

# LINKS

An occasional newsletter linking those with an interest  
in Community Psychology

December 2007

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Feel free to contact **LINKS** with your responses on  
this issue and suggestions for future issues. General  
contributions are welcomed and should be forwarded  
to: [ajpsychlists@westnet.com.au](mailto:ajpsychlists@westnet.com.au)

## Welcome.....

**Hello** everyone and welcome to the December issue of **LINKS**, our occasional newsletter for those with an interest in Community Psychology.

In this issue, **LINKS** readers are concerned with the issue of torture, from how it relates to Community Psychologists to how it is portrayed within society. In addition, Heather Gridley very kindly permitted us to include her presentation for the APS Annual Conference. We examine changes to Community Psychology on a local, state, and national level; including the recent changes to the Postgraduate Psychology Program at Edith Cowan University.

Amiee-Jade looks at racism in our society, sharing her experiences at the recent Racism Conference, and **LINKS** also extends a warm welcome to three former Community Psychology students. These lovely ladies have entered the challenging arena of Community Psychology in practice and popped in to offer us a glimpse into their respective worlds. Check out 'Where Are They Now' to see what Kaye Abel, Diane Broderick, and Margaret Maassen had to say.

We are also very excited to announce the first installment of our 'Suggested Readings' segment where **LINKS** readers are given the opportunity to suggest any new releases they think will be interesting to others interested in Community Psychology. Feel free to contact us with your own suggestions, whether they are old, new, books, or journal articles.

Don't forget to check out the Upcoming Conferences and, if you're lucky enough to be able to attend one, jot down a few thoughts. As always, **LINKS** readers have taken up the challenge to discuss the tough questions and we'd love to hear from you.

So enjoy this issue of **LINKS** and be sure to e-mail us with your comments and suggestions so that we can continue to make **LINKS** a newsletter from the community to the community!

## Mysogyny, 'Torture Porn', and...Quentin Tarantino?

Lauren Breen

There was a recent post on the UK Community Psychology email listserve that really got me thinking. Unfortunately, it wasn't about something deep(!) – It was about whether or not Quentin Tarantino's new film 'Death Proof' is an example of misogyny because it eroticises violence against women. There have been rallies and protests about the film in cities such as Liverpool and Glasgow. These responses are part of an ongoing debate about whether or not Tarantino should be acclaimed because his films are about 'empowered' women or are part of the burgeoning trend of so-called 'torture porn' films (Hostel, Saw, Wolf Creek, etc.).

It really piqued my interest because, not only am I a fan of Tarantino's films, I am a self-proclaimed feminist who is always interested in how women are portrayed in the media. For example, Australia's leader of the opposition recently had a boost in the polls after it was revealed that he visited a strip club in New York City a few years ago. Further still, a lot of the media comments about women politicians are still based around their appearance and whether or not they have children (obviously still more important than policies). Finally, I cannot stand those cleaning product commercials where the women are grinning insanelly with pleasure over a newly 'clean' surface.

Anyway, back to Death Proof. I have seen Death Proof and, although boring in sections, the film subverts the usual exploitation, 'killing the chicks' style film. For example, the 'baddie' is the opposite to the ultra-masculine, über-sadist stereotype that usually inhabits these kinds of films. I would say a bit more, but don't want to give away any content in case [LINKS](#) readers are actually interested in seeing the film, and (like all Tarantino films) it does have a great ending!

I actually think (at least by Hollywood standards) Quentin Tarantino is a little bit of a feminist. Look at how women are portrayed in his movies – Reservoir Dogs – only one woman in sight (and barely there at that) and women are barely mentioned, and when they are it is of course not always favourable, but there is an overtly political spiel about the social and economic injustice faced by waitresses in the US. Next was Pulp Fiction – at last some strong women

featured and they were not always objectified. Then Jackie Brown – now in my opinion, this movie was a watershed in Tarantino's evolution – not only was the main character a woman, but she was middle aged and African American! And the film sensitively portrayed her romance with a middle aged man, and she was by far the smartest character. Then Kill Bill I and II – compare these to the Charlies Angels films, which were widely marketed as being about 'girl power'. Sure, the 'girls' kicked butt, but were also wearing heels, had perfect nails, wore the latest fashion, and never had a hair out of place, and had a disturbingly 'icky' relationship with Bosley – please! And the producers on these films were women! At least Uma Thurman et al. looked like they could 'kick butt'. Far more importantly, the Kill Bill films (particularly number II) are not about 'revenge' or 'chicks with guns' as much as they are about aspects of womanhood – about maternal instinct, about identity as a mother, about how pregnancy changes you (not just physically), about the love a mother feels for her child, about the grief a mother feels over the loss of her child, and about the overwhelming joy of being reunited. I've never seen these issues dealt with like this in any Hollywood film, and these were written, directed and produced by men (Tarantino and Lawrence Bender).

Other media too, such as video games (e.g., Tomb Raider) and pop music (e.g., the 'girl power' of the Spice Girls), are also demeaning to women, contribute to the sexualisation of girls, and bastardise the notion of empowerment by conflating it with nudity and/or sexiness. I'm not arguing that there are no problematic features of Tarantino films, but the films (and other media) that masquerade as feminist statements while really being the opposite are, well in my opinion anyway, far more problematic.

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## Psychologists, the APS, and Torture

Heather Gridley

### Background:

Community psychologists who subscribe to the email lists of the American equivalents of Psychologists for Peace and the College of Community Psychologists (APA Division 27 - SCRA) have been privy over the past two years to extensive discussions on the subject of psychologists' involvement in torture, as well as via the literature on bioethics and the electronic and print media (e.g., sample links below).

