

## Editorial Comments

Welcome to this first *Journal* for 2005, which is a “big” issue in many senses. We are very pleased to be able to include so much material of a substantive nature, which focuses on collaboration between the work of counsellors and the wider systems of schools, communities and cultures. Sitting with individuals as counsellors often do, we can sometimes feel overwhelmed by the constraints or frustrations of the wider context within which our clients live, study and work. Our Code of Ethics charges us to focus on the core values of “partnership” and “social justice”. These papers explore a variety of ways in which this can be done, and describe initiatives that counsellors have taken to work in partnership with others to bring about change at a structural as well as an individual level.

Furthermore, the first three papers situate their reflections, and subsequent interventions, within particular philosophical paradigms. They are concerned with the operations of power in wider organisational and political contexts. They extend our focus from self-reflection to reflexivity, inviting us to look at the discourses within which we find ourselves positioned and the manner in which problems are construed as such. In a world where politicians continue to be concerned about increasing social problems and about accountability, it is more and more likely that counsellors will become “done to”, with the scope and limits of their practice being described by others. It is our belief that, in order to contribute to discussions involving people, problems and counselling, we need to be able to address some fundamental philosophical assumptions. On what premise do we found our beliefs? From what standpoint do we make our observations, and in what way can the problems we perceive most usefully be described? We hope you will find these perspectives engaging.

As you read, you will see that the scope of the articles moves from a broad to a narrower focus. The first two articles, *The Dunedin Safer Schools Safer Communities Initiative: A Narrative Approach to Community Collaboration* by Glenda Dixon, Maureen Bretherton, Mark Lynch and Yvonne Perkins, and *Developing Restorative Practices in Schools: Some Reflections* by Wendy Drewery and John Winslade, describe two collaborative initiatives, in different parts of New Zealand, aimed at addressing issues of bullying and harassment in schools. In both, the process of collaboration and partnership was integral to the outcomes, using ideas from narrative theory.

Rob Strathdee's *Making Connexions: "Joined Up" Solutions to Social and Economic Problems Affecting Youth* is a description and critique of the Connexions strategy in England, looking at tensions within a service designed to assist young people to make successful transitions into adulthood. Developed as part of a "Third Way" by New Labour in the UK, it will no doubt have resonance with policy-makers in our current Labour administration.

Suzanne Dimmendaal and Sue Watson's paper, *Families' Perceptions of the Mental Health System*, is very relevant in the light of recent changes in mental health policy in New Zealand. Their finding that satisfaction levels were lower for people whose relative had a severe mental illness is significant in this age of "evidence-based" practice.

The theme of bullying in schools is picked up again by Ro Lange, Margaret Nelson Agee and Robyn Dixon, in *Best Friends, Worst Enemies: The Same-Sex Friendships of Year 10 Girls*. While the focus of this study is narrow, its conclusions and recommendations link directly back to the earlier articles focusing on wider, collaborative solutions.

The final two papers look at two different cultural contexts. Dianne Hill, in *Counselling and Deafness*, explores the context of the Deaf in a school setting and some implications for counsellors. Edwina Pio's paper *Culture's Currency: Indian Women and Multicultural Counselling* offers a cultural cameo of the centrality of work to Indian identity and weaves a thread in the fabric of multicultural counselling.

Many of the articles in this issue invite you to position yourselves in new ways in relation to several "problems". Some have a political edge and raise important issues for us to consider. If this *Journal* makes you feel uneasy or fired up, the authors have probably done their job!

Once again, we have been supported by a team of rigorous reviewers. In many cases articles have been stringently critiqued, and most authors have appreciated the feedback and acknowledged the potency of the rewriting process. This issue we would like to thank for their hard work: Margaret Nelson Agee, Helen Bowbyes, Hans Everts, Jonathan Loan, Lyn James, Judi Miller, Sue Mortlock, Irene Paton, John Tetley, Sue Webb, Carol White, Dick Wivell and Barbara Woods.

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**Fran Parkin**