

## Editorial

The contents of this issue address a range of counselling-related topics, and present not only research—based both on existing literature and on original investigations—but also illustrations of and reflections on authors’ practice and their personal and professional experience. The first two articles will be of particular interest to school guidance counsellors and practitioners working with families.

A significant group of young people with complex needs are those affected by the neurological condition Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In the first article, Hannah Saalbrey Ross draws on literature and her own experiences both as a parent with a 12-year-old ASD son and as a school counsellor, in providing a comprehensive discussion of the ways in which students who are “differently wired” with high-functioning autism are affected by the condition and experience challenges in school. She discusses research-based and practical approaches to the holistic pastoral care of these students, and the multifaceted aspects of school counsellors’ roles in providing effective support for them and connection with their families.

Barbara Mackay then takes an in-depth look at school mobility, a widespread problem with potentially serious ramifications for children and young people in our schools. This article explores the reasons why some secondary school students change schools frequently. While a negative view tends to be taken of these young people, it is vital for school counsellors and others involved in pastoral care to understand the factors that influence this mobility, including family-related circumstances. This knowledge can help equip counsellors to respond effectively to these students’ diverse and complex needs, and it can also enable them to take the lead and advocate for them with the teaching staff, pastoral care network, and wider school community.

In contrast, as a counsellor within a palliative care context, Sasha McAllum Pilkington uses the mode of ethnographic fiction, blending truth with imagination, to demonstrate her use of Narrative Therapy when meeting with a Māori woman

who has a life-threatening illness. In telling this story, Sasha has sought to illustrate how, as a Pākehā counsellor committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, she engaged with her client whose experience of cancer had been shaped by marginalising discourses and the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Readers who are employed by organisations may find that the next article resonates with them personally as well as professionally, as many professionals are experiencing increasing pressures and aspects of workplace cultures that can be corrosive of their wellbeing. The fourth article, by Raewyn Laurenson Elder, Margaret Agee, and Carole Adamson, explores the significance of workplace roles and identities, the influence of contemporary working environments on professionals' identities and functioning, and the implications of research into work-related stress and coping for workplace counselling. This information is relevant not only to practitioners in Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and other work-related services, but also to counsellors in community agencies and private practice who encounter clients whose lives, relationships, and wellbeing are adversely affected by workplace stress.

Counsellor educators are one group of professionals who currently find themselves under increasing pressures and constraints in the environments in which they work. As a way of providing one another with support and professional development, Niccy Fraser and Toni Horrell, two senior counsellor educators, contracted with one another to engage in peer supervision for a year. At the same time, these authors of the fifth article purposefully undertook an autobiographical study in which they recorded and reflected on their experience of peer supervision. In their article, they provide the background to their study, describe the rationale for and establishment of their peer supervisory relationship, analyse key aspects of the process and identify the benefits gained. This article contributes to current discussions of both peer supervision and the support needs of counsellor educators.

In the final, brief article, Russell Vant and Joey Domdom report the outcome of a literature review on the value of mindfulness meditation. Undertaking a search and critical analysis of pertinent literature, they assessed levels of evidence and applied an appraisal framework. The results indicated that as a self-care approach, mindful meditation may reduce stress and anxiety, while increasing self-compassion and personal confidence. It has also been associated with such attributes as clearer thinking, and an increased capacity for reflection, empathy,

and compassion. While not conclusively demonstrating a direct causal relationship between mindfulness meditation and the enhancement of professional practice, the evidence gathered is encouraging and will interest counsellors working in diverse settings.

This issue marks the end of our term as editors. As we look back over the past 10 years, the most significant development has been the transformation of the Journal from a print-only to a predominantly online publication. The *New Zealand Journal of Counselling* now has the capacity to reach a much wider readership and represent counselling in Aotearoa New Zealand not only locally but also internationally. Starting with this current issue, readers of the print version will notice another significant change: a striking new cover, more befitting of the Journal as a respected publication. Over the years it has been encouraging to receive high quality submissions from a range of contributors including practitioner researchers and students, and it has been very satisfying to have played a part in bridging research and practice through publishing material that contributes to this vital, two-way relationship.

One of the most rewarding things about our role has been working with others associated with the publication of the Journal. We particularly want to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of Susan Brierley and Robyn Sivewright (Afineline), whose talents with technical editing and layout have ensured the quality of the Journal's presentation. We also warmly thank the members of the Editorial Board and others who have so willingly supported us and responded to our invitations to review submissions, as well as the many authors with whom it has been a pleasure to work during the editorial process to publication.

We welcome to the editorship Dr Peter Bray, and Guest Editor for Volume 38(2), Dr Brian Rodgers. Janet May will join Peter in 2019, and Paul Flanagan will become the third member of the editorial team in 2020. More information about the incoming editors will be available in the NZAC newsletter, *Counselling Today: Nga Korero Awhina*, the Executive Report to Branches (ERB) and the *NZAC 2017-2018 Annual Report*. We extend our warmest wishes to the new editors as they shape the next phase of the Journal's growth and development.

**Margaret Agee and Philip Culbertson**

Editors