This issue came to our particular attention in Australia in early 2007, when several APS members began to express concern about one of the keynote speakers for the 2007 APS Conference Brisbane, Dr. Gerald P Koocher. As immediate past President of the APA, Dr. Koocher was at the forefront of the very public debates surrounding the involvement by psychologists in Behavioral Science Consultation Teams (BSCTs, or ‘biscuits’ as they are known) deployed in interrogations at Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere. In 2005, Dr. Koocher oversaw the establishment of the Psychological Ethics and National Security Task Force, whose report attracted widespread condemnation. In part as a result of the PENS report, which stood in contrast to AMA (and American Psychiatric Association) policies prohibiting their members from participating in any activity that could be described as torture, the US Department of Defense decided to only use psychologists in these roles.

A number of members argued that the status of Dr Koocher as a keynote speaker raised questions about the APS’s own stand on the ethics of psychologists’ involvement in torture, interrogation and related practices, and risked bringing the Society and the profession into disrepute. In response to these concerns, the APS decided to invite Dr Koocher to make himself available for a public forum, alongside representatives of groups such as Psychologists for Peace, which he did. The forum was titled “Lessons from Guantanamo: Ethical issues for psychologists working in the military, intelligence and detention facilities”. I was asked to participate in the forum, to represent the concerns that had been raised by APS members, especially Psychologists for Peace and the Community College. Apart from Dr Koocher and myself, the other participants in the forum were APS President Amanda Gordon and Dr. Chris Lennings from University of Sydney, who had been involved in research and advocacy in relation to the mental health of detainees in places like Villawood and Baxter. The forum was chaired by Professor Graham Davidson.

Speaking at the forum was one of the scariest experiences of my professional life. While I had read a lot of material prior to the forum, I didn’t feel I could argue directly with Dr Koocher, since he was a protagonist in a debate on which I had only second-hand information. And it seemed hypocritical for us to be pointing the finger at the APA without examining our own responses to somewhat parallel issues closer to home, such as psychologists’ roles in immigration detention centres.

For me, the forum felt a bit like a drawn Grand Final – it was impossible to tell which side had won or lost,

partly because the focus shifted between issues such as service provision in coercive environments, direct and indirect roles (e.g. designing interrogation tactics), and whether in such roles psychologists can actually intervene to prevent or report abuses, or whether our very presence makes us complicit in cruelty. Much of the ‘action’ had already taken place over the previous two days: the APS Board had passed a resolution on members’ involvement in the use, involvement or provision of advice about torture and other injurious practices (see below); and Dr Koocher had delivered his keynote address on the complex ethics surrounding the visible and invisible harms that might ensue from psychologists’ actions in a range of contexts; including litigation, advertising, ‘homeland security’, triage, mandatory reporting, and interrogation/torture. So the forum was in some ways an anti-climax.

For some, the announcement of the APS’s very strong declaration, based on the UN definition of ‘Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’, was a major achievement that in itself could serve to shine a torch on the APA’s much more equivocal stance (with its exceptions for ‘national security’, and falling short of forbidding members from participating directly or indirectly in such practices). For others, there was a sense that Dr Koocher had ‘got off lightly’, because he was not tackled directly on the APA stance, perhaps due to his status as a guest, and perhaps because the forum was largely in-house, with no input from groups like Amnesty International, and no attempt to invite the general public or involve the media.

#### **APS Declaration on Torture:**

The Australian Psychological Society, as a member of the International Union of Psychological Science, fully endorses the United Nations Declaration and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1997.

The Australian Psychological Society regards all forms of torture, as defined in Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1997, as breaches of the Society’s Code of Ethics (2003) General Principle III Propriety.

#### **DECLARATION**

- Psychologists shall at all times comply with the Society’s Code of Ethics.
- Psychologists shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, in any situation, including armed conflict and civil strife.

- Psychologists shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.
- Psychologists shall not be present during any procedure in which torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is used or threatened.
- Psychologists must have complete professional independence in deciding upon the care of a person for whom they are responsible.

A Profession Struggles to Save Its Soul:  
Psychologists, Guantanamo and Torture

<http://www.counterpunch.org/soldz08012006.html>

"Collective Unconscionable" By Arthur Levine The  
Washington Monthly, January/February 2007

Miles, S. (2007). Medical Ethics and the Interrogation  
of Guantanamo 063 2007. The American Journal of  
Bioethics. 7(1):W3 Read Full Text:

[http://www.bioethics.net/journal/j\\_article.php?aid=1140](http://www.bioethics.net/journal/j_article.php?aid=1140)

Protecting the Torturers: Bad Faith and Distortions  
From the American Psychological Association.

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10903>

<http://www.newscenter.org/2007/03/06/psychological-torture-just-as-bad-study-finds>

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## Lessons From Guantanamo: Ethical issues for psychologists working in the military, intelligence and detention facilities

**Public Forum at 42nd APS Annual Conference  
Brisbane 2007**

*Presentation by Heather Gridley,  
on behalf of Psychologists for Peace  
and the APS College of Community Psychologists.*

I'm Heather Gridley, and I work for the APS as  
Manager of Public Interest. But I'm not speaking in

that capacity today, because I've been asked to represent the concerns that have been raised by a number of APS members, especially from Psychologists for Peace and the College of Community Psychologists. So I guess there is some tension in my position, being employed by and at the centre of the APS, and speaking today from the margins. Dr. Koocher said yesterday that the voices of opposition to the APA stance were 'loud, but a minority'. I don't apologise for being in the minority, nor for speaking from the margins – sometimes the view is much clearer from the edge than from the inside. I think of myself as a critical friend to the psychology profession and to the APS as an institution.

