



Australian Association of Relationship Counsellors
[AARC] Inc

QUEENSLAND NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2007

FROM OUR PRESIDENT DESK

Dear Colleagues,

Every time I sit down to write one of these columns I wonder what will be meaningful to you the Queensland members of AARC. I wonder what it is that makes AARC significant to members and why people continue to belong to this association. I know why I do, but I'm not always sure why others do. I hope that it is because many of you share my passion for relationship work and believe it is worth defining as a specialist field in the broad psychotherapeutic arena. I think it is a symptom of life in a fast paced world that people are happy to belong to an association without needing to be actively involved for some members simply knowing the association stands behind them is enough. I cannot help but wonder if there is more we could be doing to provide services to our members?

In the past couple of years we have been running workshops on a variety of relationship counselling based topics with reasonable attendance at most. I have attended all of these and been very happy with the level of skill and quality of the presenters, and hope to continue to provide these opportunities for professional development to our members at a very reasonable cost. I would really like to hear some feedback from people not attending workshops as to what other topics they might find interesting.

We will see the inaugural lunch meeting of the Queensland branch in August. I do hope that people will attend to contribute to meaningful and lively discussion of practice and professional topics. These meetings will be similar to the Friday evening meetings held a few years ago and will provide a less formal opportunity to meet and talk with like minded colleagues. We will also be hosting the AARC National Symposium in Queensland in 2009 and are already working towards providing quality workshops and addresses with a focus on relationship work. If you have any thoughts or ideas about workshops or other facets of the symposium please forward these to one of our committee members. I am sure that somewhere amongst these offerings you will find something of value and interest.

The state committee is charged with the management of issues pertaining to Queensland members. We have discussed at length reintroducing an association advert in the yellow pages with the option for clinical members to pay a portion of the advert to have their name and contact details listed. We are eligible to claim a portion of the fee from the National Committee but would still incur significant cost at a branch level. It would be helpful to know if there are folks out there interested in doing this. Please get in touch with myself or William Diplock if you are.

Finally I would like to direct your attention to the letter that will arrive with your renewal notice. The proposal contained in the letter, if adopted, would significantly affect all levels of membership and our membership process. I urge you to read the notice and give the proposal your very careful consideration. This proposal will be voted on at the next AGM in Melbourne and is quite crucial to the future of the association. If you have any questions or comments after reading the proposal please feel free to contact myself or William Diplock our state representative.

Yours in counselling,
Sue Eaglesham

Highlights of President's letter

Inaugural lunch meeting for AARC Members

AARC Symposium Queensland 2009

Yellow Page advert.

Newsletter Contents:

- President's Report
- Newsletter Guidelines
- Workshop Review
- Symposium Date claimer
- AARC Lunch meeting

Queensland News – Guidelines for Articles and Reviews

I have included these guidelines again, in the hope it may prompt some of our members to consider contributing to the newsletter, sharing with us all your passion or expertise in your field.

We strongly encourage members to contribute to the Queensland News and would like to offer the following guidelines:

Feature articles need to be between 500 - 1200 words in length. They should be well written (edited for grammatical and spelling errors), thought provoking, challenging and maintain a focus on relationship in some form. We welcome articles that are practice focussed and remind you to get written permission from clients before writing up case studies or anecdotes.

Book reviews focussed on relationships or relationship counselling are also suitable for inclusion and need to be approximately 500 – 750 words. Reviews should consist of: a thorough and fair description of the book structure and content; a short description of the authors; a statement of the apparent aims of the author in writing the book; an evaluation of how well they have achieved these aims; an outline of previous publications and the contributions of these to the field; an assessment of the contribution this book makes to the field; an assessment of who the book would be useful for; and any other relevant comments.

Film reviews will be considered as long as they are relevant to the practice of relationship counselling or help practitioners to think about relationships and their practice.

If you would like to make or discuss making a contribution with me please email me at:

gppassmore@australiaonline.net.au

Or phone [07] 38498168

Pamela Passmore [Editor]

A Review on a Workshop presented by Eric Hudson called Men and Relationships by Naomi Blake

his two day workshop was excellent. Eric took us on a journey to understand more about both men and their relationships, and the counsellor and their relationship with male clients, starting with an excellent video showing the best and worst of Aussie mateship.

