Watson . . .
I think I've found another clue . . .

Note Taking, the Ins and Outs

Bully Tactics

Narcissus & Echo

Peer Support: Providing 'on the ground' support

Counselling Australia's Contributor's Guide for 2003

Counselling Australia is now calling for articles and papers for publication in 2003. Counselling Australia is a peer-reviewed professional journal that is registered and indexed with the National Library (ISSN 1445-5285). Counselling Australia is designed to inform and to discuss relevant industry issues for practising counsellors, students, and members of the Australian Counselling Association.

Note publishing dates: the journal is published quarterly every March, June, September and December.

Counselling Australia has an editorial board of experienced practitioners, trainers and specialists. Articles can be peer-reviewed and refereed, upon the author's request, or simply assessed for appropriateness for publishing by the editor. Non-editorial staff may assess articles if the subject is of such a nature as to require a specialist's opinion.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Counselling Australia is committed to valuing the different theories and practices of counsellors. We hope to encourage readers to submit articles and papers to encourage discussion and debate within the industry. Through contributions, we hope to give contributors an opportunity to be published, to foster Australian content, and to provide information to readers that will help them to improve their own professional development and practice. We also aim to promote the Australian Counselling Association and its commitment to raising the professional profile and status of Counsellors in Australia.

ARTICLES FOR PEER REVIEW (REFEREED).

⇨ Articles are to be submitted with a covering page requesting a peer review;

⇨ The body of the paper must not identify the author;

⇨ Two assessors will read refereed articles and advise the editor on the articles' appropriateness for publication;

⇨ Articles may be returned for rewording, clarification or correction prior to being accepted;

⇨ Attach a separate page, noting your name, experience, qualifications and contact details;

⇨ Articles are to be between 1500 and 4000 words in length;

⇨ Articles are to be submitted in MS Word format via email or floppy disk;

⇨ Articles are to be single-spaced, with minimal formatting.

CONDITIONS

⇨ References are required to support argument and should be listed alphabetically;

⇨ Case studies must include a signed agreement from the client, providing permission for publication. This is to be attached to the article. Clients must not be identifiable in the article;

⇨ The author must seek permission to quote from, or reproduce, copyright material from other sources and acknowledge this in the article;

⇨ All articles are subject to our editing process and all authors will be advised of any necessary changes and sent a copy prior to the proofing of the journal for publication;

⇨ Authors are to notify the editor if their article has been published prior to submission to Counselling Australia;

⇨ Only original articles that have not been published elsewhere will be peer reviewed;

⇨ Counselling Australia accepts no responsibility for the content of articles, manuscripts, photographs, artwork, or illustrations for unsolicited articles.

DEADLINE

The deadline for articles and reviewed articles is the 7th of February, May, August and November. The sooner articles and papers are submitted, the more likely they are to be published in the next cycle.

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Regular Articles

Features

Editorial By Phillip Armstrong

Again, I find myself wondering where the year has gone. This is now becoming an alarming feeling for me. Once I used to look forward to the end of the year, full of Christmas cheer and ready to launch myself into partying and celebrating. My only concern was to ensure I was still able to enjoy New Year's Day without it being clouded by the after-effects of too much Christmas cheer. Now it is all upon me before I can even grasp the fact we are in December; I am still in August. I now no longer look forward to the holiday period, not because I will not enjoy it but because I am not ready for it. There is a lot in the saying that, as you get older, time seems to go faster. Anyway, after applying some solution-focused therapy, I am now in November and, with one more session, I will join the rest of you in December.

The issues of duty of care and confidentiality are becoming more important within the industry since a Queensland man, who was HIV positive, had unprotected sex with a female partner without informing her, was recently convicted and sentenced to seven years jail. This then begs the question of whether, had the perpetrator been receiving counselling and disclosed to the counsellor that he had had unprotected sex with a partner without first informing her, the counsellor would have had a duty of care to have notified the victim. If the counsellor did not notify the victim, would the victim have a case to take litigation against the counsellor or, had the victim consequently become infected, even criminal action?

Another interesting case that has set a precedent in American law was the Tarasoff case of 1974. The Tarasoff case involved a university counsellor (USA) whose student client had stated during a counselling session that he was going to kill his girlfriend, Taliana Tarasoff. The counsellor informed the campus police who, after interviewing the student, released him. Neither the counsellor nor the police informed Miss Tarasoff or her parents of the threat. The student fatally stabbed Taliana eight weeks later. The parents then successfully initiated a lawsuit against the counsellor and police, which was won on appeal to the Supreme Court of California. The case was won on the pretext that the counsellor and police had a duty to warn the victim or her parents. Although this precedent is not relevant to Australian law, the principle remains.

I attended a very interesting presentation by Dr Robert Grant in relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on 14 of September. Those who know me are aware that this is a subject I am interested in, having spent many years counselling veterans and ex-defence force personnel. The presentation was organised by Cortex Educational Seminars and was well attended. What made the subject more relevant was the tragedy of the previous Saturday in Bali. It was very apparent that, should terrorists continue to target populous areas, PTSD and trauma-related issues are going to increase dramatically, particularly in relation to trauma issues for the large numbers of those who witness these events and their after-math on television.

I am sure the membership would support me when I say our hearts go out to all those who lost family and friends as well as those who were present at the tragedy. I am proud to say that, as a country, we did not go out and start bombing people in retaliation. Taking revenge on countries, peoples, cultures or religions solves very little; if anything it makes things worse. The perpetrators should be brought to account as individuals not for the belief system they hide behind.

IMPORTANT MEMBER SURVEY

You will find enclosed with this issue of the journal a members survey form. I encourage all those who receive (individual members, associations and organisations) Counselling Australia to fill in and return the survey. ACA cannot crystal ball the thoughts of those who we service, we need to know what you think. Without your input we do not know what, if anything, we are doing that is not meeting your needs or expectations. Please take this opportunity to tells us, if you have any suggestions, complaints or ideas or you just wish to make some general remarks. If we are doing O.K. tell us that to. The survey is printed on pre paid post forms so you do not need to place a stamp on them. One returned survey, picked at random, will win a book of their choice of one of the books reviewed in 2002 series of Counselling Australia.

THANK YOU

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people, who have either contributed articles, book reviews, proof read or helped administer the 2002 series of the journal. These people have contributed their time and resources for no monetary or commercial return. Without them, the journal would not be the success it is.

Thank you. **Travis Gee, Angela Lewis, Adrian Hellwig, Alison Booth, Jenny Peart, Sandra Brown, John Murray, Judy Boylan, Miguel Barreiro, Anthony Buczynski, Lillian Jetter, Jill Elvy-Powell, Uma Bone, Martin Hunter-Jones, Gordon Ray, Andrew Ward, Peta Dale, Stephen Harrop and Ken Warren.**

ACA

> The issues of duty of care and confidentiality are becoming more important within the industry

Important Membership Information – Changes to Criteria in Relation to Ongoing Professional Development & Professional Supervision

During the year, I have been meeting and having discussions with the Chapters and the same two issues are constantly raised. These are restructuring of Ongoing Professional Development from hours to a points system and accepting peer supervision as a form of professional supervision. The following explains how we now have changed these requirements to better suit the membership. The mandatory requirements of OPD and Professional Supervision still exist, however we believe the changes we have made will lighten the financial burden these two requirements may impose on some members. It is also hoped that the restructuring will make the accumulation of points and hours easier by being more flexible. Members are reminded that individuals are able formally to request exemptions from OPD and Professional Supervision due to extraordinary circumstances.

CHANGES TO ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OPD)

One of the major points that came up in the meeting of the Chapter Chairpersons and ACA management was OPD. It was suggested that the members felt that the current system needed to be overhauled and a new system introduced. The main theme that was suggested was OPD should be based on an accumulation of points rather than hours. This would give more flexibility and greater options for the members to accumulate the required amount of points without causing great expenditure. The idea of allocating points for attendance at Chapter meetings also would encourage more members to attend meetings as well as giving them a cost-effective avenue by which to accumulate points.

All full members (qualified, professional and clinical) are now required to show **40 points** of OPD per membership year before being able to renew membership. Each year, when full members renew, they will need to show documentary evidence, such as certificates of attendance, receipts, transcripts etc, that they have accumulated 40 points in total over their membership year.

It will be the responsibility of members to ensure that the Chapter issues certificates of attendance that show the point value of the meeting. Members claiming points for course work will need to supply a copy of the course syllabus, outlining the expected hours of study per unit, and a transcript stating the units completed. Attendance at workshops, seminars and/or presentations will need to be supported with certificates of attendance or, at the least, receipts of payment. Members claiming points for reading professional journals other than "Counselling Australia" will need to show proof of subscription. The following outlines how many points are allocated per activity:

- 1 point per journal reading of "Counselling Australia", giving each member a maximum of 4 points automatically per year.

- 1 point per relevant professional journal reading, to a maximum of 4 points per year.

- 1 point per hour for attendance at relevant workshops, seminars and presentations.

- 2 points per hour for attendance at ACA-approved seminars, workshops and presentations. ACA-approved workshops will carry the ACA logo for identification purposes.

- 1 point per hour for relevant course work to a maximum of 30 points per year.

- 2 points (4 points if a presentation takes place) for attendance per Chapter meeting, to a maximum of 24 points per year.

- 1 point per hour for giving an inaugural presentation/workshop/seminar that has been authorised by the national office, to a maximum of 20 points per year.

- 5 points per published article/paper for members who are successful in having a peer-reviewed article published in a journal such as "Counselling Australia" or an appropriate professional book (not self-published) in the same year of the OPD requirement, to a maximum of 20 points per year.

- Attendance points for ACA conferences will be allocated as they occur.

Members who wish to claim points for researching and writing workshops and seminars and for their presentation may apply separately for information re points allocation.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

ACA management has been approached by the Chapters to consider peer and group supervision as part of our professional supervision requirement for members. Group supervision is an acceptable form of professional supervision as long as the group leader is a qualified supervisor. The group leader will need to outline how many hours of supervision you have received in your membership year in an original letter as supporting documentation. The policy for group supervision in relation to working out the amount of supervision received is that the amount of time of the session is divided by the amount of people attending eg if four people attend a one-hour session, the formula is to divide 60 minutes by four, giving each participant 15 minutes.

Peer supervision is also acceptable and works on the same system as group supervision when working out time. Documentation must be supplied as part of the renewal process, showing that the member did attend a peer supervision meeting. Peer supervision that is held as part of a Chapter meeting is also an approved model of supervision. It is the responsibility of the Chapter to document this meeting, so that each member can claim, with documentary evidence, that they were a participant.

All peer supervision sessions must be overseen by an ACA member who has applied to ACA, prior to the

Group supervision is an acceptable form of professional supervision as long as the group leader is a qualified supervisor

Important Membership Information – Changes to Criteria in Relation to Ongoing Professional Development & Professional Supervision – (Continued)

All practising full members (qualified, professional & clinical) of ACA must receive a minimum of five hours of professional supervision per membership year to retain their current level of membership.

meetings, to be recognised as the group facilitator. It will be the group facilitator's responsibility to document the names of the attendees and the length of time of the session. The maximum amount of professional supervision that can be claimed through peer supervision is three hours per year. ACA will not accept claims of peer supervision from members who attend meetings that do not have a recognised ACA facilitator.

All Chapter Chairpersons, or their formally nominated representatives, are recognised as facilitators for peer supervision meetings. To register as a facilitator, please contact ACA for a nomination form.