I was prompted by a former APS President, Clive Williams, to draw your attention to the precedents for debates like this in the history of the APS. Simon Cooke's 2000 book *A Meeting of Minds* has an excellent chapter on the Society's treatment of social and political issues over the years, and there's an account of psychologists' campaign in the late 1960s for humane treatment of prisoners in the criminal justice system, and also of the APS urging the International Union of Psychological Science to take a stance condemning abuses of psychiatry in the gulags of the then Soviet Union.

The APS *Code of Ethics* as it currently stands seems pretty clear on the subject of whose interests take priority. From the general principles of Responsibility, Competence and Propriety, the Code goes on to state: "The welfare of clients and the public, and the integrity of the profession, shall take precedence over a member's self interest and over the interests of the member's employer and colleagues." Furthermore, "Members must refrain from any act which would tend to bring the profession into public disrepute".

But who is the client is a more complex question – is it the detainee? The general public? The contracting agency, in this case, the Government? And who brings the profession into disrepute, the perpetrator of torture, or the whistleblower who makes the disreputable behaviour public? As a community psychologist, I'm open to the argument that the collective good might take precedence over the individual, but I do wonder how we have been led to believe that 'we' are under such threat from 'them' that we are prepared to surrender 'our' civil liberties and violate 'their' human rights. And how did psychologists' long-standing involvement with the military shift from treating shell-shock to being used as 'weapons', according to US Admiral Harris?

Agreement on what constitutes core human rights has



hard won, and is most sorely tested under conditions of perceived threat. Psychologists for Peace was founded on the principle that, in order to reduce the global quotient of hatred, we need (and can learn) to avoid cyclic patterns of violence. ‘An eye for an eye’ just leaves everyone blind. The creation of climates of fear is an age-old means to political, not peaceful, ends.

What behaviours are we talking about when discussing the subject of psychologists and torture? The US ‘biscuit’ teams reportedly advised the military on how to “break” detainees to make them more cooperative. The techniques they devised included sleep deprivation, ‘waterboarding’, and playing on detainees’ fears and cultural vulnerabilities to extract information. Recent evidence has confirmed that psychological torture is at least as destructive as physical torture. The APA insists that it is vehemently opposed to torture, and cruel, degrading treatment. But it could be argued that any form of interrogation in the context of places like Guantanamo Bay constitutes torture. Through a process of linguistic detoxification, torture tactics are minimized as Donald Rumsfeld’s ‘enhanced techniques’, while the climate of fear is amplified by terms like ‘national security’, ‘illegals’, and ‘enemy combatants’ (in a war that remains unnamed so that the Geneva Convention can’t be applied).

How did we get to be ‘discussing’ torture at all? Deakin University law academic Mirko Bargaric raised the issue not long ago of what might constitute ‘acceptable’ degrees of torture in extreme circumstances. That was the same academic who argued that a community’s distaste for abortion might be balanced against individual women’s rights by ‘allowing’ women one abortion per lifetime – but no more! He also argued that lawyers’ personal ethics are not important to clients, who just want them to be good at their job. Last I heard he was in Greece offering advice to [convicted drug baron] Tony Mokbel on how to avoid extradition, so I guess that’s where ethical relativism takes you.

Some people argue against torture on the grounds that it doesn’t work anyway – people will say anything under that kind of pressure. Do we have any evidence that torture (or ‘enhanced techniques’) have prevented World War 3, or averted any other global crisis? When has compromising ethics ever lead to a better, safer, less violent world? But even if it were ‘effective’, would the ends justify the means, or are we not all diminished, and all our values-based stances disqualified, when we head down that road? And if

torture is ineffective in its stated purpose, what then is its real purpose?

Closer to home, we can ask whether Australian psychologists, or the APS, would have acted any differently from our US counterparts in the same circumstances. Immigration detention centres are not quite the same as Guantanamo Bay, and perhaps there is a case for the provision of psychological services in either context, as opposed to participating at first or second hand in interrogation or torture. But many would argue that it is impossible to promote someone’s mental health amid conditions that are demonstrably oppressive and destructive to health and human dignity. The likelihood that individual psychologists could take on a monitoring role in such circumstances seems far outweighed by the probability of their co-option to collude with oppressive practices.

If professional codes of ethics are not equal to the task of dealing with the complexities Dr. Koocher described yesterday, then perhaps we need to be promoting a critical reflective practice that takes us beyond rule books to personal and collective accountability throughout our professional lives.

I would now like to present Amanda Gordon as APS President with a petition that was signed online by more than 60 people in a matter of days, from around the world and locally, within and beyond the APS. The petition urges the APS to clarify its position on torture and its members’ involvement in any activity that could be classified as such; and then to resolve how APS should respond to the APA’s actions on this matter.

### References

Australian Psychological Society. (2003). *Code of Ethics*. Melbourne APS.

Cooke, S. (2000). *A meeting of minds: The Australian Psychological Society and Australian Psychologists 1944-1994*. Melbourne: The Australian Psychological Society.

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## Congratulations!

LINKS would like to congratulate the following people:

Dr. Lauren Breen for being awarded the Australian Psychological Society’s Psychology of Relationships

Interest Group Thesis Award 2007 for her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Silenced Voices: Experiences of Grief Following Road Traffic Crashes in Western Australia”.

