



MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 89 July 2024

This edition

2024 Annual General Meeting

Winston Rickards Memorial Oration

Artificial Intelligence in Psychotherapy

Our Website

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MHYFVic Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 22 August 2024 in the usual format of a brief business component, followed by dinner and an after-dinner speaker. All financial members are entitled to attend the business meeting and/or the after-dinner presentation free of charge, but the dinner at Pier Hotel, Port Melbourne, requires pre-paid booking.

The other difference, this year, is that the after-dinner presenter is YOU.

The Committee has had some Strategic Planning discussions and determined that our good work and lobbying for improvements in mental health services would be much enhanced if we changed our constitution to become a company limited by guarantee, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as a Health promotion charity, with recognition by the Taxation Department for 'Deductible Gift Recipient'

status. This change would show clear evidence of high corporate governance standards closely monitored by government authorities, which is important when making public political and social representations.

The Strategic Planning by the committee looked at our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Our conclusions will be summarised after dinner, including our plans to develop our network of like-minded organizations to enhance our advocacy role. This is where YOU come in. YOU need to tell us how we can improve our plans.

Another dimension of strategic planning that we have not yet covered is the PEST analysis - the Political, Environmental, Social and Technological dimensions of our work. We can ask the questions and you can give us some answers (or at least, your opinions). Our members have a lot to contribute, and we really want you to take part.

<https://www.trybooking.com/CTSTJ>



The Thirteenth Winston Rickards Memorial Oration

A link to the video-recording of the recent WRMO is available to all financial members of MHYFVic and to everyone who subscribed to attend the Oration. If you are eligible but have not received the link, please contact us at admin@mhyfvic.org

Visitors to the Orations page of our website can read a pdf transcript of the Oration.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

There are many different forms of psychotherapy, each with its conceptual framework and methodology. Differing aims and objectives of various methods make comparisons difficult. However, in terms of reduction in severity of clinical symptoms, the outcomes of most methods have fairly similar results. This suggests that, notwithstanding the different methodologies, there are some commonalities that produce the improvement. What are they? How can we enhance them for maximum therapeutic effect?

My conceptualisation is that a trusting relationship is established between therapist and patient in which the patient can safely replace maladaptive behaviours by more adaptive behaviours. In this context “behaviours” includes thoughts, feelings and social interactions. Some forms allow gradually increasing self-awareness to resolve resistances, including ones that are unconscious, whilst others work immediately on what is conscious. In all of the therapies it is the patient who brings about the change, facilitated by the therapist. The role of the therapist is to help the patient realize what must change and support them in the process of change. The process of change begins with the assessment but mainly takes place outside the sessions.

This conceptualisation abets assessment, case formulation, treatment planning and case management. Formulation involves defining the problems and the factors that set the stage for them, what causes them to emerge, and what maintains them. Treatment planning involves mutual agreement between therapist and patient as to what needs to change and how it could be done. Case management involves the arrangements that are put in place to enable the treatment plan to be done.

Clearly, different therapists approach these tasks in different ways, depending upon their preferred style of therapy. Many involve setting tasks to be done on a timetable. Writing a journal, keeping a mood diary, counting occurrences, taking medication and remembering to do certain tasks are examples that might be discussed at sessions. Traditionally, successes and failures at these tasks occupy time at appointment sessions, including thinking about resistances and reviewing the tasks. Various strategies may be implemented to improve success rates.

One new approach uses modern technology. A smart phone application (app) has been developed, called AN TSA. It provides therapists with an automated function to remind patients when their task is due or to record their responses. It also offers psychoeducational materials, such as videos, and provides questionnaires to assist the clinician. In the interval between appointments, another option of the app is to offer an opportunity for the patient to talk about issues of concern with jAlmee, an artificial intelligence interactive responder that is designed to answer empathically in line with the therapeutic goals and professional standards of the therapist. The recorded interactions are then available for further discussion at subsequent appointments.

The creator of this new approach is Sally-Anne McCormack, a clinical psychologist, who developed the system in order to maintain an ongoing connection even during intervals when the therapist is unavailable.

In our next newsletter I plan to explore with Sally-Anne how patients react to the app in parallel with their reactions with the therapist.

Allan Mawdsley.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SOCIAL WORK IN HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

NAVIGATING A CHANGING WORLD:

EMPOWERING MINDS AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

The **10th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health** (10th ICSWHMH) will be held from **Tuesday 19 – Friday 22 November 2024** in Melbourne. This hybrid event will bring together more than **600+ national and international delegates** from across the globe.

The Conference aspires to cultivate strong connections among social workers and professional associations worldwide. AASW recognises the pivotal role of social workers and allied health professionals and, with a focus on a shared commitment to social work practice, social justice and human rights, this event is a unique opportunity for practitioners, academics, researchers, and students to come together in the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

The Conference will cover a breadth of topics, including mental health, private practice, child, youth & family services, disability management, leadership, family dynamics, domestic & gendered violence, counselling & therapy, aged care, child protection, addiction, alcohol, social justice & human rights &

equality, climate change, and sustainability, among others.

OUR UPDATED WEBSITE

Our website has been significantly revised to give casual visitors immediate information about what we do, 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.

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**

2024 MHYF Vic Committee

- * President : Jo Grimwade
- * Vice- 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, Liam O'Connor, Sarina Smale, Porpavai Kasianan, Michelle Morris, Kylie Cassar.