Supervision gained during counsellor training generally will not be accepted as professional supervision. In cases such as students completing the degree in Counselling at Notre Dame University, all supervision completed in the third year of training will count towards professional supervision for membership

purposes. Training providers who have counsellor training courses can approach ACA, should they wish, to have supervision in training counted as professional supervision.

All practising full members (qualified, professional & clinical) of ACA must receive a minimum of five hours of professional supervision per membership year to retain their current level of membership. The recommended amount of supervision is one hour for every 20 hours of client contact time. Members wishing to upgrade to the next level of membership will need to complete in excess of five hours of supervision per year. Exemptions on the grounds of sickness, family issues or extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Philip Armstrong
National Manager

ACA

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Bullying Tactics By Phillip Slee

Phillip Slee discusses school bullying and its implications for creating violence free communities.

"Bullying is endemic in our schools" (Kid's Help-Line, 2000)

"Security and safety in schools is probably more at the forefront of public concern now than at any other point in history" (Gill, Hearnshaw & Turbin,1998).

Bullying: Understandings Gleaned from International Research

Bullying is widely regarded as a particularly destructive form of aggression. It is defined as physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to the victim, where the intimidation involves an imbalance of power in favour of the perpetrator. Typically there are repeated incidents over a period of time.

Certainly, there is now international consensus regarding the negative mental health outcomes of bullying for victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

The evidence is now quite clear from both national and international studies (Smith et al, 1999) that bullying in schools is an international problem. The research of the last 25 years confirms its widespread nature. It is particularly likely in groups from which the potential victim cannot escape, such as schools.

The international research suggests that, despite some cultural differences, many of the broad features of bullying are similar across different countries. For example, there appear to be characteristic sex differences with boys using and experiencing more physical means of bullying; whereas girls experience or use more indirect and relational means. It is also commonly found that many victims do not report bullying or seek help. This is primarily out of fear.

Bullying in Australian Schools

In 1991 Rigby & Slee published the first Australian report on the incidence of bullying among 685 students aged between 6 and 16 years from a sample of South Australian schools. The study revealed that 13% of females and 17% of males reported being personally bullied by other students "pretty often".

Since the initial study, data has been collected using anonymous surveys for 25,399 students ranging in age from 8 to 18 years from over 60 schools around Australia. These results indicate that over 20% of males and 15% of females report being bullied "once a week or more often" (Rigby, 1996; Slee, 2001; Murray-Harvey & Slee,1998; Murray-Harvey, Slee, Taki & Saebel, 2001).

The Association of Bullying with Mental Health

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

The links between bullying and poor physical and mental health and suicidal ideation found in the Australian studies is consistent with the overseas research (Slee, 1995; Rigby & Slee, 1999).

PSYCHO-SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT AND BULLYING

In recent years an increasing number of Australian and overseas researchers have asked whether victims of peer aggression experience psycho-social maladjustment, which includes depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.

In a meta-analytic review of twenty years of research Hawker & Boulton (2000) concluded that it was clear that "victimisation was positively associated with depression, loneliness, anxiety and low self esteem and poor social self concept among victims of both sexes, of all age groups, and of all subtypes of aggression" (p.453).

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VICTIMISATION AND OTHER FORMS OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

In a summary of research Rigby & Slee (1999) have noted that adolescent bullies were "More likely than others to be absent from school, scrawl graffiti, shoplift and get into trouble with the police" (p. 331).

School-Based Programs to Reduce Bullying

As Elsea & Smith (1998,p.203) have noted "Most, if not all, children experience bullying at some time in their lives: they may be the victim, they may be the bully, or they may witness the suffering of others". Schools are now being strongly encouraged to develop anti-bullying policies, grievance procedures and intervention programs.

In Australia a resource called the P.E.A.C.E. Pack (Slee,2001) has been developed. It includes guidance for schools on raising awareness of the issue of bullying, developing policy and grievance procedures, and the use of curriculum to reduce bullying. This intervention program has a strong community focus. In year long evaluations schools using the P.E.A.C.E. Pack have achieved reductions of 25% in the level of bullying, with associated increases in reported student safety, awareness of who to talk to about bullying, and student knowledge of how to stop bullying.

Community Based Interventions

While there is a growing body of research into the effectiveness of school based interventions to reduce bullying, the idea that bullying is a wider community issue is gaining currency.

There are in fact significant advantages to nestling the issue of bullying in a community context. For example, it is a less blameful orientation than considering it only as a school problem, which must be solved by education and school authorities.

The fact that it is being seen as a community issue is reflected in the growing number of organisations expressing some concern about the issue. For instance, in Australia organisations such as "Safety House" and "Child Help-Line" are just some examples of where the issue of bullying has been addressed in the broader community context.

The movement toward the wider community initiative is underpinned by the writing of authors such as Etzioni (1995) and Tam (1996). In advocating a movement toward "communitarianism" Etzioni (1995) describes the "social webs of communities" as the "webs that bind individuals, who would otherwise be on their own, into groups of people who care for one another and who help maintain a civic, social and moral order".

While there is a growing body of research into the effectiveness of school based interventions to reduce bullying, the idea that bullying is a wider community issue is gaining currency.

Bullying Tactics (Continued)

BULLYING: A COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTION

A two-year South Australian community intervention program to reduce bullying in schools has just completed its interim evaluation. Funded by the Attorney-General's Department the program was co-ordinated by the Crime Prevention Officer at Charles Sturt Council.

Participating community organisations included schools, the police department, Catholic Education Office, Department of Education, Training and Employment, Department of Human Services, and Flinders University. Representatives from these organisations met regularly to co-ordinate an intervention program in a primary and secondary school, which had volunteered to be involved.

Details of this program have been presented in a paper to the Victimology Conference (Clearihan et al, 2000). Preliminary examination of the interventions indicates that they were successful in addressing the issue of bullying in schools, achieving over a 40% reduction of bullying in primary school. A recently evaluated two year follow-up has established that the gains in the reduction of bullying have been maintained. A range of other positive outcomes from this community based intervention included greater student awareness of the issue of bullying, increased confidence about how to manage and report it, and greater feelings of safety at school. Significant efforts were made to reach out to and engage the parents and broader community around the issue.

Bullying: More Than a Duty of Care

As described here, the issue of bullying has now broadened to embrace the idea that it is a community issue, rather than simply a school problem whose responsibility it is to address. It is now understood far more clearly that the issue of bullying is really about relationships. Simplistically, a great deal of research has focussed on the relationship between perpetrator and victim. Now it is understood that the relationship also incorporates the bystanders who witness the bullying. Bystanders have a very active role to play in encouraging or discouraging the bullying. More broadly still the relationships extend well beyond the school bounds to embrace the family and the broader community.

Bullying has always been with us, but it is now that the community is beginning to voice its collective concern that it is an unacceptable aspect of human relationships.

Guidelines for Countering Bullying in the School Community

The following guidelines are offered in the spirit of promoting some informed discussion as to the practical steps that a school community might take to address the issue of bullying. The guidelines draw on the writings of Boethe, 1997; Webb, 1998; Stewart & Knott, 1998; Scott, 1998; Fehring, 1998; Slee & Ford, 1999; Slee, 2001.

COMMUNITY PROFILING

An important first step is to engage the in some discussion of the issue of bullying. (Community is defined loosely as students, staff, parents, and other community representatives such as the police or social services.) Terms of reference for the discussion could draw upon ideas previously referred to in this paper, such as the idea of "communitarianism" or "social capital" (Cox, 1995) or the school's own mission statement.

The first step typically involves a meeting of interested persons. Issues to be addressed could include:

- discussion of the purpose of the meeting
- information sharing
- identification of key individuals in the community to be contacted
- determination of action to be taken
- formation of a representative action group to carry the work forward.

PRIORITISING THE ACTION PLAN

It is important for the group to determine the aims and objectives of the program and the methods for promoting the work. Issues to be considered include:

- whether anyone else needs to be invited onto the group
- clarification of the aims and objectives (development of policy and grievance procedures)
- identification of a time scale
- determination of resources (such as money and personnel).

COMMUNITY AUDIT

It is important to collect some information from the community regarding the issue of bullying. At this point the group must have some shared understanding of what data is to be collected and how it will be analysed. For example, the decision could be made to conduct a survey or interview individuals. The following points would be taken into account:

- what information is to be collected and from whom
- who will collect the information (for example, will the students be involved in developing and collecting it)
- how will the information be collated and fed back to the community
- what use will be made of the information
- who will take responsibility for devising an appropriate means for data collection.

COMMUNITY EVALUATION

Some commentary is needed from the community regarding the results of the audit. As a result:

- further action to be taken will be identified (such as collecting different information)
- the process to date may be evaluated along with the progress made.

COMMUNITY ACTION

The information presented needs to be acted on. This could include:

- development or revision of policy statements regarding bullying
- development or revision of grievance procedures for addressing bullying incidents
- identifying the means for communicating the action to the community.

> It is important to collect some information from the community regarding the issue of bullying. At this point the group must have some shared understanding of what data is to be collected and how it will be analysed.

CELEBRATING/MONITORING

The community might stop to celebrate its achievements. It is also important that the means be found for establishing some on-going monitoring of the program. In summary, the guidelines and procedure described here are presented for the purpose of promoting further discussion around the legal issues concerning what a community must do to address the issue of bullying.

Conclusion

School bullying, as a mental health issue, crosses individual, school, community, state and national boundaries. Its impact and effects are indeed far-reaching, and are now well documented and substantiated in the psychological research. Most significantly bullying has now crossed the boundary of what was once regarded by some, if not many, as "acceptable' behaviour. In acting in the best interests of those deemed to be most vulnerable, the community would be seen to be fulfilling broader civic, social and moral imperatives.

For information regarding the resource The P.E.A.C.E Pack: A program for reducing bullying in our schools contact Associate Professor Slee on Phone: (08)82013243, Fax: (08)82013184 or e-mail: edpts@flinders.edu.au.

For further information about bullying and children and adolescents visit http://www.caper.com.au.

Associate Professor Phillip T. Slee has a background in psychology and education. He currently teaches for the Department of Human Development, the School of Education at Flinders University of South Australia. He has also undertaken research in the areas of parent-child relations, bullying & peer relations, and families & stress.

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School bullying, as a mental health issue, crosses individual, school, community, state and national boundaries. Its impact and effects are indeed far-reaching, and are now well documented and substantiated in the psychological research.

Summary: Lessons Gleaned from National & International Research

The level of bullying is as high if not higher in Australian schools than overseas schools.

Bullying is an identifiable form of aggressive behaviour.

Bullying is part of the social fabric of the school and community.

Bullying has negative outcomes for perpetrators, victims and bystanders.

"Bullying Tactics" by Phillip T. Slee reprinted from "Balance: The Journal of the Mental Health Association (Qld) Inc.", Winter 2002 issue, with permission of the Mental Health Association (Qld) Inc.

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Narcissus & Echo By Gordon Ray

INTRODUCTION

Greek myths, as with other myths, were established to connect with important ideas, be they social, psychological, cultural, philosophical or religious. In the main they were metaphors reflecting on life and rather than providing specific answers they usually related to our nature, relationships and even to the nature of the universe. So they offer a way to think about answers to problems. We can still draw insights from myths even if, as individuals, we may or may not choose to believe either in Gods or in a monotheistic God. What then are some of the issues that the myth of Narcissus and Echo may point to?

This myth is usually just called the myth of Narcissus thereby relegating Echo to a marginal role. In fact, at first glance the story itself centres on Narcissus, but Echo is there from the beginning to end. She, in some ways, is the polar opposite of Narcissus and just as important in issues of love, freedom, destiny and authenticity.

