outcome of the Information Age, as identity depended less upon civil society (which was shrinking) and more upon communal resistance (increasingly the basis of identity).

Finally, there was the *"rapid diffusion of ideas in a globalised culture, and in an interrelated world, where people and experience travel and mingle, quickly weaving a hyperquilt of women's voices throughout most of the planet"* (Castells 1997:137). In March 2002, for example, there was an international controversy about a woman who had been sentenced to death by stoning in Nigeria for

adultery. Globalised communication placed the decision-making processes of regional and national authorities under international scrutiny, eventually resulting in the woman's release.

One problem with Castells' line of argument is timing. The dawn of the Information Age occurred in Silicon Valley during the 1970s. Only then, Castells (2000:39) observed, *"did new information technologies diffuse widely, accelerating their synergistic development and converging into a new paradigm"*. Yet some of the most dramatic changes in the Australian family occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In particular, this was the time when the divorce rate spiralled, after which it stabilised during the 1980s and 1990s.

So how is it possible that the cultural effects of the Information Age occurred at the very dawn of the technological revolution in the relative technological backwater of Australia? After all, Australia is still a laggard in the new Economy thirty years on.

The bottom line is that the dramatic changes in the family were anchored in the *"Second Industrial Revolution"*, no less than the Information Age itself. By the same token, the Information Age did not put a stop on these changes. On the contrary, as Castells observed, women's workforce participation continued to increase; social experimentation around birth and socialisation proliferated; and patriarchal privilege struggled to maintain its legitimacy.

In close connection, a new vocabulary of family and communal relationships – such as *"designer babies"*, *"cyber sex"* and *"virtual communities"* – emerged. The new vocabulary suggested new possibilities and choices. It warrants closer scrutiny.

Designer babies

One hundred years ago the most controversial aspect of family change was the declining birth rate. In the 1900s a Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-Rate described birth control as a *"threat to the future of the family"*. Yet by the 1950s birth control was routine. Indeed, it was even described as *"family planning"*.

Birth control suggested the possibility of selective breeding among human beings. In 1885 Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, coined the word *"eugenics"* to describe the science of selective breeding among humans. From the 1900s eugenics became increasingly influential across western societies. More than this, it was instrumental in creating a more tolerant attitude towards birth control. The first birth control clinic in New South Wales, for example, was established by the Racial Hygiene Association, a eugenics organisation (Gilding 1991:78).

During this era some countries adopted coercive eugenics policies. Many states in the United States passed laws providing for compulsory sterilisation of the *"feeble-minded"*. More than 100,000 Americans were sterilised under these laws (Ridley 2000b:35). The Nazi regime in Germany went furthest of all. Its mass sterilisations and death camps ultimately disgraced eugenics and made it a dirty word.

Fifty years later we are again practising a sort of eugenics – not in the coercive sense, but at the level

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FAMILIES OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM. Designer Babies, Cyber Sex and Virtual Communities (continued)

of individual practices and choices. More specifically, individuals and couples are taking a more calculative approach to the genetic material of their offspring. In turn, they are making choices about coupling, contraception and abortion, with significant effects on the make-up of the human population.

In the United States, for example, the Committee for the Prevention of Jewish Genetic Disease organises the routine testing of school children's blood. A hotline allows prospective couples to find out whether they are carriers of the same genetic mutations. As a result, cystic fibrosis has been almost eliminated from the Jewish population in the United States (Ridley 2000a:191).

Similarly, medical screening procedures such as amniocentesis are now widespread in western societies. They are especially widespread for older mothers who are more likely to give birth to babies with genetic mutations, notably Down syndrome. The proportion of babies with Down syndrome born to older mothers has fallen dramatically in the past decade. This is because older mothers are often choosing to abort the foetus rather than proceed with the pregnancy (Ridley 2000a:286-287).

The scope for calculative choice in designing our babies is growing at breathtaking speed. Genetic engineering of plants and animals is now routine, but it is still controversial (Commoner 2002:39-47). Only the genetic engineering of human beings is now forbidden, but some commentators have no doubt that it would work. The science writer Matt Ridley, for example, provides a simple example: *"the gene on chromosome 4 that is associated with Huntington's disease, a terrible mental affliction of middle age"*.

"Your could go into the gene in a fertilised egg, find the crucial phase 'CAG' – which, in affected people, is repeated more than 39 times in the middle of the gene – and remove about half of the repeats. It would not be easy, but it could probably be done. The result would be a healthy person with no risk of Huntington's, and no risk of passing it on to their children". (Ridley 2000b:35)

It is difficult to imagine that genetic engineering along these lines will not occur. After all, it seems a lot less intrusive than genetic screening followed by abortion, which is currently available. And if this type of procedure becomes routine, then it is a series of short steps to cosmetic genetic engineering – say, to prevent dwarfism, or remove a facial disfigurement, or program for blond hair and blue eyes. And if genetic engineering for appearance became commonplace, then it is not difficult to imagine engineering for performance. For example, there is a gene on chromosome 17 called the ACE gene. This gene comes in two varieties, long and short. They are equally common in the population. On average, people who inherit two long ACE genes make better athletes than people with two short genes. According to Ridley, it would not be so difficult to engineer an embryo with two long genes (Ridley 2000b:35).

And if genetic engineering for performance occurred, then it is no less difficult to imagine engineering for behaviour. Yet the further we travel down this pathway, the more uncertain the effect of genetic

inheritance becomes. More to the point, social influences such as family environment and social class become more important in mediating the effects of our genes. Even so, there will be experimentation anyway.

It is possible that *"designer babies"* will become so ubiquitous that the expression itself will become irrelevant – a bit like the expression *"small families"* in the course of the twentieth century.

Cyber Sex

One hundred years ago birth control unleashed fears not only about the future of the family, but also the future of sexuality. This was because birth control meant a separation between sex and reproduction. For example, the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-Rate quoted the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, who complained that birth control turned marriage into *"a mere sexual compact"* (cited in Gilding 2001:8).

In the course of the twentieth century the worst fears of the Archbishop of Sydney were probably more than realised. There occurred what has been described as a *"sexualisation"* of marriage, whereby sexuality became more important in marital relations (Game and Pringle 1979: 74-81). An Australian survey in the 1980s, for example, found that most Australians thought that sexual pleasure was more important to a happy marriage than success as a breadwinner or performance of household duties (Evans and Kelley 1990: 9).

More than this: sexuality itself became increasingly detached from marriage. This was reflected in the growth of de facto relationships and ex-nuptial births. And it was exemplified in growing social acceptance and legal recognition of homosexuality. As Anthony Giddens observed, this was *"the logical outcome of the severance of sexuality from reproduction"* (Giddens 1999). Giddens described the new sexuality as *"plastic sexuality"*. Plastic sexuality was *"decentred sexuality, freed from the needs of reproduction"* (Giddens 1992: 2), *"something to be discovered, moulded, altered"* (Giddens 1999). It was intrinsic to what Giddens called *"the pure relationship"*, the emergent social ideal of coupledom in western societies. The pure relationship was based on intimacy, equality and voluntary commitment, unencumbered by kin and community obligations.

The Internet facilitates new ways of forming relationships – and having sex. Cyber sex, or netsex as it is sometimes called, is sex in cyber space. An Internet list of *"Frequently Answered Questions"* describes cyber sex as people typing messages with erotic content to each other, *"sometimes with one hand on the keyset, sometimes with two"*. Sherry Turkle, an American Psychologist, observes: *"Many people who engage in netsex say that they are constantly surprised by how emotionally and physically powerful it can be. They insist that it demonstrates the truth of the adage that 90 per cent of sex takes place in the mind. This is certainly not a new idea, but netsex has made it commonplace among teenage boys, a social group not usually known for its sophistication about such matters"*. Turkle 1996:21)

If genetic engineering for appearance became commonplace, then it is not difficult to imagine engineering for performance.

Relationships forged on the web, including cyber sex, have at least four distinctive characteristics. First, they transcend geographical distance. More than this, relationships formed on the web transcend distance through high speed, low-cost interactive communication. People can have cyber sex with next door neighbours, or with people on the other side of the planet.

Second, cyber relationships are forged on the basis of common interests, rather than common locality. These common interests can become very specialised. They may also lead to the formation of “real life” networks and relationships. One of the most infamous bulletin boards on the Internet, for example, is a site where people with a common interest in bondage, discipline and sadomasochism meet in cyberspace. They also meet in real life (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1995).

Third, relationships forged in cyberspace are disembodied. Disembodiment means that symbolic exchanges become more important at the expense of physical markers. In turn, there is more scope for fantasy, deception and experimentation. In this context it becomes possible to explore different identities and sexualities. The most well known form of deception (or experimentation, depending upon your point of view) is men pretending to be women, and women pretending to be men.

