

THE PROFILER

Newsletter of the College of Forensic Psychologists

National Chair's Column

Hi to all.

The National Committee, greatly assisted by the working party chaired by Dr Rebekah Doley, has been busy reviewing and revising the APS document outlining the core competencies of all psychologists and the unique competencies pertaining to each of the nine colleges. This work is critical to the health and survival of the smaller colleges and to ensuring that APAC (the body that accredits psychology courses across Australia) properly conceptualises and defines each area of endorsement and the boundaries between them. While the main work on the documents that the APS will send to APAC in a few weeks has been completed, our college needs to continue working on this matter in order to take control over how the PsyBA and other external bodies will define and understand us. It is also critical to marketing ourselves and nurturing the survival of our courses and thereby our future membership.

I plan for the national executive to have a briefing paper out to all members in the next edition of the Profiler so that we can obtain feedback from the wider membership on these matters.

Our 2013 AGM will be held during (or following) the ANZAPPL National Conference in Adelaide in November.

Prof Tom Grisso is heading a team that is investigating psychologists' experiences in undertaking forensic work (evaluating litigants and others involved in legal proceedings and preparing reports and other evidence on those evaluations). This is an international study that includes an online survey that I encourage as many of you as possible to participate in. I realise that not all members of the forensic college engage in forensic work, but those who do work as expert witnesses and otherwise contribute to legal proceedings (e.g., trial consultants) will have valuable insights that can help build a picture of how practice varies across nations and across civil and criminal jurisdictions within countries.

The current phase of the project involves an international survey of psychologists' use of standardised instruments in their forensic assessments.

The person to contact to find out more about this research is Tess Neil: Tess.Neal@umassmed.edu

The link to the survey is: <https://arcsapps.umassmed.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=8CnrZX>

Dr Greg Dear

Victorian Branch Chair & National Deputy Chair Report—Dr Michael Davis

The Victorian Branch of the College has continued to focus upon providing professional development activities for members in 2013. There has been an emphasis on providing pragmatic PD events that are particularly relevant to forensic practitioners.

This year we have provided two “Think-Tank” events, which involve a number of practicing forensic psychologists providing short presentations on a particular topic. This is followed by often lengthy group discussions. The first think-tank for 2013 was held in March on the topic of “Forensic Report Writing – What Not to Do!” Our speakers included His Honour Judge Gullaci, Dr. Dion Gee, Mr. Chris Drake, and Dr. Michael Davis. This was a very well attended event and the speakers were often blunt and controversial in their comments; which facilitated a lot of discussion.

The second think-tank event was held in July on the topic of “Working with Disability Clients in a Forensic Setting.” We were lucky to have Dr. Frank Lambrick and Mr. Peter Stanislawski as our expert speakers who generated a lot of discussion from our attending members.

In addition to the think-tanks, we also recently held a training workshop on the topic “Treatment Models for Trauma in a Forensic Population.” We were lucky to have Dr. Jan Ewing present this workshop for us.

The Victorian Branch has three more events planned for 2013. Our annual College Student Research Day will be held on the 26th of September and our Christmas dinner and AGM will be held on the 28th of November. We are also planning a joint panel discussion with ANZAPPL and the RANZCP Forensic Faculty on the topic of forensically-relevant changes to the DSM-5. This will be a follow-up to a similar panel discussion we gave in 2012.

Next year we are going to organise an international speaker for a workshop and this is being planned in collaboration with our friends in the South Australian Branch. We are also planning on having more think-tank events and are open to topic suggestions from our members. What would you like to see? Please contact the Victorian Branch at forensic.college.VIC@gmail.com if there is a topic that you would really like to see covered.

PLANNED EVENTS IN YOUR AREA (VICTORIAN BRANCH)

Thursday 26th September 2013

Student Research Day

Thomas Embling Hospital

Call for papers: deadline 16th September

Thursday 26th September 2013

AGM & Christmas Dinner

4.00pm – 8.00pm

NSW Branch Chair's Report - Dr C. Lennings.

Since the last report, NSW has been quiet. A number of PD programs will be run over the next 6 months, including schema therapy in forensic contexts, a 3 day program. Much of the College's activities have been taken up with professional issues, and the August meeting reported on the unsatisfactory resolutions to both the VCT and the MAA challenges to forensic psychologists in New South Wales.

It appears necessary to consider what advice we should be giving our members in regards to the recently released DSM 5. Following attending a number of presentations on this document, serious concerns about the political, ideological and economic influences brought to bear on the development of DSM 5 have to be raised. Whilst there are some interesting and useful developments in DSM 5, there are also pitfalls. Changes in how paraphilia's are identified, the dropping of the ball on Axis 2 disorders, and the heavy bias on as yet emerging neurobiological explanations of behaviour, thus weakening what has been a cornerstone of psychology – the bio-psycho-social model - require serious consideration as to whether in its current form the DSM 5 should be adopted in an uncritical fashion. Changes in risk assessment protocols to move away from psychopathy and anti social personality disorder (DSMIV/5) to Dissocial Disorder (ICD-10) and the generally wider acceptance of ICD-10 and the hope that ICD-11 will be a more harmonious process suggest that we should encourage members to make use of both the ICD and the DSM when considering clinical opinions and diagnosis. However, knowledge of the ICD classification is low, with most programs to my knowledge making only a cursory reference to it at best. It may be an important PD opportunity for the college to consider mounting a National workshop on the use of the ICD-10 complementary to the DSM?