And to Dr. Lizzie Finn for being awarded the 2007 Robin Winkler Award which was “designed to memorialise the pioneering work done by the late Robyn Winkler to recognise excellence in community psychological research and intervention” (Brian Bishop, CommPsych).

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## Where Are They Now...?

“Where Are They Now” is a new segment in **LINKS** about the experiences of past community psychology students since graduating from university. In this issue, Kaye Abel, Diane Broderick and Margaret Maassen share with **LINKS** readers their post-graduate community psychology experiences. If you would like to submit a “Where Are They Now” piece, please send it to: [ajpsychlists@westnet.com.au](mailto:ajpsychlists@westnet.com.au).

### Kaye Abel

After completing her Masters in Community Psychology at ECU Joondalup in 2001 Kaye Abel is putting her skills to good use at the Shire of Mundaring. Her role as Manager, Community Development, sees her synchronizing the individual projects of her numerous team members to create a pleasant, well-functioning work environment. Her many tasks include coordination of projects, staff supervision, and raising awareness of the many issues that affect the community.

Kaye has had extensive experience in community events planning and delivery, recently managing the 6030 Community Carnival, Celebrate Your Culture Day, and Dad’s Day Out in Clarkson. In 2005 and 2006 in her time at the Shire of Mundaring she has developed and managed International Days for People with a Disability, Safety for Seniors Days and Seniors Week activities and has overseen the development and implementation of the Active Ageing Project.

Among other projects, Kaye’s focus at present is on the development of a Cultural Plan for the Shire, a transport strategy, and a Youth Policy. Kaye has also retained a link with the university by offering practicum placements to current students.

## Diane Broderick’s LINKS Missive

So where are they now?? Not far away...to be sure.

For me, it has been an amazing journey since my BA Psych (Hons) graduation in 2002. This was followed (finally) with the Ma Psych graduation in July 2005. A micro highlight at this time was overcoming a huge public speaking dilemma (read as: sheer dread) and presenting the ECU Students’ Response Address to the assembled students, friends, and academics. From this point on anything was possible in the postgraduate (PG) world.

I’ve had an array of different experiences in the PG (real) environment. Initially, I joined several Post Doc Fellows to utilise my psychology research skills (Will wonders ever cease?) in the qualitative data collection, analysis and in some instances, the reporting of their studies’ findings. It was great to be part of a multidisciplinary team doing meaningful community projects, especially when the outcomes are destined to make a difference to people like you and me.

During a very worthwhile period providing contract counselling, an opportunity presented to combine my health care background with the tenets of community psychology. This prospect urged me to set up my own practice, including essentials such as ABN, personal/business stationary, additional insurance and the like. A measure of this pursuit was when one of my community psychologist colleagues remarked in response to a “how do I...?” inquiry: “I’m really sure you were at the lectures when that was discussed.” This may reflect the directions I thought psychology held for me – the reality is different, although not without its challenges, there is still a sense of newness and fulfillment.

The combined psychology-health care consultancy was unique in many ways. Aside from addressing the organisation’s requirements, it was fun, I was on *home territory* (a sense of belonging perhaps), and from all accounts (I’m really into evaluations!) the outcomes for the participants were well met.

What did I have in my “toolbox” at this point? A series of home-grown workshops (Amazing. By now I’ve somewhat overcome the facilitator dilemmas), refined time management skills, handouts covering a range of topics, a few more evaluation formats (of course), plus the inevitable end products: reports.

When that great project came to fruition, the next door quietly opened via an email on my lovely laptop, which brings me to *now*.

I am currently working with the veteran community and their families in a role that enables me to contribute to this community's collaborative support services.

So what could I be aiming to share in this [LINKS](#) missive?

A key aspect promoted by small business development organisations is the concept that: wherever possible, always combine existing knowledge and skills with any new endeavours.

Thus far this resource has contributed to my reality. Now, some may be wondering about the fun parts. Well, I can truthfully say, it's not been all work and no play.

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## Social Justice At The Heart Of Our Practice

### Margaret Maassen



My name is Margaret Maassen and I had the great pleasure of discovering community psychology as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame Australia, when Dr Moira O' Connor conducted a winter semester unit on environmental psychology. From the very first lecture she had me in her web. Don't get me wrong I loved Notre Dame and I loved the psychology lectures I had attended but I was beginning to feel weighted down with things like symptoms, stresses and dysfunctions and felt as if people who were having difficulties in their lives were becoming pigeon holed into different categories of needs. As a teenager and young adult of the 60s and 70s my heart missed a beat when Moira began to talk about the new psychology that had responded and evolved out of the grassroots of the disempowered communities of that time.

Growing up in New Zealand as a Catholic, a good part of my life had been defined by the amazing social justice teachings and action reflection method of my church affiliation, while I marched in protest at our involvement in the Vietnam War, stood in picket lines

to support young workers imprisoned and tortured for speaking out for justice in their own countries, marched to ensure that our beautiful harbours stayed clean of American nuclear powered ships, stood in lines of solidarity with Maori friends to protect their land rights as we came eye ball to eye ball with my family members in the police lines, and again to keep our football fields clean of racist games.

I moved to Edith Cowan University to complete my fourth year and was accepted into the community psychology program. Over the number of years I completed my Masters in Psychology it would be true to say that with every community psychology unit I participated and wonderful lecturers I met my heart sang with a true sense of coming home to myself and my belief in the strength of communities to empower each other by drawing on their knowledge, strengths and understanding of themselves to bring about changes in social, emotional, physical, economic and spiritual wellbeing.

