



MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 80 July 2022

This edition

MHYFVic Annual General Meeting

Resources for natural disasters

Time to listen, time to speak.

Tribute to Jennifer Luntz.

Our Website

MHYFVic ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Although the 2021 MHYFVic Annual General Meeting had to be held as an on-line Zoom meeting, we are glad to say that this year's AGM will be again held at **Bleak House Hotel**, Beaconsfield Parade (corner of Victoria St), Albert Park, followed by an after-dinner presentation by James Wood-Bradley, Coordinator of Fire-CAP, Fire Rescue Victoria:

"The Firelighting Consequences Awareness Program (Fire-CAP): Risk-taking and mental health for children and youth"

The history, aims and methods of this best practice community program will be outlined and discussed

The AGM will be on Thursday 18th August at 7pm. Booking and pre-payment of dinner is essential. Details on the TryBooking website: <https://www.trybooking.com/CAWAH>



News from Emerging Minds. Newsletter 16 May 2022

Resources to support children and families during a natural disaster

The last two years have seen many natural disasters and traumatic events, from bushfires to floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Natural disasters and traumatic events are frightening for everyone involved, and children are particularly vulnerable to trauma in highly stressful situations. But, there are actions that we can all take to support children, parents and families and help minimise this impact.

Our Community Trauma Toolkit is an extensive resource designed specifically for adults and services to support the mental health of infants and children through the different stages of a disaster or traumatic event. The steps outlined will help you support children's resilience, understand what you can expect at different stages of disaster recovery, and how to recognise the signs if a child is struggling.

The toolkit can be accessed through the website emergingminds.com.au

The toolkit covers six sections for:

- Health and social services practitioners
- First Responders
- Community Leaders

- Educators
- General Practitioners
- Parents and Caregivers

Each of the sections contain short articles, factsheets and videos covering topics relevant to that group. For example, the section for Health and social services practitioners has 52 such items for supporting children immediately and longer term in a variety of different disaster situation.

Other items that may be of interest to readers can be accessed through the Emerging Minds website.

Newsletters 16 May & 30 June 2022

Resources to support work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Online course supporting children who disclose trauma.

Podcast about engaging children in “naming and framing the problem”.

Time to listen, time to speak

Jo Grimwade

The State of Victoria has embarked on an endeavor of reconciliation with the First Nations’ Peoples of the region. It is a truth-telling commission not dissimilar to that which was conducted in South Africa. Truth-telling has a long tradition and has long been sought by Aboriginal Australians: wrongs need acknowledgement, communities need healing, reconciliation needs to be fostered, and further abuses need to be prevented. These are social goals, but what happens psychologically?

How does truth-telling help? What is the mechanism by which description of atrocity and abuse lead to reconciliation? After all, abuse stories are usually accompanied with re-traumatization.

Those who worked with victims of systemic child abuse who gave evidence to private sessions of the recent Royal Commission will know that the circumstances of the truth-telling were very important. The witness needed to feel safe and needed to feel heard, as this was something that they had endured in silence and in deep shame. This is part of the answer to the above questions, but re-traumatization did occur and, for my clients who gave evidence, it took quite some months for the witness to recover from the trauma of truth-telling.

The first case before the Yoorrook Justice *Commission* was that of Uncle Jack Charles: actor and celebrity cat burglar. He was removed (stolen) as a young child and then placed in institutions where he was abused by staff and other residents. Uncle Jack has made a performance of his autobiography, telling of all sorts of abuse in an inspiring monologue of recovery. Clearly, he feels safe to tell his story over and over and he feels he will be heard. But he is a celebrity who has turned his suffering into inspiration for others. This applies to very few First Nations’ people. His leadership is meritorious in setting the agenda and providing the tone. But his is not a general case.

Victims of abuse feel shame. There is shame about the events that are unspeakable and beyond hearing for many a listener. Then there is shame for not speaking up: for lacking in courage and, for not protecting others, when speaking up might have saved others. Then there is the shame of accusing others and blaming others. All this needs to be thought about in order to appear before a truth-telling commission.

Behind this are two complementary processes: directing of blame away from the witness and regaining of pride by the witness. The witness stands up and says what happened. There is no discrediting of what is said. As truth flows, the guilt of others and of systems emerges; not by accusation but in the shadow of the truth-telling.