Different versions of the myths are common. This myth is no exception, so what follows is an explanation of one version. The seer Teiresias told the mother of Narcissus that he would live to a ripe old age provided he never knows himself. He grew to be an exceedingly handsome young man and had an unyielding pride in his own beauty. So much so that he rejected all the potential lovers that sought him. One day as he was out hunting stags he met the beautiful wood nymph, Echo. She fell hopelessly in love with him. He abruptly rejected her and all her attempts at a relationship, declaring, "I will die before you ever lie with me." She spent the rest of her life alone pining and suffering from unrequited love, wondering among the woods and glens. This displeased the Gods.

The Gods were contemptuous of her weakness in accepting this as her fate and in not facing life and its challenges. So they took away her ability to communicate and all they left her with was the ability to echo another's words. Now as one version has it she asked the Gods to avenge her and also make Narcissus a victim of unrequited love. In some versions it is Ameinus, who was the most insistent suitor of Narcissus who, on killing himself on Narcissus' doorstep, called to the Gods asking them to avenge him. They answered the plea and made Narcissus fall in love but without being able to consummate this love.

From our perspective Narcissus was anyway, unable to love anyone else but himself. He could not give of himself, no one else was good enough for him, and he was incapable of mutually rewarding interpersonal relations. He was narcissistic. Neither the death of Ameinus or the humiliation and despair of Echo served to lead him to self-reflection or to building on other aspects of his character. So Narcissus continued to hunt until one day, thirsty from hunting he came across a lovely clear pristine spring and pool. As he lay down to drink he saw a beautiful creature looking up at him. As he reached out the face vanished in a

ripple of water. Each time he tried to embrace the object of his growing infatuation he failed. Later he recognised it was himself. He was in despair over both in a way possessing and yet not really possessing himself. So as he stayed by the pool, grief was destroying him. He had finally found his love yet could never consummate it. "Yet he rejoiced in his torments, knowing at least that his other self would remain true to him, whatever happened." (Graves, 1996:268) Echo had followed him to the pool and grieved with him. She echoed his last words as he stabbed himself to death. "Alas, alas! Ah, youth, beloved in vain farewell!" (Graves, 1996:269) And so he died. What are some of the lessons to be drawn from this myth?

The main lesson people draw is usually that of 'self-love' and they point out the danger: that this can lead to narcissism. Perhaps we all have a degree of narcissism and that it is fundamental to our survival. Indeed some psychoanalysts refer to 'healthy narcissism' as a means of distinguishing self-respect from tendencies whereby individuals over-value the ego or the self into a more exclusive Narcissism. In the myth Narcissus shows an extreme degree of narcissism. The term is also often merged with the term 'Solipsism': here the person sees oneself as the centre of the world and all experiences. Narcissus could only experience himself as real and he would view others only in terms of how they would nurture and maintain himself and his view of himself. Fromm uses the term 'self-love' to mean a necessary and healthy aspect of one, which enables an individual to reach out and love others in a healthy way. In this way he regards self-love as an essential foundation for building loving relationships. (Fromm, 1995/1957).

Fromm contrasts this with 'selfish love', which he sees as only being interested in oneself, someone who is a taker but not a giver in relationships. Such a person for Fromm is only interested in her/himself and as such excludes genuine concern for others. So Fromm is equating selfish love with a narcissistic orientation. But it is his use of the term "self- love" that draws May's criticism. May agrees that we can't love others if we hate ourselves, but if we love ourselves we do not automatically love others as Narcissus clearly demonstrates. (May, 1999/1981). Fromm, of course, would not disagree with this, his point is that self-love is a pre-requisite of the mature loving of others and it is selfish love that would thwart this. May, prefers the term 'self caring' (which includes self-esteem, self-respect and self-affirmation) to "self-love" (1999/1981:147). The problem with this as I see it is that self- caring can also imply diet, grooming, youthful appearance and exercise, and itself can be a road to vanity as contemporary society amply demonstrates. Fromm argues, "the affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, freedom is rooted in one's capacity to love, i.e. in care, respect, responsibility and knowledge. If an individual is able to love productively, he loves himself too: if he can love only others, he cannot love at all." (1995/1957:47).

We will all arrive at our own view of this. It is important for counsellors though, when the need arises, to ensure clarification as to the client's subjective view of what the terms mean to her/him.

May agrees that we can't love others if we hate ourselves, but if we love ourselves we do not automatically love others as Narcissus clearly demonstrates.

Narcissus & Echo (Continued)

After looking at self- love and self- caring May raises an important point, that of revenge. In one story Echo seeks revenge, in another it is Ameinius that seeks revenge, nevertheless revenge is a factor. Whether May is right in saying, "narcissism has it's origin in revenge and retaliation" (1999/1981:145) or whether this is too much a generalisation, it obviously can be a cause. He refers, to the neo-narcissism of contemporary society where young people blame parents, the system, culture or something else for letting them down and making them a victim. Echo as with Narcissus, has abdicated the search for genuine interpersonal relationships. She is denying herself and by making the choice of being a victim is incapable of growth and maturity and is betraying her 'self'. People have different views on what 'self' means and will no doubt always have differences. One useful way is considering the self from an interactionist framework.

The interactionist approach to 'the self' takes the view that our awareness of self emerges and develops over time and that it does this through the various interactions that we experience with others and the world as we go through life and it is a process, which continues through life. If this is so – that the self is constructed over time - then the 'I' (or me) that we know it at any given time is not permanent, it changes through life. Is this not what happens, if we observe children over time, how they develop and change as the 'self' grows. Now this in no way holds a challenge for those who believe in a soul; that is a non-physical part of ourselves as the most important part. In fact people who believe in the spiritual/religious aspect of us tend to say it interacts with the body and grows and refines over time. Now how does this view relate to Narcissus and Echo?

> There has been an increase in contemporary society of self-referential, self-regarding individualism, to the point where some, in the pursuit of liberty of the individual move from liberty to license.

Neither Narcissus, nor Echo, had any real interactions. Narcissus is solipsistic and is unrelievedly self-referential. Any interactions he has would be conducted entirely in these terms. So his 'self is sedimented: as it is at the beginning of the myth so it is at the end. He reveals no ability to self-reflect or to productively interact socially. He undertakes no growth and dies rather than share part of himself with others and interact with the world. Even when he did have contact with others it was entirely on his terms. He has not only alienated himself from society he has alienated himself from himself. Echo has done the same but not from becoming entirely self-referential but because she had no self-regard at all. She too is alienated from society and self. Like Narcissus, Echo does not grow through social interaction and connectedness. It is generally held that this myth is about the dangers of self-love (or selfish-love). May also adds, revenge and retribution. The retribution to both is of course, caused by themselves. We are each "Master of our own destiny and captain of our souls." This does not mean we have unlimited freedom – we do not have, but do possess limited freedom and with that comes responsibility. Various elements in our lives consist of ontological or existential 'givens'. These include, being born into the word, which means being with others and we negotiate through this. Time and mortality, we are moving through time towards physical death: our genetic inheritance; the historico-cultural context – we are born into a particular historical epoch; the politico-social system

with its mores, norms and values; the contingencies of life such as earthquakes, floods, wars etc., and illness, aging, suffering and death. We do not have any say over the existence of these 'givens' but we do have a freedom to respond to them and in so doing fashion our own being. Now, because such 'givens' as these we all have what is called "existential anxiety", which is another given. We are aware of the nature of Being in terms of these ontological givens and thus we experience a degree of existential anxiety or angst or dread. Nevertheless we can, as Heidegger says, face these resolutely, even unto death, and in so doing, we grow authentically (1927). Tillich, in similar vein, says we can face these courageously and grow spiritually. He says despite all the things in the world that challenge our ability to affirm ourselves (as a self), for example suffering and death, we can still have the courage to be. (Tillich, 2000). Heidegger is the main philosopher/writer on these aspects of Being. (1927) Contemporary writers include Deurzen-Smith, 1988,1997), (Spinelli, 1989,1994) and (Strasser and Strasser, 1997). Kiekegaard's work on anxiety (1844) and on modes of being is seminal. Rollo May's work has also been referred to. So how do Narcissus and Echo shape up to this?

They don't of course, in existential terms, they are both inauthentic. So although at one level the myth is about self-love and revenge at another level it is also about self-abnegation and the absence of facing life with integrity and having the courage to be. Further more, by having two people neither of whom experience reciprocal love; it raises for us the question of love itself. Having read in the myth about the two failed human beings, in effect we pose the question concerning a truer mode of living; something other than these two extremes. This brings us to ponder the nature of relationships and love. As I mentioned at the beginning an important function of myths is to make us think about our nature and relationships. There has been an increase in contemporary society of self-referential, self-regarding individualism, to the point where some, in the pursuit of liberty of the individual move from liberty to license. An instant gratification society is sought and not necessarily by younger people. This appears to be more widespread and more prolonged in our type of society and involves older people too. Christopher Lasch referred to American society as 'The Culture of Narcissism'. This can also, of course, be aimed at other western societies. One of the defining statements in this context was that of Fritz Perls which is often repeated with unthinking glibness.

The Gestalt Prayer

I do my thing and you do yours
I am not in this world to live up to your
expectations
And you are not in this world to live up to
mine
You are you and I am I
If by chance we find each other, it's beautiful
If not it can't be helped

As a statement of arrogant and self-regarding behaviour it's a classic. It fits in with the "me" society and it also fits more with an atomistic society rather than cooperative and connected society. Tubbs produced an excellent answer to this; he used an

approach influenced by Martin Buber (1923). (I do not have a reference on where Tubbs statement appears unfortunately) Tubbs says, if I only do my thing and you only do yours we are likely to lose each other. He agrees we are not in this world to live up to the others expectations but we are in the world to confirm each other as unique human beings. He says we are only fully ourselves in relation to each other and that the "I" detached from a "you" disintegrates. He disagrees that we may find each other by chance. We do this, he says, by an active life and a reaching out. (The opposite of Echo and Narcissus). It is true, he says, we must all begin with ourselves but must not end with oneself. (Narcissus and Echo). The reference to Narcissus and Echo here are my inserts. Perls says if we find each by chance, it is beautiful- but would it be? He advocates a high level of individualistic behaviour so it seems that the relationship would be problematic.

We have said that we possess freedom but that this freedom is limited by ontological givens that are not negotiable e.g. genetic makeup, death, aging, and natural events. We included in this another given, that of existential anxiety, which is present due to our awareness of these aspects of the nature of being. We may, of course deny and seek to avoid this basic anxiety. We may do this through hedonism, increased materialism and seeking the excesses of a western society. Freedom involves making choices and this involves anxiety as choices involve risk and uncertainty. They also put us into certain situations, which later we might consider to be unsatisfactory. If so, we realise we could have chosen differently, hence we can say that choices/decisions involve an opportunity cost. Freedom and choices feature prominently in counselling. It is not to sweeping to say that freedom; choices and values are central to the counselling process. Narcissus shows a strong orientation to narcissistic behaviour and may not be aware that he has severely constricted use of freedom and choices due to this. Echo has abdicated her freedom and chooses only to exist and suffer unrequited love. This freedom is central to who we are and become. Consider Spinelli, "Nevertheless the freedom which existentialists stress, and which is ours to act upon, is the experiential freedom to interpret the stimulus events in our lives as we choose (within the boundaries set by the innate bio-physical invariants of our species). Herein lies the basis of our freedom to choose. …it is a far greater degree of freedom than that which we as inauthentic beings, convince ourselves is at our disposal." (1989:111-113)

With freedom goes responsibility; that is being responsible for the way in which we use our freedom. This freedom can be impaired by clinical neurosis. Given this limited freedom, we have to ask ourselves what will we make of it? Or how will we use it? Frankl says life presents us with challenges and it is up to us to respond. "I have said that man should not ask what he may expect from life, but rather understand that life expects something from him." (Frankl, 1986/1946:xxi) We are free to respond to what life presents us with. Echo expected her love would and should be returned; that Narcissus should love her as her right because she loved him. So she is

expecting from life, not responding to life's challenges. She refuses to exercise her freedom.