The practicums I completed in this course offered further opportunities for growth on professional and personal levels. In 2002 after community needs assessments, community consultation, scoping and profiling, interviewing teen mums, funding applications and more, the Balga Senior High School Teen Parent program was launched. With access to a registered Child Care Centre on the school grounds teenage parents were able to return to school to complete their secondary education while having access to their child throughout the day. This is particularly beneficial for breastfeeding mothers and for children suffering "separation anxiety". While my prac finished in 2002 I have remained heavily involved in this wonderful example of community empowerment at numerous levels. The program has evolved and expanded to cater for the individual needs of teen parents and their families. This program has supported over 60 teenage parents with many going on to tertiary education (including six graduates in 2006) with past students completing psychology and nursing degrees. It remains the only program of its kind in Australia.

I also had the opportunity within a practicum to undertake a report on the 'Barriers to Accessing Employment for Refugees' at the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASETTTS). This practicum further opened me up to the struggles experienced by our African refugee families in Perth. I have been able to apply this knowledge, understanding and skills development in my present work as the Consultant for Student Wellbeing at the Catholic Education Office of WA. I have also had the pleasure of being able to give back to other community



psychology students in this area through supervising a practicum. Postgraduate student Linda Rogerson joined me in 2005 to carry out a program evaluation on the Rainbows Silver Linings Crisis Intervention Change, Loss and Grief Program with the Sudanese students at Majella Catholic Primary School. Linda's work provided valuable research results on the suitability of the Rainbows program intervention for students who had experienced such traumas.

My core business at the Catholic Education Office is in the areas of change, loss and grief as many young people in school struggle with classroom academic learning and discipline due to often multiple losses in their short lives. These include but are not limited to parental separation/divorce, imprisonment, and job absenteeism; death of family members, friends and members of school communities; situations of disability; and the ever increasing number of more traumatic community losses.

In a society that prefers not to acknowledge death and significant loss and struggles with change, people are expected to 'get-over' their loss and 'move on' in a matter of weeks. This is always to satisfy the discomfort of others, not to support the grieving person. In a society that is obsessed with quick, feel good fixes it is important that young people understand that grief is a 'normal' reaction to significant loss, and it has its own pace and time in a person's life. It is not a disease and does not need to be medicated, counseled or silenced. However it can be a battle of the heart and it is important to support our young people to come to their own understandings of its place in their lives as they touch into their own strengths, weakness, fears and abilities to learn, grow and empower each other through their experiences and their development of a supportive community.

This year I was again blessed to be supported by many ECU students in August as I facilitated another Grief Awareness Day. This year was a wonderful occasion with many examples of grieving communities reaching out and empowering each other to move towards healing. Some of the presentation highlights were Dr Lauren Breen, who shared with us her deep understanding of 'Behind Closed Doors: What Happens in the Family after a Crash Fatality?' from her incredibly moving research with families who had experienced such a tragedy. Pam Castensen, Funeral Director with Mareena Purslowe and Associates presented 'A Community Farewells Baby Luke'. Pam shared how she answered the desperate helplessness people felt when a small unclaimed baby was found dead in a rubbish bin. Pam empowered the community

with a ceremony that named baby Luke, celebrated his ability to bring so many people together in his short life and provided him with a place of beauty to be buried. Des Mitchell, principal from Carey Baptist College presented on the 'Flowers for Friday' initiative which showcased the incredible strength, courage and support young people at his school displayed as they reclaimed their local shopping centre by laying flowers after a beautiful young girl and fellow student had been murdered there. We also had the opportunity to hear directly two primary and two high school students share their stories about the transforming power in their lives of the Rainbows Peer Support Grief programs that they are part of in their schools.

So as you can see, to me community psychology is not like a piece of professional clothing you put on when you go out to do your job each day, it is a deep seated way of life that comes from a deep belief in the ability of communities to share their stories of pain and joy, to support each other to embrace their strengths and weakness, and to willingly share resources so that our young people can truly live in communities that support justice for all. I am proud to be part of a movement of professionals that holds social justice at the heart of their practice. If your interests lie in any of what I have shared and you are looking to do your practicum, look me up.

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## Suggested Readings

- Altman, J., & Hinkson, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Coercive reconciliation: Stabilise, normalise, exit Aboriginal Australia*. Carlton, Australia: Arena.
- Beresford, Q. (2006). *Rob Riley: An Aboriginal leader's quest for justice*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Garvey, D. (2007). *Indigenous identity in contemporary psychology: Dilemmas, developments and directions*. Melbourne: Thomson.
- Proctor, G., Cooper, M., Sanders, P., & Malcolm, B. (Eds.). (2006). *Politicizing the person-centred approach: An agenda for social change*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.
- Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. London: Sage.



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for the

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## Reflections on the National Conference on Racism in a Global Context

Amiee-Jade Pereira

I recently had the pleasure of attending the National Conference on Racism in a Global Context which was held at Murdoch University from 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November. This conference was perhaps one of the most confronting experiences in my life. I've always had an interest in racism and prejudice as it was a subject that was fervently discussed in my home. I grew up hearing about great activists such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Steven Biko, Malcolm X and Aung San Sui Kyii. I also learnt about the activism of the sixties. These experiences have led me down the path to community psychology, and to my Masters thesis exploring Anglo-Australians' attitudes towards multiculturalism. They have also led me to attending the above-mentioned conference.

