

Editorial

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We apologise to readers for the delayed publication of the current volume, including this second issue, as a result of circumstances beyond our control. Looking ahead, we are now receiving submissions for Volume 36, and we are particularly interested in publishing examples of research undertaken to evaluate counselling outcomes in local counselling practices and agencies. This follows calls by both Crocket (2013) and Manthei (2015) for urgently needed research into counselling effectiveness. If sufficient articles of this kind are submitted, we will include a special section in one of the Volume 36 issues.

In this current issue, the first article is likely to strike a chord with a number of practitioners. In a professional development workshop with 15 counsellors, Maria Kecskemeti and Carol Hamilton used an adapted form of a structured technique, a circle conversation, to address the participants' collaboratively chosen topic of their working conditions and payment for their counselling work. Many had recently completed a training programme and/or were transitioning from another profession to counselling. Only three of the counsellors taking part reported having paid employment, while others were struggling to find paid counselling work and were doing voluntary work and extended unpaid practicums to complete the number of counselling hours they required for NZAC membership. The circle conversations enabled the counsellors involved to make meaning together of the conditions of precarity most of them were encountering in their professional lives, offering new perspectives and new ways of thinking about possible ways forward that could improve their current situations. The authors hope that, through this article, the conversations will also lead readers to reflect on and critique the implications of precarity in their own working lives and conditions, and explore new possibilities, given the constraints and uncertainties of the current labour market. It is interesting but not surprising to note that the concerns of participants in this project about the professional and financial challenges they face resonate with concerns that have been voiced at events for new counsellors sponsored by the Auckland branch of NZAC in recent years.

Natalie Thorburn undertook research into a very different topic: the experiences of young adolescent sex workers. In her qualitative study, she interviewed eight young people who had started sex work between the ages of 12 and 15. The second article in this issue focuses on information she obtained about their experiences with social services and helping professionals, including counsellors. The findings make sobering reading, given the high needs and vulnerability of this population of adolescents. They also, however, provide clear messages about the importance of establishing a relationship of trust and a strong therapeutic alliance, based on the provision of what are fundamentally Rogers' "core conditions"—acceptance, warmth, and unconditional and consistent positive regard—in order to overcome the intense, internalised shame these young people are likely to bring with them. When Natalie Thorburn presented at the annual one-day conference, *Recent Research and Innovations in Practice*, co-sponsored by the Auckland branch of NZAC and the University of Auckland in November 2015, it was noteworthy that several practitioners who attended spoke of their experiences of counselling young sex workers, because meeting the needs of this clientele is a topic that seems to be rarely acknowledged publicly or discussed. We hope that the publication of this article will encourage further reflection and professional development among counsellors and supervisors, to enhance the quality of counselling work being done with these young people.

When Paula Yeatman began interviewing professional women between the ages of 58 and 68 about their experiences of transition to retirement, one thing she did not expect was that the word "retirement" would hardly ever feature in their stories. The third article in this issue reports the results of her study, which found that these women undertook a series of transitions in which they integrated the various domains of their lives—the personal, the professional, and the domestic—and carried over skills and experience they had built up into the new stages of their lives. As well as being of personal interest to counsellors who are contemplating or already in this phase of their professional careers, this article provides valuable perspectives for those whose clients are in a similar stage of transition. This article also follows a presentation by Paula Yeatman at the *Recent Research and Innovations in Practice* one-day conference in Auckland.

Innovative practice features in the final article in this issue, in which Barbara Mackay writes about a narrative and visual strategy she has developed for use with young people. Similar to genograms in the co-construction of meaning and understanding between counsellor and client, "housework" is a way of mapping young

people's stories that arose out of work she has been doing with a group of students who have frequently changed schools. Often, changing schools relates to wider upheaval in young people's lives, including changes in family circumstances and accommodation, and adolescents who move house and change schools frequently can be adversely affected. Although the strategy was developed with this particular group of students, it has also proven useful with a range of others including those who experience difficult times in their homes. Clear instructions for using this strategy as well as an illustration of a work co-created with a student are provided. We are delighted to be able to publish this innovative contribution to the creative approaches available to counsellors working with young people. We welcome the submission of more articles offering examples of practice-based, innovative approaches.

Margaret Agee and Philip Culbertson

Editors

References

- Crocket, A. (2013). Articulating counselling in the context of registration and New Right policy. *New Zealand Journal of Counselling*, 33(2), 31–45.
- Manthei, R. (2015). Evaluating counselling outcome: Why is it necessary? How can it be done? *New Zealand Journal of Counselling*, 35(1), 60–85.

Referees for Volume 35, Issues 1 and 2

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