Finally, cyber relationships – for a variety of reasons, including disembodiment – tend to be relatively disinhibited. Disinhibited behaviour on the web includes what is known as “flaming”, or destructive behaviour. It also includes heightened self-disclosure, with people revealing more important, risky and personal behaviour online (Parks and Floyd 1986: 88; Walther 1996: 17-23).

Following this line of inquiry, some social scientists have described relationships formed through cyberspace as “hyperpersonal” (Walther 1996: 5). In the words of the psychologist Patricia Wallace: “You may reveal more about yourself to (online friends than real life ones), feel more attraction to them, and express more emotions – even when all you have is a keyboard. At the keyboard you can concentrate only on yourself, your words, and the feelings you want to convey. You don’t have to worry about how you look, or those extra pounds you meant to shed . . . online you can reallocate your energies to the message”. (Wallace 1999:151)

Another American psychologist, Joan Ullman, has observed that the unexpurgated email in New York’s first Internet-related sexual assault case provided “a prism for viewing the new havoc in relationships playing out on-line”: “The most important facets include blurring of male and female identities, cocktails of fact and fantasy, sharp disjunctions and free associations in thoughts, and the fluid assumption of new personas, all aided and abetted by hyperfast communication in the absence of verbal and visual cues to behaviour. If the cybersex trial tells us anything, it is that in the free-wheeling interplay of these elements, which it encourages, cyberculture has turned yesterday’s pathology into today’s ordinary sex chat.” (Ullman 1998)

Cyber sex is a new form of “plastic sexuality”. Like homosexuality, it is decentred sex, cut loose from

reproduction. It also exemplifies the “pure relationship”, in the sense that it is grounded in interpersonal intimacy, unencumbered by kin and community relationships (Clark 1998).

Some historians argue that sexual mores swing like a pendulum, back and forth between permissiveness and repression (Stone 1977). Yet the emergence of plastic sexuality seems qualitatively different from earlier shifts in sexual mores. More likely, it seems that there will be further elaborations of plastic sexuality in the new millennium.

Virtual Communities

Birth control was one controversy one hundred years ago. Another controversy was the living quarters of the working class and poor. This controversy was precipitated by the outbreak of bubonic plague in inner-city Sydney. As a city health officer reflected in his official report, the “poorer classes” needed better housing “not the less for their own health, but as a policy of insurance for that of the whole community” (cited in Gilding 1991: 42-43).

During the next two decades there emerged an outspoken town planning movement, which blamed high-density inner-city neighbourhoods for dysfunctional community relationships. More specifically, they blamed the “slums” for drunkenness, crime, larikism, immorality, birth control, infant mortality, industrial inefficiency and political subversion. The solution rested in low-density “garden suburbs”, where people became more family-centred (Gilding 1991: 42-46).

Public transport made low-density suburbs possible. Before rail and tram networks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people needed to be within walking distance of where they worked – and for that matter, within walking distance of those people with whom they wanted regular contact (Spearritt 1978: 141). This often meant the intertwining of residential, work and kinship relationships. Public transport meant that people were able to follow the rail and tram lines into the suburbs. Public roads and private cars meant that they were able to move out further still. In turn, there was increasing separation of residential, work and kinship relationships.

Since the 1960s sociologists have mapped the patterns of community involvement in the Australian suburbs. Lyn Richards’ description of a new Melbourne housing estate in the 1980s is typical: “The strongest message is that neighbour relations normally are not close. Those who have close relations find them elsewhere, those who know their near neighbours know them very little”. (Richards 1990:215)

In this context, community ties in contemporary Australia are not generally grounded in neighbourhood. What we have instead are “personal communities”, facilitated by cars and phones. These communities consist of multiple social networks, involving narrow and specialised relationships – say, school friends, or tennis friends, or work friends, or the relatives. By implication, people have to actively maintain their networks, rather than rely upon the goodwill of a single community (Gilding 1997: ch. 4).

Faxes, mobile telephones, electronic mail, the Internet and hand-held computers further extend the scope for

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FAMILIES OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM. Designer Babies, Cyber Sex and Virtual Communities (continued)

personal communities. Local neighbourhoods become even less important as the basis for personal communities. It is now possible to forge disembodied communities on the basis of extraordinarily narrow interests. Consider, for example, the Diving Dentists Society, which unites dentists interested in scuba or other forms of diving. Or the Ginger Alden "Lady Superstar" Fan Club, consisting of fans of Elvis Presley's last girlfriend (Frank and Cook 1996: 51).

Consider another example, arising from an innovation piece of research called "Reach for the Clouds", at Swinburne University of Technology (Meredyth, Hopkins and Ewing 2002). The project is a practical experiment in building a networked community at Atherton Gardens, a high-rise public housing estate in inner-city Melbourne. The estate had its origins in "slum clearance" during the 1960s. It houses low-income families, many of them recent immigrants. At the inspection of the project, the agencies sponsoring Reach for the Clouds were mainly interested in whether providing residents with networked PCs would facilitate local community and exchange – ironically, the type of relationships that slum clearance was once intended to wipe out. But the preliminary findings of Reach for the Clouds show that residents are mostly interested in using their PCs to email family and friends overseas, in the countries from whence they have come.

Some commentators lament the decline of local communities. But as the Canadian sociologists Barry Wellman and Milena Gulia (1994: 78) argue: "It is not that people's communities are disintegrating, but rather that they are in flux." Networked PCs facilitate personal communities unrestrained by physical distance – including existing networks of family and friends (as is the case with Atherton Gardens), and new relationships with total strangers sharing specialised and sometimes esoteric interests (as is the case with the Diving Dentists)."

There is even scope for optimism. The American sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973) has documented "the strength of weak ties" – that is, the way in which loose networks can have dramatic effects (for example, in getting a job or identifying a business opportunity). Networked PCs lower the costs in building and maintaining weak ties. They also have the capacity to facilitate strong links, as observed in the discussion of cyber sex above. In Wellman and Gulia's (1994: 176) words: "Thus even as the Net might accelerate the trend to moving community interaction out of the public spaces, it may also integrate society and foster social trust."

New millennium families

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries new expressions were coined and old ones were refashioned to describe the changing structure and contours of family life and sexuality. Old words with a new meaning included "housewife", "breadwinner" and "motherhood". New expressions included "homosexual", "teenager", "the small family", "the nuclear family" and "broken families" (Gilding 1991).

Expressions such as "designer babies", "cyber sex" and "virtual communities" also reflect new

experiences of family and sexuality. The common thread in these expressions is that they all contain a reference to new technologies in communications and the biosciences.

There is a sense in which designer babies, cyber sex and virtual communities are simply the extension of long established trends. Eugenics, after all, predated designer babies by more than one hundred years. More permissive norms around sexuality paved the way for cyber sex. Trains and trams undercut local neighbourhoods, with overlapping social relationships long before the virtual communities of cyberspace. From this perspective, we can regard the technologies themselves as the outcome of cultural patterns and preferences.

By the same token, the new technologies dramatically extended the scale and scope of family change. Biotechnology made the old-style eugenics seem hopelessly crude. Cyber sex was the ultimate expression of plastic sexuality and the pure relationship. The Internet took over from the car and the telephone, pushing the boundaries of personal communities to the edges of the planet. We are now able to choose our offspring, our sexual partners and our communities in ways that were once inconceivable. This is why it became necessary to invent new expressions. It is also why social scientists such as Castells, Giddens and Fukuyama drew attention to the effects of new technologies in the Information Age.

The sociologist Judith Stacey has described gay and lesbian families as "the pioneer outpost of the postmodern family condition, confronting most directly its features of improvisation, ambiguity, diversity, contradiction, self-reflection and flux". More to the point, she observed "how unambiguously the substance of their relationships takes precedence over their form, their emotional and social commitments over genetic claim" (Stacey 1996: 142-143). The same could be said of designer babies, cyber sex and virtual communities. Above all, they are manifestations of "the families we choose" – right down to parents and their babies, the biological core of family relationships.

In one hundred years I imagine that social scientists (if that is what they are called then) will look back on our own times and find the seeds of their own family structures and relationships in expressions such as designer babies, cyber sex and virtual communities. The only qualification here is that these expressions may well be anachronisms by then. Not least, the phenomena to which they refer may be so routine as to make the expressions irrelevant.

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I've been around the world By Angela Lewis

www.Wanted : A (tall, rich, funny, enchanting) Partner who can fulfil my every wish and desire. White horse optional.