I have always considered myself to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Although I have described myself as a white person, I have never really identified with being 'White'. Until now. The conference really opened my eyes up to the privileges I enjoy by virtue of the colour of my skin. For example, in a collective session in which he discussed systemic racism in education, Ray Winbush talked about how teachers who want to 'teach them (African American students) that they can be anything they want to be', are actually ignoring systemic racism. In fact, this statement is based on an individualist assumption inherent in White culture, that individuals need to work hard, and they can do anything that they want to do. This is prevalent in politics (see O'Neill, 2005) and popular culture. As a friend pointed out to me, in the film "The Pursuit of Happyness" (based on a true story), viewers watch as Will Smith's character has to fight his way out of homelessness and poverty to become a successful stockbroker. This assumption, that individuals can be anything they want to be if they work hard enough, totally ignores the struggles that non-White people are faced with as they try to live in a society built on White institutions and White discourse. It is an assumption that I have held in the past. Even though I have 'talked' about systemic issues, I have not thought critically about how external influences can actually prevent an individual from fulfilling their dreams. So, upon realizing my 'Whiteness' at the conference, I began to

see myself as part of the problem.

As a result of this awakening, I was faced with two emotions, and I'm still trying to deal with them now. I feel a great sadness to have come from a culture that has been responsible for mis-treating the 'outgroup' (people who are not White) like this. And as much as I, like many others, could argue that 'it wasn't me or my generation', the point is that I still come from generations who did do it, and some who still do. Furthermore, the whole fabric of society has developed from the ideas, values and beliefs of the oppressors. The language we speak, the laws we abide by, our values and beliefs, began with our past. I am not trying to argue that society has not changed, of course it has. What I am arguing is that to really know who we are now, we need to understand where we've come from and how our world got to where it is today through the influence of those in our past. Which brings me back to my earlier point - the conference opened my eyes up to *my own White privilege*.

The second emotion is anger. I feel angry that I am a part of a system that has been, and still does, oppress others. Before the conference I was angry, but my anger was directed at 'the people who are racist', people like Pauline Hanson, John Howard, the participants in the Cronulla riots. I did not direct anger at myself because *I wasn't like that*. However, now that I feel White, I am angry at us. Us includes me.

So as the conference progressed and my emotions grew stronger I started to feel quite helpless. The message that seemed apparent was that I am part of the problem. Particularly as one of the messages coming through loud and clear was that people of colour need to claim their rights to self-determination, to take it back from White people. I felt like this meant that I couldn't 'help' out without being seen to be doing what has been done in the past. So then I started to wonder, how can I be different? How can I break out of the cycle and do something positive?

My answer came upon reflection of a number of speakers' presentations. Linda Tuhiwai Smith talked of 'little steps' when resisting colonial hegemony. She spoke of a need to re-create our future by walking together to challenge the status quo. The bottom line from Harry Allen's presentation for me was about changing *myself* instead of changing the world. This realization reminded me of a Sufi tale my Dad gave me on my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday...

The Sufi Bayazid says this about himself:

"I was a revolutionary when I was young  
and all my prayer to God was:  
'Lord give me the energy to change the world.'

As I approached middle age and realized that half of my life was gone without my changing a single soul,

I changed my prayer to:

‘Lord give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends and I shall be satisfied.’

Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, I have begun to see how foolish I have been.

My one prayer now is,

‘Lord give me the grace to change myself.’

If I had prayed for this right from the start I should not have wasted my life.”

It is not that I am losing hope in social change. I still believe it can happen. However, I need to start by making changes with myself. I can start by challenging racist comments made by those around me. I can also start getting out in the community and learning about other cultures instead of just talking about the need for cultural awareness. I am going to attend community events such as NAIDOC day. The main thing is that, through continually reflecting on my thoughts, values, beliefs and actions, I can minimize my participation in problematic practices. I can also work in partnership *with* marginalized groups to change the world, by listening to their experiences, and hopefully as Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggested, we can re-create a shared vision of our future.

Special thanks to Dawn Darlaston-Jones and Lauren Breen for thought-provoking email discussions and their feedback on this piece.

### References

O'Neill, P. (2005). The ethics of problem definition. *Canadian Psychology*, 46(1).

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## Upcoming Conferences

### NATIONAL

*APS Women and Psychology Interest Group's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference: Living and Working with Diversity as Women in Psychology II* at Sunbury Hall, Victoria University, Victoria  
6-9 December 2007

Email: Raelynn Wicklein

raelynn.wicklein@rmit.edu.au

<http://www.psychology.org.au/Events/EventView.aspx?EventID=2784&Highlight=1>

*Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association 2007 Conference: Transforming Bodies, Nations and Knowledges* in Adelaide  
10-12 December 2007

Second call for papers

<http://www.acrawsa.org.au/conference2007/index.htm>

*11<sup>th</sup> Trans-Tasman Community Psychology Conference: Exploring Boundaries, Expanding Frontiers* in Perth  
July 2009

Email: Dawn Darlaston-Jones

ddarlastonjones@nd.edu.au

or Julie Ann Pooley

j.pooley@ecu.edu.au

### INTERNATIONAL

*The New Zealand Discourse Conference: The Challenge of Discourse Analysis* at AUT University in Auckland, New Zealand

6-8 December 2007

Email: Andreea Calude on nzdc@aut.ac.nz

<http://www.nzdc.aut.ac.nz>

*The 2008 International Counseling Psychology Conference* in Chicago, Illinois

5-9 March 2008

Email: Linda Forrest

forrestl@uoregon.edu

or Laura Palmer

palmerla@shu.edu

*Unite for Sight Fifth Annual International Health Conference: Building Global Health for Today and Tomorrow* at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA

12-13 April 2008

<http://www.uniteforsight.org/conference/2008>

*2nd International Conference on Community Psychology: Building Participative, Empowering and Diverse Communities (Visioning Community Psychology in a World-Wide Perspective)* in Lisbon, Portugal.

