

Editorial – Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia (PACJA). Fifth Edition

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One of PACJA's original and enduring aims is to encourage submissions from a broad spectrum of contributors within the counselling and psychotherapy profession. Providing a professional forum for practitioners, researchers, and educators, and support for students, the journal is a valuable means to reflect on practice and share knowledge.

This range of contributors broadly represents the diverse membership of the journal's parent organisation, PACFA, and its diversity provides an opportunity to reach a wide readership, ideally inspiring the production of knowledge and the dissemination of research findings that contribute to the evidence base of the profession.

For many years, however, there has been debate in our profession on the ways in which the practice of counselling and psychotherapy is informed by research, with numerous studies reporting on the research–practice 'gap' (see Morrow-Bradley & Elliott, 1986; Safran, Abreu, Ogilvie, & DeMaria, 2011). It is widely accepted that the relationship between research and practice can be tenuous, and considerable attention has been given to how this might be addressed.

In his 2016 publication *Using Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, John McLeod draws on an ample body of research into "practitioner attitudes to research" (see pp. 1–11), and notes that experienced counsellors and psychotherapists find that supervision sessions, interactions with clients, discussions with professional colleagues, and information gleaned from books, have a greater influence on their practice than the evidence and insights gained from research papers. In addition, they find that research results are often poorly presented, inaccessible, and clinically irrelevant.

After reviewing numerous studies McLeod (2016) concludes that, overall, practitioners have a positive attitude to research, particularly if it has clinical relevance and is beneficial for their clients. He adds that he is reassured that practitioners maintain a healthy scepticism, and throughout his book he describes the many and varied ways that practice and research can and do connect, and proposes an alternative model for considering such connections (a review of McLeod's book is provided in this edition of the journal).

It is essential to acknowledge, however, that practitioners and academics have different needs when it comes to research. Clinical practice is the principal occupation of most counsellors and psychotherapists and the requirement for activities such as collecting data or learning a new therapeutic approach takes time—which for those in private practice is most probably unpaid. Although it is not uncommon for researcher-educators to work as practitioners as well, their clinical practice is usually limited and their relationship with research is different. The production and publishing of research findings, and the volume of one's publications, are now essential criteria for academic promotion and job security.

Irrespective of the motivation, based on the cross-section of contributions to this fifth edition of PACJA, it seems that this 'gap' is narrowing. As incoming editor, I am very pleased to see that more than half of the contributions in this edition are from practitioners, with several in private practice.

In *So, you think your practices are collaborative?* Anne Hollingworth offers an original and powerful analysis and eloquent critique on counselling and psychotherapy collaborative practices. From her initial training as a social worker in the 1970s, and postgraduate qualifications in that profession, Hollingworth went on to qualify as a clinical and forensic psychologist, earning several further degrees, including a Master of Applied Linguistics. Her research knowledge is evident in her close focus on the micro aspects of language use in therapy, particularly on the use of 'So'. Hollingworth argues that counsellors and psychotherapists, although committed to working collaboratively, unintentionally control and disempower clients through their use of this particular speaking practice. She notes personal communications with the developers of Narrative Therapy, Michael White and David Epston, who informed her of their early decision to "minimise starting a conversational turn in therapy with So and advised their trainees to do the same." This was a significant concept in White and Epston's development of collaborative speaking practices. Hollingworth demonstrates the basis of her argument through a skillful application of linguistic theory in her analysis of therapeutic discourse.

In *Motivational Interviewing and School Misbehaviour: An evidenced-based approach to working with at-risk adolescents*, David Mander also provides a bridge between research and practice. Highlighting a lack of success of "zero tolerance" policies in schools, Mander argues for a "paradigm shift" in how interventions are considered for dealing with school misbehaviour, particularly for adolescents who are at risk of early disengagement from education. He acknowledges the introduction of various approaches now being used in schools to promote "pro-social" behaviour, but is not convinced of the effectiveness of interventions that assume that behaviour is changed extrinsically. He proposes Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidenced-based, collaborative and non-directive approach, for use as an adjunct by school counsellors. Mander provides a detailed summary of MI, and his description of its applications, and provision of many specific examples related to changing adolescent misbehaviour, offer a very useful contribution to those working with this client population.