BRANCH NEWS

The Branch continues to explore, successfully, relationships with other Colleges and the State executive to coordinate PD and professional issues in the State.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS STATUS

Currently NSW is solvent, despite having to pay some fees for a cancelled workshop due to the presenter being unable to attend at the last minute

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Current proposals are on the APS Website, including the Schema Focussed therapy in forensic contexts

Queensland Branch CFP - Rebekah Doley (Chair)

This year the Committee has planned another series of informative and stimulating seminars and workshops around key areas of relevance to forensic psychologists generally. Our first seminar introduced the work of Professor Theresa Gannon, University of Kent, UK who addressed treatment issues relevant to female sex offenders. We hosted an evening seminar on the management of offenders subject to the Dangerous Prisoners (Sex Offender) Act (Qld) conducted by Joel Smith (Psychologist, HROMU). Most recently, the College was fortunate to have access to Karen Franklin (Forensic Psychologist, USA) who was visiting Queensland as a guest of Bond University. Karen delivered a stimulating workshop on psychiatric diagnoses and the questionable application/utility of DSM-5 in forensic contexts.

Events currently planned for last quarter of 2013 include:

- ◆ Juvenile Offenders (Dr Bruce Watt; TBA)
- ◆ Managing Professional Boundaries (Dr Wendy McIntosh; 16 Nov)
- ◆ Recovery in Forensic Mental Health (Andy Aboud) & Christmas party (6 Dec)

Later in 2013 or early 2014 we will be conducting our second survey of branch members to confirm future professional development requirements for our members.

The Executive Committee has also been concerned to broadening the scope of professional development events to ensure the needs of rural and remote members are being addressed. To this end a bursary for rural and remote practitioners to assist in travel costs associated with attending events in Brisbane has been established. Opportunities for video-conferencing have been explored and the Committee is continuing to pursue viable means for delivering PD to our regional members.

College membership has had strong student growth, with 47 new student members/subscribers in the past quarter and a total current membership at 131 (with approx. 50% being student subscribers). Recently we identified that few graduate and undergraduate students have been attending forensic college seminars and workshops. To encourage student participation in Branch activities, some professional development activities have been offered with no fee for full-time students.

The Queensland Branch of the APS College of Forensic Psychologists welcomed the Committees newest student representative, Marlese Bovenkerk. Marlese is a first year Forensic Psychology Masters

student at Bond University. In addition to working with the Qld Committee, Marlese will have an opportunity to work with the editor of The Profiler co-ordinating a 'student interest' segment with other student representatives around the country.

One of the early tasks the Committee completed in 2013 was to develop a strategic plan for 2013-2015, with four core strategic areas for the College of Forensic Psychologists QLD group to guide our activity for the next two years:

1. The professional identity of Forensic Psychology in QLD2.
2. Membership
3. Professional standards and support for the Discipline
4. Engagement with stakeholders

The Committee has decided to focus on developing and furthering engagement with stakeholders, initially with current College members through two mechanisms. The first will be a regular (2-3 monthly) 'e-newsletter' sent to College members with updates on upcoming professional development activities, local issues, and a focused brief article on a topic of interest to members. This newsletter will assist in keeping members up to date, as well as highlighting the ongoing activities of the College. The second strategy being considered by the Committee is the development of a 'listserv' email group which will serve to engage members in an ongoing 'real time' discussion forum in relation to day to day practice and professional issues, as well as provide an opportunity for seeking support and advice. The Committee is currently exploring options and developing draft guidelines for the appropriate use of such as discussion forum.

In breaking news, named in honour of past chair Gavan Palk, the Committee has established two prestigious awards in recognition of outstanding professional and research contributions to the field of forensic psychology. The APS College of Forensic Psychologists Queensland Branch awards include The Palk Prize (Research) awarded to a provisionally/fully registered psychologist for outstanding contribution to the field of forensic psychology and The Palk Prize (Professional) for current members of the APS College of Forensic Psychologists whose work over the preceding 12 months has led to substantive positive outcomes in terms of contributing to the philosophy and values of forensic psychology in Queensland. Nominations for both of these awards will be called for in the next few weeks.

Tasmanian Report

By State representative Dr Georgina O'Donnell

Forensic College membership numbers remain low, and insufficient to establish and sustain a Forensic College State Branch. However, our small contingent continues to be active in representing the interests of the specialty within the profession and wider community.

Our membership has been active in seeking professional development opportunities, both intrastate and attending interstate/international learning activities. We thank the national membership for continued generous support of Tasmanian practitioners through offers of visiting Tasmania and sharing knowledge. We promise at least top Tassie wine and fine fare in return!

We have maximised our learning opportunities by sharing professional development activities with our Tasmanian ANZAPPL branch. We also look forward to sending a small Tasmanian contingent to Adelaide later this year for the ANZAPPL Conference.

We remain concerned about the future of the forensic specialisation in Tasmania, due to lack of postgraduate training opportunities that meet Forensic College eligibility requirements for current and future students. We continue to seek access to distance education/online postgraduate study for clinical psychologists working in forensic settings who wish to specialise and be accepted as Forensic College members. Without same, the retirement of the current generation may see the demise of the forensic specialty in Tasmania.