It's true, as Kiekegaard says; "Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom." (1844:61) He is saying that anxiety is a necessary concomitant of freedom, but we must accept it and confront it in living our lives. We may seek to avoid this existential anxiety (which can be referred to as normal as opposed to neurotic anxiety) by becoming part of the 'crowd' (Kiekegaard) or 'herd' (Nietsche). We may seek thereby to 'lose' ourselves in the norms and pastimes of society in a non-reflective way. Like Kiekegaard, Heidegger warned of the dangers of belonging to the crowd and that the crowd can become the soul of the person's life. In this case, belonging to the crowd, the person has set inauthentic limits to their being whereby everyone is the other, and no one is himself. Neither Narcissus nor Echo had tried to become part of the 'crowd'; on the contrary, they have avoided this, yet neither is engaging relationships. For Narcissus it would mean him losing his sense of importance. By definition Narcissus could not be a member of the crowd, if it meant being equal to others. He could be the centre of attention in a group if everyone deferred to him and he was able to see them as serving his needs. Echo has avoided all others, but neither of them was interested in seeking interaction. They both denied the growth of self. Their impoverished choices, reminds me of a spiritual (or perhaps psycho-spiritual) saying. "If I am not for myself, who am I for? But if I am only for myself, who am I? Narcissus could not be for anyone else. But was he only for himself? In one way yes, but by denying mutuality and social interaction the 'self' he ended up with was a shrunken pathetic self. Kiekegaard would go further and say he remained a non-self and failed to answer the question "what am I". What of Echo? Kiekegaard would give the same answer for her.

She fell at the first hurdle of attempted social interaction and avoided social contact from then on. In an important way she neglected being herself so she never confronted the question of "who am I?" Both neglected the challenge of being and avoided asking or answering "How shall I engage with life?"

We all have limited freedom but we should use this to confront our limitations and possibilities in order to develop the 'self'. In this way we face the structure or nature of Being, (the ontological givens) each by our own way of individual being to the extent we can do this, we become, in Heidegger's terms, authentic.

We may recall the prophecy of Teiresias, that, Narcissus will live to an old age if he never knows himself. This seems to be a rejection of the ancient Greek Maxim, "know thyself" and "the unexamined life is not worth living". What can it mean then? May offers an insightful way of interpreting it viz.: "But could Teiresias be saying that Narcissus will live long if he avoids the absorption of self-love? (1991:144). In this way he would avoid knowing that tendency towards extreme self-regarding behaviour. By his uncritical pursuit of self importance Narcissus has pursued his selfish behaviour. If, however, he had

We all have limited freedom but we should use this to confront our limitations and possibilities in order to develop the 'self'.

Narcissus & Echo (Continued)

examined himself and reflected upon it, he may have been able to see his human frailties, his strengths and weaknesses or limits and possibilities and used his freedom responsibly. If so, he could have moved toward individuation rather than individualism. In which case his "self" could have become more enriched.

> This conscious awareness of "knowing' brought with it and suffering he had caused others. In fact he was able, at last, to see the pool as a mirror.

There is, though, another possible interpretation of this myth. As Narcissus gazed, at first enraptured, into the pool, he finally came face to face with himself. That is he came to know that he has chosen to focus on the selfish aspects of life (as we all may do) and now he saw clearly what he had become and also what he could have become. This conscious awareness of "knowing' brought with it and suffering he had caused others. In fact he was able, at last, to see the pool as a mirror. He saw his life reflected back and he was contemptuous of it and grieved by it. He freely chose to end it. Hence his reference to being loved in vain. "Alas! Alas! Ah, youth beloved in vain, farewell!" (Graves, 1996:269)

Gordon Ray MSc.Econ, MA. (Lond.), Grad Dip. Ed Admin., Dip Psychoanalytic Psych. MACA (Clinical)

email: pagora@powerup.com.au

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Peer Support: Providing 'on the ground' support

By Anne W. Ford

INTRODUCTION

Whether or not we realise it, many of us experience and provide informal peer support on a day-to-day basis—with friends, colleagues, and those in similar situations to our own. Whilst this often requires of us an understanding of the person's feelings and situation, and perhaps a helping hand, there can be times in which more is required: they want us to have answers, do something for them, or maybe even to share in their difficulty. It is during these times we might feel stymied, at a loss for what to do or say. We might feel de-skilled or scared of saying what we think, or of saying the wrong thing. It is for these reasons that a formalised peer support programme can be beneficial in institutional settings, one in which training and follow-up are provided, clear boundaries and guidelines are set, and which provides a clear and safe welfare network that can enhance existing welfare provision.   Such a formalised programme not only makes the institution in which it exists a more user-friendly and accessible place, but peer support is preventive in its nature.

Peer support programmes are found in many different institutions: schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, businesses and police forces, to name a few. They are in place to support those who are experiencing emotional distress, for those who need a supportive listening ear, or for those who simply need to connect to somebody and perhaps have a cup of tea and a chat. The generic term 'peer support' covers a variety of services: peer education, peer mediation, befriending, peer counselling, and peer mentoring. Although there is a central ethos inherent in peer support programmes, the focus of this article is on peer support in a university setting and on a training and service that provides a listening ear and referral service to those in need: The Oxford University Peer Support Programme.

WHY PEER PROGRAMMES?

Research has clearly shown that peers generally seek out their peers first and foremost when they have a problem or concern. With only minor changes in percentages these findings hold true "regardless of age, quality of counselling found, or experience in working with a counsellor." (Carr, 1981; De Rosenroll,1992; Carter and Janzen (1994); Tindall, 1995; Cowie and Sharp, 1996; Ford, 2001, The Mental Health Foundation, 2002) This has been borne out through the experiences of the students who have trained to be peer supporters at Oxford University. The university students, both verbally and through written evaluations, have reported that they are often a "first stop" for a friend or "peer" getting further help, and that they have been a pivotal turning point for peers seeking further professional help. As students naturally talk to one another, and often care

for one another, formalised peer support training helps students "more effectively continue what they are already doing." (De Rosenroll, 1992, p. 2)

In this sense, peer support uses the positive side of "peer pressure", or peer influence, since there can be built into peer groups a sense of loyalty, co-operation and caring. There is often a strong sense of understanding amongst peer groups about the struggles, stresses and successes they have to face in life. Peer support begins with the natural willingness of most young people to act in a co-operative, friendly way towards one another. As a consequence, peers are often willing to give their time and offer themselves in a role of listener and supporter at the very point of crisis when professional help is not available. (Cowie & Sharp, 1996) Peer helpers may have more credibility with their peers than professionals initially have, and may have a better understanding of the stresses and problems of their peers, which in turn might help in the way they listen and talk to people seeking help. Peer supporters also can be seen as role models, and tend to interact with their peers on a regular basis. In addition, they learn skills that will last far beyond the confines of the training/programme. And finally, there is a great personal growth amongst the peer helpers themselves. (Tindall,1995; Ford, 2002)

Peer support can therefore be seen as preventive (Carr, 1981, Chatterton et al., 1988; Ford, 2001), in the sense that it can help a person before a problem becomes too severe, can model the importance of sharing and communication, and can direct a person to seek professional help, which they otherwise might not have sought. The existence of such a programme is especially important at a time when, developmentally, college and university age students are shifting from adolescence to early adulthood, and are facing the ensuing developmental hurdles.

This shift between adolescence and early adulthood is discussed in *The Myth of Maturity: what teenagers need from parents to become adults* (2001), by Terri Apter. Apter coins a new term: thresholders. Thresholders are 18-24 year olds, on the brink of becoming adults. Her thesis is that this group of young people are facing more stress, whilst at the same time getting less from the family structure, than those in previous generations. Her contention is that the potential for isolation amongst this group is rising, and that the risks that go along with isolation are increasing: eating difficulties, drink and drug problems, suicide rates, to name a few.

Apter focuses on the importance of family support, which is not available for many, especially high-risk students. She also explores the changes in family structure, for example, the increase in divorce and less emphasis on extended families, which is new for many cultures, and how this affects how isolated students might feel. This decrease in support is at times mirrored by the institutions in which students find themselves, such as colleges and universities, which can then compound their isolation.

Statistics have been used to relate drop out rates with levels of support in educational establishments. In the

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Peer Support: Providing 'on the ground' support (Continued)

UK, it was reported that institutions with strong social networks have a 1-2% drop out rate, whereas, institutions that do not provide extensive pastoral care, or do not believe it is their job to be in loco parentis, have drop out rates up to 40%. (Freely, 2001) Even if we take these numbers with a pinch of salt, especially as not all the reasons for leaving the institution were stated (i.e. financial necessity, change of course, supportive nature of family, etc), the obvious point is that providing a caring environment for those in transition from adolescence to adulthood – with all the ensuing developmental issues such as separation and individuation, identity, attachment, development of healthy relationships with their peers, to name a few—will enhance rates of retention, promote health and well-being amongst students and staff, and will ease their experience as thresholders.

Peer relationships are extremely important at this age, and those who do not have a peer relationship/group can feel extremely lonely and cut off from their peers. This is especially true as this age group hovers between adolescence and adulthood, a time when they are in the process of moving away from complete dependence on the family structure—to whatever degree it exists—to an independent state. We often expect this age group to be more independent than they are ready to be—it's a fine balance between 'coddling' them and forcing independence on them before they are emotionally or developmentally ready. This will to a large degree depend on a culture's view of independence and dependence; whether or not it is accepted that a person will leave home at a certain age, or whether the young adult will be expected to stay at home until they find a partner.

It is often what might seem like the 'simple' things that cause stress when going away to college or university—time management, diet, managing social schedules, doing laundry, finding the lecture hall—as many students have been over-supervised and over-scheduled when in the family home. Then again, there might well be students who have not had input from family with regards to academic work, and who find themselves struggling with the academic system as a whole.

All these factors point to the need for and importance of having trained peers who make themselves available in some sort of supportive capacity – be it peer support, peer mentoring, peer education – thereby enhancing the welfare provision within the institution, promoting well-being amongst students, and potentially reducing the drop-out rate and poor mental-health.

The existence of peer support within an institution symbolises to students, staff and the wider community the educational institution's commitment to not only the academic growth of their students, but also their emotional well being. In order for students to feel connected with their environment, the whole person (academic, social, emotional and physical) needs to be tended to, especially in adolescence. A peer support scheme also demonstrates the institution's belief that students' wellbeing is valued as a necessary and integral component in the learning environment. Peer support contributes to a health-promoting environment, which in turn increases learning

The thirty-hour Peer Support Programme training was born out of an extensive period of experimentation and monitoring of the training needed to provide the appropriate level of skill for peer supporters at Oxford University.

capacity. (Ford, A. and Keys, S., 2002)

It was for these reasons that the Peer Support Programme at Oxford University was developed. It recognises that students are an invaluable source of support for each other, and that a supportive college or university will ease a student's road to independence. It also recognises that skills can be taught through a clear and comprehensive training, which helps students become more confident in themselves and in helping others.   Through training and supervision, students are taught that there are limits to what they can do, and made aware of the importance of sticking to these limits. The Peer Support Programme provides a support network within the University for those students who wish to talk about problems they are facing, but are not yet ready, or do not feel they need, professional help.

