

PEACE NEWS

Newsletter of the *Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace*

September 2001

Hello to all PPOWP members, and a warm welcome to new members.

The last week has understandably been very busy for PPOWP. The current tragic events certainly give the work of PPOWP new meaning and perspective. As you will notice, the newsletter has been somewhat revamped. 'Peace News' will continue to bring you up to date with the many exciting new PPOWP projects and initiatives in the planning. We also want to encourage your contributions: relevant articles, news on peace-promoting events around Australia, or ideas and opinions.

Please send any contributions to the new editors Karen Weiss or Michael Green via email at:

michael@unimelb.edu.au.

Report from National Convenor, Dr Susie Burke

The horrific terrorist attacks in America have shocked and devastated millions of people throughout the world. All of us, individuals, communities and World Leaders, are searching for appropriate ways to respond. Let us have the wisdom to respond in ways that will lead to long term peace and stability and not escalate cycles of violence.

The first, most immediate response that is required is to care for the victims – those who have been hurt, families and friends of those who have been killed, and those who, from a greater distance, have also been traumatised by the events. We can help by making space for people to share their feelings of grief, fear, anger, sadness and shock in a supportive atmosphere. We can assist people to find ways of expressing their grief through rituals or positive actions, and support people as they try to make sense of the events.

We also need to care for our children. The extensive media coverage means that many children will have seen images of the attacks on television. Research tells us that viewing violence on television leads to immediate distress and fear in many children, and the belief that the world is a scary place. Many children retain longer-term recurrent disturbing memories from viewed violence. Children need adults who can talk about what has happened in a calm and reasonable manner, and help them to understand what has happened without resorting to racist judgements. It is not helpful for us to try to shield them by not talking about it. They will be aware of what has

happened, and in the absence of our help, will resort to making up their own ideas about the events. Psychologists for Social Responsibility (America) have written some guidelines for young children which I have included below.

Other victims include members of the ethnic groups to which the suspected terrorists belong. It is dismaying how quickly racism and blaming has escalated in Australia and overseas since the attacks in America last week. We can challenge uni-dimensional and stereotyped images of these ethnic groups and invite people to see the diversity and strengths of these groups and understand that one cannot blame whole ethnic groups for the actions of small political sections.

On a global scale, the way in which our leaders respond is critical. Clearly it is important for action to be taken. However we feel it is imperative to keep in mind the ultimate aim: to create a safe and just world, both now and in the future. Revenge and retaliation are tempting responses to help deal with feelings of helplessness and fear. While they may seem to 'teach others a lesson', psychologists are generally clear about the relative ineffectiveness of punishment in long term behaviour change. Retaliation responses entail the real danger of setting into action continuing cycles of revenge on all sides in which core interests are forgotten and retaliation becomes an interest in itself. When escalation of this sort occurs, conflict is much more difficult to resolve.

Whenever power methods are used, they need to be examined carefully in the context of all other possible alternatives. Action to be taken needs to be considered from the full range of methods including interest based (examining the grievances that lead to groups becoming so angry that they would act in violent and even self destructive ways), rights based methods (using legal approaches and abiding by international law), and power based methods (which can take a variety of forms, not just violent ones).

We need to make it clear that we do not support a response that involves a violent retaliation against a nation. We cannot blame whole nations for the actions of small political factions. A preferable response is one that, in the short term, is targeted at the clearly identified perpetrators of the crime and includes proper adherence to principles of justice. In addition, in the long term the extreme grievances of groups of people who eventually feel driven to such terrible actions must also be addressed if the world is to become safer in a lasting way .

One thing we can do is to write to decision makers to advocate a response that is focused on ensuring such a tragedy does not happen again, and on preventative peace-building, rather than one focussed on punishment and revenge. Some of the people you may wish to write to are: Prime Minister John Howard, the Foreign Minister Alexander Downer; US President George W Bush (President@whitehouse.gov), US Secretary of State Colin Powell (secretary@state.gov), and NATO leaders. Although it may seem that letters from the public have little effect, we believe it is important to add our voices to those who are calling for a non-violent response to this crime.