Complementarily, the witness takes heart from speaking. Shame lifts as pride in what has been achieved in the now, and in the life despite adversity, also emerges. The witness experiences being heard and leaves with the burden of shame lessened and pride in the telling is in its place. Pride in self that has been lost needs to be re-gained. This is likely to be an iterative process; it is not an all or none healing event when one speaks finally about the shame.

In one sense, the telling is more important than the truth for the witness. But in what is said, the society is held accountable for the crimes. The psychological mechanism is complex, but the process is straightforward and robust to allow for the witness's distress to be subdued before the public performance of casting out shame and finding pride.

Almost as a side product to the performance is the documentation of past crimes by people and systems; and the creation of the possibility of learning by all members of the society; and the opening up of the society to real compensation and real reconciliation.

Let us all listen to what is said and participate in the much-needed process of reconciliation.

Jolyon Grimwade,

Clinical Psychologist, *Change Consultations*

**TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER LUNTZ,
SOCIAL WORKER:
VALUED COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND
Vice-President of Mental Health for the
Young and their Families: Victorian Group
*who passed away on the 27th June 2022***

Mental health professionals in the developmental field who have been honoured to work with Jenny Luntz recognise her firm, enduring commitment to understanding and improving conditions for disadvantaged children, adolescents and families in society, both here in Australia and around the world. Her energetic dedication to her profession of Social Work has been unswerving and her approach inclusive and integrative.

Born and bred in South Africa, Jenny trained as a Social Worker at The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, graduating in 1962. Her early career saw her gain diverse and wide experience of society and the potential role of Social Work. In South Africa, within the Child Welfare Society and the Cripples' Care Association, she worked against the evil impacts of apartheid. After migration to Australia with her husband Harold in 1965, and settlement in Melbourne, Jenny joined the Victorian Society for Crippled Children and Adults, followed by Mt Royal Special Hospital for the Aged, Doncare (Doncaster Community Care and Counselling Centre), and later the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

Jenny thus established a broad professional base. During her early years in Melbourne, her two children were born, and then in 1977, she was appointed to the part-time position of Social Worker/ Community Team Leader at the public mental health system's Observatory Clinic. This clinic was forerunner of South Eastern Child and Family Centre and then Alfred Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), now known as the Alfred

Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS).

Soon after commencing in child and adolescent mental health, Jenny undertook the Master of Social Work at La Trobe University, completing in 1983. Her thesis was recognised as breaking new ground in the application of Social Exchange Theory to the consultation process in Social Work, and two articles in peer-reviewed journals resulted from this work (2004, 2005). Jenny had already contributed part-time to academia in Social Work teaching at the Philip Institute (now part of RMIT University); subsequent to Masters graduation, she was taken on board by the Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and by Monash University and The University of Melbourne, to deliver supervision and teaching in secondary consultation and child psychology within Child and Adolescent Psychiatry training in Victoria.

During her years within the public child and adolescent system, Jenny worked tirelessly to improve practices. From Observatory Clinic to Alfred CYMHS, this particular service has pioneered innovations, especially so during Jenny's time there, under the direction of Dr Allan Mawdsley. Jenny herself brought a very strong community perspective to the service through its various iterations, as well as to the wider social systems of Victoria relevant to child and adolescent mental health. Her vision was broadened further by experiences in the UK when, accompanying her husband on sabbatical, she had opportunities to pursue social work with the Oxfordshire County Council, training in Group Psychotherapy at the Institute of Social Analysis and several clinical courses at the Tavistock Clinic's Adolescent Department.

Highly active voluntary community involvement followed formal retirement in 2005. Jenny had already, in 2000, helped to

found the professional-consumer collaborative advocacy organisation Mental Health for the Young and their Families: Victorian Group (MHYF Vic). Jenny has been Vice-President of MHYF Vic from 2014 to 2022. Before that, she represented Victoria from 2005 to 2013 on the Board of MHYF Vic's national counterpart, the Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association, now re-developed and known as Emerging Minds. Both organisations have been enriched by Jenny's imaginative and critical thinking in the advocacy space.

Jenny is recognised as a Social Worker and mental health professional of high excellence.