PEER SUPPORT AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

When first developed in 1990, the Peer Support Programme was designed to target students who provided welfare for other students within their colleges. Within the Oxford collegiate system, each college has its own welfare network, which is made up of undergraduates, graduates and members of the Senior Common Room (SCR—academic staff). The welfare systems and the amount of welfare provision vary within each college. Twelve years ago, welfare systems were not as developed or entrenched in the colleges as they are today. The aim of the scheme was to enhance the welfare provision in colleges, and to complement existing professional services such as the University Counselling Service, GPs, College Nurses, Chaplains, etc.

The training is now run in 23 colleges within the University, and each college sets up and advertises their panel, which then provides support and a 'listening ear' to students within that college. The panels are comprised of between 6 and 12 students, undergraduates and post-graduates, and sometimes a member of the SCR. Candidates are selected through an application process and students recruited, trained and then supervised fortnightly. Supervision is an integral and mandatory part of the scheme. The students are not trained to be counsellors, so it is imperative that supervision is provided.

Peer Support Training

The peer support training lasts 30 hours, and takes place in three-hour sessions over a 10-week period. The training is designed to enhance what students are already doing: listening to each other, offering support and caring about their peers. The training teaches through experiential learning ways to listen and support, whilst at the same time keeping boundaries and limits in place. The length of the training allows enough time for students to master, practise, and integrate the skills being taught, and to develop the confidence needed to put them into practice. The level of confidence and ability to access the skills they have learned is crucial for people who are known sources of support in college, and who often talk to distressed students or see friends of people who are causing a concern within the college setting. The thirty-hour Peer Support Programme training was

born out of an extensive period of experimentation and monitoring of the training needed to provide the appropriate level of skill for peer supporters at Oxford University. When given less than thirty hours of training, students reported that they wanted more practise and information, and that they did not feel ready to fulfil their roles as peer supporters. This finding corresponds with de Rosenroll's (1992) and Carr's (1996) view that the length of training must reflect the level of skill needed to carry out the aims of a particular programme and that a required 25-30 hours of training should be provided. Training therefore prepares the students for what they might be facing in their role as peer supporters, but also acknowledges that the support they can provide will be useful on a day-to-day basis. As one student said:

> "What I do is 'on the ground' support. Even though I'm formally identified as a peer supporter, most of my contact is quite casual. The training has helped me to know what I am doing in both cases. Recently, when I was walking to the library, this person began chatting to me. By the time we were through the quad I realised he was getting down to a heavy level. It was then I realised that I was using my peer support skills…and I hadn't even known it!"

The first four sessions of training concentrate on confidentiality, listening, values clarification, decision-making versus advice giving, and getting to know the group. These are followed by two sessions on assertiveness training, which are referred to frequently throughout the rest of the training. The remaining sessions focus on specific issues, such as culture and stereotypes, family concerns, crisis intervention and suicide prevention education, limit-setting and referrals, but are underpinned by the listening and support skills the peer supporters learn throughout the course.

The fact that training is participatory is emphasised from the start. Trainees are encouraged to be as open as they feel they can be, with the caveat that they do not have to answer or participate if they feel uncomfortable. Initially most students feel anxious about the group because they do not know what to expect. The training is therefore designed to ease into personal issues, building trust first within the group.

Peer support training is varied in its balance of input and exercises, large group and small groups, and brainstorming which means students are free to write up ideas without worrying about spelling, grammar or being right or wrong. The latter may seem like a

Trainees are encouraged to be as open as they feel they can be, with the caveat that they do not have to answer or participate if they feel uncomfortable.

OVER a thousand students have graduated from the peer support programme Anne Ford has run at Oxford University for the last 12 years. Now back in The States she has refined and developed the programme and is offering it to colleges and universities around the world as a tried and tested package.
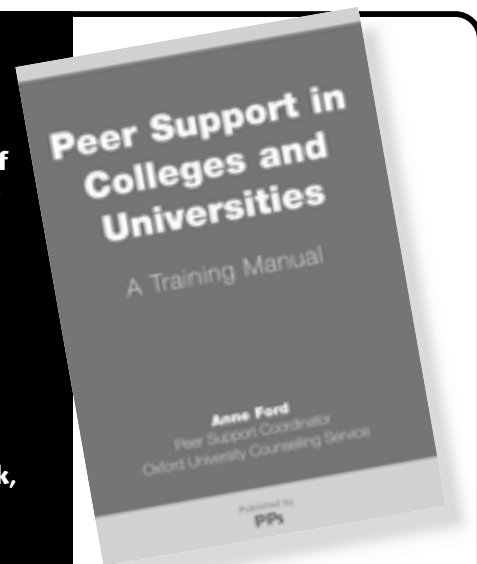
Structured in 10 training sessions, each one lasting three hours, *Peer Support in Colleges and Universities: A Training Manual* contains everything the trainer needs to run a course for 8 to 12 students, including a very clear introduction, in depth notes for all 10 sessions, a full range of student handouts, a helpful conclusion that touches on supervision, and a resource and reference list. Feedback comments from students Anne has trained are included throughout the manual. In loose-leaf format there is scope to adapt the training to different cultural and organisational settings.

A peer support programme benefits the students who seek help, the institution, the lifelong personal development of those who train as peer supporters, and ultimately all those with whom they come into contact. The effects are far-reaching.

"Since undergoing peer support training as a student at Oxford in 1998, the skills I learned have greatly influenced many areas of my life. As a Peer Supporter, the training has helped me listen to people under stress, without either judging or influencing their thoughts. In my social life, the skills I have acquired have helped me to better understand my friends and be more open and supportive. In both my teaching and my university work, I am able to deal with the differences and problems that arise on a day-to-day basis, and by listening and asking non-directional questions, find solutions that offer the greatest benefit to my colleagues and to the community"
Peer Support Training Graduate Oxford, August 2002

Published September 2002, 146 pages, loose leaf, ISBN 0-9543483-0-3, only 150 Australian dollars for the hard copy, including delivery, or the sterling equivalent of 52 Australian dollars for the online version up to the end of 2002 and 68 dollars equivalent thereafter.

Peer Support in Colleges and Universities
A Training Manual

Anne Ford
*Peer Support Coordinator
Oxford University Counselling Service*

Published by
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Please note: We recommend that the trainer is a counsellor, psychotherapist or psychologist – or an equivalent, trained and supervised professional – with substantial experience of work within the student welfare setting

Peer Support: Providing 'on the ground' support (Continued)

small point but in an educational setting it is important and refreshing.

Three levels of training

The training works at three levels: individual, group and community. Through the exercises, assignments, and feedback, these different levels are touched upon.

Individual level

The training is challenging and empowering at the individual level. Often the students are encountering the issues under discussion for the first time. As they learn new skills, especially ones that teach them to be aware of their own emotions as well as those of others, they often feel de-skilled for several Sessions. The training challenges their views of helping and listening - which at times may be grandiose. As a result, they often no longer feel they are 'right' in, or certain about, their ability to support and help. The process of being challenged and de-skilled are discussed during training sessions, as the experience may lead to feelings of resistance, anger, frustration and confusion. After the struggle with their sense of feeling de-skilled, they truly begin to understand what the process of listening and supporting is all about and to feel skilled at what they have learnt.

A lot of time is spent thinking about boundaries and limits. Most students feel that the assertiveness training sessions help them the most in their every day life. For many of the students, it is important to hear, then internalise, that they cannot be everything to everybody, nor should they try. These two sessions help them overcome their fears about setting clear limits. They are pleased when they know they have set an appropriate limit, and equally can feel disheartened when they feel they 'could/should have' set a limit, but did not. We work from the premise that recognition is the first step to change, and that their awareness is positive, albeit at times painful.

Group level

The use of the group as the vehicle for this learning process provides a space for the trainees to learn to trust, take risks, learn about and work with each other in order to gain knowledge and skills, and use each other for peer support. The course is designed so that trust and risk-taking build steadily over the sessions. For example, in the first session, confidentiality and group boundaries are discussed. This helps the group to feel safe, which, in turn, affects the students' willingness to be open and take risks. They quickly learn how much support they can get from each other in the group - an important experience in university settings, where people are normally pitted against each other in order for one to come out on top.

The group dynamic can be worked with at different levels. It is sometimes useful for the trainer to point out what is happening in the group. This models what the students are being asked to do: be open and honest with feelings and concerns. Students have reported that they have found it helpful when the trainer reflects on a process in the group, or on an issue that has arisen. At other times it may be best to leave space for the trainees to air their own feelings about what is happening within the group, without personal input from the trainer. There may be times, however, when the trainer is aware of a particular dynamic, but chooses to work with it, without bringing it into the group consciousness. As the group is not a

therapy group, a balance needs to be kept.

One of the most commented on aspects of the group is the peer support they get from each other, both during the training and after. Through the training exercises and during the breaks (which is a bit of social time when tea, coffee and biscuits are always provided), the trainees get to know each other very well. They often begin to talk to each other about how they handled a certain situation, how they would like to use the training outside the training room, and eventually, about things happening in their personal lives. Often by the sixth session they have set up an outing or dinner to which everyone is invited.   It is both interesting and constructive that the group pulls together in this way at this time as the emotionally demanding sessions on family, crisis, and suicide prevention education are soon to follow. Even though they are nervous — often terrified — of these sessions, they have a strong base of support in the group. Even in groups that don't gel in this way, there is *good enough* support within the group to make it possible to get through the more difficult topics.

Community level

The trainees tend to talk amongst themselves about how the skills learnt in training function in the community. This involves discussions around how to make it known that they have had peer support training, how to advertise themselves, what they are willing to try and what they cannot do, i.e. the limits they are going to set within their institution. In the training itself, questions follow every exercise to facilitate the students thinking about how to use the training outside the training room, for example:

> *"How does that apply to you in your*
> *role in college?"*
> *"In what way can you use these skills/this*
> *idea 'out there'?"*

Most importantly, the trained students take back to their communities a sense of commitment and desire to make their institutions a more welcoming and supportive place, and to reduce, through making themselves available, the loneliness and isolation felt by so many. In many of the Oxford colleges, the Peer Support Programme is well embedded and accepted.

Supervision

Through fortnightly supervision, the peer supporters decide how they want to advertise themselves in college, i.e. information flyers, posters with name, subject and email address, peer support 'teas', 'surgery hours', etc. Most often, after advertising themselves, the peer supporters find that they are approached casually, mostly by friends or acquaintances, rather than through their more formal surgery hours. Although they may find this disappointing, the peer supporters recognise the importance of keeping formal hours available as it sets aside a 'psychological space' within the college for those who wish to avail themselves.

Supervision also provides continuity for the training group who have moved on to becoming the peer support panel. It is a compulsory component in the existence of such a scheme because through supervision the students' anxieties are contained and worked with. It is crucial for this type of post-training follow-up in order to hold the boundaries of the

Most importantly, the trained students take back to their communities a sense of commitment and desire to make their institutions a more welcoming and supportive place, and to reduce, through making themselves available, the loneliness and isolation felt by so many.

sometimes very heavy, upsetting and confusing issues the supporters confront. In addition, supervision serves the purpose of further training students in both support skills and specific issues that are not covered in the training. It also provides the important function of monitoring the programme. The supervisor is able to monitor how the peer supporters are being used in their roles, what issues arise for them, how they are dealing with the more difficult issues, and how the institution is taking to the scheme.

