



The Profiler

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

VOLUME 7



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DECEMBER 2009

CHAIR'S REPORT

- The APS Forensic College sponsored a booth at the ANZAPPL conference in Fremantle 26-29 November 2009. The aims of the sponsorship were to promote the Forensic College but also general membership to the APS as that appears to be the stumbling block for some psychologists. The booth was manned by WA members who took several queries about membership, including some from New Zealand psychologists working in the forensic domain. A flyer was developed specifically targeted towards lawyers giving them information about why they should engage Forensic Psychologists and about our training. We also promoted the ICAP conference which will be in Melbourne from 11-16 July 2010.



The APS booth at the ANZAPPL conference

- I attended an APS National Chairs teleconference on 20th November to discuss the APS response to the Psychologists' Board of Australia (PBA) consultation paper. Although the main focus of the meeting was about the proposal regarding specialist title, other items in the consultation paper were also discussed as follows.

Proposed qualification requirements for general registration - There were some concerns amongst other colleges about the timelines which have been suggested in relation to changed minimum requirements for general psychology registration and the impact on universities, or more specifically a lack of available places and funding.

Proposal for Continued Professional Development (including supervision) - Those providing supervision (including placement supervisors) will need to be registered supervisors and will be required to do ongoing PD related to supervision. It was clarified that the need for an endorsed supervisor relates only to supervision required to meet registration purposes. Post registration supervision may take the form of consultation, mentoring, and peer supervision. It was thought that consultation and mentoring may be able to be done at times through a lawyer or other professional for Forensic Psychologists. There was some concern about more senior psychologists' obligations for supervision and how that could be facilitated. There was also some discussion about the evidence for the efficacy of ongoing supervision.

Proposal for specialist registration – This formed the bulk of the discussion and is a very controversial section of the consultation paper. The submission made by the Forensic College was that the College:

Welcomes the range of specialist titles proposed, as it believes that the specialist titles should reflect the current College structure, and that the status quo should be maintained if specialist title is not made available to the members of all the Colleges.

In other words it is “all titles or no titles” and this was the general consensus of the other colleges at the teleconference. We also submitted a view that there should be further options for bridging courses which allow specialists with one Specialist Title to obtain a second one without needing to complete a further DPsych.

The APS have supported the Specialist Title proposal in principle. The reality is that the Ministerial Council needs to be convinced of the need for specialist title and may not support the current College structures. The final decision will be made by the Ministerial Council and not the PBA.

There was a consensus for a need for further discussion and consultation. There was also a plea in relation to the psychological testing debate: If anybody is aware of cases where people have been harmed by non-psychologists using psychological tests can you please let me know? I am sure in the forensic area this may be easier to prove than in some other domains.

- We now have webmaster for the Forensic College webpage – welcome aboard Kerri Pezos. Please have a look online at <http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/cfp/> as we will use the webpage as our main communication format in the future, and hope to keep it regularly updated. We will also be adding relevant cases to the page from time to time and link to other relevant sites. If you have ideas or suggestions please let me

know on mary-anne.martin@optusnet.com.au

- On behalf of the National Committee of the Forensic College I would like to wish you and yours all the best for the Christmas Season.

Mary-Anne Martin, MAPS

MEMBER PROFILE: DR DAVID BRIGHT

More by Providence than Design: A Career in Forensic Psychology

I'm not sure whether it was while reading *Mind Hunter* by FBI profiler Kevin Douglas, or during my twenty-seventh viewing of *The Silence of the Lambs*. It was one of these experiences, or perhaps a combination of the two, which initially sparked my interest in Forensic Psychology. At the time, I was working in community psychiatric rehabilitation as an intern psychologist, feeling on the one hand entirely out of my depth, and on the other hand hopelessly bored and dissatisfied with the generic tasks I was required to perform as a 'mental health professional'.