4-6 June 2008

Call for proposals now

Email: Associate Professor José Ornelas

jose.ornelas@2iccp.com

<http://www.2iccp.com>

<http://www.2iccp.com>

*22<sup>nd</sup> Global Conference of the International Peace Research Association: Building Sustainable Futures: Enacting Peace and Development* in Leuven, Belgium.

15-19 July 2008

<http://www.ipra2008.org>



*Subjectivity International Conference in Critical Psychology, Cultural Studies and Social Theory* at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom.  
27-29 June 2008  
Call for papers now  
Email: [subjectivity@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:subjectivity@cardiff.ac.uk)  
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/subjectivity>

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Thanks to everybody who forwarded the information on the conferences above. Please continue to send in information on conferences and events for inclusion in [LINKS](#).

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## APS College of Community Psychologists

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### Changes to the ECU Postgraduate Psychology Program

**Amiee-Jade Pereira**  
WA Branch APS College of Community Psychologists Student Rep.  
**Anne Sibel**  
APS College of Community Psychologists National Student Rep.  
**Dawn Darlaston-Jones**  
**Lauren Breen**

In August 2007, Associate Professor Craig Speelman, the Head of Edith Cowan University's School of Psychology, announced the re-structuring of the School's Postgraduate Psychology program. From Semester 1, 2008, the Master of Community Psychology will no longer be offered. Instead, there will be a single Masters stream in Clinical Psychology. Following the completion of the two year Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology), students will be able to choose to complete a third year of study in either Clinical, Forensic or Community Psychology, from which they will graduate with a Professional Doctorate degree.

In a letter to the students, Associate Professor Speelman presented the change in the Postgraduate Psychology Program as an "opportunity (for students) to obtain the highest Medicare rebate whilst still having the ability to specialize in one of the three areas offered at ECU: Clinical, Forensic or Community Psychology".

As the School is currently developing the course, the course content is unknown. Furthermore, it is not yet known how the course will fit with the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and the Australian Psychological Society's College of Community Psychologists' regulations. APAC is responsible for setting the standards for the accreditation of psychology courses in Australia and the College determines whether or not courses meet the specific requirements of community psychology as a specialisation.

The School of Psychology is also considering developing a bridging course for psychologists who have completed a Master of Psychology in a field other than Clinical Psychology and have completed a research project that could be framed as 'clinical'. This would enable psychologists from other specialisations to obtain the higher Medicare rebate.

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### WA Branch News

**Anne Sibel**  
APS College of Community Psychologists  
Acting Chair, WA Branch.

At our recent Annual General Meeting the WA Branch of the College of Community Psychologists reluctantly accepted the resignation of Dawn Darlaston-Jones from the position of Chair. Dawn's passion for community psychology has directed her very considerable contribution to the College both at the state and national levels, and we thank her for all of her time and effort. We will miss her guidance and leadership. I have accepted the interim position as Acting Chair of the WA Branch.

Reviewing the year, 2007 has been one of mixed achievements for the WA Branch. On a positive note, Lizzie Finn was the well-deserved recipient of the 2007 Robin Winkler award. Congratulations Lizzie from all of us! We were also pleased that our student subsidy initiative was taken up by 7 ECU students who are now members of the APS and the College. Much of this success is due to the excellent efforts of our Student Representative "AJ" Pereira, and the fundraising efforts of Neil Drew's fabulous band.

However these achievements have been overshadowed by threats to the future of the College of Community Psychologists as a result of the interaction of the following issues. Recent changes to Medicare funding have resulted in a focus on clinical psychology training and practice to the detriment of other areas of

psychology. Additionally, the membership of the College of Community Psychologists has continued to decline despite concerted efforts such as Grace Pretty's article in the last issue of **LINKS**. In addition to financial viability, the APS rationale for the College to exist is its source of qualified Full Members, and the resources of members to fill the roles of managing the College. Our numbers have been low for a number of years; we currently have fewer than 80 members, few of whom are willing to take on the management roles of the College. Further, there are fewer students entering the Post Graduate Community Psychology courses at ECU and VU. And finally, as discussed in another article in this edition of **LINKS**, ECU is restructuring its post graduate courses in psychology and will no longer offer a Masters degree in community psychology. The change in course structure could potentially impact on the number of future graduates eligible for membership of the College of Community Psychologists.

The cumulative impact of these issues has serious implications for the viability of the College. Although membership of the College and CP student numbers have been low for a number of years, we have remained active, as evidenced in the success of the regular Trans Tasman Community Psychology Conferences and our internationally recognized journal, the Australian Community Psychologist. Now, however, the additional issues of the change in course structures and the influence of the Medicare funding place the future of the College in jeopardy.

The National Committee of the College will hold its AGM and a separate face-to-face meeting in Perth during the second week in December to consider these issues. The outcomes of these meetings will be reported in the next issue of **LINKS**.

On behalf of the WA branch we wish you all a peaceful and safe holiday season.

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## Issues Facing the APS Community College

**Heather Gridley**

**In context of discussions from the  
National College of Community Psychologists  
Committee**

The APS College of Community Psychologists has faced many challenges over the years since it began life as the Board of Community Psychologists in 1983. We are now facing another series of challenges that require us to do some serious stock-taking and

collective soul-searching.