CONCLUSION

Peer support is an effective way to enhance existing welfare services, and to use the rich natural resource in colleges and universities: the students. Making an educational institution more approachable, user-friendly and supportive greatly increases the likelihood of a positive experience for students, which in turn increases their capacity and ability to learn. Furthermore, it reduces the potential for isolation and alienation within an educational environment. In this sense, having formally trained peer supporters is preventive as a means of early intervention for those students seeking help and support.

Every setting is different; therefore, a large degree of careful consideration and planning needs be put into a new programme. There is no doubt that setting up and running a well thought out peer support scheme takes time, energy, enthusiasm, flexibility, creativity and funding. It may at times be difficult to evaluate the effect such a scheme has on students within an

institution and on the institution itself. However, at Oxford University, where the programme has been in existence for 12 years, a recent external review concluded that The Peer Support Programme is now an integral part of the varied support structure within the university, and recognised peer support as effective 'frontline' provision. Peer support is undoubtedly a venture which has a positive impact not only in the personal lives of the students who go through training, students who speak to a peer supporter, but also in the wellbeing of the educational establishment as a whole.

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Anne W. Ford, MSW
Co-ordinator and Trainer
Oxford University Peer Support Programme
1990-July 2002

Anne Ford recently published Peer Support in Colleges and Universities: a Training Manual, *which is published by the Peer Support Training Company (email* info@peersupporttraining.com*). You can visit the Peer Support Training website on* www.peersupporttraining.com *Please see page 15 for more information. (advertisement for the manual)*

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here is no doubt that setting up and running a well thought out peer support scheme takes time, energy, enthusiasm, flexibility, creativity and funding.

Register of ACA Approved Supervisors

Name	Contact number	Qualifications	Cost hr	Medium
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Internet Resources Compiled by Angela Lewis

Angela Lewis
MA.Ed, CTDP, MACA, *is a qualified Counsellor and practices as a corporate adult educator (computer training) in Melbourne.*

www.angelalewis.com.au

Hello fellow members!

Well, our last column for the year and I have lots to tell you. Firstly I am offering my student training manuals for sale at these special ACA members' only prices. Each purchase gives you the right to email me one technical question in respect to a Microsoft Office Program.

If you would like to order any of these please email me your requirements and on receipt of your cheque I will attach the documents as a PDF file, this means you can print it out yourself and keep it on your computer to read whenever you like. A PDF file opens in Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is a free program. If you do not have it, then you will be prompted t download it when you receive my files.

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Buy everything in one hit = $100 incl. GST.

These manuals are available from now onwards on a continuing basis.

However, if you still need support and you don't feel like buying the manuals, here is another resource for locating answers to your technical problems.

Microsoft help and support can be located at www.support.microsoft.com. If you are like the rest of us users – both home and business – the chances are you are running your computer system on Microsoft products, known as Microsoft Office, and incorporating Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. If this is the case this site is probably the best initial port of call. It has a searchable database of answers to most common questions and a software download area where you can download updates, patches and complete products.

Personality Tests: I have found a fascinating site where you can take the Myers-Briggs Personality test at no cost. The Myers-Briggs test is used widely in corporations worldwide, when staff are being hired and assessed for different roles, and is based on Jungian topology. The site address is www.humanmetrics.com.

Still on the topic of online test taking, another free one is www.testcafe.com which allows you to take an online IQ test – no cheating!! This site also has an emotional IQ test and a body age test. They do require you to sign up with email details, so consider using something like your Yahoo or Hotmail accounts, to save you getting possible unsolicited email to your usual email address. As I have mentioned in previous columns, it is always a good idea to have a generic, free Hotmail (www.hotmail.com) or Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) mail account for the purposes of anonymity.

Jargon: Ever wondered what a 'blog' is? Well, it is computer jargon (surprise, surprise!), short for ***Web log***. A 'blog' is a Web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual. Typically updated daily, blogs often reflect the personality of the author. These could be the ramblings of an idiot savant, a highly sophisticated site authored by someone like google.com, or a teenager's page diarising who she kissed and who she is not friends with.

And just on the ubiquity of McDonalds: I see McDonalds in Melbourne city has launched its first cybercafe, so you can download emails while munching your burger. Guess that had to happen!

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.

ACA

Watson….I think I found another clue…..

By Angela Lewis

Recently I received (in error) an email that a stranger had sent to a group of his friends. (Should I have been reading it – well that is another issue entirely – but I am ashamed to say I did!!). However…this person evidently lived in a high rise building somewhere where it was snowing and some flats/apartments in this building had caught on fire. There was lots of talk about smoke damage, confusion and fright – he actually wrote an interesting and newsy email - and then one line that made me think….he wrote, "luckily none of the cats in the building were hurt".

The email was from a man – a stranger possibly on the other side of the world. And here lies the dilemma; because I am reading this email without any contextual clues, I have to interpret the meanings and nuances myself – I have to put my own spin on it so to speak. But what should that be? Do I assume the intention was to say "I am so glad there were no cats hurt", with heartfelt genuineness because maybe the man is gay and owns 15 cats himself, or perhaps he is a nurturing soul who loves and pets the neighbourhood cats; or was this the sarcastic tongue in cheek…"what a pity none of the cats were hurt" - because he hates cats and wishes they had been burnt to a crisp?

Which brings me to my question - how do we deal effectively with our communications now that the non verbal clues that constitute such a large part of our

> If we are not sensitive to the possibility of misinterpretation by those receiving our emails, or dash off ill-conceived or cavalier communications; it is possible that relationships can be torn apart and feelings hurt, because we have treated cyber communication in a casual fashion.

lives no longer exist; communicating as so many of us now do, electronically with a keyboard and a modem? In my example, even if I had never met this man before, if he stood in front of me or spoke down the telephone line, the expression on his face or the tone of his voice would have very quickly alerted me to his feelings about the aforesaid cats – stranger or not.

In a way, you could say we have gone back to the days of old…the eagerly waited letter from a loved one arriving in the mail, perhaps from a lover in the war, a family member overseas, our best friend on the other side of the city, even a neighbour 2 miles away…..because that is how it was before we got the telephone. Then along came the telephone, and letters and writing became a thing of the past.

Well now the old fashioned 'letter' is back, albeit with the post-modern twist of arriving with a 'ping' in our electronic mail-box. This leaves us as readers, to figure out and flesh out the second and third dimensions of the meanings being conveyed by the flat characters on our screens – a skill that the current generations have not had a lot of practice with.

In the example above with the cats, the language of email could possibly have been deciphered with the appropriate use of emoticons – for example:

Luckily none of the cats in the building were hurt ;) – winking icon, ☹ sad face icon or <grin> to indicate he wishes they were hurt.

Luckily none of the cats in the building were hurt ☺ - smiling icon to show he was genuinely happy they were not hurt.

In the flat, one dimensional chat rooms and emails that exist in the virtual world of the Internet, we have to become super sleuths of idiomatic nuance and word formation and placement. As a society we probably used to have those skills, and didn't think too much about it – our parents and grandparents, who perhaps didn't have telephone access and certainly didn't have email, would have had those skills for sure.

If we are not sensitive to the possibility of misinterpretation by those receiving our emails, or dash off ill-conceived or cavalier communications; it is possible that relationships can be torn apart and feelings hurt, because we have treated cyber communication in a casual fashion. For example, someone dashes off a note on the keyboard to a friend or lover. The friend or lover reads the intent behind the words incorrectly….maybe it is something like …"see you later". The recipient might then agonise: am I being brushed off, does this mean he/she wants to see more of me, does he or she mean they will come and see me later"…and on and on it goes.

While I know the 'flip' reply is open to (mis)interpretation aurally, most of us have enough skills to decipher the tone and intonation of "I'll see you later" to know whether it means coffee or goodbye, when someone is actually speaking to us!.

In terms of a shared verbal discourse there is always the auditory - what is heard, and the sensory – what is felt. The context of a discourse is always going to rest on some type of shared knowledge and taken for granted assumptions that are unique to that particular moment. The silences, the intonations, the inflection of an utterance – a facial expression, surprise, disgust, irony, admiration – these intonations can serve as a bridge built between the two speakers when no words can be used.

Women in particular (in my own experience and opinion), are more adept at translating the context of

a shared discourse and looking 'under' the layers of conversation; noting the body language, comfort level or involvement the other speaker has in the exchange. In a way the virtual exchange - the distanced and disembodied - is a style that may well suit a male communicator more than a female, but obviously this is only conjecture on my part.

So how do we deal with the absence of intonation and voice, utilising only the non-verbal clues of cyber-communication? I don't really have any answers…… but accept that the textual message is only a snapshot in time that the writer wants us to have, a one dimensional image of reality that they have selected. The philosopher Barthes (1985) talks about the layers that intonation add to speech in terms of .."the tiny liaisons speech uses to fill up silences".

 In the absence of facial expressions and eye contact that emails cannot convey, our society has to learn to deal differently with a new mode of communication, but equally I feel, not be seduced by the ease of clicking off a short email, when a longer conversation might be called for. Picking up the phone perhaps, or make personal contact when you are unsure of where that communication is heading is perhaps a good start…sure it takes more effort, and puts you in the firing line (how easy is it to hide behind an email), but so much more a dose of reality!

Barthes, R. (1985). "The Grain of the Voice", New York, Hill and Wang.

> So how do we deal with the absence of intonation and voice, utilising only the non-verbal clues of cyber-communication?

ACA

To ACA Members within the radius of the Gold Coast From Gordon Ray, Main Beach

Re: Feasibility of establishing a sub-chapter on the Gold Coast

Phillip has asked me to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of such a sub-chapter.

There are undoubted benefits that can flow from having such a branch. These include, helping trainees, peer reviews, discussion of ideas, topics or draft articles for our journal, possible conference papers, arranging one day or half day events etcetera.

It would probably not be helpful at this stage for me to set a date, time and venue. We could certainly hold

our first meeting at my Main beach apartment. Could anyone interested please contact me so we can arrange the best possible date and time. We would need to select some initial office holders.

Please contact me on:
    Phone: 5528 5926
    Mobile: 0412 858 969
    Email: *pagora@powerup.com.au*

                    I look forward to hearing from you.

                                    Gordon Ray

Note Taking, the Ins & Outs

Accurate notes are useful when debriefing with your supervisor particularly if a difficult case was experienced several weeks before your supervision. Reading your notes the day after seeing a client can also be enlightening, you may find you have been taking sides or your own belief system is interfering with your objectivity. Read notes critically, but don't change them, learn from them.

Taking notes is a contentious issue, should you, if so how much should you document and how should you document issues? What words are appropriate what words will hang us? There is no real answer, the dilemma is will your notes be adequate and not incriminating if called upon by a court to divulge them and will your client sue you after reading them? The following article may help with some considerations when you to design you own system of taking notes.

Clarity in Documentation

Mark Twain once said to would-be writers, "As to the adjective, leave it out." His words have meaning to us today. He meant that when you write an adjective, for better or for worse you give an opinion. Adjectives must be carefully chosen, or even replaced, if the language is to be clear and precise.

Examples of the need for clarity and precision are the focus of this article. Your written words are the only record of a session you have with a client, and those will count for nothing, for your agency's purposes or in a courtroom, if you have not written them down accurately. Let's take an example: The sky is blue...no, the sky is generally blue… no, the sky generally appears to be blue...no, in some parts of the world, what is generally thought of, as the sky sometimes appears to be blue. We sometimes make things harder on ourselves when we go to extremes. All we need to say is the *sky is blue*. In many instances, the work we do is simple and very straightforward; we don't need to mystify it with complicated or confusing words.