I continue to welcome enquiries regarding Forensic College issues from our local members, and prospective members: ForensiClinic@gmail.com

Dr Georgina O'Donnell

ForensiClinic Consulting Pty. Ltd.

Georgie FC georgina.o.fc@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
COLLEGE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS
(SA SECTION)
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SEMINAR SERIES



We are pleased to announce our next workshop for 2013, which is a practice and research forum. The morning session will be a workshop presented by Christina Kozar on therapeutic practice with offenders. This is followed by a 'forensic mini-conference', with presentations from a number of researchers who have an interest in forensic practice in South Australia.

When: Tuesday 29th October 2013, 9.30-4.30pm.

Venue: The Hackney Hotel
95 Hackney Rd, Hackney

Cost: \$40 APS student
\$50 Non APS Student
\$60 College Forensic Psychology members
\$75 APS members
\$90 non APS

Contact: Katherine Hawkins (katherine.hawkins@dva.gov.au)

Register Online: Places are limited so register early on the APS CPD Site:

Morning Session: 9.30-12.30: The therapeutic alliance and offending behaviour programs: A workshop for forensic psychologists by Christina Kozar.

Afternoon Session: 1.30-4.30: Research forum with:

- Loraine Lim: The South Australian Mental Health Court Diversion Program
- Yilma Woldgabreal: Positive psychology and offender supervision
- Ashlee Curtis: The treatment of arson in offenders with intellectual disability

Katherine Hawkins: Social support and sexual offending - the role of social support in sexual offender management

WORKSHOP: The therapeutic alliance and offending behaviour programs: A workshop for forensic psychologists by Chris Kozar.

This workshop will describe qualitative research exploring aspects of the therapeutic alliance in offending behaviour programs, with particular emphasis on the types of clients therapists have difficulty in developing an alliance.

Continued : PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR SERIES

These clients invariably demonstrate significant personality dysfunction and elicit therapist frustration. Participants will be provided with experiential opportunities to develop skills and strategies to identify and respond to problems in the therapeutic alliance in treatment settings. The value in responding to ruptures in forensic settings is argued as critical to reducing program attrition and assisting clients make therapeutic gains.

About the Presenter

Chris is a forensic psychologist with seventeen years of experience working within correctional environments, both as a clinician working with sex offenders, violent offenders and in the area of drugs and alcohol as well as strategic work involving correctional case management and drug and alcohol policy implementation. She is currently a PhD candidate at Deakin University.

Research Forum

Come and hear about forensic research that is currently being undertaken in South Australia. The presenters are all Higher Degree by Research candidates at Deakin University in Victoria who will talk about their research and then invite questions and comments.

Loraine Lim: The South Australian Mental Health Court Diversion Program

Recent years have seen the introduction of a number of specialist courts in Australia, especially those which aim to address the needs of mentally disordered offenders. Other than a few pilot evaluations however, limited research has been conducted to date to determine the effectiveness of mental health courts and whether they have been meeting their stated goals. As such, it has been difficult to assess the impact of such initiatives on the criminal justice system. This presentation will therefore report the main findings of three studies conducted on South Australian Magistrates Court Diversion Program (MCDP) which is also the first and most established mental health court in Australia. The first study involves an investigation into the philosophies and expectations of key stakeholders to further understand the rationale behind the development of mental health courts. The second study is a retrospective analysis of re-offending outcomes for MCDP completers, and finally, the third study presents the findings of a prospective study involving the analysis of demographical, clinical, and offending risk factors on core program outcomes. This presentation will conclude by discussing the findings in terms of their contribution to the development of a new framework that can be used to understand the operation of the court in order to those who seek to evaluate mental health courts in the future.

Continued : PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR SERIES

Yilma Woldgabreal: Positive psychology and offender supervision

Offender supervision practices have a long history of focusing on deficits, problem behaviours, and risk. However, the growing interest in the positive aspects of human functioning suggests that offender supervision practices that draw upon positive psychological states can augment and improve risk based approaches. In particular, this presentation highlights that positive psychological states relating to psychological flexibility, self-efficacy, optimism, and hope may serve as protective factors and buffer between the presence of empirically established criminogenic risk factors, and the onset of criminal behaviour, and can contribute to successful offender supervision outcomes. Thus, it is suggested that offender supervision outcomes can be improved when Community Corrections Officers promote positive psychological states more consistently in routine supervision practices, and that these positive psychological states can be cultivated or developed through motivation and raising awareness.

Only four studies which evaluated treatment programmes specifically for arsonists with an intellectual disability were identified.

Although each of these studies reported a reduction in fire setting behaviour following programme completion, all employed relatively weak research designs. It is concluded that there is a lack of evidence regarding treatment programme outcomes for arsonists with an intellectual disability. The next step for this body of research is to determine both community and professional attitudes towards treatment for offenders with intellectual disability, as well as investigating what works in treatment for offending behaviour in persons with ID, specifically, what has been effective in regards to anger management, sex offending and violent offending for offenders with ID. In addition, an offending profile of an arsonist with ID will be developed to enable a treatment framework to be presented for arsonists with ID which focusses on both their offence specific and offence related needs.

About the Presenter

Chris is a forensic psychologist with seventeen years of experience working within correctional environments, both as a clinician working with sex offenders, violent offenders and in the area of drugs and alcohol as well as strategic work involving correctional case management and drug and alcohol policy implementation. She is currently a PhD candidate at Deakin University.