Another way in which people can have their say is by responding to the following petition. This seems to one of the better ones going around.

"Petition for a Thoughtful U.S. Response: Please sign The Petition at <http://home.uchicago.edu/~dhpicker/petition> which appeals to world leaders to be level-headed and, wherever possible, peaceful in their response to the recent attack against the United States. PLEASE FORWARD THIS MESSAGE TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. The signatures logged by the website above will be forwarded to leaders around the world. It is imperative that we act quickly to prevent war!!!

Promoting dialogue.

PPOWP would like to promote dialogue between Muslims and non Muslims in Australia. The need for such dialogue is particularly pressing in light of the recent Tampa crisis and the attacks, and their aftermath, in the U.S. Please contact your State Convenor or Dr Susie Burke, National Convenor, if you are in a position to engage in such dialogue or if you have an interest in doing so. Also, please contact convenors if you would like to add any ideas of your own about promoting such dialogue. Contact details – page 9.

Other PPOWP news

The new PPOWP Web site has been launched and we hope members and other interested viewers enjoy the site and make use of the order form for purchasing PPOWP resources. The web site can be accessed through the APS web site at <http://www.psychsociety.com.au>.

PPOWP has been incredibly fortunate to receive a very generous bequest from the deceased estate of James Frederick Blythe. We have received an amount of \$93,000 to assist us in projects for many years to come! State groups are currently brainstorming ways in which they would like to use this money, and we welcome your suggestions. Contact your state convenors or myself with ideas.

We would like to congratulate the winners of the 2001 Peace Project Award. A panel of judges from universities in three states has reviewed the entries and made two awards. **Jackie Bornstein**, of University of Melbourne, was awarded for her project entitled "The qualities of peacemakers: Retrospective case-histories exploring the dialectical processes leading to peace action and successful activism in PPOWP members and Nobel Peace Prize winners". **Anne Matuszek** of University of Tasmania was awarded for her project "An evaluation of a cognitive model for enhancing couple relationships".

Distribution of our German language bullying poster in Switzerland has continued. All 20,000 posters were distributed and the orders were still coming in! A further 2 – 3,000 posters are being printed and will be made available to members of the Swiss Teachers Union and other interested people. A set of our posters and a copy of the Wise Ways to Win book has been sent to the library of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. We have also donated 10 copies of all of our posters to the Christian Children's Fund in East Timor, upon request from one of the staff members there. It is wonderful to think that our resources are being found to be helpful in other parts of the world.

Dr Susie Burke, National Convenor, PPOWP

Media Release

The following is a media release sent out in response to the events in the USA on behalf of PPOWP.

Revenge is No Leadership

Dr Susan Burke and Associate Professor Eleanor Wertheim

We are united by our distress, sense of helplessness and concern for the future. While these feelings rightly make us want to take action, let us take these actions in a considered way, that will lead to long term peace and stability in the world, rather than a way that will escalate cycles of violence. Our feelings of helplessness and outrage are not going to be resolved by knee jerk retaliatory responses globally or locally. The course of revenge is totally understandable – but revenge is not the leadership the world needs right now. Violence begets more violence.

It is important that we don't let racism escalate and blaming to take over. We cannot blame whole ethnic groups for the actions of small political sections, and scape goating people in the local community is no solution. Such actions simply create an oversimplistic 'us versus them' view of the world which creates divisions and makes long term world peace more difficult to achieve.

Today, enormous good will has been shown to America from leaders traditionally seen as enemies. Hopefully both America and Australia can build on that goodwill, rather than polarise and inflame the passions that extremist individuals can use to incite more violence.

Dr. Susan Burke, National Convener, Psychologists for the Promotion of World Peace, and Associate Professor Eleanor H. Wertheim, PPOWP National Secretary.