The advent of Medicare rebates for psychological services has been a milestone in the public recognition of the profession's potential contribution to the mental health and wellbeing of individuals via direct service provision, particularly in clinical psychology. However the very success of the Medicare initiative has made other forms of psychological practice less visible, and specialisations such as community organisational, educational and health psychology, and even clinical neuropsychology, are struggling as a result in different ways.

Added to this challenge is the increasing pressure on universities to charge fees for postgraduate programs, and to cover their costs – a virtually impossible task with such labour-intensive components as thesis supervision and practicum placements. The availability of Commonwealth-supported places for some courses and not others has driven changes in demand trends, although this will be eased somewhat by the 2007 Federal Budget's expansion of funding to most specialist areas (including community psychology). The development of college competencies and guidelines for dual doctorate programs has been a drawn-out process that has served to highlight the wide philosophical differences as well as the fundamental overlap between the nine APS colleges. The evolution of APS structures in regard to specialist practice means that there is a symbiotic relationship between colleges and university courses – no college can exist if there are not corresponding accredited postgraduate programs, and no programs can exist outside the umbrella of a specialist college (which is why there is no such thing as a Masters in Social Psychology or Coaching Psychology in Australia, and no College of Environmental Psychologists).

The current situation underlines the fragility of a specialisation that relies on just two programs (Edith Cowan and Victoria Universities) for its supply of new graduates and for its ongoing status as a college (although we are not the only college in this position, and the demise of some other specialist programs has been relatively more dramatic).

Finally, PD requirements continue to affect college membership numbers, as a proportion either drop out altogether, or change from full membership to affiliate, each time a new two-year cycle is completed and the points are tallied. From a membership of around 250 ten years ago, the Community College now has a membership of around 90 and falling, with about half of that number made up of associate, affiliate and student members. To date only 30 of the College's 48 full

members have completed the PD requirements for the last cycle. There are also many eligible psychologists and graduates who for various reasons have not taken up College membership.

The National Executive believes that the Community College has a number of strengths that serve it well in times of crisis. We are used to operating in survival mode, and have managed to maintain APS specialist college status since 1983. We have maintained two active state sections, and strong internal collaborative relationships across at least four states. We have a thriving journal of international standing, and the Trans-Tasman conferences and associated international links continue to be well supported. And our graduates are eminently employable.

In addition, there are similar challenges facing all non-clinical colleges, and the time is fast approaching when the APS might need to rethink its policies on specialist practice, course accreditation, the distinction between colleges and interest groups (which does not exist in the APA/USA) and so forth. If it comes to pass that we are the first college to buckle under the current pressures, we almost certainly won't be the last. And perhaps the more important question is how to ensure that the values, competencies and unique contributions of community psychology are not lost to the wider Australian and global community, whether or not there is a place for the field within an increasingly narrowly defined psychology discipline and profession.

At the Annual General Meeting of the College in Fremantle on December 13<sup>th</sup>, a motion will be considered that proposes that **the College be restructured as an APS Interest Group**. We would also like to hear from non-College (or non-APS) members on the current state of Australian community psychology. *Given the APS is the host organisation that provides resources for CP organisation, communication, conferences, etc, what would you suggest as a possible alternative funding body?*

Comments can be emailed by Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December to Grace Pretty: [pretty@usq.edu.au](mailto:pretty@usq.edu.au)

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## Australian Community Psychologist \ LINK

The latest of Australian Community Psychologist is now available on-line at:

<http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/ccom/publications>

Happy reading! Remember that your comments and responses are very welcome and we hope that this issue might generate a series of papers challenging or contesting or supporting what has been included in this issue!

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## Useful Contact Details

### WA Community College Committee Contacts

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### APS College of Community Psychologist website:

<http://www.psychology.org.au/units/colleges/community/>

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### Comm. Psych: Australian Based Community Psychology e-discussion List

To Subscribe/Unsubscribe to the Comm. Psych List:

Send the following in an email to

[listproc@info.curtin.edu.au](mailto:listproc@info.curtin.edu.au)

Make sure that there are no automatic signatures on the bottom of your email and a few lines after the text in the email.

The only way to subscribe to the list:

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### **COMMUNITYPSYCHUK: UK Based Community Psychology e-discussion List**

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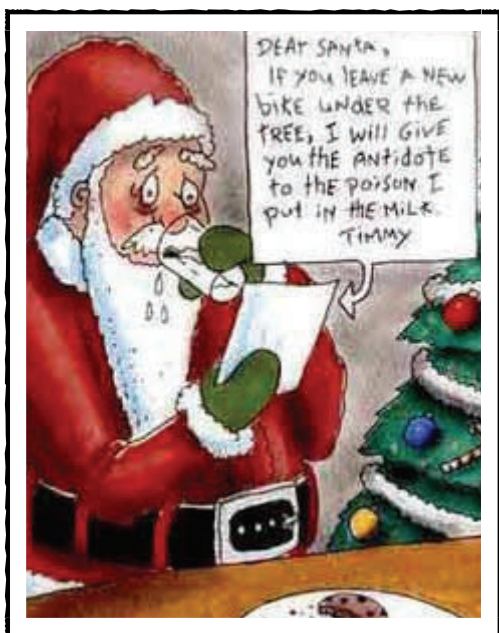
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MERRY  
CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
DELIGHTFULL  
NEW YEAR!!!**