Katherine Hawkins: Social support and sexual offending - the role of social support in sexual offender management

Interest in the field of positive psychology has prompted an increased focus on the impact of wellness factors. One of these, positive relations with others, has been proposed as a key predictor of psychological well-being alongside environmental mastery, personal growth, autonomy, and self-acceptance. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with improved mental health, increased treatment participation and outcomes, and reductions in relapse in clinical populations. Although interventions which engage social supports have demonstrated positive outcomes in many clinical treatments for a wide range of psychopathologies, they have not yet been broadly incorporated into forensic practice. Social influence and engagement are routinely identified as critical factors in risk management, however few publications detail program methodology which actively incorporates the benefits of social influence. The field is further complicated by the heterogeneity of the sexual offender population, disparity in the operationalisation of social influence, and a lack of clarity of the underlying definition and theories of the social support construct. This presentation will provide an overview of the literature and highlight the need

The continued role of US psychologists in interrogation and torture: What's the APA doing about it?

Dr Astrid Birgden (astrid99@hotmail.com)

As a follow up to the last Profiler article- **US psychologists involved in interrogation and torture: What are we doing about it?** - I am providing a link to a recent update.

To summarise, the American Psychological Association (APA) recently held its annual convention. One of the topics of discussion was a new policy document that provides guidance to psychologists working in national security settings- in effect, it is just a list of seven endorsed policy documents and resolutions.

The guidelines continue to support the 2005 Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Psychological Ethics and National Security (which some sectors of psychology have sought to be annulled but the APA merely indicates that it should no longer be referenced), rather than ban psychologists from working in national security settings that violate the US Constitution and/or international law in settings such as Guantanamo Bay.

A Coalition for Ethical Psychology have provided five scenarios where ethical issues may arise but a response from APA representatives about how the new guidelines may address them has not been forthcoming.

One scenario- based on an actual event- is this:

A Behavioural Science Consultation Team (BSCT) psychologist picks up three adolescent boys under

the age of 16 from Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and transports them to Guantanamo. During the entire 22-hour flight they are dressed in diapers and orange jumpsuits, and chained to the floor in uncomfortable positions. At Guantanamo, the same psychologist is in charge of the boys' interrogation, and claims this role enables him to protect their health.

What do you think?

For more info see the attached pdf or look up:

www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dangerous-ideas/201308/Hawaiian-mind-games-apa-fiddles-while-psychology-burns

Update

In late Oct 2011 I had asked the APS why it did not respond to a request to sign a petition to annul the PENS Report. In a response in April 2013, I was informed that the APS would support an annulment of the PENS Report, but as an organisation representing 20,000 members, it is not its practice to sign on-line petitions. Note that the APS had Koocher (the ex-APA President in 2005) as a keynote speaker in 2007 and now has Behnke (Director of the Ethics Office of the APA then and now) as a keynote speaker at the upcoming conference in Cairns (and I was on a panel with the two of them at the International Congress of Applied Psychologists in Melbourne in 2010). With their continued invitations to Australia, what kind of message is that sending about human rights violations?

OVERSEAS NEWS

A Review of 'The Psychology of Conflict' conference by Fiona Stevens.

I attended a conference in the UK in July this year. The conference was put on by the Open University Psychology Society (OUPS). The overall theme of their two day programme was the Psychology of Conflict. The presenters included Professor Steven Reicher, Professor Paul Rogers and Professor Clifford Stott. The focus of the conference was on the issues around terrorism and the way in which they have investigated crowd behaviour. They have an interest in how crowds can turn into conflict between the crowd, the community and the police. Professor Clifford Stott was particularly impressive, he has analysed the way riots happen and how crowds can be managed effectively even when there is the potential for violence. What I found most interesting was how he studied the ways riots developed. He used YouTube footage which he patiently linked together to give him a sequence of events which then served to highlight the turning points from community distress to acts of violence. He has been involved in work with

police in Europe to stop the so called hooligan football fans from becoming such a problem that it was costing extraordinary amounts of money to control them. He is a great advocate for the passion associated with football and other community events and says that by understanding the way the fans, the communities operate means that it is possible to develop ways to prevent violence. He recommends the use of Police Liaison Officers which is sometimes used and then forgotten when there are events out of the ordinary which then escalate into events such as the riots seen in London in recent years. I found his work and his passion about the needs for all parties to be respected to be impressive and would argue for him to be invited to any conference where the issues of violence, crowd behaviour, and the way we act when in a crowd is discussed.

Submitted by Fiona Stevens (Clinical & Forensic Psychologist) Adelaide. <http://scholar.google.com.au/citations?user=EJ1ps-oAAAAJ&hl=en>

LINKS OF INTEREST

The following are not endorsed by the College or the APS, but may be of interest to readers.

www.anzappl.org

Established in the late 70's, the Australian and New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology And Law (ANZAPPL) is committed to exploring the relationship between psychiatry, psychology and the law.

www.aija.org

The AIJA is a research and educational institute associated with Monash University. The principal objectives of the Institute include research into judicial administration and the development and conduct of educational programmes for judicial officers, court administrators and members of the legal profession in relation to court administration and judicial systems.