It was around this time that fate or providence stepped in - I can say with some confidence that it had absolutely nothing to do with careful career planning on my part. I was offered a one month stint working inside a gaol- which at the time excited me a great deal. Little did I know at the time that this was the start of a decade's worth of experience in corrections, most of it in the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders. Needless to say that working with these damaged, poorly functioning, and inadequate individuals quickly disturbed all of my misguided notions about serial-killers and *sexual predators*. In stark contrast to the books and movies which capture the imagination, these men were not monsters, nor were they incredibly interesting, absorbing personalities. They were just men with problems. Men who were not able to derive pleasure and satisfaction in the way the rest of us do. Despite my initial disappointment, the up-side of my epiphany was that these men were capable of redemption - and more importantly, were amenable to change.

Soon after commencing work in the gaol system, I returned to University to start a Forensic Masters. This opened my eyes to the breadth of forensic psychology: from clinical applications such as psychopathy and risk assessment, through to applications in

psychology and law, such as jury decision making, eyewitness evidence, and the detection of deception. But perhaps more importantly, the Masters Degree reinvigorated my interest and excitement about research. So, the relatively simple Masters Degree transformed into a somewhat more complex (and time-consuming!) beast: a combined Masters/PhD. For the purpose of my doctoral research, my focus fell on jury decision making, and in particular, the impact of gruesome evidence such as crime scene photographs on jury decisions.

In the midst of all things "thesis", I managed to secure a brief respite from my incarceration. I was granted a year and half "works-release" with the NSW Police. Apart from offering a welcome change to the walls and wire of the prisons, this offered a great opportunity to gain clinical-forensic skills with a very different population in a very different context. Psychological debriefing interventions and *fitness for duty* assessments were staples in this position. One of the highlights of my time with the police was attending weapons training scenarios at the shooting range deep underground at the Sydney Police Centre. Alas, it was soon time to give back my badge (so to speak), and return behind the high walls of Long Bay.

Those who have travelled the road will know all about the trials and tribulations, the highs and lows, the excitements and disappointments of a PhD. By the time I was finally writing up the doctoral thesis, resplendent in the remarkably surprising realisation that I was actually going to finish the thing, I contemplated actually making the career shift I had been considering for years: a move into academia. I had worked in corrections for 10 years, most of that time in the Sex Offender Treatment Program, and much of that as the Therapeutic Manager of the CUBIT program. I was acutely aware that most men needed to something reasonably serious to end up in gaol for that length of time. With the conclusion of the PhD near, it was time to seek my release.

I think my career thus far is characterised by variety: I've run my own part-time psychology practice; taught psychology students at undergraduate and post-graduate levels; attended post mortem examinations at the morgue; witnessed trials, Police Integrity Commission Hearings, and Coroners hearings; attended sieges and shootings; trained specialist police; and provided expert testimony in the Supreme Court.

My career has now taken another sharp change in course. And again, far more by providence than by design. I am now a Research Fellow with the Drug Policy Modelling program at the National Drug and Alcohol Centre at UNSW. Although this has involved a shift away from what might be considered *pure* forensic psychology, it possesses its own novel challenges and unique appeal. My main research interests now are the operation of illicit drug markets, the behaviour of drug dealers, and the effectiveness of

drug law enforcement. But I haven't strayed too far from my roots just yet: I am particularly interested in the behaviour of high level drug dealers: how do dealers evaluate their risk of detection by law enforcement, and what strategies do they use to mitigate the risks? I plan to conduct some research in this area via interviews with incarcerated dealers, which will mean a return to prison. Perhaps I just miss the way the sunlight reflects off the razor wire in the afternoon...

David Bright, M. Psych. (Forensic), PhD, MAPS

Core Competencies of Members of the APS College of Forensic Psychologists.

The National Executive of the College is revising our statement on core competencies. After much debate about whether or not we should restrict the competencies of our college to those pertaining to psychological investigations and expert witness work, we decided that there are two broad areas of competence that psychologists need to demonstrate in order to become members of the Forensic College. We have labelled those areas "forensic evaluations" and "forensic interventions".