A Response from Psychologists for Social Responsibility, USA

General guidelines for young children

1. Check with your children to see how they feel. Children often experience these events as concrete and profoundly personal and emotional, and wonder if harm would happen to them. Adults can help by placing the event in perspective.
2. Keeping things as normal as possible for children is very helpful to their feelings of security, so whenever possible, provide them with regular children's activities.
3. Children may respond to the anxieties felt and expressed by their caregivers. Talk with them about their feelings. Tell them in simple language how you are feeling about the incident. Reassure them that you are watching out for them.
4. Shield children from in-depth discussion of how the adults feel about these events (specifically the recounting of traumatic stories that create vivid images in one's mind's eye and vengeful fantasies of retaliation).
5. Limit the amount of time children spend watching coverage of the attacks. Do not let them watch television coverage of these disastrous events by themselves. They need your adult presence and perspective.
6. What we do is often as important as what we say. Pay attention to your reactions because children will take their cues from you. Children often see far more than adults are aware of.

Constructive actions that we can undertake ourselves, as well as encourage for others

1. Take responsibility for our perceptions--do not act hastily on the basis of stereotypes. Suspend judgement until the facts are gathered.
2. Write letters to the editor or respond to talk-back radio shows to inoculate people against the tendency to take out their frustrations by threatening or attacking people from different cultural groups.
3. Offer to facilitate a discussion of the events at community centers, local churches, synagogues.
4. Consider making yourself available to community groups, schools, the media, etc. to help people express their feelings in a supportive atmosphere. For adults as well as children, creating space for grieving and rituals that restore our collective sense of community and relative safety in public places is vital .
5. When others are discussing modes of retaliation, emphasize the need to work even harder for long-lasting peace. Give more attention to preventive, peace-building measures, especially the resolution of protracted conflicts we have around the world.
6. Work for social justice. In the long run, the best insurance against ruthless human action is social justice for all.
7. Reach out to people who might be alone and frightened.

Edited version of 'Action Possibilities' put out by Anne Anderson, National Coordinator, Psychologists for Social Responsibility, USA.

PPOWP Victoria - Victorian Convenor, Dr Karen Weiss

This is the first Victorian report in some time as the position of convenor has been unfilled. That is not to say that the Victorian group has not been busy and productive in putting out yearly calendars and managing various initiatives as they arise. The Victorian group has traditionally been very active due to the fantastic resolve of Dr Eleanor Wertheim and Dr Ann Sanson, as well as our National Convenor, Dr Susie Burke. Luckily, I too have recently joined the ranks of 'Dr', otherwise I may be really feeling out of my depth! My first impression on joining PPOWP is the great connection experienced through working on issues that are so fundamental to our existence. Our meetings are always filled with lively discussion and debate around exciting topics such as the role of forgiveness in reconciliation, the latest psychological research in conflict resolution, and ways that therapists may integrate peace activism into their everyday practice. There is only one thing missing from our meetings and that is more voices. Now, more than ever, the activity of our membership may really make a difference.

So to this end, the Victorian group is putting out a call to all those interested in attending meetings or contributing in some other way to keep in touch with us through email to karenweiss@optusnet.com.au or phone Karen on 03 9531 3914.

A Time For Peace

As a generation X'er I've always held an unfounded belief that my life would not be harshly touched by war. Silly really, as coming from a family of holocaust survivors, the effects of war were in fact in close proximity every day. My complete belief in the need for peaceful methods of conflict resolution has been constructed out of both the suffering and the resilience of my family's history. Now is it my turn to help shape my daughter's experience. As a Family Psychologist, I sit with the pain of family conflict every day. How can I now use my knowledge and experience in helping families overcome conflict to address the rather larger issue of the current state of the world? What can I do to have any impact?

A Time for Peace is an initiative of Victorian PPOWP to bring together groups of people to talk about what they might be able to do to assist world peace. We are calling these groups, 'Conversation Groups'. Psychologists are tremendously good at talking; we do it all the time in our work through our roles as therapists, teachers and supervisors. To use our greatest strengths as orators and conversationalists may be a starting point towards some kind of appropriate and relevant action. If nothing else, talking about peace connects us as a group of like-minded professionals with similar goals.

We hear often that making time for peace activism is almost impossible given busy schedules. This initiative takes that into account, so the time involved would be wholly determined by you! For example, you might consider setting up a conversation groups in your workplace over lunch once a month. Or you might set up a conversation group with friends, making it a social event. Another possibility is that a group may be conducted somewhat like a group peer supervision where cases are discussed from the perspective of reconciliation/nonviolence. Groups could take many foci. Again, this would be determined by the interest of group members.

