

# Editorial

A theme characterising the six diverse articles in this issue of the Journal could be “crossing bridges,” as the authors invite readers to venture across bridges that link the present with the past and that take us from our known worlds into communities, perspectives, and experiences that may be unfamiliar to us in various ways. In one way or another, the articles in this issue may expand the limits of our vision and awareness, and inspire our curiosity. Bridging research and practice is an important aim of our Journal, and in this issue, different approaches to research are also represented in the work of the contributing authors.

Through an analysis of the contents of NZAC newsletters, Judi Miller reviews the significant matters that have engaged and challenged the NZAC as an organisation during the past decade. She traces contextual influences that have shaped the development of current Association policies and the matters that concern members in the present decade. Such an historical analysis can contribute to members’ understanding of past and current controversies and inform their participation in current and future debates.

Bridging cultures as well as bridging research and practice are both powerful themes in the next article, by Averill Waters and Kathie Crocket. In this autoethnographic account, told in her own voice, Averill reflects on her experiences in undertaking a research project as a pālagi counsellor into how her school might better serve the educational interests of a small group of Tongan students and their families. We hope that Averill’s account of the effects of her engagement with members of the Tongan community on her own development and practice as a counsellor might support and encourage others to engage in bridge building within their own practice contexts.

A world that is increasingly talked about—often with fear—is the day-to-day experience of those with dementia, particularly Alzheimer’s disease, and their family members and caregivers. In another autoethnographic study with a very different focus, Morag Cunningham has bravely undertaken to record and discuss her own personal journey into this disturbing world since becoming her mother’s caregiver. Her vivid first-hand account and the resources she discusses will resonate with those who already know this world, as well as providing bridges of insight and understanding for others.

The next two articles offer the possibility of “enriching future connections” with two groups—first, lesbian clients, and then young people who are gifted and talented. As research indicates, it often seems that clients differ in their perceptions of what transpires in counselling encounters and what is important. Victoria Marsden interviewed several lesbian women who had been clients in counselling relationships—a different approach to consulting members of a community—to seek their retrospective views. The perspectives of these women, members of a group that are vulnerable and marginalised in various ways, and Victoria’s discussion of aspects of counselling practice in relation to pertinent ethical principles, provide a valuable opportunity for readers to reflect on their own practice.

Working in a different context, secondary schools, and drawing on practice wisdom and literature, Gay Gallagher offers readers a bridge of understanding into the worlds of gifted and talented young people. This group is often overlooked, or misinterpreted and poorly understood in their schools, despite the fact that they are now recognised in Ministry of Education policy. While gifted and talented young people can excel, they often face complex challenges and different forms of marginalisation from those that are commonly discussed. Gay’s article bridges readers into their worlds and will be of particular help to counsellors in school and community contexts in supporting these young people.

The last article in this issue, by Khalid Shah with Philip Culbertson, reports the results of a research project in which Muslim community leaders were interviewed about their knowledge of mental health in the New Zealand context. The Muslim community is relatively new to New Zealand, with a high proportion of immigrants and refugees. Imams, the respected religious leaders in Muslim communities, were recognised as potential bridge builders to enable members of their communities to access local mental health services. As the research revealed, imams already provide a great deal of mental-health-related support to community members, and the bridge needs to allow for two-way communication: the New Zealand mental health system needs to become more responsive to the needs of communities such as this, and more respectful of culturally appropriate forms of mental health support.

This issue concludes with a review by counselling ethicist Tim Bond of Bristol University, of the recently published book *Ethics in Practice: A Guide for Counsellors*, edited by Kathie Crocket, Margaret Agee and Sue Cornforth.

Margaret Agee and Philip Culbertson

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