Forensic evaluations are assessments of individuals, couples or families that are undertaken in order to obtain admissible evidence for legal proceedings. Core competencies in this area include: investigative interviewing (including investigative interviewing of children and other vulnerable populations), risk-assessment (criminal recidivism, risk of child-maltreatment, suicide risk, etc.), knowledge of the rules of evidence in various courts and tribunals, diagnosis of mental disorders and mental status examination, forensic use of psychological tests, preparation of court reports, and giving oral evidence. Related competencies include trial consultancy, consultancy to police investigators, and research into the interface of psychology and law. Forensic intervention refers to the development, delivery and evaluation of therapeutic services to persons who are involved in or impacted by legal proceedings (e.g., children of divorced parents, children taken into foster care, victims of violent crime, persons suffering psychological injuries from compensable events, offenders). Core competencies in this area include: clinical assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders, treatment of mental disorders, clinical work with mandated clients (e.g., court-ordered treatment of substance misuse

problems, treatment of sexual offenders on community supervision orders), group therapy, clinical use of psychological tests, and programme evaluation.

While most college members will be competent at both forensic evaluations and forensic interventions, we recognise that some college members will work in only one or other area and will maintain their competence in only that area. Therefore, psychologists are only required to demonstrate their competence in either forensic evaluation or forensic intervention. Postgraduate courses in forensic psychology are required to train students in both areas (including providing placements in both areas).

Once the detailed list of core competencies is finalised by the Executive, it will be distributed to all college members for comment.

Other News

SA College members Jack White and Andrew Day took the opportunity to lobby the South Australian Premier, Mike Rann, at a recent dinner at Parliament House.

They presented the Premier with a submission proposing law reform relating to Section 23 of the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act 1988. This legislation relates to 'dangerous' sex offenders in South Australia, but currently only allows medical practitioners to assess offenders.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**College of Forensic Psychologists
Victorian Section**

AGM & ANNUAL COLLEGE DINNER

Wednesday 9th December 2009

Venue: Graduate House, 224 Leicester Street, Carlton

Cost: Forensic College Members: \$40.00 |

Students: \$35.00 | Others: \$50.00

Time: 6:00pm AGM; 7:00pm pre-dinner drinks followed by a 3-course dinner

Registration: Dr Belinda Guadagno

(via e-mail: belinda.guadagno@deakin.edu.au)



College of Forensic Psychologists SA Section

The college AGM was held on Wednesday 2nd December followed by a dinner. At the AGM the CPD program for 2010 was discussed, and details will be circulated to SA members shortly and included in the next edition of the Profiler.



Proposed 2009-2010 seminar and workshop activities

Date	Topic	Presenter	Format	Location
Sept 2009	Assessing malingering	Jacqui Yoxall	2 hour	Griffith University (Mt Gravatt)
Dec 2009	Victims of Crime (includes end of year function)	Victims of Crime Support service (Qld Health)	2 hour	Griffith University (Mt Gravatt)
Dec 2009	Treating internet sex offenders	Prof David Middleton (visiting from the UK)	1 day	Bond University
Feb 2010	Assessment and treatment of substance abuse	TBA	2 hour	Bond University
Apr 2010	sexual offenders – assessment and risk management	Prof Stephen Smallbone	1 day	Griffith University (Mt Gravatt)
Jun 2010	Psycholegal interface	Steven Morgan	2 hour	Ipswich
Aug 2010	Forensic report writing and giving evidence	Ian Freckleton	1 day	Wacol
Oct 2010	Psychological autopsies	Ros Robertson	2 hour	Griffith University (Mt Gravatt)
Dec 2010	Genocide (includes end of year function)	Prof Paul Wilson	2 hour	Griffith University (Mt Gravatt)

Please send contributions to the Profiler to Andrew Day. Email: andrew.day@deakin.edu.au