One quiet Tuesday afternoon I typed in these Internet Search Parameters on a popular Australian Personals site: Area = Sydney Central: Sex = Male, Age group = 38 – 42. Profiles = pictures only.

The result - 200 men complete with a picture and a self written profile of their likes, dislikes, hopes and dreams. That is the apparently genuine ones – there are another few thousand that write the sketchiest details in the hope of simply snaring any woman who might exchange a racy email with them. You can repeat this exercise with women – only the number is higher and the written profiles are longer and more concise – and very few appear interested in just cyber-dirty talk.

What are we talking about here? The phenomenon of the new millennium - finding a date or marriage partner by advertising on the Internet. The days of categorising those who sat at their keyboards typing messages to other supposed lonely souls with a similar lack of social skills on the other side of the planet are well and truly over. The Internet meet/date/sleep with or hopefully marry 'scene' contains all sorts of people in all shapes and sizes – picture opening the gates of the MCG to a cross section of the community who is in the broad age group of 18-99 all wishing to meet some time of partner and you have a tiny inkling of what is happening out there.

A thousand times more hip than the earnest paragraphs found under 'Men Seeking Women' and 'Women Seeking Men' in the local newspaper (where the words 'gent', 'cuddly' and 'GSOH' appear to be the currency of the day); those seeking partners in the cyber-realm can be highly intelligent with brilliant careers, high paying jobs and lives we can only dream about – but rather than being elitist, their ads mingle with people who have 5 children, or are 45 and still at home with mum, or who are seriously personality challenged and who's idea of a top date is a bottle of cheap Spumante and the Tuesday night special at the local Pizza Hut.

The Internet world has a fascinating mix of population, and taking the Internet 'mate wanted' route appears deceptively easy. This type of searching for a partner is not to be confused with meeting someone in a chat room and going no further than furtive emails and online chatting. Those that take the advertising path frequently invest time and effort into showcasing themselves with photos, considered essays of their 'essential self' and their intended, and in many cases have involved payment for the pleasure of being able to make contact with the others on the dating site.

This article seeks to explore experiences of users of Internet Personals in an effort to both illustrate the process and gain insights from men and women looking for a partner through the mediation of technology. It is not concerned with safety aspects and issues of possible harm - for that see my article from last year on cyber-dating, which is more about dating on the Internet as opposed to using the Internet as a conduit for arranging dates.

I started thinking about this after a number of my own friends and associates began meeting possible partners after joining these services. People talk about it freely, and it seems to be a very acceptable, upmarket way of making contact; the scary stories about being abducted by a lurker on the Internet are seen to be more cyber-myth than fact. Let's take two very busy ones as an example for this discussion - www.Friends.com and www.RSVP.com.au. The process for both is similar and I went through the steps myself in order to experience it fully.

RSVP.com.au is an Australian site, though they do offer introductions to people from all over the world. Their website says they have approximately 208,896 members. In order to become a member you must give yourself a username e.g. Melbhunny, Latinlooker, SleeplessNBrisbane and a password and then fill in a lengthy questionnaire about your vital statistics, describing your film, musical and leisure tastes as well as write a catchy first few lines followed by a more in-depth description of your hopes, likes, desires etc. Once you submit your profile you must wait for approval from the website that they have found it acceptable to post (profiles are scrutinised for profanity, pornography and whether you have slipped in your contact details – a big no no for a number of reasons).

If you wish to have a photo of yourself included this is free, but if you wish to update it then this will cost you \$5.00. Once you are up there as a member you can freely search the database of other members based on criteria such as age, star sign, sex and demographics. How you make contact with someone you are interested in, is to send them an 'RSVP kiss'. This is an email sent to your target's private email account (known only to RSVP) which lets you know that person XYZ is interested and is replied to with a proforma email that says 'thanks but no thanks', 'thanks but show me a picture', or 'thanks, please email me'.

You cannot email another member unless you purchase 'stamps'. This is the email equivalent of a postage stamp, which allows you to email the person directly but via RSVP who act as a gatekeeper between the two of you, for the cost of \$5.80 an email. However if you purchase more the cost goes down, so for \$34.95 you get 6 stamps, \$54.95 12 stamps and \$64.95 18 stamps. The intention of making the user buy stamps is why profiles are not to have email details in them, though people get very cunning and in amongst their profile details will weave sentences such as I am a 'funny1' in a hot male sort of way. This is so we know we can email him direct as funny1@hotmail.com .

Everybody wants to see a profile with a picture, so a photo is de-rigueur, however a person's privacy can be protected by attaching a password to your picture, so only those that you are interested in can be given the password. The majority appear to attach photos without a password, almost as a sign of good faith that they are real people looking for real partners. You have to admit that it takes courage to paste up a photo of yourself for the world to see with an open statement of who you are and who you are seeking. A few people I have spoken to during this process say that while this is a good and honest thing to do, in a

This is the email equivalent of a postage stamp, which allows you to email the person directly but via RSVP who act as a gatekeeper between the two of you, for the cost of \$5.80 an email.

society that is predicated on physical attractiveness, a person can be neglected because their photo does not do them justice or they are a plain person; while the good looking ones are hammered with more emails than they can handle. Cyberspace ironically imitating life!

Friend.com is similar but costs \$24.95 US for 30 days and \$99.95 per year; however they have chat rooms which seem a much better idea, where you can pop in and meet and mingle without appearing to target a specific person.

My friend Michael is a very senior executive with lots of money, charm and personality. He works hard and doesn't like to hang around bars. His solution is to jump on the Internet every couple of weeks, and utilise one of the services mentioned above; he emails a woman who appeals to him who lives in his general area and goes on a date. He says he has no illusions about meeting the perfect partner, but sees this as a ideal way to meet a cross section of women, enjoy some company and if one of them turns out to be a mate for him that would be great; but he doesn't have those hopes in mind.

Therese on the other hand finds that after six months of belonging to both the dating sites mentioned above, she feels herself jaded with the experience and sick and tired of going through the same getting to you you/getting to know me process via email and telephone. She says where her emails were at first long, introspective and carefully worded, she is now cursory, straight to the point and more business like about the whole process...which she acknowledges almost defeats her purpose.

Petra is one of the few success stories. She met a man almost instantaneously and as I write she is in Barcelona with her two children meeting a man she has been calling 'her soulmate' since they exchanged their first email. She did not speak to him on the telephone before flying out, and has only one old photo of him to go on. She says she really appreciates the 'meeting of the minds' aspect of the Internet personas, where the process is not predicated on how a person looks or what they offer financially, but on what their true spirit and essence is all about.

Others I have spoken to would never in a million years do what Petra has done, seeing the dating sites as a starting point or an initial electronic introduction. In a way these sites take the place of the old fashioned village matchmaker, that the parents would visit with a list of qualities they were seeking in a prospective husband and a matching list in hand of what their daughter could offer.

The problem I have heard people describe is the one (ironically) of too much choice, and too much choice then makes a person far more choosy and picky than they ever would be in real life. For example as a woman you have searched for men in the category described at the beginning of this article. There are now 200 of them to scroll through, and it suddenly becomes a needle in a haystack option. You start to become ruthless – no Geminis for me, 5'11 – nope, I specified 6' and over, that person doesn't use capitalisation properly, ooh that one looks a bit receding...and on it goes. What starts as a looking for similar minds exercise (albeit ones with nice

photos), can turn into an almost superficial process of who has good grammar and how tall are they?

Never mind that you - the female selector - are not Kylie Minogue with a mansion and a PhD to offer in return.

I have interviewed one man who has taken this pedantic 'perfect match' outlook to extremes. He discounts women if they do not like exactly the same music as he does – even if they are a match made in heaven on all other counts, and he sees nothing wrong with doing this – even before he has had a cup of coffee with them.

This pickiness can carry through to the exchange of emails, once you actually get to that point. The profiles may look great and be well written, but one girl I interviewed will not exchange phone numbers with a man who is makes the slightest spelling or grammatical mistake – the wrong comma or incorrect grammar means they don't even get to speak with her. What if English is not this person's first language? What if this person types badly but spells brilliantly and happens to be just right for her – well she is never going to find that out, but isn't perturbed by it, as there are plenty more men on this website.

The issue of 'baggage' is also a hotly contested one. More women than will specify the 'no baggage' option and I notice the men will include the 'I'm baggage free' line on some of their profiles, as they have picked up on this as a desirable advertising factor. What do these people hope to gain I wonder – the outlook and history of a 12 year old child in the head of the 40 plus man who must also be financially secure, have a good sense of humour and be well travelled? Are these women looking for Peter Pan with money?? The interesting thing I found in this exercise was that the women who made such demands had very little to offer themselves. For example they lived out in the country, they didn't offer a financially secure/own my own home/own business type of profile in return, and their photos were nothing to stop you in your tracks.