PROFILE ON INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKER DR. KAREN FRANKLIN



Dr KAREN FRANKLIN, Ph.D. is a forensic psychologist at Alliant International University in San Francisco. She is chair of the Ethics & Professional Affairs Committee of the Alameda County Psychological Association. She specializes in the evaluation and treatment of criminal defendants. She was among the first to study the motivations of hate crime offenders, and presented her findings at a U.S. Congressional briefing. Other research interests include the cultural dynamics underlying multiple-perpetrator rape and the ethics of psychiatric diagnosis in forensic settings.

An over view of her career in a recently published text called 'Forensic Science--Advanced Investigations' outlines that, "In a typical week, I might conduct evaluations at several jails, meet with attorneys, review scientific research, and write reports. The forensic issues are varied. I evaluate mentally ill defendants to see if they are competent to stand trial, that is, do they understand what is going on in court? I may assess someone's mental state at the time of a crime, to see if he met the legal criteria for insanity. I evaluate people's risk for committing future violence or sex offenses..... The challenge is to apply the science of psychology to understanding people's behavior without moral judgment." Dr. Franklin stresses that a good forensic psychologist needs excellent writing skills, sharp investigative skills, and a "thick skin" to be able to cope with the stress of being publicly cross examined in court. "I realized that forensic psychologists got paid to do what I liked best - study what makes people tick".

In Australia, most recently Dr Franklin gave a workshop on the topic of 'Controversial psychiatric diagnoses in court: A framework for ethical practice' at Bond University in July. While she was here our National Forensic College Queensland student representative Marlese Bovenkerk and fellow post graduate forensic student colleagues Leeran Gold & Anna Howlett interviewed Dr Franklin about her forensic career. The aim was to gain from her experience as a forensic expert in the hope of gaining some insight about what it takes to be a successful forensic practitioner today. A shortened transcript of the interview held with Dr Karen Franklin at Bond University on 27 July 2013 is provided below. The full interview can be heard via the following link.



Karen Franklin.m4a

Karen's regular forensic psychology blog is found at <http://forensicpsychologist.blogspot.com/>

Q1. In your blog posts, you express a great deal of concern about ethical practice in forensic psychology. What are some of your major concerns in this area? How did you come to have those concerns?

A1. I became concerned when I saw how some forensic psychologists were behaving in court and also in their written reports. Some were advancing theories and facts that I didn't think had much scientific support. The problem with that is that often times the judges, attorneys and juries don't have the training and education to know what's real and what's not. Therefore, these practices can go unchecked, if there's not somebody on the other side for example saying 'wait a minute, this doesn't sound right, where's the evidence base for what you're claiming?' So that was one of the things that prompted me to start my blog. One of the topics I've blogged a lot about is psychiatric diagnosis, and what I call 'pseudo-diagnoses' that get advanced in court just to further a certain legal agenda. It relates to the general ethics of making sure that when we go into courts, high-stake situations, that we're not going further than science supports.

Q2. Do you think there needs to be a regulatory body that can actually enforce these things, to say "that's technically not a real diagnosis" or "you didn't have enough evidence"?

A2. That's a really good question and I am struggling with that issue myself, because on the one hand I think that might be what's needed. Certainly some people are calling for that because many of the standards in our field are only aspirational, they're not binding. And so people who are ethical follow them and people who are not, or maybe are a little bit lazy, they just don't. Maybe if there was some kind of authority to make it mandatory that might help. On the other hand, in practice those types of authority things tend to limit access to the courts for underprivileged people. So it's a double-edged sword. I think it might be helpful but there might also be some unintended consequences. I try to think about down the line, would that really work, or would

people get around it and would it end up working in a way it wasn't intended? I think the new practice in Australia called "hot tubbing" is interesting, in which experts are retained on different sides and come together and talk about the case and try to come to some sort of middle ground if that makes sense, and then present that to the court. I think that might be an interesting approach and I think it's starting to spread. Australia is exporting it to Canada and Europe and the United States. I haven't looked into it in great depth, but I'm planning to blog about it soon.

Q3. You have written extensively on the limitations of sex offender risk assessment tools currently being used in the legal system as well as the importance of encouraging forensic students to engage in critical thinking when learning to write court reports. What additional advice would you give to budding forensic psychologists who may be considering conducting sex offender risk assessments in the near future?

A3. A couple of things. One is to really know the critical literature on the limits of the science. It's too easy to pick up a risk assessment instrument and use it on somebody and think 'okay now I have my answers'. But if you look at the critical literature, those instruments aren't all that predictive and they have really high false positive rates which makes them very dangerous. For example, if a person is predicted to be 'high risk' for violence on an actuarial instrument, the chances are 6 out of 10 that that's a false positive. So 6 out of 10 people deemed as high risk wouldn't have become dangerously violent. That's a scary statistic. Jay Singh is an international scholar who has done some of the critical meta-analysis in this area, so I would encourage people to read his work. The second thing is to be aware of one's own biases, and that's kind of hard to do. If you try as much as possible to take steps to counteract your own biases, like for example instead of just wading into an evaluation, think about competing hypotheses and testing them, that's a way to limit one's biases because one is more apt to look at different angles.

Q4. Your blog has become very popular with forensic experts around the globe. What are some of the advantages of blogging on current issues? Do you experience any negatives consequences for being so vocal on current social justice and human rights issues?