If you are at all curious about the possibility of starting a conversation group, please contact Karen Weiss (see above for contact details). At our next meeting on October 30th, this initiative will be on the agenda.

Presentation by Associate Professor Eleanor Wertheim:

Experiences in training UN staff and foreign diplomats in negotiation and mediation through the United Nations Institute of Training and Research.

At the meeting on October 30, Eleanor will discuss her work with the UN. Dr. Connie Peck (who initiated PPOWP) and Eleanor have been running workshops for UN officials in conflict resolution. This work is fascinating as it takes psychology into the political arenas, where Psychologists do not often get a chance to influence. This work has taken Eleanor all over Africa and Europe, so she also has many anecdotes to tell of the experiences of different cultures.

Associate Professor Eleanor Wertheim has been involved in overseas United Nations Training and Research (UNITAR) programs in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking since 1994, working as a facilitator, planner and lecturer in the programs. These programs offer advanced training in conflict prevention, and international negotiation and mediation to staff from the United Nations, regional organisations, foreign ministries from around the world and relevant non-governmental humanitarian organisations.

In 2000, UNITAR began running regional programs in Africa, with a specific focus on conflict prevention and peacemaking in that region. Eleanor has facilitated and run the conflict analysis/negotiation components of programs in Senegal and Zimbabwe and will be talking to PPOWP about her experiences in the UNITAR programs just after her return from a regional program in Ethiopia.

Associate Professor Eleanor H. Wertheim is at the School of Psychological Science, La Trobe University, and also teaches negotiation skills at La Trobe in the School of Law and Legal Studies. She is currently National Secretary of PPOWP, having served as National Convenor in previous years.

The meeting will be held at Relationships Australia, 46 Princess St. Kew at 8.00pm on Tuesday October 30. Please RSVP to Karen on 9531-3914.

Informative Web Sites

Reconciliation and Nonviolence: www.institute-for-nonviolence.com.au

This site is run from Tasmania. Calling themselves the World Institute for Nonviolence and Reconciliation, this organisation specialises in global peace initiatives. It also has a strong Buddhist perspective concerning nonviolence. Well worth a look and or a visit if in Tassie.

Optimism and Activism: <http://activismandoptimism.iwarp.com>

Sue Jackson and colleagues have set up a very interesting web site that tells stories of optimism and hope from both our clinical and our personal experience. The web site offers potential for activism from everyday experience. It is worth a look, particularly as this web site has a therapy focus. Sue has provided us with the description below.

In February 2001, my colleague Susie Costello, my son, Luke Jackson and I presented a workshop at the 3rd Narrative and Community Work Conference in Adelaide. In the workshop we discussed our recent discoveries about the impact of economic globalisation on the environment and our lives, and began to explore ways in which ordinary people **can** make a difference. We outlined how these ideas were influencing our therapeutic work. Speaking from a young person's perspective, Luke described one innovative community environmental response. Our paper appears in the journal 'Gecko', 2001, Number 2.

People from all around the world attended this conference and we were astonished at the level of enthusiasm about our presentation. It is obviously an idea whose time has come. As a result, Luke, together with Laurence Carter of Dogsboddy Publishing, decided to build a website to celebrate outstanding examples of activism and optimism in the areas of the environment, human rights, and anti-economic globalisation.

It is a not-for-profit website. It is intended to provide an interactive forum for people to read about and record positive examples of activism that occur at an individual, local, national or global level. There is also an articles section, links to relevant and inspiring organisations and a notice board on which we would love people to leave messages. Although we built the site, we would be thrilled if more people took ownership and it became a truly community run site.

British Medical Journal's Website of the Week review: Bullying.

"A paper in this week's *BMJ* (p [480](#)) reports an association between emotional problems in teenagers and being bullied. Bullying, whether at school or at work, is a fashionable subject. To the tough minded, it's often used as an excuse: a way of shifting the blame for personal failure or unhappiness. To the tender hearted, it's a serious threat to psychological health.

