



The Profiler

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

VOLUME 4



The Australian Psychological Society Ltd.

JULY 2009

Webmaster needed!

We are looking for someone who can help to develop the webpage for the Forensic College. The committee will be able to offer plenty of support and assistance, but we need someone with the technical skills to make the webpage work. Is there anyone out there who can help?

The Profiler could also do with a face-lift. If anyone has the skills to make this a more professional looking newsletter please let me know....

As always, please send contributions to the Profiler to: Andrew.day@deakin.edu.au

Andrew Day
SA Section

From the Chair

National Executive:

The National Chair, Prof Alfred Allen, is currently overseas and Dr Greg Dear is acting Chair while Alfred is away.

The National Executive will hold its annual face-to-face meeting on August 15th and 16th with the Chairs of each State Branch of the College also attending that meeting. Any members who have pressing issues that they believe need to be discussed at a national level should direct their concerns to their State Chair. Among our agenda items is an in-depth discussion about the core competencies for college membership. It is essential that we finalise the way that we define ourselves and what makes us distinct from other colleges.

Alfred Allan attended the College Chairs' meeting with the chairs of the State Committees. He reported the following:

- The State Chairs are interested in having closer links with the Section Chairs. Some of the chairs were keen for sections to submit news items and information about their PD activities the various State newsletters.
- Each State has a political liaison officer (PLO) who we can work through if we come across legislation or other political matters that we feel need to be addressed.
- The chairs of the States where there are no Forensic College representation were keen for us to offer forensic related activities through their committees. They thought this was a way for us to get, at least, associate members in their states.

New South Wales Section

Dr. David A. Bright (BSc (Psych) Hons, MPsych (Forensic) Hons, PhD, MAPS), was recently elected Chair of the New South Wales Section.

David is a Research Fellow with the Drug Policy Modeling Program. David completed a Masters degree in Forensic Psychology in 2002 and a PhD in 2008. His doctoral thesis, which examined the influence of gruesome evidence on juror emotion and decision making, was awarded the 2007 Maconochie Prize by the College of Forensic Psychologists. David has worked as a psychologist in a range of clinical and forensic settings including community mental health, police, and corrective services. From 2003 to 2008 he was Therapeutic Manager of the NSW custody-based intensive treatment program for sexual offenders (CUBIT). David's research interests include the operation of illicit drug markets, decision making and behavior of drug dealers, and the effectiveness of drug law enforcement. (Email: david.bright@unsw.edu.au).

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the outgoing NSW chair, David Mutton to the College.

SA Section

The SA Section was recently asked to provide feedback to the State Registration Board on the proposed changes to the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice in relation to child protection and family court matters. Our response has been submitted for consideration by the State branch. We are particularly indebted to the feedback provided by Dr Greg Dear, current acting chair of the College. Our next seminar is on July 24th, by Professor Ephrem Fernandez from the University of Texas. Professor Fernandez will be talking about the treatment of anger.

WA Section

One of our significant activities in recent months was the Stakeholders' Meeting, held at the end of March. This was attended by judicial officers from several courts (District Court, Children's Court, Family Court) and other tribunals (Office of Criminal Injuries Compensation, State Administrative Tribunal, State Review Boards) as well as by lawyers from key industry groups (Family Law Practitioners' Association, Legal Aid Family Law Unit, Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Director of Public Prosecutions, etc.). The wider consultation also involved the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief Magistrate, and the Legal Services Division of the Department for Child Protection.

Our meeting discussed the quality of psychologists' forensic reports and problems in various jurisdictions with regard to quality-control, procedures for adducing psychological evidence, mentoring and supervision of less experienced forensic psychologists (those new to writing reports for courts and other tribunals or to giving oral evidence), and joint training of lawyers and psychologists and judicial officers and psychologists.

The view was expressed that a significant problem that the Forensic College must wrestle with and resolve is that a lot of forensic work is being undertaken by clinical psychologists who have no forensic training, particularly in areas like criminal injuries compensation and Family Court evaluations. The common theme running through the issues raised by each of the judicial officers and lawyers present was that many clinical psychologists (but also some forensic psychologists) are preparing reports that are not helpful to the courts and other tribunals, and that report writers do not understand either the rules of evidence or their obligations to the court.