One of the chaps I exchanged emails with has specified that people who are looking for 'no baggage' should not approach him as he finds it an insulting requirement. His profile says that 'baggage is all about how you carry it', which seems a little bit more healthy and realistic.

A number of people I spoke with have ambivalent feelings about the 'hot-housing' of relationships that occurs in this type of partner-seeking environment. Before you even exchange a personal email with the person you know a great deal about them by reading their profiles. You exchange emails and it is possible that with a week of solid emailing you know more about them than you might know about one of your oldest friends. By the time you get to the first date there might not be too much more to 'pull out of your sleeve' to keep the date going – e.g. you already know his mother's maiden name, that he eats 5 Weetbix every day and he is desperate to 'nibble your sweet ears'. On the other hand of course, the accelerated intimacy could lead you into a sweeter, deeper more intimate relationship, - just faster....

One of the more sensible people I spoke with Natalia, who has kissed a few frogs in the last 6 months in her

One of the chaps I exchanged emails with has specified that people who are looking for 'no baggage' should not approach him as he finds it an insulting requirement.

I've been around the world (continued)

cyber-quest for a prince, says she tries not to make the mistake of giving away too much too soon in email and on the telephone as this hot-housed intimacy prior to actual dating can give the impression that the date must/should include sex because 'they know each other so well'. She also makes the point that by relying on the email contact too much a person can become self-delusional as it is easy to read into another's email exactly what you want and the reality of the date can then be a crushing disappointment. On the subject of relying on email contact, all the people I spoke to admit to becoming a little crazed at times with checking their email to see if there is anyone new interested in them, and feeling unloved and unwanted when there is no interest being shown in them – by strangers they had never met!

The pros of the process as I see it are : access to like minded individuals you may never usually have the opportunity to meet, the world can become your dating oyster so choices become huge, you can be specific in what you are looking for without fear, you are saved the investment of face to face dating, which can be hugely time and labour intensive and you are allowed to be as romantic, introspective and honest as you wish – things you never do in a face to face contact with a stranger who you hope to date. As well it is perfectly acceptable and comfortable for women to be the instigator of interest in a man, and women do it in equal numbers to men without being seen as predators.

The cons are the narrow outlook and/or unrealistic expectations a person can very readily develop when being faced with so much choice, and the artificial intimacy that may occur and that can sometimes never survive face to face meeting for the two people involved or never even result in a meeting. Another negative I noticed for myself was the quandary of making yourself different from the rest, when you are not there in person to be charming in your own unique way – when there are thousands of ordinary people, how does one ordinary person differentiate himself/herself? Writing your own publicity is tough - so many people use the tried and true and earnestly say they love a bottle of wine in front of the open fire, and the walks along the beach, but unfortunately their ideal lives sound straight out of a cheap paperback – but I guess saying "I go to work, I come home and eat dinner and I watch TV – but I want to have someone's hand to hold and someone to commiserate with after a hard day at the cash register" is just too much truth.

Some people do the exact opposite and paint a very exciting picture of their lives – "adrenaline is my middle name and I snowboard, ski and race F1s on the weekends" – but exciting as they may be – this can be intimidating itself to the reader who may enjoy the Cadburys and a soapie after work.

Still on the subject of 'cons': for women in particular there is a new negative to deal with, and that is in being 'knocked back' after approaching the opposite sex. As women culturally do not approach the opposite sex in real life as much as men do, they are not inured to receiving knockbacks. However on the Internet, women approach equally to men, and so will get knockbacks in the same way that men do – which can take some time to get used to without taking rejection to heart. Men appear to approach

large numbers of women on the Internet, often employing the 'spray and pray' approach – bait 50 hooks and get one live one type of thing. Women on the other hand seem to target one person and then wait anxiously for a reply, and end up feeling a little hurt when that person does not respond. Men on the other hand are delighted with a response and hardly notice the lack of one.

Once the contact has been successfully made, things can get very personal and very involved – very quickly. One of my interview respondents says he exchanged in excess of 150 "deep, emotive and soul baring" emails with a woman in the space of 2 weeks and then never heard from her again. Another Australian woman admits to one week of scores of 'deeply personal, intuitive and sensitive' emails with a man who owns a ranch in Colorado. When she offered him her phone number as she felt so in tune with him, she never received another email from him again.

Putting your self 'out there' in writing takes guts, and unfortunately leaves a person open to emotional abuse. People are always going to blame themselves when that special person suddenly disappears into the ether – but whether we like it or not, the fact remains we are competing with another couple of thousand others with a good spellchecking program and unfettered access to that same person who is the object of our affections. One of the most disappointing things people nominate is seeing their special person's profile continue to be on public display on the dating site, plainly advertising their availability, while that same person continues their email and telephone contact on a deep and personal level with them - which means the 'love object' is possibly having trysts with another or is ready to leave for someone 'better' at any point. Maybe this type of honesty is better for us, but for some it is deeply wounding to see their object of affection still 'on sale' while writing them daily 'love letters'.

Rsvp.com.au has about 100 success stories listed on their website. These success stories range from babies, marriage, first house together and engagements; and those that offer their stories are glowing and happy. If there are 208,895 members and 100 success stories that is a success rate of .0479%...but I guess that isn't a very romantic thing to point out and I am sure that math will not put anyone who is keen off – and nor should it, if we all did the math on the number of bad dates it takes to meet a new partner we would all stay at home under the doona watching 'Sex in the City' rather than planning on it for ourselves.

Next issue I will give a run down on a dating site that caters solely for fetishes and is having enormous success in Australia and another set up solely for consenting adults to meet other consenting adult sex partners. (Yes – I know – I get all the good jobs!)

Footnote: Other popular introduction sites are www.lavalife.com, and <http://personals.ninemsn.com.au>

Any prices and website addresses were correct at time of printing.

Once the contact has been successfully made, things can get very personal and very involved – very quickly.

Chapter News

VICTORIA

Greetings from the Victorian Chapter.

On Saturday the 22nd of February we held our first chapter meeting for the year. We had Mr. Gerard Koe as a the guest speaker. Mr Koe is a full time Family Drug and Alcohol counsellor at the Mary of the Cross Centre as well as a clinical member of ACA and a Registered Supervisor for ACA. His presentation was entitled 'A Useful Framework for Drug and Alcohol Counselling'. The response from members was that the presentation was of a very high standard and that they were going home with practical information.

There is a real network forming around the chapter. The Eastern Cluster Peer supervision group had their first meeting. The group currently has 6 members. The group members have a strong belief that this form of supervision is going to be of great assistance to their professional development. It is likely that there will be two groups in the east since other counsellors have made approaches to join the group. The concern is that numbers will need to be restricted to about six for maximum efficiency.

I was delighted with the attendance to the meeting, 15 members; the largest attendance to a meeting we have had in Victoria. *The next scheduled chapter meeting* is for **Saturday the 5th of April** at Yarra Valley Psychology 148 Maroondah Hwy. Croydon. Let me know if intend to attend, Acavichapter@aol.com

The **Vic Chapter Conference** will be held at Latrobe University on the **31st of May** so pencil in the date.

I am currently seeking help to take the chapter to a new level. We are looking at incorporating this year and possibly to rename as The Victorian Counselling Association. Anyone with time, a genuine interest in forming a community of shared interest, can contact me.

On a different note Yarra Valley Psychology is offering an internship for a selected number of counsellors. This will include training, supervision and a paid case load. A fee applies for the training and supervision. This is an excellent opportunity for those seeking to begin their professional career in a supportive and highly experienced environment. For detail contact Miguel Barreiro on 9723 1109.

TASMANIA

The first Tasmanian chapter meeting took place on Friday 14th February 2003. The meeting was a great success with plenty of interaction and issues covered between the members. It was the first time that ACA members in Tasmanian have been able to come together on a professional level. The Chapter looks forward to growing and expanding under the helpful leadership and guidance of Philip Armstrong, who we thank for his valuable help and professional advice in forming the Tasmanian Chapter.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 18th March at 6.00pm at 6 Portsea Place, Howrah.** Please Contact David Hayden on 0417 581 699 or 03 6247 8162

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane

Diary Note: Queensland State Conference
Saturday 24th May, 2003.

The Bardon Centre

Speakers: **Dr Nancy Arthur**
Associate Professor
Division of Applied Psychology
Faculty of Education, University of
Calgary, Canada

Topic: "Culture is our Business"

Peter Murrell
Senior Partner Murrell Stephenson
Solicitors.

