

## Editorial Comments

Welcome to the first issue of the *New Zealand Journal of Counselling* for 2003. We hope that you will find the contents lively and interesting reading. Through them, we acknowledge the wide range of work in which our colleagues are engaged. We hope their various initiatives will inspire you as you move through the year.

This *Journal* considers the various frameworks that are important to our clients in their journey to “develop more resourceful ways of living and to bring about change in their lives”, which is our core business, as indicated in the Code of Ethics. The following articles all make significant contributions to this. Many of these articles are papers presented at the NZAC/IRTAC conference which had as its theme *Counselling in the New Millennium; Facing Difference: Respectful Practice*. Respect in the face of difference is a core theme in this issue.

The articles in this *Journal* cover a wide range of counselling approaches. Their commonality is an interest in the multiple perspectives, the differences, that may be taken in relation to counselling and client experience. Exploring such themes, in particular the metaphors that embody the client’s experience and value system, complements the findings of the Society for Psychotherapy Research convened in Oxford, England, in December 2002. Mental health providers from a variety of disparate disciplines including, among others, psychiatrists, nurses, counsellors, psychologists, universities and user groups, discussed future research priorities. One of the main themes identified was “developing user-defined outcome measures, terminology and research priorities”. Other main themes were ethnic minority issues, bridging the research–practice gap, and identifying which kind of therapy works with complex problems.

Pauline Dickinson, Bob Francesco, Graham Woolford and Margaret Agee search for an understanding of the phenomenon of mocking from pupils’ perspective in *The Phenomenon of “Mocking”: The Voices and Experiences of Boys in a Single-Sex School*. Mocking is identified as a school-wide phenomenon, affecting all players. Within this study the authors place emphasis on continuing dialogue and the importance of including the boys’ solutions to what is found to be a significant issue for all pupils. This paper addresses a social issue of current concern and

relevance and it is good to see clients' perspectives addressed in this way.

Richard Cook's article is of interest to those whose approach to counselling is from a Christian perspective. In *Liberation from Conforming Social Patterns: The Possibilities of Narrative Therapy to Aid the Exploration of Christian Spiritualities*, Cook discusses the use of Christian metaphors to confront and resist dominant social patterns. It is seldom that an attempt is made to integrate Christian perspectives with theoretical approaches. This paper is important in an age when spirituality is regaining coinage in inventories of life satisfaction.

David Bromell, in *Sexual Identity and Male Sexual Offending Against Children*, dares to consider offenders' perspectives in treatment programmes for those who have sexually abused young children. This is challenging territory and the author raises some interesting questions. He proposes that sexual identity confusion may be a significant factor in sexual offending and reflects on some provisional findings.

Margaret Bowater's article, *Dreams and Visions Around Death*, speaks to those who are fascinated by the place of dreams in making sense of our lives, in particular when dealing with death or major loss. Dreams are seen as contributing an important perspective to our life issues. In particular, death is presented as a metaphor of major change for many clients. Margaret Bowater's interest in this area is always infectious and stimulating.

Fran Parkin and Geoff Plimmer, in *Integration of Career and Personal Counselling: Future Selves as an Organising Theme*, report on evidence of greater client satisfaction when clients are able to integrate personal aspects of their lives with their career focus. They offer the theory of "possible selves" as a way of integrating the two within a more structured time frame. With only 3% of NZAC members currently identifying as "career counsellors", it seems the schism between career and personal counselling is an issue in our organisation. This paper is both timely and important in raising this issue and its possibilities.

Judi Miller's article, *Marketing Counselling in New Zealand: The Images of Practice*, explores the images counsellors employ in connecting with clients through the marketing process. What do counsellors think are the images that will connect with clients' perspectives of counselling? This account of an exploratory study concludes that the counsellors in the study "appear to have determined that information that matters to referral agents and third-party funders is also the information that matters to clients". In this sense Miller identifies an intertextuality

– a place where images and meanings and perspectives are negotiated and possibly contested between concerned parties.

Bob Manthei and Struan Duthie present *An Overview of a Christchurch Community Counselling Centre: Has It Fulfilled Its Aims?* This paper is new in addressing the utilisation of a community-based mental health service. While noting the considerable success of the clinic and the steady increase in numbers of clients, the authors also note that counselling cannot be all things to all people. The service offered appears to fail to present an image of help that is acceptable to some sectors of the community, notably ethnic groups and men. Notwithstanding this important observation, the authors present an overview of a respected and self-sustaining community organisation. Such material is important and encouraging as counselling services continue to balance the need to be responsive to their clients and to provide a financially viable service.

We conclude with a book review by Mike Cagney: *Reflections on Current Social Work Practice*. The perspectives in this book are an interesting accompaniment to the articles in this issue of the Journal in that they continue to challenge and support our relationship with the wider context of professional practice.

These contributions address our desire to meet with our clients – and our colleagues – in the process of joint meaning-making, and to explore some viable perspectives of problem and solution formulation. We hope that you will find them interesting and useful.

The process of presenting the final articles has not always been easy. For this issue particularly we would like to thank the following team of rigorous reviewers: Tina Besley, Alistair Crocket, Kathie Crocket, Hans Everts, Frances Griffiths, Sheena Hudson, Lyn James, Irene Patton, Rhonda Pritchard, Sue Sewell, Pauline Templeman, John Tetley, Rory Truell and Dick Wivell.

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