It was also apparent, although not a central feature of the discussions at the meeting, that many psychologists when writing reports for the court do not adopt an appropriate investigative stance, but seem to operate on the same principles as one would when undertaking a clinical assessment. Some felt that the forensic college must become more strident in promoting our college

members as the appropriate psychologists to undertake forensic work and should be more explicit in alerting the courts to the dangers of allowing non-forensic psychologists to undertake forensic work. There is a need to be much more vocal within the APS about the ethical problems associated with operating outside one's area of training and competence. Those psychologists who claim to be competent in forensic work should apply for membership of the forensic college in order to have their claim tested and, if upheld, to be validated through college membership and ongoing PD.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ronnie Zuessman, PhD
Convenor of Professional Development

Members of our College are very busily engaged in professional development and this is quite necessary to keep abreast of the vast amount of information relevant to our practices. I am often impressed by the forensic psychology skills our members need, as well as very specific knowledge about the subject area being addressed by their assessment. Fortunately, state sections are quite active in sponsoring very focused continuing education events to meet local needs.

In order to obtain endorsement by the College for specialist professional development points, an application needs to be submitted via the APS national office, and this can be done online. As noted in the February 2009 *InPsych* (Vol 31 / 1) changes in professional development points allocation begin on 1 July this year. Essentially, membership in APS will now require 90 points per two year cycle. At this time it appears that no change has been made to the additionally 30 points required to maintain College membership. However, there are now Level 1 and Level 2 points, corresponding to the nature of the activity, with 2 points per hour being awarded for Level 2 activities involving practice of knowledge and skills, prior reading and post assessment.

Once an application has been submitted to the national office it is forwarded to the Convenor of Professional Development for the College. The Convenor reviews the materials and consults with other members of the College executive as needed.

A factor in considering an event for Forensic College specialist points is whether it addresses a key forensic area of competency, as distinct from generalist or clinical competencies. It is also important for there to be discernable learning objectives, a reasonable schedule for a workshop, a qualified presenter, and for it to be targeting the education of psychologists. As many workshop presenters have proprietary interests, often the intended audience includes all comers (ie, non-psychologists) or they apply for all and sundry College 'specialist' endorsements. As a consequence, only 45% of applications receive endorsement for the Forensic College. Another issue of concern to many College members is that many of the professional development workshops on offer are introductory or basic, with very few at an advanced level.

Thus, I would like to encourage members of the Forensic College to consider offering professional develop-

ment workshops in your area of expertise or to sponsor an expert to do so. One example of this is a workshop on *Malingering, Denial and Other Response Styles* being presented in March 2010 by Professor Richard Rogers, author of the Structured Interview of Reported Symptoms. Information about this workshop is available at www.psychologyconsultation.com.au/workshops.html

MEMBER PROFILE: Mary-Anne Martin

I am the current membership secretary for the APS Forensic College. I have been involved in the Forensic College since I completed my specialist title registration in 2002. In Western Australia we are required to complete two years of supervised practice post Masters or Doctorate. The supervisor needs to have held specialist title for a minimum period of time as well. While it seems rigorous I would not have it any other way. The work we do can have a significant impact on a person's life and we need to be well trained and supervised to be able to defend what we do.

I commenced working in the Department of Corrective Services WA as a prison psychologist in 1998 while I was still completing my Master of Forensic Psychology. The prison psychologist role involved general clinical work with offenders, mostly those at risk of suicide and self harm but occasionally some ongoing work with adjustment problems, stress and coping and other general psychological issues. While I worked in this role we had a prison riot which really changed the way we worked with the prisoners on a day to day basis.

The MPsych Forensic degree covered family, civil, and criminal law giving us a broad overview of Forensic Psychology. Although I chose to work in the criminal arena I have the training to work in other areas of law. This is important as there is a general view that correctional psychology is all that Forensic Psychologists do, and that if you work in corrections you are automatically a Forensic Psychologist.

After completing my MPsych I was lucky enough to get my dream job doing specialist forensic assessments of lifers and serious sex offenders. I wrote risk assessment reports for the parole board and other

departmental stakeholders to assist their decision making and management of offenders in the correctional system. I have assessed many lifers and sex offenders and supervised and trained others in the completion of these reports. More recently I have held the Principal Psychologist role which is responsible for Clinical Governance of Programs, Research, Suicide Prevention, and specialist forensic services. But I missed the hands on work and I have recently resigned my position with the Department to go into private practice writing reports. Hopefully I will get to use some of my other training to branch out into different types of assessments.