A4. This is another good question. Some of the advantages are that it gives me an outlet to express my opinion and hopefully influence the field or fields. Most of my readers are forensic psychologists, students, attorneys and professors, and it's an international audience. I'm hoping that being a critical voice has some modest influence. It's also how I first came to Australia: The criminologist Paul Wilson was following my blog and invited me to give a keynote talk two years ago at a Forensic Psychology National Conference. So it's been really nice in terms of networking and branching out.

However, there are some definite negative consequences because my many posts on so many topics can be fodder for attorneys who are trying to confront me on the witness stand during cross examination. Just the week before I came here this happened to me. An attorney downloaded a handful of my posts and read from them selectively out of context. So I'm kind of opening myself up there, making myself a target by blogging, but to me it's worth it, on balance it's worth it.

Q7. If you could go back in time what advice would you give yourself at the beginning of your career?

A7. That's a hard question, because you have to go through what you go through in order to get where you are, right? It's all about stages of professional development. I might say 'keep a journal', so that I could reflect back. Memories are valuable, right? If I had kept a journal I'd be able to look back, and look at my progression. I guess I would also give myself the advice to remain critical of everything that you are told and not take anything at face value, which is the way I am anyway. It's easy at a student level or at post grad level to listen to an authority and automatically

believe what they're saying, and not realize that it's just one perspective and that there are other perspectives out there.

Q9. What tricks of the trade can you share with us that have enhanced your professional practice, be it in interviewing, note taking, rapport building, assessing & report writing etc.?

A9. It's hard to boil it down to one or two things. I would say making a conscious effort not to put people in a box, and not to think of the person you are evaluating as a fundamentally different type of person than you. Always try to maintain that sense of connection and compassion, to realize that they are a human being too. They may have gone down a very different path in life than you did, however, there are still basic human similarities. So, try not to be judgmental of that person even though you may be judging the bad act that got committed. Just think about putting yourself in their shoes and trying to walk a mile in their shoes. That approach has been helpful, because it helps with understanding, and it also helps the other person feel like you can hear them, so it helps build connection and rapport.

We are all very grateful to Dr Rebekah Doley of Bond University for being chief liaison & organiser which made this interview possible.

Queensland Branch of the College of Forensic Psychologists awards Two Prizes.

1. **The Research Palk** (value \$350). This is an award of the QLD Branch of the College of Forensic Psychologists. It is awarded for outstanding research-based contributions to the field of forensic psychology by a provisionally registered psychologist. The award will be advertised via QLD based Universities, College members and through the Australian Psychological Society. The award of \$350 is provided to the most worthy nominee.
2. **The Golden Palk** (value \$350). This is an award of the QLD Branch of the College of Forensic Psychologists. It is awarded for outstanding contribution to the field of forensic psychology by a psychologist (student, provisionally registered or registered). The scheme will be advertised via QLD based Universities, College members and through the Australian Psychological Society. The award of \$350 is provided to the most worthy nominee.

Forensic Psychology Student Page

The APS College of Forensic Psychologists (Vic) is pleased to announce the

Annual Student Research Day

Thursday 26 September 2013, 4-8pm

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The Research Day is an opportunity for students in forensic psychology to present papers based on their scholarly work and gain valuable presentation experience. In addition, a number of speakers will be available to discuss forensic psychology careers in a range of areas, including private practice, research, custodial and community forensic settings.

Proposals for oral presentations (10 minutes) are invited from any student involved in forensically-relevant scholarly work as part of a Doctoral, Masters, or Honours Degree. Empirical research, literature review or theoretical papers are welcome.

A prize will be awarded for the best overall presentation.

Abstract Deadline: Monday 16 September 2013

Forward all abstract submissions to Kyra Low: kn1@deakin.edu.au

We welcome attendance from APS and College members, researchers, practitioners and student colleagues who are not presenting. Come and celebrate the innovative work being undertaken in the forensic field and enjoy light refreshments provided!

Attendance Details:

Venue: Thomas Embling Hospital, Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield

Cost: Free!

RSVP: Kyra Low (kn1@deakin.edu.au) for catering purposes

Calling All Students!

Help us to help you... We hope to develop a regular 'student page' feature in The Profiler to keep you in the loop with forensically-relevant student activities and interests. We'd like your help in identifying what you would like to read about – **what are you interested in?** Would you like to hear from early career or prominent forensic psychologists in how they got to where they are now, career opportunities available to you, upcoming events, reviews of books on practice techniques and specific forensic populations...? **Please let us know!** Email your suggestions to rosnelson13@gmail.com

Seeking Victorian Student Reps...

Are you studying in Victoria and interested in becoming a Student Representative for the College of Forensic Psychologists? The Victorian branch committee will be seeking nominations for new Student Reps in the lead up to the AGM on 28 November 2013. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Kyra (kn1@deakin.edu.au).

Are you a part of the APS Psych Student HQ Facebook page? Head to <https://www.facebook.com/APSstudents> to stay in touch with APS student events and network with other student members.





PROFILE ON NATIONAL FORENSIC COLLEGE 'NATIONAL' STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE—TIM WU

Course: Masters of Psychology (Forensic), UNSW, Second Year

Thesis: Limiting Term Patients found Unfit for Trial: Who are they and What happens to them?

Interests: Law, Ethics, Clinical.

