From the Editor

Welcome to the last edition of Neuropsychotherapy for 2015. This year has been a busy one for the modality of Neuropsychotherapy with exciting outcomes on project developments.

Neuropsychotherapy workshops

Neuropsychotherapy workshops were (again) very well attended across all venues in Australia and New Zealand. We are constantly encouraged by the very positive feedback from clinicians attending the workshops who report that since attending the Neuropsychotherapy trainings their counselling/clinical practices have benefitted. Many indicate a significant change about how they approach client issues and in managing/treating various pathologies. One of the key aspects seems to be a shift to a brain-based, bottom-up approach focussing on the neurobiological principles starting with the therapeutic alliance, safety and the basic needs of attachment, control and pleasure maximising/pain avoidance, towards developing a thriving interactive self.

This edition

In this edition we focus on an interview where we discuss the certificate training for practitioners in Clinical Neuropsychotherapy. We discuss the development, content and aims of the Certified Practitioner Training in Clinical Neuropsychotherapy.

Workshops 2016

The workshop schedule for 2016 is available online (www.mediros.com.au) as well as in this edition. Apart from the Certified Training to become a Clinical Neuropsychotherapy Practitioner, another new workshop on the neuroscience of Pain is also available in 2016 (Sydney and Brisbane). A workshop on the neuroscientific underpinnings of males who perpetrate violence and strategies for management will also run in 2016. This workshop will be presented in collaboration with Centacare Bathurst on 15 November 2016.

Research

We are currently involved in a number of neuroscience based research projects:

1. The BrainGro neuroscience based schools program
   This is a neuroscientific strength based whole school program for all learners. The first pilot studies have commenced in 2015.
2. A predictive analytics tool assessing resilience based on six neural activation domains. We are in the standardisation phase and will have the first edition available soon.
3. A brain-based assessment tool. A guided tool for clinicians and clients to assess presentation issues (pathology) and develop management strategies from a neural perspective.
5. A guide for clients and clinicians to manage the effects of natural disasters from a bottom-up neural perspective.
6. A guide for children to manage the effects of domestic violence and strengthening neural activation (patterns of approach) and resilience.
7. A policy for brain-based education for one of the Australian Education departments.
8. A neuroscience based program for male perpetrators of domestic violence.

Information about the progress of these research projects, publications, dissemination and availability will be announced via the website and the e-Journal.

I trust you will have a lovely festive season and a splendid New Year!

Pieter Rossouw
Mr Jonathan Wills (Mediros Registration Officer) interviews Dr. Pieter Rossouw about the new 3.5 day Certified Clinical Neuropsychotherapy Practitioner Training due to start in 2016 across Australia and in Bali.

JW  Why Certified Training? What is the difference between this 3.5 day training compared to the workshops? And what are the practical benefits of the 3.5 Day Neuropsychotherapy Practitioner Training?

PJR  I have been establishing Neuropsychotherapy workshops since 2009, particularly focused on applied brain-based therapies for Neuropsychotherapy in various domains. And since then just over ten thousand clinicians from all over the world have attended. And as we have progressed with the workshops, a constant need that has been identified by clinicians has been “How can I take the modality of Neuropsychotherapy to my clinical practice?” Hence the need that has emerged over the years has been to understand the baseline of neuroscience in terms of various pathologies, and understanding the neurobiological underpinnings. But the next big step is “How do I apply this?, How can I use this effectively when working with clients?” And this has over time pointed towards the development of skills based clinician training which focuses more on the modality of Neuropsychotherapy, rather than being familiar with the neurobiological principles. So the difference between the workshops and the new 3.5 certificate training is that the workshops were developed over time to provide a comprehensive understanding of the neurobiological underpinnings of pathology and specific presentations.

Six years ago I developed the first workshop by understanding the basis of how the brain develops, and one of the ‘Holy Grails’ in counselling and psychotherapy for many years has been how to understand memory, ‘What’s the neurobiological basis of memory?’ Because we are our memory systems - what we
remember is ‘who we are’, and when those memory systems change we become different. So understanding the neurobiology of memory is essential. And the flipside of this is when the brain gets compromised, that’s the essence of trauma. So the first workshop focuses on the developing brain, memory and trauma.