Whether in casework consultation, in community collaboration and problem-solving or in complex policy development, Jenny's empathy and fine analytic skills combined to produce creative outcomes for people. At the Observatory Clinic, the multidisciplinary Community Team had been established as an initiative of the Whitlam Government to develop modes of mental health service delivery in community as well as Clinic-based settings. Under Jenny's leadership, the team continued to explore a range of collaborative outreach programs. In particular, skills in mental health consultation were identified as central. International literature was appraised, for example evaluating the relevance to local professional, legal and social contexts of Caplan's pioneering USA work in this area. The first Mental Health Consultation Workshop was presented and well received in 1978. This Workshop continued to be a regular part of the educational programs offered at South Eastern and then Alfred CAMHS. As part of this work, Jenny was a strong leader among child and family service representatives in the south-eastern region of Melbourne, stimulating cooperative and expanded service provision to the region's families.

Always forward and outward looking, Jenny was keen to foster collaborative working relationships with others working in related fields. Her focus upon children of parents suffering mental illness is a good example of this. She began by presenting a workshop in the area, working with colleagues from mental health services across the lifespan. Then, in 1993, Jenny was awarded a Creswick Foundation Fellowship in Family Relationships and Child Development, to visit key programs in the USA. She wrote about the knowledge gained, thus urging relevant service development and delivery, which was hailed as significant from Kalgoorlie to Hong Kong. Her advocacy role in this area in Australia is documented in the book "Children of Parents with Mental Illness 2: Personal and Clinical Perspectives" (ACER, Melb, 2004), edited by Dr Vicki Cowling, to which Jenny also contributed.

Another area of specialisation for Jenny was that of mental health services for families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and yet another was methods for collaboration across government and non-government services around children or adolescents with multiple and complex needs. Jenny led major investigative community projects in these areas for the Victorian Health Department and authored several significant reports with practical recommendations.

With changes in the organisation of clinical services at Alfred CAMHS, Jenny took on a small clinical case load, and demonstrated how open she was to exploring new skills. When it came to developing the role of the Carer Consultant in child and adolescent mental health services across the State, and asking for the voice of parents and carers concerning improvements in service delivery, Jenny came to the fore once again. She was

instrumental in supporting parents take on such roles in Victoria.

Her organisational support, both formal and informal, for colleagues of all disciplines has been a hallmark of Jenny's work. She played major roles in the Victorian Coalition of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Professionals from the late 1980s to 2000, especially in assisting to organise conferences at state and national levels, and in bringing together multidisciplinary professional groups and consumers in Symposia and Workshop events, including international events. It was this collaborative groundwork that resulted in the formation of MHYF Vic as a community organisation. Distinguished by her multidisciplinary and multicultural work, Jenny was also noted for her support and encouragement of younger Social Workers, who aspired to follow her example.

Throughout her career, Jenny's personal qualities of empathic concern for others, awareness of the centrality of relationships, directness in communicating, and high, enquiring and creative intelligence, shone through, guiding her approach at every turn. Underpinning all was her early learning in South Africa. Jenny never forgot where she came from. Her experiences in growing up, as well her Social Work training and ongoing experience, were crucial in shaping not just her professional values, but her life values. Jenny was passionate about social justice, advocacy for families and the empowerment of parents and the young. She was keen to see programs developed which made a real difference for vulnerable families, and particularly for their children. Jenny has made a truly significant contribution to Social Work and to child, adolescent and family mental health services in Australia.

We salute and thank her.

MHYFVic, June 2022

OUR UPDATED WEBSITE

After much thought our website has been significantly revised to give casual visitors immediate information about what we do and what we stand for, whilst at the same time allowing members to go straight to specific sections such as Projects or Newsletters or Events, without having to navigate past reams of information.

Now that the main revision has been implemented we are working on tasks of development of Projects to give us the evidence base for our advocacy. There are quite a few items under development at the present time which are not yet reflected in the website but over the next few months we expect to see a burgeoning of activity.

Visit us on **mhyfvic.org**

2022 MHYF Vic Committee

- * President : Jo Grimwade
- * Vice-President : Jenny Luntz
- * Past President: Allan Mawdsley
- * Secretary : Cecelia Winkelman
- * Treasurer/Memberships: Kaye Geoghegan
- * Projects Coordinator, Allan Mawdsley
- * WebMaster, Linda Purcell
- * Newsletter Editor, Allan Mawdsley
- * Youth Consumer Representative, vacant
- * Members without portfolio: Suzie Dean, Miriam Tisher, Celia Godfrey, Andrew Wake.