

Women and Psychology Interest Group

Australian Psychological Society

Newsletter

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Greetings,

Women and Psychology is currently without a Newsletter Editor so I've decided to step into the breach. Since I don't have access to the right software, I just use standard text and format.

Interest Groups continue provide a valuable service to APS members. We all appreciate the one-size solutions or treatments don't fit all. The gender analysis we undertake often highlights gender specific symptoms, origins and treatment strategies.

Contributions to the newsletter from members of Women and Psychology would really be appreciated. Book reviews, "what's on" in your local community, reviews of courses attended and articles of interest would be of value.

Dori

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1) **CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS**

(Due 30 September 2009)

Re-engendering Psychology: Research and Practice with and about Women

20th Annual Residential Conference of the APS Women & Psychology Interest Group

Friday 4th - Sunday 6th December 2009 at Sunbury Hall, Victoria University

It has been 20 years since the first Women and Psychology Annual Residential Conference! Come celebrate this commendable achievement with us at the Sunbury Campus of Victoria University at Sunbury Hall. This year the Conference will be hosted by the Victorian Group.

Intending presenters: This year's conference will highlight feminist perspectives on re-engendering psychological practice, community work, consultation and supervision; scholarship and research, and take account of barriers and opportunities in engaging with a feminist psychology. We will be taking a feminist approach to understanding theories, research, policies, and practices with their affect on women

We are inviting contributions that focus on re-engendering the nature of mental and physical health and well being, human rights, cultural diversity, family diversity, and the multiple roles women engage with as paid/unpaid workers, scholars and carers. We wish to offer an opportunity to explore the concept of gender as a social construction across the lines of race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexual orientation. How can we make visible women's viewpoints and experiences in practice and research? What are the obstacles and opportunities to promoting women into positions of influence in their lives? Can you identify ways to overcome any obstacles or encourage any opportunities for gender equity?

*Our definition of **Feminist Psychology** is the same as that of the international journal *Feminism & Psychology*: that which acknowledges gender and other social inequalities (e.g. race, class, disability, or sexuality) and considers their psychological effects.*

*Our definition of **Gender Equity** is taken from the World Health Organisation: Gender Equity means fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. It often requires women-specific programmes and policies to end existing inequalities. Gender Equity is different to Gender Equality which means equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services with families, communities and society at large.*

Proposals for presentations must acknowledge these critical contexts.

All presenters and delegates are also asked to read the APS Ethical Guidelines for Working with Women which are available on the APS website. A copy will be emailed to you by request if you don't have access to the internet.

For women on low incomes and students who are entirely self-funded we encourage you to apply for support to attend and make a presentation, especially if travelling from interstate. We do not want the costs involved to prevent any woman from attending.

Please provide title, author/s, affiliations, abstract of paper (workshop or poster); a few short lines about yourself and your audio visual requirements by 30th September 2009 to:

RaeLynn.Wicklein@rmit.edu.au You will be notified by 15 October 2009 whether or not your contribution has been accepted for presentation.

Provisional Program

Date	Agenda (to be confirmed)
Friday 4 th December (5-9pm)	Registration & Welcome reception (drinks and snacks)
Saturday 5 th December 9am-5pm	Keynote speaker: Papers & Workshops Postgraduate student presentations

7pm-late	AGM and presentation of Elaine Dignan Award Conference Dinner/Special Feature
Sunday 6 th December 9am-1pm 1pm – mid afternoon	Keynote speaker Papers & Workshop Lunch and Networking Conference close.

2) From the desk of Una Gault

Friday, July 31: A perfect mid-winter day - mild, sunny, no wind. As I sat in the front seat of an uncrowded bus riding up Broadway to our meeting at Women's College I enjoyed the sunset clouds ahead of me in the south-west and the changes in the old sights. More buildings incorporated into the ever-expanding UTS on the right-hand side and familiar old pubs like The Clare (now "the Clare tavern", would you believe) on the left. But new, (to me) the enormous empty clearance site where the brewery used to be. (The next morning, the SMH carried an architect's dream of what the new "Gateway to Sydney" is going to look like. Dream on, say I).

A handful of us gathered in one of the ground-floor meeting rooms of the College, enjoyed the refreshments left over from a previous meeting and generously offered to us, and discussed the topic nominated for our meeting: "Work-life imbalances - new stresses for women".

Firstly, Dori had canvassed convenors in other states and all agreed about the present status of Women and Psychology as an element of APS: women are still interested in acknowledging their interest in the aims of W&P ("all aspects of work with women in psychology") by continued payment of the membership fee.