Why Forensic: I was persuaded by films like Silence of the Lambs and Basic Instinct. I thought it would be a glamorous area to work in, I still think it is.

Self care: I spend a lot of money eating at nice places. I like good dinner conversations. I also like to spend money in general.

Goals: I feel there has not been much communication between the student bodies from the different universities and it has been a somewhat isolated experience. I hope to begin my recent appointment by building working relationships and collaborating closely with the other student representatives. I would also like to focus on creating more student interest in the College by first understanding student needs and starting a discussion with the student reps.

Contact: Send me an email if you have issues or questions regarding student matters -

timothy.wu@student.unsw.edu.au



PROFILE ON NATIONAL FORENSIC COLLEGE 'QUEENSLAND' STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE MARLESE BROVEKERK

Course: Masters of Psychology (Forensic), Bond University, First Year

Thesis: The Impact of Mental Health Expert Witnesses on Judicial Decision Making (TBC)

Interests: Youth Justice, Parental Incarceration.

Why Forensic: I originally started my studies in Science/Law with the aim of becoming a lawyer. However, it quickly became apparent that psychology was

my passion and forensic psychology seemed the perfect opportunity to combine both my interests.

Self-care: I regularly attend local farmers markets and exercise along the beach. Clean eating and being fit and active are really important to me in maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

Goals: Having only recently been appointed, my goal is to gain a greater understanding of the needs of forensic psychology students in Queensland.

Through working with the other student representatives, I hope we can tackle issues that affect students at both a state and national level.

Contact: Please contact me regarding QLD student issues: marlese.bovenkerk@student.bond.edu.au

Self-Care for Psychology Students

By Marlese Bovenkerk

The very nature of psychological practice is demanding, stressful, and even distressing at times. In the helping profession our primary aim is to help others and alleviate distress. To achieve this goal, we have to take care of ourselves first in order to successfully help others. Ongoing self-care is therefore emphasised as a preventative strategy to combat distress, burnout, and compassion fatigue.

Self-care practice is defined as engaging in activities that maintain and endorse physical and emotional well-being and incorporates factors such as sleep, exercise, social support, emotional regulation, and mindfulness (Myers et al., 2012).

Failure to adequately take care of ourselves enhances the risk of impaired professional competence and an inability to effectively apply our knowledge, skills, and abilities. Furthermore, practitioners may experience a loss of objectivity, mental health difficulties including depression and anxiety, and engage in maladaptive coping strategies such as self-medicating (Barnett & Cooper, 2009). Self-care is therefore an important professional activity and in accordance with the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Code of Ethics (2007) is considered an ethical imperative. Specifically, Standard B.1 states that psychologists ensure that their "emotional, mental, and physical state does not impair their ability to provide a competent psychological service".

Continued self-care, the promotion of psychological wellbeing, and engaging in self-awareness and self-reflective practice are all essential. Warning signs that may indicate burnout include: experiencing emotional, physical or cognitive fatigue and exhaustion; disengagement or withdrawal; frustration and irritability; and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness with clients or others (Badali & Habra, 2003).

Psychology students are vulnerable to several stressors including academic coursework, financial issues and debt, performance anxiety, lack of experience and a poor work/school-life balance (Badali & Habra, 2003). In order to manage such

stress, social support is the most commonly employed coping strategy utilised by psychology students. In one study, students reported support from friends, family, and classmates as their top three coping strategies (El-Ghoroury, Galper, Sawaqdeh, & Bufka, 2012). However, lack of time and cost are frequently cited as barriers to engaging in such strategies.

A recent study in the United States examining self-care practices and stress among psychology students revealed that healthy sleep practices, strong social support, and frequent use of emotional regulation strategies consisting of cognitive reappraisal and suppression were all significantly related to lower levels of perceived stress (Myers et al., 2012).

Badali and Habra (2003) provide the following self-care tips for students:

- Avoid overwork- be realistic and know your limits
- Reward yourself when you reach your goals and schedule fun activities
- Take care of physical needs- exercise regularly, maintain a regular sleep schedule and a healthy diet
- Attend to your emotional needs - make personal connections with your peers and work colleagues, talk about your fears and doubts, and seek personal therapy
- Remember your social needs- value family and friends, have relationships outside of mental health care, and most importantly keep time for yourself!
- Accept that you're human, in need of assistance, and a work in progress.
- Don't try to be perfect, to have it all, or to do it all.

It's all too easy to put off self-care until after we submit an assignment, finish our thesis draft or once client case notes are completed.

Continued—Self-Care for Psychology Students

I challenge you to make a personal commitment to regularly engage in self-care practices and incorporate a culture and community of self-care amongst your work colleagues, fellow peers, and professional networks.

