

## EDITORIALS

# Editorial: Groundbreaking Articles and DOAJ Listing

Jane Marsden<sup>a</sup>

Keywords: Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia, PACJA, psychotherapy, counselling, Indigenous healing practices, artificial intelligence, creative and experiential therapies, counselling educators, outcome measures, frontier violence

<https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.140727>

---

## Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia

Vol. 13, Issue 1, 2025

---

This issue of the *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia* (PACJA) comprises articles at the cutting edge of research in psychotherapy, counselling, and Indigenous healing practices. Its publication coincides with PACJA achieving Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) listing, an important milestone that will boost the journal's global accessibility, visibility, academic credibility, and impact. Arguing that artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to complement the therapeutic relationship in psychotherapy and counselling, Bloch-Atefi (2025) considers the delicate balance of ethics and opportunities presented by AI. Another timely article (van Laar et al., 2025)—given the forthcoming release by the National Disability Insurance Agency of an independent review into art and music therapy for people with disabilities—analyses testimonials and provides a literature review of reviews on the current evidence for the effectiveness of these therapies for people with disabilities. Addressing research gaps on diverse topics are four other articles. Firstly, Beel et al. (2025) thematically analyse counselling and psychotherapy educators' views on the profession and education, highlighting strengths and vulnerabilities. Secondly, Bloch-Atefi and Day (2025) examine the use of outcome measures by psychotherapists and counsellors, calling for training in the application of outcome measures to be included in the new national standards that will be released in the coming weeks. Thirdly, Atkinson et al. (2025) reflect on the Historical Frontier Violence Project that combines quantitative and qualitative data linking colonial massacres with current outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Finally, a clinical case study on an adolescent in kinship care recommends the use of narrative exposure therapy to support young people encountering out-of-home care services (Ryan, 2025). A book review on Alexander H. Ross's *Meditation for Psychotherapists: Targeted Techniques to Enhance Your Clinical Skills* (Lynch, 2025) completes Volume 13 (1) of PACJA.

---

<sup>a</sup> A PACFA-registered clinical counsellor and member of PACFA's Research Committee, Jane Marsden (MCoun, BA Psych) has edited the *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia* (PACJA) since April 2022. As a professional journalist and editor in Australasia, she managed, edited, copyedited, and wrote for a broad range of publications before requalifying as a counsellor. After several years as a regional family counsellor and educator with Relationships Australia Queensland, she now works in her own private practice specialising in relationship counselling. Jane can be contacted at [editor@pacja.org.au](mailto:editor@pacja.org.au)

Volume 13 (1) of the *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia* (PACJA) explores topics at the forefront of research in psychotherapy, counselling, and Indigenous healing practices, each offering unique insights into ethical, clinical, and professional challenges in the field. This issue also marks an important milestone: PACJA's inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), enhancing global accessibility, visibility, academic credibility, and impact.

The results of the first randomised controlled trial supporting the effectiveness of a generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) chatbot for treating clinically significant mental health symptoms were recently published (Heinz et al., 2025). It is thus timely to consider the benefits—and challenges—of implementing AI in psychotherapy and counselling. “Balancing Ethics and Opportunities: The Role of AI in Psychotherapy and Counselling” (Bloch-Atefi, 2025) argues for a staged integration guided by ongoing evaluation, practitioner training, informed consent, and ethical guidelines. These recommendations may help AI contribute to the mitigation of the worldwide mental health crisis (Fiske et al., 2019). As Bloch-Atefi (2025) states, “AI tools can complement but not replace the human interaction essential to effective psychotherapy and counselling” (para. 9).

Another well-timed article, given the April 2025 completion of an independent review into the effectiveness and price levels of art and music therapy for people with disabilities, is “Empowering Voices—Learning From NDIS Participants About the Value of Creative and Experiential Therapies: A Mixed Methods Analysis of Testimonials and Academic Literature” (van Laar et al., 2025). Commissioned by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in December 2024, the review was extended after more than 600 submissions were received. The article features an analysis of testimonials submitted by people with disabilities to an online petition in response to the possible funding threat and a literature review of reviews and meta-analyses examining the current evidence for the effectiveness of these therapies for people with disabilities. The insights presented in the article provide valuable perspectives for practitioners working in this space. The NDIA will publish the review and its response in the coming weeks.

In another first, the study “Shaping the Profession: Australian Counselling Educators’ Perspectives on Professional Identity, Values, and Education” (Beel et al., 2025) reports the views of Australian counselling and psychotherapy educators interviewed about the profession and education. Three themes emerged: the emphasis on the person of the therapist, the importance of quality counsellor and psychotherapist education, and the distinctiveness and credibility of counsellors and psychotherapists. To enhance client empowerment and dignity, “values that prioritised the personal development of the therapist and the person of the client” (para. 45) were emphasised. However, vulnerabilities were also highlighted, such as educational institution agendas that compromised counselling education quality (including a lack of required research activity by staff and students) and student selection.