A small but successful week-end Conference was held in Sydney last December, attended by women from all the Eastern states and ACT. One flew in from the NT en route elsewhere, and another had driven from the far North Coast of NSW to attend. A majority attending offered original and engaging presentations on their work, in research, one-to-one counselling, and community support in various forms. But all convenors have found that attendance at regular meeting is sparse, and when interesting and important speakers are invited the audience to hear them is embarrassingly small. Dori is interested to discover, in the paraphrased words of old Sigmund, "what does Woman (in Psychology) want?"

Perhaps part of an answer emerges from our discussion of the topic for the evening - women are experiencing the stresses of work-life imbalances.

Rosemary referred us to the papers issued over the years from the Social Policy Research Centre of the UNSW, by Michel Bittman and associates, including Lyn Craig, Jude Brown and Denise Thompson, and others. The latest of these, presented by Lyn Craig and Killian Mullan at a recent conference, compared the hours worked and parent-care shared by family partners, between 1997 and the present. More women now work (above 60 percent) though most

still prefer part-time work (including split shifts). Women still take the main burden of child care, even though full-time workers have reduced their hours of care a little (we thought, by “farming care out”- to other, part-time, women). The contribution of men has not increased to any extent (and mainly covers “outside work” - shopping, car and home maintenance, week-end care of children). One interesting fact reported was that, in cases where the earnings of women begin to equal or exceed the earning of the “main income” (usually from the male earner), women begin to increase their hours of housework. We tried to think of reasons why this might be! Adele Horin’s report of this research (SMH 4-5/7/09 - p.1) carried the heading “Women stretched to snapping point”. “By 2006, all parents were more likely to report feeling stressed. . . There was reduced gender equity and strikingly increased reported time pressure”.

The women present reported the same experience, including the added responsibility of supervision in full-time jobs or in their practices, and in practice found the same stresses reported by clients. The imbalance of the increasing demands of greater responsibility, longer hours and less support on the work scene, combined with little or no relief in the demands (some perhaps self-imposed) continuing at home, contribute to (another SMH headline) “the pressure of price rises and increased work loads”.

I found the following piece of (usual academic research with undergrads.) in the latest Research Bulletin of the BPS which they post to me. It is probably too long to quote but I’ll try and copy it. UG

The surprising benefits of time pressure at work

The modern office job has made struggling jugglers of us all. Emailing, phoning, writing, accounting, project-swapping, browsing, not to mention snacking, and day-dreaming, all at once.

It helps to have the self-discipline to focus on one task at a time, but even that isn't always enough because thoughts about a previous task can linger and spoil our performance on our current task.

Now Sophie Leroy has made a counter-intuitive finding that could have implications for reducing interference between successive tasks. She's shown that completing a prior task (rather than leaving it unfinished) helps prevent its interference with a later task, but this benefit arises specifically when that initial task was completed under strict time constraints.

In an initial experiment, 84 undergrads performed a word task and then a second task based on appraising candidate CVs. The ease of the initial word

task was manipulated by the researcher - one version could be completed; the other was impossible to complete. Also, time pressure was imposed on half the participants by saying that other people had struggled to succeed in the five minutes available.

Crucially, in between the two main tasks, participants performed a series of "lexical judgements" - deciding whether strings of letters were real words or not. Among the real words that were presented, some were taken from the first main task. The whole point of this was that particularly speedy performance with letter strings taken from the first task would be a sign that a person's attention was still lingering on that first task.

Leroy's first key finding was that participants who completed the initial word task under time pressure (as opposed to those who didn't complete it, or who completed it without time pressure) showed fewer signs that their attention was still stuck on the first task.

A second experiment with 78 undergrads was similar to the first, but this one looked at the effect that being mentally stuck on the first word task had on the second (CV appraisal) task. This time, participants who completed the initial word task under time pressure performed better at the subsequent CV appraisal task, than did participants who hadn't finished the first task, or who had finished it without time pressure.

Leroy further showed that participants who'd completed the first task under time pressure showed the greatest amount of confidence, when asked, that they'd fully completed the first task. Her theory is that task completion under time pressure fosters a sense of cognitive closure, allowing us to fully shift our focus onto subsequent tasks.

Leroy, S. (2009). Why is it so hard to do my work? The challenge of attention residue when switching between work tasks. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 109 (2), 168-181

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2009.04.002>

Please send information for inclusion in the next newsletter to dori.w@bigpond.com