For students interested in learning more, the following readings may be useful:

1. Kottler, J. A. (2012). *The therapist's workbook: Self-assessment, self-care, and self-improvement exercises for mental health professionals*. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Son
2. Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish*. North Sydney, N.S.W: William Heinemann: Australia.
3. Skovholt, T. M. (2012). *Becoming a therapist: On the path to mastery*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

References

- Australian Psychological Society (2007). *Code of Ethics*. Melbourne, Victoria: Author
- Barnett, J. E., & Cooper, N. (2009). Creating a culture of self-care. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 16, 16-20. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2850.2009.01138.x
- Badali, M.A., & Habra, M.E. (2003). Self-care for psychology students: Strategies for staying healthy and avoiding burn out. *Synopsis: Canada's Psychology Newspaper*, 25(4), 14.
- El-Ghoroury, N. H., Galper, D. I., Sawaqdeh, A., & Bufka, L. F. (2012). Stress, coping, and barriers to wellness among psychology graduate students. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 6, 122-134. doi:10.1037/a0028768
- Myers, S. B., Sweeney, A. C., Popick, V., Wesley, K., Bordfeld, A., & Fingerhut, R. (2012). Self-care practices and perceived stress levels among psychology graduate students. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 6, 55-66. doi:10.1037/a0026534

Do You Work with Offenders + Intellectual Disability ? = Research opportunity to participate in treatment program for Arsonists

Investigating the need for a specialised treatment program for Arsonists (or those with a history of fire lighting) who have Intellectual Disability.

If you work or have worked with offenders with Intellectual Disability you are invited to participate in this research.

The aim of the project is to discover what services are currently being offered to offenders with Intellectual Disability, and in particular those convicted of Arson or with a history of fire lighting, and to identify areas for future service development.

The research involves completing an online survey which will take approximately 25-35 minutes to complete.

The survey can be accessed via the following link: http://www.deakin.edu.au/psychology/research/arson_treatment_programs/

The research is being conducted by PhD student Ashlee Curtis under the supervision of Associate Professor Keith McVilly and Professor Andrew Day of Deakin University.

For further information about this research, please contact Ashlee Curtis ajcur@deakin.edu.au; Ph. 03 52278618).

Review of Counselling with Indigenous People

By Tim Wu

The following is a short review of the chapter "Counselling with Indigenous People" by Pat Dudgeon in the book *Working with Indigenous Australians – A Handbook for Psychologists* (2000) by Pat Dudgeon with Darren Garvey and Harry Pickett. This book may be of interest to students as there are APS Ethical Guidelines for the provision of psychological services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Overall, the book covers broad topics regarding psychology and indigenous people, examining history, cultural difference and alternative models to name a few. I discovered no magical solution for working with indigenous people but I had suspected this given that no one approach would apply to all individuals and incredible diversity exists within any culture. However, it has given me much insight and I would recommend reading the book or similar articles on the area.

Although Dudgeon does not encourage applying specific practices for all individuals, she makes some key points about the approach and framework for working with indigenous clients. This begins with understanding the history of the indigenous people in order to appreciate their experience and counter/transference issues. Like other issues in cross-cultural practice, she reminds us to think about the norms and models in psychology that we have been trained in, and to be aware of our own biases and stereotypes/ assumptions. This probably means having to think about our own cultural identity and how it influences interactions with indigenous clients, which I thought was rather confronting.

What I liked most about Dudgeon's work was that she incorporated use of personal anecdotes from others and herself. Hearing stories from both perspectives of the client and the psychologist helped normalise the experience and gave credence to the messages she made. Dudgeon was able to draw on theory and really made me think about some of the uncomfortable topics about racism. I would recommend reading the book for more specific cultural topics but for the counselling context, I have listed some general tips I found helpful for students:

- ◆ Communicate your level of knowledge regarding the culture. Make the client the expert and ask what you could do to meet their cultural needs.
- ◆ Adopt a good counselling style – empathetic, good listening, non-judgemental.
- ◆ Seek a cultural consultant when issues require specific cultural knowledge but be aware of conflicts of interest and consent.
- ◆ Avoid making any assumptions about certain behaviours that you must / must not practice, ask the client and be open about things that you observe.
- ◆ Conduct some research into the community that you are working with, the approach could be very different and there is no unique answer.



PROFILE ON THE PROFILER EDITOR—ROS NELSON

I am a registered psychologist and forensic psychology registrar, with a Master's degree in Forensic Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with Honours. I have been practicing since 2009. Currently I work in private practice consulting with LSC Psychology in NSW, as an Independent Expert for Department of Immigration & Citizenship conducting family violence referrals in Townsville.

I am also involved in a variety of assessments as part of the 'Acute Care Team' at Townsville Base Hospital. I also consult with 'forPsych' in Tasmania, around Child Protection matters, conducting forensic assessment and report writing.

I have been previously employed as the relief Psychologist at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in 2011, and my role was to assess and convene suicide risk assessment team (SRAT) meetings, on young people aged 11-17 who were mainly Indigenous. I started my provisional (forensic) practice as a Psychologist at Townsville Correctional Complex for adults in 2009, and worked with both women and men who had offended.

I emigrated to Australia from London in 1979 with a Youth Community & Social Work Certificate and started work in 1981 at Guthrie House in Sydney where I worked for 3 yrs. It was run by Sandra Wilson who then was the longest serving women's prisoner in NSW who started the 1st women's prisoner's half-way house when she was released on license having been incarcerated for 18 years—the TV program 'Prisoner' was based around much of her life inside. I then worked at Tiresias House for 6 months, which was an ex-prisoner half way house run by Roberta Perkins for transgender people, while completing my Associate Diploma in Social Welfare at MacArthur Institute in Sydney.

I have enjoyed immensely working with Dr Doley who has been a wonderful encouragement to both myself as new editor, and to the new students in networking with me to get the student page up and running— a big thank you.

All submissions for inclusion in the December edition of "The Profiler" to:-

The Editor
Ros Nelson
rosnelson13@gmail.com