“The Use of Therapeutic Outcome Measures by Australian Psychotherapists and Counsellors” (Bloch-Atefi & Day, 2025) is another article addressing a significant research gap. A total of 1,177 participants or 34% of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia’s (PACFA’s) registered counsellors and psychotherapists were surveyed in a mixed methods study examining their use of outcome measures. The majority regularly used outcome measures, mainly because of a belief in their effectiveness in tracking client progress but also because of institutional requirements. However, time constraints, administrative burden, inadequate training, and perceived incompatibility with client-centred therapy models presented barriers. The authors call for professional development and training in the application of outcome measures to be included in the new national standards for counsellors and psychotherapists due in mid-2025. They also highlight a need for tailored, flexible outcome measures that consider the therapeutic relationship.

The Historical Frontier Violence Project is an ambitious first attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative data to link colonial massacres with current outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. At the halfway point of this Australian Research Council Discovery Project, the multidisciplinary authors of “Reflecting on Contesting and Presenting History With a Focus on the Impacts in the Present” (Atkinson et al., 2025) discuss transgenerational trauma, truth-telling, and potential healing. They advocate for “the development of community-led programs that directly address trauma, rather than band-aid policies that focus on treating the symptoms of trauma” (para. 53).

The last article in this issue reports a clinical case study on an adolescent in kinship care experiencing complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD; Ryan, 2025). The author used narrative exposure therapy (NET) excerpts to examine the adolescent’s lived biographical narratives, identifying themes of substance use, parental mental health and self-harm, parental assault, community violence, sleeping rough, and freedom. Scores on two validated outcome measures indicated clinically significant decreases for C-PTSD, depression, anxiety, and stress. “The Biographical Narratives of an Adolescent in Kinship Care: A Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Case Study” (Ryan, 2025) recommends that trauma-focused interventions such as NET be used by out-of-home care services to support young people who have experienced violence, abuse, and neglect.

A book review on Alexander H. Ross’s *Meditation for Psychotherapists: Targeted Techniques to Enhance Your Clinical Skills* (Lynch, 2025) completes this issue. The review notes that the book differs from others on the subject of meditation for mental health practitioners in that it provides different meditation models for different psychotherapy modalities. These include psychoanalytic–psychodynamic, body-centred, person-centred, existential, and mentalisation-based therapy. An accompanying website provides

recordings of the meditations. Lynch concludes that “although readers might be tempted to skip through to the chapter discussing the therapeutic approach they use in their work, I recommend exploring them all” (para. 25).

In other news, PACJA has just been included in the DOAJ, a highly regarded international index that recognises high-quality, peer-reviewed, open access publications. Its metadata is collected and incorporated into commercial discovery systems, library discovery portals, and global search engines. These include OCLC, EBSCO products, Clarivate’s ProQuest and Ex Libris products, Clarivate’s Web of Science platform, Scopus, Google Scholar, Google, and Dimensions. All past and current articles will be uploaded, resulting in increased visibility and citation potential for the journal and its content.

Finally, credit is due to PACFA, the PACFA research committee, the PACJA editorial board, peer reviewers, copyeditors, and Scholastica staff, all of whom made this issue possible.

Published: June 19, 2025 AEST.



This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CCBY-4.0). View this license's legal deed at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> and legal code at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode> for more information.

## References

- Atkinson, J., Evans, M., & Moschion, J. (2025). Reflecting on contesting and presenting history with a focus on the impacts in the present. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.137965>
- Beel, N., Taylor, S., & Chinchin, C. (2025). Shaping the profession: Australian counselling educators' perspectives on professional identity, values, and education. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.129711>
- Bloch-Atefi, A. (2025). Balancing ethics and opportunities: The role of AI in psychotherapy and counselling. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.129884>
- Bloch-Atefi, A., & Day, E. (2025). The use of therapeutic outcome measures by Australian psychotherapists and counsellors. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.137570>
- Fiske, A., Henningsen, P., & Buyx, A. (2019). Your robot therapist will see you now: Ethical implications of embodied artificial intelligence in psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 21(5), Article e13216. <https://doi.org/10.2196/13216>
- Heinz, M. V., Mackin, D. M., Trudeau, B. M., Bhattacharya, S., Wang, Y., Banta, H. A., Jewett, A. D., Salzhauer, A. J., Griffin, T. Z., & Jacobson, N. C. (2025). Randomized trial of a generative AI chatbot for mental health treatment. *NEJM AI*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.1056/Aloa2400802>
- Lynch, J. (2025). *Meditation for psychotherapists: Targeted techniques to enhance your clinical skills* (2025) by Alexander H. Ross. Routledge. ISBN: 9781032453507 (hardback). ISBN: 9781032453514 (paperback). ISBN: 9781003382959 (eBook). *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.133604>
- Ryan, G. T. (2025). The biographical narratives of an adolescent in kinship care: A complex post-traumatic stress disorder case study. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.136978>
- van Laar, C., Bloch-Atefi, A., Grace, J., & Zimmermann, A. (2025). Empowering voices—Learning from NDIS participants about the value of creative and experiential therapies: A mixed methods analysis of testimonials and academic literature. *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.59158/001c.128556>