Topic: "Professional Ethics"

Adrian Hellwig
Vice President CCA

Topic: "Counselling Adolescents"

Dr Travis Gee
Director of Sigmax Consulting
Topic: "Repressed Memories"

Book now and get in early! Please contact Nicky on 1300 784 333 or email nicky@theaca.net.au

Gold Coast

The Gold Coast steering committee has been elected. The Committee member are as follows:

Chair Person – Kaye Laemmle

Vice Chair – Martin Elley

Secretary - Raewyn Peoples

Committee Members - Kate Oosthuizen, Cynthia Houston, Carmel Timmins

The Gold Coast sub chapter will hold its **first meeting on Saturday 12th April at 2.30pm** at 35-39 Scarborough Street, Southport. RSVP 5591 1299

Sunshine Coast

The Sunshine Coast sub chapter presented a workshop on Relationships hosted by Noelene Young, Manager Relationships Australia Sunshine Coast, on Wednesday 12th March, which was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended.

The next Sunshine Coast sub chapter meeting will be held on **Thursday 19th June**, full details will be advised in the Email of the Month and sent to all Sunshine Coast chapter members.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We had a very successful "Happy Hour" on February 6th where new members were attracted to what A.C.A. has to offer and apart from the social networking that took place we were able to introduce our committee, explain what the A.C.A. both nationally and locally has done and will be doing. We were grateful for all those who completed our local survey to gain feedback on the "needs of counsellors" and gained a very consistent message in relation to networking and business building.

The South Australia State Conference will be held on **10th of May** and the speakers will reflect the preferences of the members in relation to their comments.

We are in the process of identifying "cluster groups" for the North/South/East/West and Central to facilitate peer group reviews, having had creditable

The group members have a strong belief that this form of supervision is going to be of great assistance to their professional development.

Chapter News (continued)

"volunteers" step up. The respective facilitators will be responsible for their group meetings and in turn sign off on Professional Development requirements.

Next phase will be to attract the practitioners to come together for their benefit and provide meaningful forums for development and discussion.

We are building a really substantial data base of local people in Counselling, to keep them informed about what's happening and in particular to let the country people know that support is available for them. It's not always possible to be directly involved, but anything we can do to reduce the isolation will be responded to.

The student monthly forums have re-activated and will consistently be held at the last Saturday of each month. Next meeting on 31/3/03 will be interviewing skills practice.

Keep an eye open for the workshops in relation to Building a Successful Practice and Lifelines, both available in April/July and November and as previous indicated these programs will come out to regional centres, North and South, if sufficient interest is gained.

For any further details and to register your email address for the data base in SA, please contact Peter Papps on 8363 5822 or persontoperson@picknowl.com.au

Monthly forums will continue to be conducted on the last Saturday of each month at 42 North Terrace, Kent Town from 10am to 12noon, cost \$10. Personal development, networking and problem solving will be covered plus all topics driven by participants. The next forum will be held on **Saturday 29th March 2003**.

All members encouraged to attend

ACT

If you are interested in joining the Canberra Chapter, please contact Nicky on nicky@theaca.net.au or call our office for an application form on 1300 784 333.

The student monthly forums have re-activated and will consistently be held at the last Saturday of each month.

NSW

Sydney

Next Chapter Meeting - Saturday 12th April at the North Sydney PCYC (223 Falcon Street) from 3pm to 5pm. In addition, at 2pm, we host an optional "case study" professional development group where people can bring their case issues to the group for discussion. This service, whilst new, has been embraced immediately, with strong attendance and feedback.

Chapter contacts: Bridget Hallam on bphallam@smartchat.net.au or Martin Hunter-Jones on [martinhj@tpg.com.au](mailto:martinjhj@tpg.com.au) or 0438 336 535

Hunter Valley

ACA Hunter sub-chapter meetings are now held monthly. Business meetings alternate with case-work discussion meetings. The March meeting is an open invitation to bring along counselling case-work, or counselling issues, for presentation and discussion. Professional counsellors as well as students with interests in counselling or psychotherapy are welcome to attend. The meeting is followed by a shared informal supper. The **next meeting is at 5:30pm on Wednesday 19th March** at Gracegrove College, upstairs at 723 Hunter Street, Newcastle West. If you have any enquiries please phone Ted Heaton at the college on 49 625 650

BECOME A CHAPTER MEMBER.....

New Chapter members are always welcome, for more information on your local Chapter, please contact Nicky at nicky@theaca.net.au or call 1300 784 333.

Membership to a Chapter is \$20.00 and will keep you up to date on your local Chapter meetings and future calendar events. Attending Chapter meetings also goes towards your 'Ongoing Professional Development'.

ACA

Is your practice risk management up to date?

Risky PRACTICES

A counsellor's guide to risk management in private practice
(Expanded Edition - 2002) - 152 pages. RRP \$33 (inc GST)
by **Nigel McBride** (lawyer) and **Michael Tunnecliffe** (psychologist)

BONUS . . . Order direct and receive a disk containing three risk management templates.

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Can you afford not to have this book?

Being There: The Real Time Value of attending your local ACA Meeting

By Helen Star

On reading the *News from the Chapters* in the Summer 2002 Counselling Australia I was struck by the opportunities available to ACA members – *simply by attending meetings*. Firstly of course there is the networking – the opportunity to chat about issues in our practice as counsellors which does not often arise in our everyday routine. We all can contribute our own unique perspective – on matters arising in both chapter business and professional agendas.

Then there is the high quality of presentations offered by chapter members on a huge variety of topics – providing valuable and relevant information as well as familiarisation with areas of counselling specialisation. The range of topics offered by members reminds us of the wealth of knowledge and experience available in our immediate community of practitioners. ACA meetings are therefore a place to begin to become known within the profession and also to hone our skills as presenters. These prepared topics can also form the basis for publications which obviously enhance our image in terms of building our practices.

In addition to this the inclusion of case study presentations with the accompanying group feedback assists dramatically in our ongoing professional development.

The 'group' is a valuable processing tool for our personal interests and projects. If we approach meetings in this way it really is an opportunity for ongoing professional development in a supportive environment. And as we all well know - encouragement and enthusiasm add valuable fuel to our activities. By fully engaging in our area ACA meeting we expand the potential of the entire organisation of which the meetings are the professional person to person frontline where counselling itself can evolve.

The Hunter Sub-Chapter of which I am a member also has a close relationship with the Sydney Chapter. Members regularly travel to attend the Bi-Monthly meetings. It's wonderful to enlarge our forum, and the guest speakers offer topics quite uniquely different to our own meetings. It's worth the 2 hour drive down the coast.

An important aim of the ACA organisation is to become more fully recognised in the provision of mental health services and thereby to be in the position to offer counselling to a wider community (especially through recognition by health funds). With Western Australia having already led the way we are in a strong position to challenge funds in our own states. One of the best ways of doing this is through the power of the lobby group – and that means our members. Consolidated support in promoting counselling services increases public recognition and enhances our case for the widespread inclusion of ACA accredited Counselling in the prospectus' of all Health Funds. Supporting ACA activities – particularly the local meeting - ensures the creation of a robust counselling community and an increase in demand for our services, which eventually establishes wider professional acceptance.

From this brief discussion it is obviously advantageous in many ways for the growth in professional strength of our organisation for members to become involved in the Association meetings. I fully realize how busy our lives have become – it is very challenging to do everything we want to do including take care of ourselves. I'm convinced that the ACA meetings are exceptional value for time investment and encourage members to include 'attendance at meetings' – even every second meeting, whatever is manageable for you personally - as a goal for the year 2003.

There is the high quality of presentations offered by chapter members on a huge variety of topics – providing valuable and relevant information as well as familiarisation with areas of counselling specialisation.

ACA

NETWORK & SUPPORT GROUP

Hello! I'm a deaf counsellor who has completed a M.A degree in Mental Health Counselling from Gallaudet University, USA in May 1998. Since then I've been providing community work, individual, group and family counselling as well as workshops at various Deaf organisations in London and Melbourne. This year I'm into an exciting development: setting up my own private counselling practice. I would be interested to get in touch with any deaf trained mental health professionals for information network and support. If you have a deaf client or have a deaf related question please email me at karlicounsellor@hotmail.com. Karli Dettman, qualified member of ACA.

WHEN I'M SIXTY-FOUR - OR MORE By Gordon Ray

Having read the article "Remains of the Day" by D. Richards in Volume 2 Number 2, Winter 2002, I would like to share some of my thoughts regarding counselling of older people with my counsellor colleagues and invite their comment. With increased longevity we have moved on since the Beatles song. It is common nowadays and useful, to see old age in two stages; sixty-five to seventy-nine and then eighty onwards. Ask "old" people and most say, "I don't feel old". To this we could add, "and in general senior citizens do not think old." True, some will need to jog their memory and physical reaction's can be slower but mental ability remains strong- even vigorous. This of course excludes individuals with mental problems or serious physical ones. However, even people with physical disabilities can still remain mentally strong. There has been a rise older people seeking leisure activities, volunteer work and educational pursuits.