The second workshop that I’ve developed is a workshop focussing on the neurobiological underpinnings of pathology, particularly of a condition called anxiety, which is not the same as Anxiety Disorders. Anxiety is when the brain experiences a certain level of distress – different neural patterns are activated – patterns of avoidance, patterns of dysfunction, rather than patterns of wellness. That’s the onset of pathology. So the second workshop focuses on understanding anxiety in the brain.

The third workshop then focuses on one of the main pathologies of our time, which is depression - a very complex disorder from a neurobiological perspective to understand. Although a lot of people think about depression as something that everyone understands, the complexities are quite significant because it’s a high order dysfunction. It’s not a primary order dysfunction, which means it’s closely linked to how the brain develops systems of unwellness in association with the environment. Our environment plays a big role in unwellness, hence the focus on the neuroscience of depression.

And the fourth in depth workshop I’ve developed is one focussing on the interaction between ourselves, our environment and other people and that’s the neuroscience of relationships, the social brain. So those are the key four workshops.

Then I developed a few specialised workshops – understanding the adolescent brain, understanding the ageing brain, understating the brain and pain, and the latest one is a workshop on the neuroscience of domestic violence – so all of these are specialised workshops focussing on aspects of pathology or dysfunction, and understanding this from a neurobiological perspective.

Now we’re taking this into a totally new direction, one that looks in depth at the modality of Neuropsychotherapy as a clinical model and how to become skilled using this model in various domains of psychopathology, and apply it on a daily basis and hence the development of a Clinical Neuropsychotherapy Practitioner Certificate.

JW Great, well that was a very full answer. So I understand that the training will enable joining of the Association of Clinical Neuropsychotherapy, so what is required for a clinician to join the Association?

PJR Well the requirements are quite generic. Ideally, and it’s not a full pre-requisite though that may change in future, but ideally, a clinician will need to have attended at least one or more of the Neuropsychotherapy workshops, just to have a good understanding of the neurobiological basis of pathologies. So I would strongly encourage anyone who is interested in doing the Certificate to have attended at least one or more of the workshops, because the 3.5 day training will not focus that much on the principles of neurobiology, it will assume an understanding of this. It’s not compulsory, because some people will have a really good grounding, because of University studies etc. but ideally it is strongly suggested to complete one workshop, prior to undertaking the Certificate.

Secondly, a pre-requisite is that a clinician will need to be part of an existing professional association. A counselling association, a psychological association, to be registered within a professional body, as opposed to a layperson who is not a member of a professional organisation. So it is a Certificate that is only available for people who are already practitioners in a particular field. So those are the minimal requirements for this Certificate training.

We are in the final stages of establishing the Association of Clinical Neuropsychotherapy. This is the Association, which will oversee the registration process and will ensure that minimum standards are met, as well as ensuring ongoing professional development in this area.

JW How is the 3.5 day Certificate training different from the Mediros workshops in terms of presentation?

PJR Well the entire presentation will be quite different from the workshops, although the workshops, and people who have attended the workshops would know, are very interactive, there’s a lot of discussion and time to enhance learning rather than just listening to me talking for three and a half
days. Having said this, the focus in the Certificate training again is quite different because it’s a longer training period running over three and a half days, it offers greater opportunity for practical learning, as opposed to a one or two day workshop. So the focus really is on experiential learning. And the emphasis is on the modality of Neuropsychotherapy, there’s greater weight on how skills are applied in clinical settings, so there will be audio-visual resources where I demonstrate working with a client and how we facilitate outcomes with clients, and then using role plays as well as case discussions and interactive work. So the entire training is much more experiential focussed, rather than just theoretical or cognitive based learning.

JW   Is the Association for Clinical Neuropsychotherapy linked with other Associations or to any form of professional registration?

PJR   The Certificate training is part of a professional development process and hence the Association for Clinical Neuropsychotherapy is an association for already existing registered clinicians in different fields. So the training does not lead to a registration for a field of practice like counselling or psychotherapy more generally. But it’s a professional development process to enhance skills and to develop a particular set of skills in a particular modality.

JW   More generally, what is the purpose of the Association for Clinical Neuropsychotherapy?

PJR   The purpose of the Association is first of all to acknowledge people who are skilled in this specific field (Neuropsychotherapy). Second it is to develop a Register for clinicians who complete this Certificate training, which can be provided to referring doctors, NGOs and other institutions who would like to refer a client to a skilled clinician in the practice of Neuropsychotherapy. The Register will be accessible through the website [which is currently being developed]. Thirdly the purpose is to enhance professional development in the Neuropsychotherapy field, so there will be ongoing development and offering of training in this field. Fourth, will be to increase availability of peer support within the field so that clinicians are aware of who else works within the Neuropsychotherapy modality, who lives close by, so that peer support and peer supervision, peer group discussion can be facilitated. And finally to provide ongoing clinical supervision in this modality, when clinicians require this.