Not surprisingly, most websites reflect the latter view. Some, such as www.childline.org.uk/factsheets/bullying1.htm, offer commonsense advice and support. But others seem more concerned with publicising the scale of the problem than with critical appraisal of the evidence. The home page of www.bully.org, for example, leads with a tabloid style headline about a 14 year old Canadian college student who shot two of his classmates after years of relentless peer victimisation. www.applesforhealth.com/bullying1.html makes the scarcely believable claim that 80% of US middle school students admitted to having engaged in bullying in the last two weeks and quotes from William Pollack, author of a book entitled *Real Boys, Real Men and Real Depression*, who finds that bullies are the most depressed boys he's observed.

Well known people confess how they were bullied at school at www.bbc.co.uk/education/archive/bully/celeb.shtml. If you're someone who inclines to the tough minded view, you might change your mind after reading what the industrialist Sir John Harvey Jones, the explorer Ranulph Fiennes, and others not noted for their wimpish outlook have to say.

People do not think of themselves as bullies. They tell themselves that they are just being assertive, giving strong leadership, or disinclined to suffer fools gladly. So it might be salutary to visit www.successunlimited.co.uk/bully/serial.htm to check out your management style and make sure that the place where you work really does have an anti-bullying ethos. "

Christopher Martyn.

BMJ cmartyn@bmj.com

[The above review was taken from British Medical Journal online at <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/323/7311/520/a>]

Conference

A PPOWP Conference is being mooted for next year. Suggested topics for presentations include forgiveness and reconciliation, conflict resolution, professional activism. If you are interested in contributing with ideas or time, please contact either Susie Burke or Karen Weiss.

Posters

As you all know PPOWP has put out calendars each year. These calendars are now for sale in poster format. They are informative, well designed and make attractive wall hangings for home or office. Ideal as Christmas presents! Also, we are looking for people to sell posters at conferences. Our administrator, Tamsin has put together a kit that makes the process of selling them very expedient. To buy posters or to help sell them, please contact Tamsin Whaley on (03)54721113.

Wise Ways to Win reaches out

PPOWP have given permission to adapt *Wise Ways to Win* (book) for online delivery to the Bachelor of Education at James Cook University to remote Indigenous students.

Bach of Education are preparing an online version of the subject Primary social and Environmental education for students enrolled through the Remote Area Teacher Education Program which delivers teacher education to Indigenous people studying in remote Queensland communities such as Naparanam, Yarrabah and Bamaga. They wish to include story reading within delivery of this program. Many of these students have English as their second or third language so the modelling of story reading in English is an additional reason for including story reading within the program.

Specific details of the proposal:

1. They wish to create an audiovisual adaptation of *Wise Ways to Win* to provide examples of conflict resolution skills, and procedural text for conflict resolution.
 2. The lecturer would read the story and comment on how it can be used to explore conflict resolution. Ideally, this audio recording would be accompanied by some or all of the illustrations from the book, in order to maintain the moral rights of the copyright owners.
 3. The adaptation would be produced as a Flash interaction so that the screen illustrations change as they would when turning the pages in the book. The resource will be password protected - online remote Indigenous students enrolled in this subject would have access to this website (approximately ten students per semester).
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Amnesty International Candle Day - October 26/27.

Amnesty International is another organisation working for peace. Consider collecting money for Amnesty on Candle Day, as an antidote for feelings of personal helplessness, and for an instant increase in world peace-promotion. Contact Amnesty International to get involved: Private Bag 23, Broadway NSW 2007. Freecall number automatically connects you to local/regional office – 1800 808 157. www.amnesty.org.au or <http://www.amnesty.org.au/whatshappening/Index.html>

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If you are able to receive Peace News or other PPOWP information by email this will reduce printing and postage costs to PPOWP and allow us to direct these resources elsewhere. The newsletter will be distributed as a Word document to the nominated email account. Please email including your nominated email address and current mailing address to Tamsin at tnt@gcom.net.au.

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*Anyone interested in starting new groups in Queensland, A.C.T. or Northern Territory, please contact PPOWP Administrator Tamsin Whaley.