Ancient Romans valued old age, as did the Chinese giving priority and respect to experience. Now the young are seen in Western society as being the focus of attention in jobs, advertisements; as consumerism, music and leisure with the corollary that they are the most or for some, the only ones of importance. The old are "oldies" or "wrinklies" and therefore often labeled and boxed, all of which invites negative stereotyping. They also seem to be seen in negative economic terms, with articles written about how, they will increasingly become a drain on society. This called forth an opposing series of statements to the effect that contrary to this many retired people tended to be more self-sufficient than the younger generations. So older persons have some negative social reactions to contend with which can hurt their self-esteem. It is a time when a range of crises or significant issues presses upon them and they need to be resolute and place them in a coping perspective that also enables them to even gain further fulfillment.

Existence involves limit or boundary situations such as mortality, despair, anxiety, ageing, guilt and illness and that by confronting them we can move in a positive direction. These can wake us up from a false sense of existence and can help us to reflect and respond to the wake-up call in terms of the "here and now" and how to live in it. Strasser and Strasser,(1997) refer to 'limitations and possibilities' and discuss how choices can help us confront limitations and achieve possibilities.

We all come up against such boundaries or life limit situations. They can be met by finding motivation and direction in order to journey onward. For older people, a boundary situation can be retirement from work or even from knowing they are now seen as older citizens, so they feel they have to see themselves differently. Important issues arise from this. Economics apart they may see themselves as devalued by others, and even feel so within themselves. They are no longer accepted members of a particular work group with an acquired status. They may see themselves as moving towards reduced physical and sexual vigour even if it may be a considerable time ahead. It is also a time of taking stock and of an increased sense of passing time, with more awareness of mortality. This raises, pressing issues of meaning and values, and of how to respond to one's situation.

Other people, however well-meaning, are "outside" the situation and see the changes as incremental. They may think, "well, he/she was sixty four last year and is now sixty five." However, to the new retiree it is not incremental it is a quantitative and a qualitative leap.

An older client may look back unfavourably on her/his life because she/he did not seem to achieve much. E.g. low status, little power and moderate income and perhaps not a great deal of pleasure. This presents a challenge which may be helped by realising that it is not the degree of power, status and wealth a client achieves, but the meaning derived from what he or she achieves in terms of the skills, aptitudes, education and life chances available to her or him.

A retired or older person may be devalued by others and even by oneself. Yet it is a time where new or little considered values and meaning can be pursued. As Frankl insists "... life proves to be potentially meaningful literally up to the last moment, up to one's last breath." (1986/1946:300) Jung (1990) saw later life as a time of consolidation and completion in terms of the process of individuation. This involves bringing desirable attributes more to the fore such completing any essential tasks and so undergoing change and growth. This process, he argued, seems to become more urgent in later life. As Jung remarked and is cited in Jacobi, "About a third of my cases are not suffering from any clinically definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and aimlessness of their lives." (1973,133)

Earlier Jung had written about this in 1933 in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. Jacobi says contemporary society seems to be "... a time in which all the fundamental values are dangerously wavering and a total spiritual and psychic disorientation has taken hold of mankind." (1973:133). In which case Jung's process of individuation may be seen as a counter to this disorientation. As counsellors of older people we need to be aware of this wider context.

Not all but certainly many older people will ask themselves "how shall I live in this part of my life?" Frankl has much to say on this. He says that a "will to meaning" is a unique and innate human characteristic and also a reliable guide to mental health. (1997). "On the other hand a lack of meaning and purpose is indicative of emotional maladjustment". (Frankl, 1997:89). He goes on to report that at an international conference research had found that "...ever more patients are suffering from a lack of life content, rather than clinical symptomatology..." (1997:94). So too Rachel Kohn reports that, "...patients are looking for more than clinical insights they are looking for meaning in their lives" (2001:3).

It is no good sitting asking life to provide us with answers. We need to confront life and discover what it requires of us. When we suffer from an inner void then we experience an existential vacuum due to our will to meaning being frustrated. We should answer this call by responding to the world and our contexts and discover meaning. We may be seeking meaning and feel frustrated but this is really a healthy sign. It is a wake-up call from within; a call to action to seek valued meanings. This raises anxiety but this is not neurotic anxiety, but normal to the situation. It is

A retired or older person may be devalued by others and even by oneself.

normal to feel anxious concerning one's existential situation such as with regard to suffering loss, sickness, ageing and to find meanings of the moment as we go through life and also to find ultimate meanings. Feeling existentially frustrated is healthy, and a sign of spiritual discomfort requiring a response. It is when anxiety is clearly disproportionate to the situation and brings the blocking off of awareness that we may speak of symptomatology. (see Frankl, 1984/1946; 1986/1946).

When we talk of values and meaning we can see there is a close connection between the two. To 'mean' is to have as one's purpose or intention, 'meaning' simply means what is meant by an action, idea etcetera. It also can imply importance or significance.. Value implies being of worth or desirability, i.e. things actions or behaviours that hold meaning for the individual. We may value openness, trust, mature relationships or spiritual growth so they all hold meaning for us. In this sort of context we may tend to conflate the terms of meanings and values. We have mentioned that the socio-economic context can change for older persons from a full-time earning capacity. This and new issues concerning ageing may urge them to seek to adjust their meanings/values for the next part of their lives. This contextual change can be an important time for the counsellor as well, who needs to be very aware of this context.

Western society is dominated by the idea and activity of economic progress via advanced or extreme capitalism. With this comes a focus on materialism, acquisitions and consumerism. All this requires competition, even aggressive competition. Consider the following: "Of special concern to mental- health professionals are studies showing high degrees of materialism having a toxic effect on psychological and social well-being. A strong materialist orientation has been associated with diminished life satisfaction, impaired self-esteem, dissatisfaction with friendship and leisure activities, and a predisposition to depression" (Shumaker, 2001;34-35). He goes on to say: 'Hyper-materialism also features prominently in the emerging plague of 'existential disorders' such as chronic boredom, ennui, jadedness, purposelessness, meaninglessness and alienation" (Schumaker, 2001.34-35). In the same article he comments on the findings of a recent US study of university students. In this survey 81 per cent of them reported feeling in an 'existential vacuum.'" Consider also the following:

"Surveys show many of us are concerned about the greed, excess and materialism that we believe drive society today, underlie many social ills, and threaten our children's future. We are yearning for a better balance in our lives believing that when it comes to things like individual freedom and material abundance we don't seem to 'know when to stop.'"(Eckersley, 2000;5).

Jacobi in 1973, and cited earlier, wrote of the wavering of fundamental values. This puts most of our clients in a challenging context. It is important that we are aware of the power of the socio-economic context. It has great benefits in terms of technology, production, wealth distribution and related creativity but people are now feeling the adverse effects of its dysfunctions. It is the major dynamic in the West and it is value-laden as being moral and normative.

Anyone who challenges its hegemonic nature is immediately attacked in the media. It is in this climate and dominant values ethos that older people are seeking to adjust and to seek meaning and fulfillment in a qualitatively different way. There is also the siren song of others; 'forget it, you don't know how much time is left- just enjoy more of the same even if it is less than before.' This is suggesting that a older person can't enjoy her/himself by bringing new aspects of psycho-spiritual development into their life and still enjoy having the material aspect of life, only more in balance. Another way of looking at this is through the two major orientations to living; these are 'having' and 'being'. It is important to find out how the older client views this and her/his place in it.

These orientations constitute two basic modes of existence. Jesus and Buddha focussed on this as a fundamental issue in the individual's journey through life. Buddha was called the 'Awakened one' and said that craving for things caused suffering and that way out of this suffering was for people to see that craving for things was an illusion and to seek liberation from this illusion. (Schumann,1974, Mizuno, 1987 etc..). Fromm demonstrates that "One of the main themes of the Old Testament is; leave what you have, free yourself from all fetters: be! (1979:55). In referring to New Testament teachings Fromm says that a central postulate is for people to free themselves from greed and craving for possession and liberate themselves from 'having'. In Matthew 6:19 Jesus advocates not storing up treasures on earth which are subject to decay but rather store up treasures of heaven which are not subject to decay. So what are the major characteristics of having and being be?