Here's another example: *Jerry is exhibiting signs of depression*, or *Jerry is depressed*. These sentences are grammatically correct, yet I am unsure what exactly is meant. An attorney would have a great time with either of those statements, saying the writer was judgmental, prejudiced. The client was simply a quiet, unassuming person whose behaviour produced unwarranted and false conclusions. To eliminate that possibility, all you need to do is add a simple clarifying phrase. If Jerry is depressed or showing depression, add something like *because he lost his job*. If Jerry is depressing his emotions, add *by not answering questions, and by changing the subject*. What clues tell you Jerry is depressed? Add *He said he has not been able to eat or sleep, and is concerned about the crying spells*. Now your conclusions are supported with specifics.

Let's consider more examples:

- A favourite, but inadequate, phrase in records is *negative attitude*. Again, that is too vague and too judgmental. To make it clear, write something like *learn to discuss problems instead of throwing things*.

- A frequent goal is *improve hygiene*. That's too vague because it doesn't tell you enough of a story.

> Adjectives must be carefully chosen, or even replaced, if the language is to be clear and precise.

You must be specific. *How about Brush teeth and shower each day?*

- Don't write *Learn to become more independent*. What does that mean? Set up a business? Leave a husband? The specific goal could be *Get up in the morning and report to job on time*.

- *Increase self-esteem* is another favourite goal, but it's difficult to really sink one's teeth into such a phrase. How about *Will not be critical of self or personal decisions about disciplining children*. See the difference?

- The record may read *Client participated in chalk talk*. What does participated mean? Will *every* reader understand that a *chalk talk* is a chemical dependency lecture? Did the client talk? Cry? Take a swing at another client? Or at you? Someone can participate in an active or a passive way. So one word doesn't tell much. To clarify *participate*, add *client revealed examples of how he had fooled himself about the increasing use of drugs. He reported denying the importance of wife's complaints. The group encouraged his willingness to open up.*

- Since part of our topic concerns communication, let's take the phrase *communication problem*. Again, what does this mean? Why not list the problem exactly: stuttering, speaking too fast, or talking around the subject.

- Is your client withdrawn? How do you know that? Write instead *Suzanne is withdrawn as evidenced by the fact that she spends all her time in her room and refuses to even eat meals with her family*.

- To characterize someone as *aggressive* is not enough. Does the client fight? push? scream? kick? Do not leave room for interpretation. If the client described eventually takes you to court, the term aggressive used alone could be interpreted by the attorney as a positive characteristic, not a negative one.

- If a client is unemployed, there may be more to the situation. Clarify your entry by adding something like *has been fired from last three jobs for drinking and excessive absences*.

- You can define the term *nervous* by writing something like *not eating, sleep is not restful, or screams at children*.

- Instead of *feels bad*, write *history of high blood pressure and heart condition*. Remember, one can feel bad physically and/or emotionally. That holds true for another one-word problem: *health*. Enter something like *asthmatic condition requires expensive medication, so client does without*.

- When the client is ambivalent, you need to know why. So does a record user. Enter something like *She cannot make a decision about continuing in a marriage with abusive spouse*.

- We often think we are describing a behaviour when we say *Henry is lazy* or *Laura is aggressive* or *Karen is withdrawn*. These statements do not describe behaviours; they make undefined judgmental observations. That could be disastrous for a counsellor and the agency. What

characteristics or symptoms give you cause to think the way you do? Write them down!

As you are choosing words, remember it is a complex task. Your choice could convey, deliberately or not, a view that tends to be too negative. Consider these examples and decide which is better: *dumb or limited intelligence; cheap or economical.* **It is vital that your words be clear and precise to satisfy your profession, external auditors, your client, and attorneys, should the need arise. It is necessary to substantiate your observations and give them authority. Remember, good entries are precise and current.**

There is also the matter of timeliness. The word *current* is a directive to record information immediately! Waiting even one day can blur accuracy. Those who wait until the last minute to write their entries often suffer from fainting spells, anxiety attacks, and acute writer's elbow—a heavy price to pay.

Your client should be an active participant in setting goals and writing staff notes and plans. Document client participation, perhaps including the client signature. Set goals the client will understand, agree with, and accept. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and meaningful to the client. Set a date for achievement of those goals. Define the methodology to be used in goal achievement. Do not create a reasonable doubt; that's a lawyer's job! Using words that are not specific or that create vague impressions could equate to an opinion, leaving room for reasonable doubt and the possible destruction of your credibility.

The writer's reasonableness and credibility can be assumed not only from the words but also from the readability and appearance of the overall chart. Did you ever stop to think a record's appearance affects a reader just as the appearance of a speaker affects a listener? There are several major factors that will influence the written word's credibility—and clarity:

- **Legibility.** Scrawled, scratchy, or sloppy handwriting, which is difficult or impossible to read, may make the writer appear irresponsible, fairly or unfairly.

- **Spacing.** Small writing that is crammed into a small space not only says something about the writer's concept of what is important but also frustrates the reader who may already be looking for a way to use the record against you.

- **Format.** Disorganized filing, half-completed forms, and a rambling assortment of ideas leave too much room for doubt.

Not taking care of the appearance of a document may be construed as an indication of disregard for the client and a lapse in professional accountability.

Excerpted from:
ACA Legal Series: Volume 2
Documentation in Counselling Records
Author: Robert W. Mitchell, ACSW
Series Editor: Theodore P. Remley, Jr., JD, PhD

ACA

> It is vital that your words be clear and precise to satisfy your profession, external auditors, your client, and attorneys, should the need arise.

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News from the Chapters

VICTORIA

The enthusiastic work of the previous chapter chair, Gayle Higgins, and the last two dynamic chapter meetings since I became chapter chair, the Vic chapter is now active in promoting business and professional development for all chapter members. Future chapter meetings will have the general agenda.

- Case presentation
- The application of theoretical and emerging psychological knowledge to counselling practice.
- Monthly topic presentation.
- General Chapter Issues.
- Networking.
- Open forum.

All members are strongly encouraged to contribute to any of the above areas. Members who have a topic or issue that they would like to take place and be discussed in the chapter meeting need to let me know in advance. We will be forming peer supervision clusters to begin meeting in February. Any one interested in peer supervision will need to register. I need your name, address, contact telephone/email, your region South-North—East——West, (Metropolitan), and time availability.

I am committing to bi-monthly chapter meetings for next year. However, I believe that monthly meetings will be of greater benefit to all members. Therefore I will schedule meetings for the first three months of next year. If attendance is high meetings will continue on a monthly basis. Some of the proposed topics to be presented at chapter meetings next year are:

Critical Incident Debriefing
Relationship counselling and personality disorders
Crises management & trauma management
Creative approaches in counselling
Working with Children & adolescents
Delusional illnesses
Co-dependency
Grief & loss
Counselling new age clients
Integrating cognitive & emotion in counselling
Counselling clients with Eating disorders
Stages of change & motivational Interviewing
John Gottmans' approach to relationship counselling

I encourage all members to be committed to professional development and ongoing professional supervision. In conjunction with the national body we are making supervision and OPD more affordable and accessable.

The chapter will be developing a newsletter from January, contributions from members will be essential. Contributions can take the forms of letters to the editor, short articles or questions. Networking is encouraged if you would like to let members know what you are working or if you have any advertising you would like to make you can do it free of charge (members only). Please email your contribution before the end of December for the inaugural edition in January 2003 to acavichapter@aol.com.

We are currently in the process of organising a chapter conference for 2003. Details are not yet finalised. However, I have been negotiating with some exciting and knowledgeable speakers who are interested in passing on their experiences. I have chosen to go for quality of speaker and diversity of topic rather than theme. If you have any suggestions about a particular speaker you know of drop me a line.

It is also time for us as a group of professionals and individuals to begin claiming our place in the provision of mental health services in this state. While the demand of mental health services continues to increase counsellors are struggling to establish their practices. I am committed to lobbying state and local bodies on behalf of chapter members. I am calling for members interested in assisting me in this task to make themselves known to me.

In addition, I encourage all members to be committed to professional development and ongoing professional supervision. In conjunction with the national body we are making supervision and OPD more affordable and accessible. It is my hope that members will set goals for supervision and OPD that aim above the minimal requirements. When we are putting ourselves up for consideration as equal professionals in the mental health field we need to demonstrate our professionalism and commitment to ongoing training and development. It is your professional and ethical duty to do so. I believe that the chapter meetings offer an excellent forum for PD, practice building, and networking.

Finally I like to extend my best wishes for a healthy and joyful end to the year as well as a prosperous new year to all ACA members in Victoria and around Australia.

Miguel Barreiro

Left to Right:Chapter Chairperson Meeting Lorne Ferster (WA), Peter Papps (SA), Miguel Barreiro (Vic), Philip Armstrong (HQ), Martin Hunter-Jones (Sydney), Ted Heaton (Hunter Valley).

WEST AUSTRALIA

First of all I would like to thank all the Chapter members who have taken on roles within the Chapter management committee this year, particularly the secretary Carolyn who has been the major contact point between the Chapter members and the National Office.

Members of the WA Chapter were happy to welcome Philip Armstrong from the National Office to an informal meeting in Perth on Friday 18th October. Philip's visit provided us with much valuable information, and his enthusiasm and suggestions really motivated us!! The WA Chapter is currently investigating 'Incorporation' which would provide us with more opportunities for growth, expansion in our dealings with local government and organisations.

The WA Chapter would like to take this opportunity to wish all members of ACA a very happy and prosperous festive season, and a very successful 2003!

TASMANIA

We are excited to have fellow islanders making contact to start a Tasmanian Chapter. I am asking all Tasmanian members to forward their applications directly to the ACA for processing if you are not a member. All those who are members of the Tasmanian Chapter please contact me with your details so as we can organise a meeting in the new year.

With the isolation from the main land, Tasmania is often bypassed in favour of the big island. Yet as a small state Tasmania has so much to offer on a professional counselling basis to its own people. We look forward to the continued growth of the Tasmanian Chapter under the guidance of the National Office too great things in the future. I may be contacted on Email at resid@knightfranktasmania.com.au Att: David Hayden.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As Chairperson for the SA Chapter I would firstly like to acknowledge and thank Yvonne Howlett, Liz Gamble, Mary Rose and Tony McAvaney for their work on the committee once again this year. We will be expanding our committee next year and have already obtained 3 new "volunteers" who will compliment our team.

For 2002 it was a mixed bag as we put a lot of focus and energy into developing a conference which unfortunately lacked attraction for most of our members and from this we have learned to be more in tune with local needs. We did run a successful Mandatory reporting workshop and there has been a monthly forum provided for students and counsellors covering a wide range of topics. In addition we started a Yellow Pages listing for ACA members and we would look to continue that next year with increased numbers.

2003 is expected to kick off early with a "Happy Hour" of sorts, but more particularly designed to identify existing and new members, what skills we have as a counselling resource and to establish the needs of our members for the next 12 months. We

certainly will be having a State Conference for which we have identified 4 speakers in relation to Drug and Alcohol addiction, Youth Suicide, Step Parenting and Men's issues. More details below and will follow through the year. We are very keen to get as many members as possible on email for ease and regularity of contact, so please register the basic Name, Location, Contact phone and mobile with persontoperson@picknowl.com.au as you read this article.

Monthly forums will continue to be conducted on the last Saturday of each month at 42 North Tce, KENT TOWN from 10.00am to 12.00 noon, cost $10-. Personal development, networking and problem solving will be covered plus all topics driven by participants. New year will commence 22/2/03.

