

# **CONVENOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

**For**

## ***AGM of Narrative Theory and Practice in Psychology***

***20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012***

Presentation of our Annual Report

I would like to confirm, the Group's charter which as you know, is to support APS members who have a special interest in Narrative approaches. Our main goals are to assist group members to form and maintain liaisons with each other, to develop a supportive network of narrative therapists, to offer professional development for our membership and to promote the narrative approach to the wider world of psychology and by so doing encourage psychologists to discover more about this post-structuralist approach, the intentions behind the work, and the research and applications currently being done in the field. In particular we are hoping to create further awareness of the importance of "practice-based evidence" and Qualitative Research. Through this process we would like to highlight not only the efficacy of this way of working but the recognition of it as best practice not only in areas of supervision and work with Indigenous Australians but in a broad spectrum of contexts, in particular in the Mental Health field. By having an impact in this way the group aims to have Narrative therapy incorporated more broadly as the preferred way of working and ultimately to be endorsed as a PD requirement for Psychologists as opposed to the current status quo which is mainly limited to CBT. Our activities during the year have been focussed around these ideas.

### **IN REVIEW:**

1. We are a national interest group and currently have 98 members across the States and Territories. The membership of an Interest Group includes APS members and non APS members. Membership of the Interest Group is open to all APS Members and Associate membership is open to people who are not APS Members. Associate members are welcome and encouraged to take part in all activities, however this category of membership has no voting and may not bear office.
2. Despite some efforts to engage Narrative practitioners from States and Territories outside NSW, logistics and the tyranny of distance have proved a huge challenge. We are very keen to engage Narrative Interest groups outside the Sydney Metropolitan and surrounding area and are working on strategies to promote

involvement. We will be devoting more time and strategies to encourage the set-up of sub groups within the States and Territories next year.

3. Throughout the year, the committee has consistently held its regular monthly, and sometimes bi-monthly meetings at 242A Oxford Street, Paddington. All meetings have been minuted. Whilst we have had many pragmatic issues to attend to we have also had moments of exciting theoretically based and applied narrative conversations and explored our intentions in our work and as a committee. Whether it has been debating what workshops to have, their format the relevance to our work etc it has all been beneficial and helped us in our work. We aim to incorporate further reflective practice into this space to ensure committee participants gain as much as possible from their involvement.
4. Our first event for the year was on 22nd May, 2012, when we arranged a day long workshop with David Epston,( the co-founder of Narrative Therapy along with Michael White) entitled “Magic, Mischief and Imagination – working with children and families”. This was held at the Woollahra Sailing Club in Rose Bay and for those of you who were lucky enough to attend, it was a very enriching professional experience. David was extremely generous with his time and actually engaged the group for longer than the scheduled time. Approximately 78 people attended and the very positive feedback we received confirmed that it was a success. ***(You will soon be able to read some of the comments we received on the Homepage)***. David has agreed to conduct another workshop in the second half of next year
5. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2012, the Interest Group arranged a day of professional development at the Old Leura Dairy in the Blue Mountains. The format was a workshop which we called “Reflections on our Work – A day of Narrative Practice”. Approximately 20 people attended this event which was also very well received with positive feedback (which we are soon hoping to post on our Homepage on the APS website). The event was deliciously catered for, in an idyllic rustic setting that promoted tranquillity and serenity while at the same time prompting reflection and inspiration. The workshop allowed us another opportunity to get together to reflect on both the challenges to presenting narrative approaches a in our varied work environments and to discuss how well we were able to share and utilize narrative approaches in our various work contexts. This workshop included a major contribution from Sheridan Linnell, Lecturer, UNSW. . Participants requested that this type of workshop should become a biannual event. Given the enthusiasm, it is our intention to arrange another, similar workshop in the Blue Mountains in 2013.

6. During the year applications were invited for two awards sponsored by the APS, a **Research and Development Award** and an **Ethos Award**. Following both the committee's and an independent review of several worthy applications, winners will be announced at a gala awards ceremony in Sydney on 6th February, 2013. Winners of the awards will be invited to discuss their work. We hope to do live reflective interviews with them which will allow them to tell us what sparked their research interests and what may be their hopes and intentions for future research. We hope to make this the first gathering of 2013 for members of the Interest Group.
  
7. In the past few weeks, as the Convenor of this group, I have been approached by some Israeli psychologists who are keen to workshop with us on a range of topics including trauma related issues. The psychologists will be visiting Adelaide for the International Narrative Therapy Conference on 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, and have offered to travel to Sydney after the conference to train with us.
  
8. In October/November, the Interest Group has also been in contact with the Convenor of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Interest Group in South Australia. Our group is interested to explore the potential for both groups to join in relevant narrative events and they responded with enthusiasm to this suggestion and are awaiting us to follow up.
  
9. Over the year we have struggled to maintain and update our Homepage on the APS website. Nonetheless, we have succeeded in advertising our 2 major events on the Homepage and our Christmas Newsletter with a brief vision for 2013. Anyone who has visited our Homepage on the APS website will note that some of the information is quite historical and requires archiving. Up to this point we have relied heavily on the efforts and goodwill of our Interest Group contact persons in the APS (Sue Picard and Anna Terrington) to keep the page current and to post news of upcoming events. We also take this opportunity to thank them for their unfailing support. It is one of our priorities for 2013 to regularly update and post information on the Homepage so that members are better informed not only about the group's activities but on matters relevant to the Narrative approach. **(If you have an interest in helping to manage the Homepage, we would be so pleased to hear from you).**
  
10. In October, a paper prepared by members of our Interest Group committee (myself and Carley Forster) was presented to the committee for the International Narrative Therapy Conference in Adelaide from 6th-8th March, 2013. The paper has been

accepted for formal presentation and is entitled *“The Survival Kit: Development and pilot of a new suicide screening questionnaire”*.

11. In October, Dan Marjason, who had occupied the position of Treasurer of the Interest Group, over the last financial year, resigned from this position. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his valued contribution . The position of Treasurer is now vacant and we are urgently seeking nominations.
  
12. We have also been requested to respond to a number of position papers by the APS over the year- something we would like to do with more energy in the coming year and represent a louder voice on issues relevant to the Narrative community. We would also like to invite members from the other areas of the APS to our events, and work towards a closer connection, in particular with the Counselling College in the New Year.

**CONCLUSION:**

In 2013, we shall be increasing our efforts to offer interesting professional development events and opportunities to meet and exchange ideas. We are keen to connect with the Adelaide Narrative Therapy Centre as well as other agencies in offering enriching opportunities for our members.

The Committee of the ***Narrative Theory and Practice in Psychology*** would like to take this opportunity to wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday season, to thank you for your interest and support for the Interest Group during 2012 and to say we are looking forward to your engagement in a dynamic and inspiring 2013

I NOW MOVE A MOTION THAT THE ANNUAL REPORT BE ACCEPTED:

.....

SECONDED BY: .....

MOTION CARRIED:

Rina Taub

Convenor

Narrative Theory and Practice in Psychology Interest Group