Career highlight – seeing some of the other Forensic postgraduates I have supervised developing and making a real difference to Forensic Psychology in both WA and the rest of Australia.

Scariest moment – knowing that some of the offenders I have assessed would gladly kill me because they do not like their reports (and knowing they are capable of it!)

Regrets – none – going on to do a Forensic Psychology Masters was the best thing I ever did. Prior to studying psychology I worked in the banking industry as a manager – dealing with complaints all day is not why I got up in the morning – being a Forensic Psychologist is so much more rewarding and interesting.

Who do I admire most – that is a difficult one – I have been particularly fortunate to have studied with, and met, some excellent role models – Professor Don Thomson, Professor Alfred Allan, Professor Jim Ogloff, Leonie Coxon (my supervisor and mentor), and many more though professional development activities. They have all given me a grounding in Forensic Psychology, ethics and professional behaviour which I hope I have been able to pass onto others I have supervised.

Notices

APS COLLEGE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS SA SECTION: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS 2009 (Venue: Fullarton Centre, 411 Fullarton Road)

Note: Please try to register and pay online in advance if possible. To register: Please use the online registration form on the APS Events Calendar. **Cost:** Forensic College Member \$30; APS Member \$45; Non-APS \$60. Full Time APS Student \$10 Full Time Non-APS Student \$20.

- **Friday July 24th (1.30-5.00)**
- **Professor Ephrem Fernandez: “Integrative psychotherapy for anger: Theory and application**
- To Register follow this link <http://www.psychology.org.au/Events/EventView.aspx?ID=4790>
- **Friday August 7th (1.30-5.00)**
- **Dr Jim Vess and Dr Sharon Casey: “Risk Assessment, Treatment Readiness and Risk Management”**
- To Register follow this link <http://www.psychology.org.au/Events/EventView.aspx?EventID=4519>
- **Friday November 27th (1.30-5.00)**
- **Professor Martine Powell Investigative interviewing of suspected offenders: Good forensic practice?**
- To Register follow this link <http://www.psychology.org.au/Events/EventView.aspx?EventID=4537>

CBT and the angry client: Engagement, Assessment and Treatment - 2 day workshop

Presented by Dr Raymond Chip Tafrate & Dr Monica O’Kelly

Anger is a misunderstood emotion. This workshop is directed toward developing an understanding of the issues associated with anger and developing effective interventions across the treatment process. It would be of interest to those working with adolescents and adults in educational counselling, domestic violence, relationship counselling, human relations, psychiatry, criminology and anyone working with anger problems.

The workshop is being presented in:

- **Brisbane** 24 & 25 July O’Shea Inservice Centre, 19 Lovedale Street, Wilston 4051
- **Melbourne** 28 & 29 July Holmesglen Conference Centre, Cnr Warrigal & Batesford Roads, Holmesglen 3148
- **Sydney** 30 & 31 July Sancta Sophia College, 8 Missenden Road, Camperdown 2050
- **Darwin** 13 & 14 August Charles Darwin University, Casuarina NT

Cost: \$550 (GST inclusive)

Presenters:

Raymond Chip Tafrate PhD

Dr Tafrate is a Professor and the Chairperson of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at Central Connecticut State University where he teaches courses on anger and aggression management, correctional counselling, and research methods.

A licensed Psychologist in Connecticut and New York, Dr Tafrate frequently consults with State Criminal Justice agencies and trains practitioners in client engagement skills and the application of cognitive-behavioural interventions.

His research on the nature and treatment of anger has been published in scientific journals, books for practitioners, and been presented at conferences throughout the United States and abroad.



Monica O’Kelly B Sc (Hons), Dip Ed, MB Sc, Ph D, MAPS

Dr Monica O’Kelly is Director of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Australia and an honorary lecturer at Monash University. She is an Associate Fellow of the Albert Ellis Institute and a member of the Training and Policy Review Committee of the Albert Ellis Institute. She has also completed the Extra Mural Program at the Beck Institute and is a Fellow of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. She has written many journal articles and reported on her research at international and national conferences. She has had considerable experience teaching cognitive behaviour therapy and believes that to teach therapy well, the participants must be given the opportunity to practice and be given constructive feedback.

For further information and detailed workshop outline, discounts applicable and a registration form, go to: www.cbtaustralia.com.au or phone 03 9796 9300

To advertise your section’s CPD events in the Profiler, please email details to Andrew Day (Andrew.day@deakin.edu.au).