Having involves acquisitiveness, possessions, status, power and material objects. Even people may be transformed into objects or things. Relationships in an individualistic society may well be like this. Stirner (1973) argues this and says relationships can be characterised by ownership. We have all heard someone say 'this is the wife' or 'this is the old man.' Even our bodies can be seen as things we have. For we might say; 'I must have youth or be slim. Here the body becomes the object. If the body is seen as separate then it can be kept or lost (possession) So anxiety develops around the body as a prized possession not as part of oneself which, though it changes, still is a part of you. An older person who views the body as a possession or object, will not readily accept it as part of the ageing process, as part of themselves. In this case they will feel "loss" and feel insecure and anxious. With all of this, ageing, loss, less time, reduced status, no full-time paid employment how might an older person respond? By moving more into a being mode..

Being is characterised by experience. It involves a giving out, and a taking in, of sharing and of service. It is a "mode of relatedness in all realms of human experience; with nature, with self, with others and with the world. It covers physical, mental, emotional, and sensory responses to others to oneself and to things." (Fromm, 1995:6) This activity results, more in inner-growth, than outward productivity. It allows for mutual 'alive-relatedness', (Fromm, 1995) as opposed to a mutually shared separateness.

Both of these modes, of having and being, are in

A retired or older person may be devalued by others and even by oneself.

WHEN I'M SIXTY-FOUR - OR MORE (continued)

virtually all humans to a degree. A basic orientation of having is seen as normative in our sort of society. Many people are now looking critically at the emphasis on materialism and making connections with dysfunctional outcomes. The question for the individual is; what is her/his basic orientation or where does the balance of having and being lie. For many older people this question constitutes an imperative and one a person may bring to counselling. A having life is said to be experienced as a horizontal movement through life although the thrill, success and leisure will allow one to view it in a different light. A being life is experienced vertically in terms of depths, and heights, with richness, mystery, inner growth and enlightenment. Batchelor says when secular and material values dominate social and cultural life to an extreme extent the drive to have increases the gap from an awareness of who and what we are. (1983) This as I said earlier leads to existential frustration. Below I paraphrase material from a man's autobiography based on an article on which appeared in the Age newspaper. This is a real life example of what has been said earlier.

This man is 80 years of age. He had amassed a shared fortune of some \$235 million as a result of a life in property construction. He now recognises what this single-mindedness cost him. He became estranged from his daughter and was so out of touch with his first wife that he did not know she had long suffered from Alzheimer's disease from which she died. In his book he wrote:

"Despite all the success I might have been considered to have achieved, in the face of all the wealth I have accumulated over the last 30 years...at that moment I could not help but feel that I was somehow incomplete. Prosperity...had robbed me of so much time; time to learn; time to reflect; time to be—especially with my family. I was always so busy with so many people, and yet now I now feel quite alone." (McKenzie, 2001).

This honest account spells out some of the main differences between having and being. It identifies the importance to older people (not exclusively older ones of course) of learning, of reflection, of relationships and of being. We can see the process Frankl, Jung, and others write about; that deep within us a need to know to know ourselves more completely arises and makes us feel uncomfortable unless or until it is confronted. We are called to deal with this existential frustration.

However we must disagree with his statement saying "prosperity robbed me of so much." It was his free choice of what values/meanings he wished to pursue. He chose excessive prosperity, power and status. It was his choice that robbed him, resulting in the later imbalance in his life and on to the consequences this led to. These are important issues brought up by older clients. Though most of them will not be millionaires the psycho-spiritual challenges are the same. It is never too late to learn and grow. When we reflect back on earlier times it should not be just to see if we can settle any unfinished business. In our earlier years we often ascribe to events provisional, immediate or interim meanings. In reflection particularly in later years we can place these events and the lessons from

them into a more comprehensive integrated and complete view. This can help us place them within an ultimate meanings framework and world-view.

Recently I spent some time in London and some of the volunteer work I did was to be facilitator to a group of older people in one of the poorest Boroughs in England situated in East London. Money aside these people had the same issues as ones from higher socio-economic strata. They sought to cope with loss and place it in a meaning perspective, they displayed humour, optimism and wanted to place their lives in a meaningful context and sought spiritual meanings. This tells counsellors nothing they do not already know. But it does illustrate that these issues are universal and over time become urgent.

Jung held that the religious attitude was an element in life whose importance can hardly be over-rated. (1933). Several times observers in the above discussion have spoken of spirituality. This raises the question as to whether counsellors should be involved in this as an area of concern for clients. We need to clarify this. Spirituality is seen as universally innate in all humans, which therefore includes but is not exclusive to members of institutional religions. Professor Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity, Oxford says, "For the most important thing in life, and in the end, is to discover what we truly are and live accordingly" (1992:168). This is in basic agreement with what we have been discussing. Corey quotes a definition arrived at by the USA summit on spirituality.

Spirituality is described as a capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. This spiritual tendency moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion. Spirituality includes one's capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a values system. Spirituality encompasses the religious, spiritual, and the transpersonal. (summit on spirituality, 1995;30).

Corey argues that: "In some ways a spiritual /religious perspective and a counselling perspective have similar goals. Both perspectives emphasize learning to accept oneself, forgiving others and oneself, admitting one's shortcomings, dealing with guilt, and learning to let go of self-destructive patterns of thinking, feeling and acting." (2001,462). He goes on to say: Spiritual/religious values have a major part to play in human life and struggles, which means that exploring these values has a great deal to do with providing solutions for client's struggles. They help challenge clients' life assumptions, they carry healing power by giving strength in critical times, help individuals find meaning in life and involve loving, caring and compassion. (Corey, 2001).

The spiritual view of an individual involves how she/he sees the world. It is in this dimension, however we view it, that we each put all the rest of our outlook and experiences into context. This is an important need of older people.

Professor Deurzen-Smith in identifying the spiritual dimension sees it as how

"... we relate to the unknown and then create a sense of our ideal world, our ideology and a

Jung held that the religious attitude was an element in life whose importance can hardly be over-rated.

philosophical outlook. For some people this is about religion and one's relationship to God or gods, for others it is about finding meaning during life on earth without reference to the transcendental. Contradictions here are often between finding purpose and meaning or suffering a sense of absurdity

and despair. In between these extremes people create their values in search of something that matters enough to live or die for. Something that may even be ultimate and universally valid. Faith and doubt are central in this domain." (Deurzen-Smith, 1995,5)

I have personally found this to be an excellent description. I have also found that the polarities between meaning and purpose on one hand, and of suffering and sense of absurdity on the other, are often raised in counselling, particularly by middle-aged to older clients, as they seek to place their lives in a meaning perspective. Life in the end is not pointless and absurd. Tillich reminds us there are many powerful issues that challenge our ability to remain strong and which assail our affirming ourselves such he says as fate, guilt and death. We have already noted others, for example, loss, ageing and suffering. If we can have "the courage to be" then we can retain our self-affirmation despite these challenges to us. (Tillich, 2000; passim). 'Having' will not help in this at all.

From this it can be seen that spirituality comes very clearly within the domain of the counsellor. However, it should be just as clearly understood that the counsellor must not cross the line into another profession. Issues of theological or biblical interpretation, or salvation, are the province of a pastoral counsellor representing a particular religion or religious denomination, or other duly appointed church official. Many people have written on ultimate meaning including Deurzen-Smith, MacKinlay and Frankl. Mackinlay writes, "...the goal is to continue growing in the spiritual dimension until death" (2001:222). This is in agreement with Frankl (1997/1948). MacKinlay also contends that the spiritual tasks become more urgent as people move closer to the end of life. Jung made this point to as we noted earlier. MacKinlay has produced a list of tasks she suggests for the ageing although, of course, they are not confined to any age group.

The tasks involve: identifying sources of ultimate meaning, making appropriate responses, transcending disabilities and loss, searching for final meanings, finding intimacy with God and/or others, and finding hope. (2001:223). Deurzen-Smith suggests that we live and operate in a four-dimensional world comprised of: the physical, the social, the psychological and the spiritual dimensions. These overlap and inter-connect. On the spiritual level we seek meaning, purpose, understanding and faith. In this way we can confront feelings of meaninglessness and groundlessness. From the tension between these polarities we may come to a position of serenity, purpose, meaning and good as opposed to meaninglessness, guilt, futility and evil. From this reflection and search as we go through life we may arrive at some ultimate meaning. (1997, 1988)

I believe that old age is a vitally important part of

one's journey. It may, for some, bring on resentment, bitterness or carping, for others it may mean being overly needy, or building an amnesia around ageing, by avoiding any reflection on unfinished business or one's present or future life. Others, however, will face life as a challenge with fortitude, dignity and courage and willingness to experience being. Because of this I would say it is far more than "the remains of the day." that potentially face older people. If this phrase is meant in terms of remaining time I have no trouble with it – but of course in this sense even if we are young it is always a question of what time remains. Old age is certainly not merely what is left over; it is more a case of what can be added in terms of understanding, of a reaching inward and outwards in personal growth.