Over the two days we developed our own framework for working with men. We talked a lot about the stereotypes of men held by society and counsellors – and how men are socialised into a narrow and restrictive model of masculinity. As an example, we looked at 4 main rules for men:

Be a "Sturdy Oak" and always stay strong

The Big Wheel" – status symbols

Give 'em hell" – don't back down and show them who's boss; solve your problems by showing you're not a woose

No sissy stuff" – don't be a girl

We explored the impact of these and other men's rules. In Eric's experience, most men want to reject them, but are constantly re-invited back into them in order to feel accepted.

As a group we explored the therapeutic conversations to have; such as "what is it like to be a man in this current climate?" We talked about what it would be like to be a client in an area where men may not feel competent, and the need for counsellors to normalise any nervousness.

Eric emphasised that in his framework, men do have emotions and they are an important part of their lives. The counsellor's role is to find a way of connecting with them. He suggested we try and understand the ethics of men by listening carefully and drawing out what they want (rather than hounding them into taking responsibility). Don't ask "how does it feel?" – rather, ask "what's it like for you?" Gently move from the cognitive to the affective.

He suggested we help men to understand their own importance for themselves, and that listening *is* fixing. And to always remember that men are essentially gentle, loving, sensitive and vulnerable.

Over the two days, Eric really helped me look at my own practice. He gave practical advice such as skills and strategies for working with men. And he gently challenged us to look at our assumptions and habits around working with men, and develop a new framework with far less judgement and much more curiosity.

MEMBERSHIP

New Members are welcomed by AARC and we ask you direct your enquiries to our membership Secretary, June Lynch Ph. 33560732.

FUN, FINE FOOD & FELLOWSHIP by Eva Canning

Seven AARC colleagues met at The Continental Café in New Farm on Friday 10th August for the first Brisbane networking and professional development lunch. The two hour timeslot allowed colleagues to meet in a relaxed setting for a seriously delicious lunch and discussion of clinical experiences around a topic of the day – on this occasion *First Sessions*.

It was thought that looking after one's own comfort zone in the role of therapist was also helpful in creating an environment where clients may also feel comfortable, not intimidated and first session anxieties could be contained. Subtle differences were acknowledged between private practice and organisational settings, individual clients versus couples, the influences of climate and culture, city and country.

Some clients present with a sense of urgency, wanting to be given something. The therapist's subsequent transference to also want to strive to achieve something quickly can then block the process. A discipline of deliberately pulling back - listening and waiting – slowing down to attend more carefully can then provide a good basis for what the client is there for.

An increasing complexity was noticed in some couples work where addictions and depression can be part of the presentation, raising important clinical decisions about working with the couple dynamic.

Consensus of the group from this first gathering was one of fun, feasting and the true value of sharing clinical experience and support. A date and topic for the next session was set – see notice below. All AARC members, associates, supervisees and colleagues welcome. Please RSVP to eva.canning@bigpond.com for catering numbers if you are able to attend.

NEXT AARC LUNCH MEETING BRISBANE

Following the popular initial Clinical Discussion over delicious lunch, wine and coffee, the next date has been set – put in your diary now and don't miss out!

Date: Friday 26th October 2007

Time: 12.00 – 2.00 pm

Place: Continental Café – private room - 21 Barker Street, New Farm, Qld.

Topic: **“Working with Couples vs Individuals– Exploring the Differences”**

Members, associates and colleagues are cordially invited to join in warm, friendly and stimulating conversation around couple therapy topics over lunch at the Continental Café: www.continentalcafe.com.au

RSVP to Eva please, for restaurant booking numbers

Enquiries welcome: eva.canning@bigpond.com

Phone: (02) 6684 5213

DATE CLAIMERS

SYMPOSIUM 2009

Queensland will host the National symposium in 2009.

If you have any thoughts or ideas about workshops please forward them to one of the committee members.

AGM MEETING

9th November 2007

Luncheon

Time: 12.00 noon

RSVP: Sue Eaglesham [07] 34107085

CONTACT AARC Inc.

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