JW   What are the requirements for ongoing Registration and what the costs involved?

PJR   The requirements for ongoing registration will mean that a Register is maintained and updated, but the costs will be kept to a minimum. We do not see the Association in any way to be a commercial enterprise [it is a not for profit Association], so its purpose is for the members and for the benefit of the members. There has to be some minimum cost in order for funds to be available for our Registrar to maintain the Register and to work with members to promote the Association and its objectives, to collaborate and establish networks with other Associations. At this stage we envision a cost of about $50 per annum, (slightly less for Associates and Students), with a requirement of attending or completing at least one workshop or two online modules per annum through the Neuropsychotherapy Institute.

JW   And in relation to professional development, what is the link between the Neuropsychotherapy Institute and the Association of Clinical Neuropsychotherapy?

PJR   The link between the Institute and the Association and also for that matter the link with Mediros, is a professional link. Both Mediros and the Neuropsychotherapy Institute provide ongoing professional development training. The Institute provides training through online platforms and Mediros provides face-to-face training across Australia and the Asia Pacific region. So it’s two different platforms for Neuropsychotherapy training and both are acknowledged through the Association as training providers and in future there may be more training organisations that may be accredited as training members.

JW   So talking about costs and keeping costs low, if I was a Student could I still join the Association?

PJR   Yes absolutely. Students and clinicians can join the Association, without having attended any of the workshops (although to progress to Associate they will need to complete at least one work-
The cost for Student members will be low at $25 per annum, and they will then have free access to our e-Journal, (the Mediros e-Journal), as well as being included on the Register as Student members. So they will have access via the Register to other clinicians in the field to maximise their learning and be able to participate in the online training through the Institute.

**JW**  Will there be Associate members as well as full members?

**PJR**  Yes, there will be three membership levels. Full members will be those who have attended prior workshops and have attained the Certificate by fulfilling the requirements of the training. Associates members are those who have attended the workshops but not yet attended Certificate training or yet completed the assessment requirements (we expect the cost of Associate membership to be $35). Once assessment is completed and fulfilled they will become a full member, however if they are unable to complete the ongoing professional development requirement in a given year, they may drop down again to Associate member. And the third is Student membership, which in fact is not just for students, but for anyone who has not attended any workshops but who has completed at least one online professional development (PD) module through the Institute and who are interested in the resources, interested in discussions, and also wanting to receive the free eJournal (Student membership comes at the minimum fee of $25 per annum).

**JW**  So for the full membership there’s an assessment component where an essay needs to be completed, can you tell me more about that?

**PJR**  Yes, the purpose of the essay is not to make things hard, the purpose is to see to what extent a clinician has the capacity to apply some or a number of the principles that we discuss, explore and develop during the Certificate training, in a real life situation with one of their own clients. So clinicians will need to write up, in a non-scientific essay, describing what are the specific issues their client presents with, how did they address these in therapy, and demonstrate how they applied some of the skills they have learned in the Certificate training when working with their client. Very basic referencing will be required, (but it’s not a scientific paper). The chapters in my Neuropsychotherapy book provide a really good guide. The essay doesn’t need to be at the level of the chapters, but they are a helpful template that show how the principles can be applied in a practical way. There are sixteen chapters so plenty of guidance there.

**JW**  So the case studies in the book can be referred to in the essay? And would it be useful to have a copy of the book?

**PJR**  Absolutely, so clinicians can refer to the cases in their essays, “as in this particular case study for example, this is how I applied the tenets of ensuring safety, how I maintained the therapeutic alliance, or demonstrated how a bottom up approach was used, or this is how I focussed on attachment issues, or control issues etc.” The book will be part if the prescribed literature for the workshops and chapters of the book will be the key reading materials, because it provides us with the basis for the modality of Neuropsychotherapy.

**JW**  Now there’s also an aspect where you mentioned supervision earlier, how do I arrange for supervision once I have completed the training and presented the case study, is there a requirement for ongoing supervision?

