

Editorial

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Welcome to this edition of the Journal of Te Roopu Kaiwhiriwhi o Aotearoa, the New Zealand Association of Counsellors.

We would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank our colleagues Margaret Agee and Philip Culbertson for their mahi in productively and effectively holding this space as editors over the last 10 years. Under their guidance and leadership the Journal has established a standard and a style that we hope to see further developed in the next decade.

While this issue does mark an important transition in editorship—Peter Bray will be taking an ongoing editorial role, with Brian Rodgers assisting as guest editor for this issue—it is not the first in the Journal’s evolution. Since earlier issues of the Journal are now available online it is possible to see how it has progressed as the counselling publication for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Looking back we acknowledge the considerable contributions that the editors of this Journal and our colleagues in counselling have made in offering their valuable work to a wider audience. Over the years it has been your research, your writing, and your ideas that have helped to shape both the Journal’s progress and how we see ourselves as professionals today.

Having served the Journal for five important years since 1991, Hans Everts and Margaret Nelson Agee transitioned its leadership over to Gary Hermansson who served from 1998–2000. Gary was succeeded by Sue Cornforth and Fran Parkin, who steered the Journal for a further seven years before Philip Culbertson came on board in 2007, and Margaret Agee returned as co-editor in 2008. Their partnership as co-editors and colleagues has lasted well over a decade, and as incoming editors we are privileged to receive their legacy and take up its challenge.

Part of that challenge was laid down some 28 years ago in the first “new format” Journal, at a time when the New Zealand Association of Counsellors was developing its principles and organisational structures. In their first editorial together, Hans Everts and Margaret Nelson Agee (1991) set out “to stimulate the production and publication” of counselling literature in Aotearoa New Zealand. They were keen to promote the role of the Journal in four key areas:

1. To encourage—others to share issues of importance, “commit [them] to paper and submit [them] in accordance with the Journal’s guidelines;”
2. To publish—“articles of substance, without becoming elitist;”
3. To communicate—and be alert “to potential articles or events that should be written up;”
4. To represent—and see the “Journal become representative of counselling in New Zealand in the broadest sense” (New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 1991, p. 1).

The first three points importantly echo the Journal’s founding aspirations but the fourth brings them all into sharp focus by its acknowledgement of the unique position that counselling as a practice and as a profession holds in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also suggests that what we do here may be of genuine interest to counsellors and to other caring professionals across the globe, and influence their ideas and practices. As participators in and caretakers of this space it is, in the broadest sense, this legacy that we collectively hold, preserve, and share.

This issue features five articles that resonate with these aspirations. In the first, “A partnership in progress,” Anna Reeves undertakes a critical systematic review of the counselling literature that addresses the relationship between Euro-Western and Māori perspectives of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Finding surprisingly few published sources that engage with this topic, the review identifies a number of gaps in the literature addressing what Māori clients need, the responsibility of the counselling profession to meet these needs and, through its examination of bicultural practice, how the counselling profession might operate with respect to biculturalism in the future. In dialogue with Alastair Crocket, the article raises the question of unpublished knowledge held within the counselling profession, and calls on both individuals and institutions to more actively articulate their bicultural engagement. There is a clear challenge here to both the NZAC and academia, as well as other institutions, to undertake robust self-review around bicultural engagement, and to publish more in this field.

This is followed by another systematic review, by Julia Field and Rachael Pond, on “How adoption affects the experience of adult intimate relationships and parenthood.” Similar to Reeves’ review, this study locates surprisingly few articles on the topic, especially given the historical and contemporary prevalence of adoption practices within many countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand.

Though few in number, the reviewed articles offer the counselling profession a rich descriptive account of the complex, ongoing consequences for some adoptees in their close interpersonal relationships with partners and with their own children. There is a powerful message here for practitioners to be sensitive to these dynamics.

In the next article, “Stressing out?”, Jennifer Goddard and Robyn Dixon present a quantitative exploration of sources of stress in school students in years 7 through 13. The study is an important contribution to our understanding of the challenges faced by our young people in a fast-changing world. This is reflected in the data indicating the pervasive nature of the pressure to perform, but also in social pressures, and the uncertainty of the future. Worryingly, the study finds that for the sample of students surveyed, stress levels in Aotearoa New Zealand are as high or higher than anywhere else in the world, especially for girls. As the authors indicate, there would seem to be good cause for conducting further research with the aim of informing potential interventions for reducing, or at least managing, the levels of stress in our young people’s lives.

The theme of stress is also significant in the next article, by Joanne McGrath, on “Speaking about the unspeakable poop,” a sympathetic exploration of living with the psychosocial effects of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and food intolerances. This is a deeply personal study in which the author joins with three other women to reflect upon their experiences and challenges of having to navigate lives dominated by IBS and food sensitivity. While themes such as shame, fear, and vulnerability are prominent, so are courage, persistence, and celebration. It is also a reminder of how much can be left “unsaid” in the counselling room, and of the importance for clients of finding their voice.

The final article for this issue, contributed by Brian Rodgers, is titled “More than just a measure.” In this study, the author presents the results of a qualitative exploration of clients’ experiences of using a standardised self-report questionnaire to evaluate counselling outcomes. The study takes a look “behind the scenes” at what goes on for someone when they are asked to complete an outcome measure. From the findings, it is clear that this is not simply a matter of ticking a few boxes, but rather a complex social task that has the potential to be both helpful and hindering to the therapeutic process. In an era in which the regular monitoring of outcomes would seem more and more inevitable, the key message from this article appears to be that it is not *what* measures are used, but rather *how* they are used

in practice.

As editors we would like to thank all these authors for their generosity, diligence, and collegiality in making their research available to others through the Journal. We would also like to thank the following for their invaluable support in reviewing the articles that have appeared in volume 38, issues 1 and 2:

Margaret Agee

Robyn Bailey

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Alistair Crocket

Kathie Crocket

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Maureen Frayling

Maria Haenga-Collins

Jayne Huggard

Jane Kjersten

Val McCullough

Barbara MacKay

Bob Manthei

Janet May

Rhonda Pritchard

Johann van den Berg

Paul Williams

Dick Wivell

Shaoli Zhang

In closing, we look forward to receiving your articles and your ideas, to extending our editorial board membership and developing our international representation, to strengthening the Journal's online presence, and to working with you in your professional development and practice.

We have a series of special issues planned that you may be interested in contributing to in the following areas: Education; Cross-cultural Practice; Spirituality; and Trauma. The editors welcome your ideas and contributions to future issues.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari, he toa takitini—Success is not the work of one, but the work of many.

Peter Bray and Brian Rodgers

Editors

References

New Zealand Association of Counsellors. (1991). Editorial. *New Zealand Journal of Counselling*, 13(1), 1.

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