In *The Core Sensitivities: A clinical evolution of Masterson's Disorders of Self*, Brooke Poulson and Joseph Coyne present a comprehensive explication of the conceptual underpinnings of The Circle of Security (COS). COS is an attachment-based intervention that provides parents/caregivers with a practical framework for understanding their children's behaviour, identifying their needs, and developing awareness of how to respond, all of which are essential to the formation of a secure attachment. The COS is built upon a foundation of object relations, family systems and attachment theories. Poulson and Coyne provide a thorough and accessible description of how James Masterson's psychoanalytic approach to personality theory and his concepts of the three basic human needs of esteem, safety and autonomy/relatedness are central to the COS construct of the "core sensitivities", these being the non-conscious self-protective strategies (internal working model) that guide a person's experience within relationships. The authors suggest several ways that these concepts could be applied when working with adult clients in therapy. Understanding clients' core sensitivities, for example, offers therapists non-pathologising ways to identify clients' relationship needs, including needs within the therapeutic relationship.

In the next paper, *Application of Kohut in Public Mental Health: Understanding Fatima*, we are reminded that the psychoanalytic approach to psychotherapy has undergone significant transformation since Freud's time. One of the seminal contributors to the development of psychoanalytic theories and practice was Heinz Kohut. The concept of self is central to his theoretical model—Self Psychology. Julia Jamaludin describes her experience of using the lens of self psychology in her work as a psychiatry registrar in a public acute inpatient mental health unit. She presents a case in which she adopted this psychoanalytical approach to engage with an involuntary client presenting with acute psychosis. By intentionally applying certain principles and concepts from self psychology, Jamaludin was able to better understand the woman and her subjective experience. The use of Kohut's self psychology as a theoretical framework enabled Jamaludin to organise, understand and interpret her therapeutic approach and relationship with the client.

In this fifth edition of the journal we are pleased to publish two literature reviews. The first is a *Literature Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness of Experiential Psychotherapies* conducted by Ben Mullings. This systematic review is one of a series of reviews commissioned by the PACFA Research Committee, and establishes beyond doubt the effectiveness of experiential psychotherapies for a range of psychological conditions.

Intimate Relationships and Chronic Illness: A literature review for counsellors and couple therapists by Rebecca Gray, Toby Newton-John, Jamie Lee, and Claire Ralfs is a 'scoping' literature review (one that provides an overview or map of the literature, but does not evaluate the quality of the studies). This paper draws upon research they reviewed for a three-phase study into chronic illness and relationships. The researchers provide detailed information on the background of the research project, a comprehensive

description of the themes identified in their review of the literature, and discussion of the potential use of the research findings by practitioners when working with individuals and couples affected by chronic illness.

Along with our articles and literature reviews we have three book reviews. Ione Lewis reviews Barbara Thompson and Robert Neimeyer's *Grief and the Expressive Arts: Practices for Creating Meaning* (2014) an edited book of 57 chapters by leading expressive arts therapists, each offering practical and creative suggestions, from a broad range of the arts, to assist individuals of all ages to reconstruct meaning after loss. Pam Stavropoulos reviews Frank Putnam's *The Way We Are: How States of Mind Influence Our Identities, Personality and Potential for Change* (2016), an expert synthesis of science and philosophy from a leader in the field of trauma and dissociative disorders. Deidre Ikin reviews John McLeod's *Using Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (2016), the fifth book in his series of bestselling titles on research in counselling and psychotherapy.

Bringing this edition of the journal through to publication has been very satisfying, and I want to convey my gratitude to the people who assisted me as I came to grips with the editorial role. I am indebted to the members of the Editorial Board and Research Committee who shared their knowledge and experience, in particular Ione Lewis and Elizabeth Day whose extra support ensured continuity during the period of my transition from the role of Assistant Editor. I would like to extend my thanks to Julia Bilecki at the PACFA office for her layout skills, and for assisting me in navigating the requirements for the online formatting. Last but not least, sincere gratitude is due to all the reviewers—it would be impossible to maintain the high standards of this journal without the time and expertise they offer so generously.

Hopefully, many readers will gain new insights from the contributions to this edition. It builds on a great foundation, and the journal continues to provide a valuable forum for bridging research and practice.

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