**PJR**  The requirement for supervision for membership of the Association is limited, but it is important. We want to avoid the situation where a clinician changes their current supervision arrangements, however in order to ensure that clinicians maintain a good understanding of Neuropsychotherapy and it’s practical application, we’ve decided that there has to be at least one supervision session each year with an accredited Neuropsychotherapy Supervisor. We have a shortlist of Supervisors available, myself and a group of other senior clinicians in the country, and they will be available for supervision via telephone or Skype or in person. The cost would be the normal supervision fees and once a clinician has received supervision the Supervisor will provide a note to the Association indicating the requirement has been fulfilled (with minimal information due to confidentiality requirements), but just to confirm the ongoing membership requirement is met.

**JW**  So once I become a member of the Association of Clinical Neuropsychotherapy is there a website

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PJ: We've actually been quite surprised since we announced the Certificate training that the uptake is quite significant to the extent that some of the venues are almost booked out for next year. There will be training available next year in Perth (26-29 Oct), Adelaide (30 Nov-3 Dec), Melbourne (7-10 Sep), Sydney (8-11 Nov), and Brisbane (31 May-3 Jun). There is also training being run in beautiful Bali (13-16 Jun) and the uptake for Bali is high so it will definitely go ahead, and in future we will look at other possible venues, including Canberra, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore. So there are potentially other venues within Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

By other professional certification standards, I understand the cost of this Certificate training is quite reasonable, but it's still a significant cost at close to $1500. Can clinicians spread the cost of this training, do they have to pay in full straight away, or are there other options?

Yes clinicians can spread the cost - instalment payments are available, so you can pay a minimum deposit of $300 to secure your place at any of the venues being offered and then make instalment payments as you choose to finalise the fee. There's a discount for previous workshop attendees of course and the requirement is to have paid in full one calendar month prior to commencing your training. I'm really looking forward to the first Certificate training in Brisbane at the end of May next year. I'm also excited about engaging with clinicians and hopefully to improve their practical competency as the modality of Neuropsychotherapy grows and spreads through our communities.
Neuropsychotherapy

Recent findings in Neuroscience demonstrated the unique contribution of talking therapies to facilitate lasting changes in the brain. Neuropsychotherapy is the “language” used in the interaction between client and clinician in the process of restructuring the brain towards higher levels of functioning and well-being. It uses information from neuroscience to assist clients suffering from a wide range of biological, psychological and social challenges to apply strategies to shift unhelpful response patterns and activate patterns that enhance wellness – the shift from patterns of survival to patterns of thriving.

Neuropsychotherapy Workshops 2016

The Social Brain and the Neuroscience of Relationships
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 12 hours specialised training
Melbourne 10 & 11 March 2016
Royal Melbourne Hospital, Grattan Street, Parkville

The Ageing Brain and Neuropsychotherapy
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 6 hours specialised training
Sydney 29 April 2016
Portside Centre, Level 5, 207 Kent Street, Sydney
Melbourne 25 Nov 2016
Royal Melbourne Hospital, Grattan Street, Parkville

The Brain & Anxiety: Neurobiological Information as Psychotherapeutic Tool
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 12 hours specialised training
Brisbane 14 & 15 April 2016
RBW Hospital, Herston Rd, Herston, Brisbane

The Brain and Management of Pain
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 6 hours specialised training
Sydney 27 May 2018
Portside Centre, Level 5, 207 Kent Street, Sydney
Brisbane 18 Nov 2016
RBW Hospital, Herston Rd, Herston, Brisbane

Developing Brain and the Neuroscience of Memory and Trauma
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 12 hours specialised training
Brisbane 01 & 02 Sept 2016
RBW Hospital, Herston Rd, Herston, Brisbane

The Adolescent Brain – Utilizing Neurobiological Information to Enhance Mental Health and Learning,
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 12 hours specialised training
Melbourne 14 & 15 Jul 2016
Royal Melbourne Hospital, Grattan Street, Parkville
Sydney 28 & 29 Jul 2016
Portside Centre, Level 5, 207 Kent Street, Sydney

The Neuroscience of Depression: New opportunities for Effective Treatment
Continuing Professional Development Hours – 12 hours specialised training
Sydney 22 & 23 Sept 2016
Portside Centre, Level 5, 207 Kent Street, Sydney

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Neuropsychotherapy
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**Presenter:** Dr Pieter J Rossouw

Workshop attendance – 21 hours (3½ days). Certificate of attendance provided for 21 CPD points

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### VENUE AND DATE

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