For any further information about membership or issues that may be affecting your role as a counsellor, please contact Peter Papps (08 8363 5822 or email :persontoperson@picknowl.com.au)

State Conference will be 8/3/03 at the Patawolunga Motel, Glenelg. Cost $100 members, $ 85 students and $120 non members, more information on this will become available in the New Year.

Happy Hour will be 6/2/03 and again we will be holding this at the Pat, from 6.00pm to 8.00pm with finger food, and drinks provided. We would like to have a combination of social as well as constructive business during this time. If you are unable to attend we would still like to know of your interest and support by an apology and perhaps any suggestion that you may have in relation to "what can the Association do for you".

NSW & SYDNEY CHAPTER

By the time this is in print and in your hands, our Chapter will definitely have completed a very full and functional year, fulfilling our charter of providing opportunities for participants to connect and develop as a community.

At the core of our organisation is the bi-monthly meetings we hold on the second Saturday of every second month at the North Sydney PCYC (223 Falcon Street), from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. In each of these meeting we host a speaker on a relevant topic (this year's topics included couples counselling, drug issues, the placebo effect and esoteric psychology), followed by Chapter business.

In addition, at 2:00pm, just prior to each bi-monthly meeting, 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.

An indication of the opportunity these meetings represent to participants is the increasing number of attendees, and the attendance of people from as far away as Orange, the Hunter Valley and Canberra. Also, in June we hosted a very successful NSW Conference, and on Saturday 30 November 2002, we will host a special speaker on "Counsellors and the Law", followed by the final bi-monthly meeting of 2002.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have created a culture appropriate to counsellors, one

With the isolation from the main land, Tasmania is often bypassed in favour of the big island. Yet as a small state Tasmania has so much to offer on a professional counselling basis to its own people.

News from the Chapters (Continued)

where people connect and respect, listen and learn, then involve and action. All the events described above came about from participants wanting them, then making it happen.

As for next year, there will be more of the same only different. The NSW Chapter will be moving towards incorporation. The bi-monthly meetings will continue, as will the case study hour preceding it. Topics for the bi-monthly meetings will be determined by participants at the meeting on 30 November 2002.

The special events we have planned for 2003 are:

— Ruth Bright presenting a full day workshop on "Music in Communication" on 15 March 2003 (flyer enclosed for NSW members).

— the inaugural National Conference, to be held in the latter half of the year (date to be confirmed).

To conclude, this organisation is not set in concrete but it is on solid ground. My hope and belief is that as more and more counsellors personally experience the benefits of participating with us, the amount of solid ground we can traverse together will increase.

Details on all Chapter events and issues can be confirmed by contacting Martin Hunter Jones on 0438 336 535 or martinhj@tpg.com.au or Bridget Hallam on 4294 4234 or bphallam@smartchat.net.au.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The committee wishes all ACA members in Australia a joyful and safe Christmas and a very prosperous and happy New Year for 2003.

QUEENSLAND CHAPTER

In the vernacular of the sporting fraternity after a few false starts the Queensland Chapter is now up and running! At a meeting held at ACA Head Office and attended by Philip Armstrong a new committee was established consisting of:

Chairman – Geoff Cox, Vice Chairman – Malcolm Lindridge, Secretary – Ellen Burton

Treasurer – Cathy Thorburn. Included are Gordon Ray and Myra Cummings as committee members.

The formation of the committee will enable the Queensland Chapter to work towards incorporation, hopefully in the New Year (2003). The committee has also set a date – please put it in your diary – for the Queensland State Seminar. It will be held on Saturday 24th May 2003, the venue will be the Bardon Centre at the foot of Mt Cootha in Brisbane. The proposed theme is "Counselling in 2003 A Report Card". The committee is seeking papers for presentation at the seminar and if any member or non-member wishes to submit such a paper, can they please forward them to the ACA Head Office, P.O. Box 33 Kedron Qld 4003. Requests for further information should be made to the ACA or to the Chairman, Geoff Cox. Next meeting is February 8, 10.00 pm at ACA.

The committee wishes all ACA members in Queensland and the rest of Australia a joyful and safe Christmas and a very prosperous and happy New Year for 2003.

SUNSHINE COAST SUB-CHAPTER

The Sunshine Coast sub chapter was "born" as a result of a meeting of ACA members held in Beenleigh on March 23rd 2002.

A committee was formed consisting of: Geoff Cox – Chairman, Ngaire McGrath – Vice Chairman, Kay Hartshorne – Secretary and Joan Scotcher – Treasurer

The committee held its first meeting on April 4th, 2002 and it was decided that committee meetings and functions for members would be held on a bi monthly basis.

The first function held on 12th June was a most informative seminar on Grief and Loss by Helen Maddern and subsequent functions were held in August and October. The August meeting featured the "Aged in 2002" and the October meeting was a workshop on Relationships, facilitated by Rodney Stroddart.

The functions were informal, informative, well attended and allowed members to network and get to know each other in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The December meeting will be of a social nature reflecting Christmas spirit on the 13th December.

It is planned that next years meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday, Bi Monthly in the evening. The programme envisaged is:

February 2003 – Family Relationships

May 2003 – Secondary Trauma Stress

July 2003 – Grief and Loss revisited.

Members and non-members are most welcome. These dates and topics are subject to variation, as are times and venues. All will be advised of any change.

The committee wishes all members and their families a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous and fulfilling 2003!

HUNTER VALLEY SUB-CHAPTER

ACA membership has increased, as has the size of their regular bi-monthly meetings. Interesting subjects are presented at each meeting that are relative to the issues of counselling and therapy and are intended to incorporate all of the members present into the discussions. Part of the focus of the group is to increase OPD's and peer supervision points as well as educate and stimulate.

The next meeting of the sub-chapter will be held on December 18th at 5.30pm at the facilities of Gracegrove College, 723 Hunter Street, Newcastle West 2302. Phone (02) 4962 5650.

Ted Heaton, chairperson, cordially invites all interested people to come and join in some Christmas cheer. They will be reviewing and discussing one of the pertinent John Bradshaw tapes as well as establishing the scheduling for 2003. A social gathering now is a regular event after the meeting where supper is shared and friendly networking occurs.

Book Review

Putting Together the Pieces

By Frances Day

This is a 'good read' for anyone involved in the experience of trauma. It spells out for victims, professionals and support groups what to expect with trauma viewed from these varying perspectives. While treating the subjective experience of trauma objectively, its great strength is in the personal experience of the author who suffered a severe trauma incident in her youth. She was abducted at gunpoint for several hours, by a man who shot two innocent people in another area of bushland a day later.

With additional references to her own work with other victims, Day picked me up and carried me along through the emotionally very difficult terrain of direct experience. I was left with a feeling of privilege that I had been permitted into her inner journey. As a result I feel more competent to 'be with' a victim in their trauma and more able to offer understanding, support and guidance.

The book is divided into four sections, covering the effect of trauma on self, the emotional responses to expect, the barriers to recovery and the healing process of reconstructing self and developing a meaningful future.

Each chapter begins with a useful summary of what is to follow. The text is well edited with headlines for each sub-section within chapters that guide and stimulate reading. This helps alleviate the emotional heaviness of the subject. An appendix at the back lists a summaries of symptoms as classically identified by Horowitz (1993) and Ochberg (1988). There is a useful bibliography. For the more visually minded reader I would have liked to have seen a schema or model summing-up the recovery process.

While the principles and symptoms may be familiar to you, Day's descriptive evidence of their significance in practice will confirm and challenge your competency as a counsellor or therapist in the area of trauma. Out of it can come insight, wisdom, sensitivity and practical guidance for counsellor, victim and supporter alike.

Published by Broadening Horizons, Australia ISBN 0 9580 102 0 X   Email for enquiries:
francess@broadening-horizons.com.au
Ph 61 8 9322 9777

Reviewed by John Murray MA.
Life-Coach and Counsellor, Double Bay, Sydney

Brief Cognitive Hypnosis – Facilitating the Change of Dysfunctional Behaviour

Jordan I Zarren, Bruce N Eimer

The 13 chapters broken down into three sections cover concepts and tools; clinical applications with a special section devoted to smoking cessation and keys to change. The book targets medical and mental health care professionals already using hypnosis and those who wish to add to their skills.

This book combines the use of cognitive behavioural therapy with hypnosis. It helps the clinician to reframe the patient's beliefs which continue to propagate dysfunctional behaviour. The term brief therapy is used to indicate that changes can happen within a much shorter time frame than short term therapy. The Intake Evaluation Outline is a useful guide for history taking before hypnosis can be discussed and planned.

There is a section on 'language' where the therapist needs to be open to the patient's body language, voice, breathing and eye movements. The section on trance induction gives a practical outline of what this means together with some specific scripts which may be used.

I like the use of case studies giving examples of treatment used. The section on smoking cessation contains practical suggestions including scripts. Chapter 13 is a summary with a final word from the author stating that dysfunctional beliefs are imprinted on patients and accepted by them purely because those in authority have suggested it. By reframing their beliefs it is possible these dysfunctional imprints can be changed thus increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes in any kind of treatment.

I believe this book is an excellent resource not only because of its clear language and reference resources but also because of its unbiased viewpoints on what is a fairly new field. I would recommend this for anyone who wished to add to their knowledge and learning.

Published by MacLennan & Petty, ASBN 0-8261-1484-9. Price $115.20. Phone (020 9349 5811. Mention this review for a discount.

Reviewed by Sandra C Brown
B.Ed Studies, Dip Prof Couns.

Sandra is in the Final phase of completing her Diploma in Clinical Hypnosis. Sandra has her own private practice in Bendigo and Frankston in Victoria

> By reframing their beliefs it is possible these dysfunctional imprints can be changed thus increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes in any kind of treatment.

"Recovering from Depression – A workbook for Teens"

Copeland, ME & Copans,S. "Recovering from Depression – A workbook for Teens" (Revised Edition) Sydney, Paul H Brookes Publishing 2002.

This book is the result of research and "Field Testing" by two experienced mental health practitioners who between them have been responsible for more than a dozen books on health care and depression. Broadly speaking it fits into the field of self-help psychology, but it is one of the better ones of that oft maligned category.

The "blurb" tells us that – "It is ideal for teens and the parent, friends an professionals who care for them". It's focus however is definitely on the teen who is suffering from this debilitating condition. The "workbook" is just that, and contains surveys, checklists, practical tips, fill-in-the-blanks, and brainstorming activities.

Book Review (Continued)

Comprised of five main sections [Getting Started, Things I Need To Know About My Physical And Emotional Health, Things I Can Do To Help Myself Feel Better, Things I Can Do To Maintain A Positive Outlook Over The Long Term and Building An On-Going Recovery And Safety Plan], the book presents an approach to the problem of depression that is structured, positive, holistic, and future orientated. This approach offers "a way out" for depression sufferers that is no quick fix but a realistic solution in which the reader not only has a personal investment but also, through completion of the various worksheets, a growing self-awareness and understanding. The book is above all practical.

From a clinical counsellors point of view it may, depending on your level of experience, provide you with new and effective ways of approaching the problems of depressed clients

From a clinical counsellors point of view it may, depending on your level of experience, provide you with new and effective ways of approaching the problems of depressed clients (with slight modifications many of the ideas and worksheets are just as relevant for adults).

All in all a useful text to add to your professional library.

Published by MacLennan & Petty, ISBN 1-55766-592-3. Price $61.55. Phone (02) 9349 5811. Mention this review for a discount.

Reviewed by Adrian Hellwig.

Adrian is the Vice-President of the Clinical Counsellors Association and works as a pastoral care worker at Villanova College in Brisbane.

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