Someone once said youth was too important to be wasted on the young. From my perspective old age is too important for old people to seek to ignore its deeper implications and for any adult to avoid the empathy and understanding that old age should engender.

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Someone once said youth was too important to be wasted on the young.

Book Reviews

Empirically Supported Cognitive Therapies

Current and Future Applications

By William J Lyddon & John V Jones, Jr

As the title suggests, this publication focuses on providing empirical evidence of the benefits and limitations of Cognitive Therapies. The authors have focused their discussions around the application of Cognitive Therapies to cases of Depression, Bipolar I disorder, Phobias, Panic Disorders, OCD, PTSD, Eating Disorders, Anger Management and Antisocial child and adolescent behaviour.

A wealth of research has been drawn upon, which is documented, with statistics and comparatives explaining how the findings support Cognitive Therapies and define the limitations. The results of follow up with clients have been included, to form the basis of measuring sustained improvement of the condition originally treated over periods of time.

In addition to statistics and follow up results, case studies are included for all disorders discussed, other than eating disorders, giving clear application guidelines which demonstrate the implementation of Cognitive Therapies. The authors have provided an in-depth discussion in regard to the cultural factors which may contribute to eating disorders, including messages about self-image communicated to women through advertising and how these become cognitive distortions.

Whether for a student or a seasoned professional, Empirically Supported Cognitive Therapies is a valuable resource, specifically in providing a guide to the efficacy of Cognitive Therapies.

Available from MacLennan & Petty, ph 02 9349 5811 or fax 02 9349 5911 ISBN 0-8261-2299-X, Price \$107.15

Reviewed by Dianna Dawson, a qualified member of ACA who is in private practice.

Living with paradox: An Introduction to Jungian Psychology

By Anne Singer Harris

This book is well written and very readable, requiring no prior knowledge of Jung's work. It is clearly laid out and well structured. The author says that the book aims to acquaint students of psychology and beginning therapists with Jung's theory. However, as Jung's work is increasingly seen as relevant, it is obvious that counsellors may choose to incorporate some of his concepts into their counselling approach, particularly those who aim to develop their own integrated approach. In addition to these will be counsellors who are interested in Jung's ideas on human nature and personal growth.



The book starts with an introduction to paradox and to Jung's relevance to some contemporary issues. It then gives a biographical sketch and a brief look at his philosophical roots. From there it considers basic concepts of the Self and the Psyche, following this with an interesting look at Archetypes and Personality Types. Part two covers: Theoretical Components, Clinical Issues and Varieties of Jungian Theory. Part Four considers Intervention Modes, such as narrative theory and dream analysis. Part Five discusses Current Issues in Jungian Psychology. Finally, Part Six introduces the beginning clinician to Jungian Therapy.

Obviously counsellors who read this book and believe that some Jungian psychology will be useful to them will want to go and read further, for which the list of references will prove useful. The content of Harris' book is very good and even if the counsellor finds herself/himself disagreeing with some of the lines of argument, they would find the material adding to their insight into human nature and thereby at the very least indirectly into their counselling work.

Available from Thompson Learning, ISBN 0-534-21643-9, phone 03 9685 4201, fax 03 9685 4163

Reviewed by Gordon Ray, MSc Econ, MA., Grad Dip Ed. Admin, Dip Psychoanalytic Psych, MACA. Gordon is an active member of the Gold Coast Chapter and a Clinical member of ACA.

A Clinicians Guide to Psychodrama

By Eva Leveton

This is the third edition of this title, which gives a comprehensive and practical approach to the use of psychodrama techniques. These techniques can be an added resource, adjacent to clinical practice with individuals, families and groups.

Psychodrama provides a safe arena for individuals who wish to use creative imagination to act out their feelings and learn new aspects about themselves in a supportive environment. The author provides a detailed account of psychodrama techniques and practical demonstrations of re-enactment that can be used as a resource for any mental health professional wishing to venture into this area.

A practical benefit of this book is the detailed approach of the individual techniques outlined in each chapter. This becomes beneficial when there is a need for quick reference. An added feature of the book is the author's integrity as she gives her honest appraisal of her experiences, especially when she first ventured into the use of this practice. She outlines her personal challenges in using psychodrama as she developed techniques drawing from her previous acting experiences, experimenting to find those that worked and those that proved to be unproductive. A possible point to consider for those wishing to apply psychodrama techniques is that some clients may feel intimidated, especially those who have difficulty with the visionary concept. Having said that, however, it is an avenue that has tremendous possibilities and certainly



Obviously counsellors who read this book and believe that some Jungian psychology will be useful to them will want to go and read further, for which the list of references will prove useful.



can have a powerful and effective outcome for those exploring and using psychodrama techniques, and it would be a complement to traditional approaches.

Available from MacLennan & Petty, ph 02 9349 5811 or fax 02 9349 5911 ISBN 0-8261-2263-9, Price \$85.70

Reviewed by Ellen Burton, a private practitioner and Clinical member of ACA. Ellen is an active member of the Brisbane Chapter.

Supportive Eclectic Music Therapy for Grief and Loss

By Ruth Bright

The first thing that caught my attention with this book was that Ruth was educated in Australia and pioneered music therapy in Australia, although she originally came from the UK. It was a pleasure not only to read such a wonderful book but one written by an Australian. Ruth graduated from Melbourne University in 1953 and after six years teaching she began working with music therapy in 1960, until her formal recent retirement. Although retired, Ruth is still passing on her years of experience to other practitioners. Ruth will be running a workshop for ACA in Sydney on the 15th of March.

The book is an easy and interesting read, which has been written in an easily understandable and logical format. It features many case studies, so that the reader can actually relate to client issues. Experienced counsellors will immediately be able to recall clients with similar issues and be able to reflect on how music therapy may have been of some help. New practitioners will be able to gain knowledge of a new tool and its advantages and be able to offer clients a valuable alternative. The book covers issues beyond counselling and discusses such areas as psychiatry and forensics. This does not complicate the issues, but simply gives the reader a broader knowledge of the subject matter.

Although the title suggests that the book is primarily about loss and grief, the issues discussed are a lot broader. It could be said that grief and/or loss are the foundation issues for many clients who may present with alternative issues at first. With loss now being broken down to finite and infinite loss, the whole issue of grief has been expanded to be symptomatic of many other areas. Ruth discusses cases ranging from survivors of concentration camps to child abuse and death through terrorism.

I highly recommend this book, particularly for those who have no knowledge of music therapy.

Available through Music Therapy Enterprises, phone 02 9487 1509 or fax 02 9487 1595. Price is \$59.95 plus \$5.00 postage.

Reviewed by Philip Armstrong
B. Couns, Dip Psych AIMM, National Manager of ACA and CEO of Human Dimensions Australasia Pty Ltd, and a clinical member of ACA.



The following are new publications that are available at no cost and contain the findings of state and federal government research:

Mental Health and Work: Issues and Perspectives

Edited by Lou Morrow, Irene Verins, Eileen Willis

The forward explains, “The original intent for this book was to consider the workplace as a target for universal approaches to mental health promotion and to record a range of successful national programs. What emerged from discussions, and was reinforced by a seminar hosted by VicHealth in Melbourne in 2001, was a need to consider work more broadly than workers and workplaces, and to therefore consider mental health and its promotion in the context of work in more depth. What has resulted is a rich archive of contemporary issues surrounding work in Australia, as well as seminal work abroad.”

Published by Ausinet, a national project funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, under the National Mental Health Strategy and National Suicide Prevention Strategy. It is based at Flinders University, South Australia.

This publication is free and available on request from; Office Manager, Ausinet Southern CAMHS Flinders Medical Centre Phone (08) 8404 2999 or email ausinet@flinders.edu.au



The original intent for this book was to consider the workplace as a target for universal approaches to mental health promotion and to record a range of successful national programs.

National Mental Health report 2002

The National Mental Health report is prepared periodically by the Mental Health and Special Programs Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. Its purpose is to:

- Provide the most recent available data on mental health service provision;
- Monitor changes that have taken place in the provision of specialised mental health services;
- Act as an information resource on the state of mental health services in Australia, for use by a range of interested parties; and
- Inform and improve community understanding of the reform of Australia’s mental health services.

The report is available from the mental health branches of each State and Territory Health Department. Copies can also be obtained by contacting the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, telephone 1800 066 247 or can be downloaded from the mental Health & Special Programs Branch website at: www.mentalhealth.gov.au



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