

## **REPORT TO THE A.G.M. 2006**

### **ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

NZAP continues to enjoy a period of relative stability and tranquility with respect to ethical issues and concerns, notwithstanding the general state of ethical crisis in which our civilization has become accustomed to operate. We are scheduled to update our Code of Ethics in February 2007. In anticipation of this task, we hope to create some opportunities in 2006 to reflect together as an Association on the strengths and weaknesses of our present Code of Ethics. Gordon Hewitt has just completed a revision and clarification of the complaints procedure and flow chart and this is much appreciated.

Now that psychotherapy registration has finally gained full Ministry approval, the impact of registration on the future of psychotherapy and the future of NZAP will begin to be felt. We intend to develop close ties with the new Psychotherapy Registration Board as the Board takes up its parallel role of formalizing professional standards for registered psychotherapists. We do not know at this point how many NZAP psychotherapists the Ministry will appoint to the Board. If the Ministry elects to work collaboratively with psychotherapists (and, unfortunately, it is not required to do so), NZAP will be given time and opportunity to assist in the development of Board policy and procedures. However, we can anticipate that the registration process will also be influenced by non-NZAP psychotherapists, including some therapists who are disaffected with our Association, as well as by several powerful groups of non-psychotherapists who are highly invested in influencing the scope and direction of psychotherapy practice - psychologists, for example. It would seem timely for NZAP to constructively explore and hold our differences, to debate and articulate the core values of psychotherapy, and to describe how these values are brought to life and given practical force and meaning in our policies and procedures, ethical and admission requirements, etc. For a tiny profession like psychotherapy, to invite the State to regulate us is likely to remain a fraught and risky business. The more self-definition, clarity and consensus we have about the aims and values of psychotherapy, the better our chances of maintaining our self-determination as a profession.

One useful way of thinking about the registration process is to place it in the context of lifetime professional development. This continuum could be represented as follows:

1. Psychotherapy studies and initial training
2. Completion of formal training
3. Provisional registration as a psychotherapist and/or provisional membership in NZAP

4. Full registration as a psychotherapist
5. Full membership in NZAP
6. Qualification/readiness to supervise other psychotherapists
7. Master/Mistress practitioner
8. Winding down towards retirement, selective 'boutique' practice
9. Retirement/Death

Will both provisional psychotherapist registration and provisional membership in NZAP follow on fairly straightforwardly from completion of formal psychotherapy training? Will provisional registration and provisional membership require equivalent levels of psychotherapeutic competence (e.g. competent beginning practitioner) as well as equivalent levels of clinical experience - completion of, say, 200 therapy sessions, or 200 hours of supervised psychotherapy practice?

Will full registration as a practising psychotherapist require less expertise and experience than full membership in NZAP? Is 1000 hours of supervised psychotherapy practice a reasonable expectation for full registration as a psychotherapist? Is 1500 hours more appropriate for full NZAP membership? Should there be any minimum time requirement allotted for post-graduate professional development, such as 12 months in provisional status? Or should a practitioner be awarded full status as soon as they meet all criteria? While none of these questions is terribly consequential by itself, taken all together they begin to define our expectations of professional development and to determine where registration and NZAP interface, converge and compete. We intend to remain the professional body of choice for all registered psychotherapists and to actively pursue strategies of inclusiveness that ensure our future survival and relevance to the profession as a whole.

In addition to longstanding EPSC Committee members Roy Bowden (Wellington) Charlotte Daellenbach (Christchurch), Joan Dallaway (Taupo) and Lesley King (Auckland), Sue Joyce (Auckland) has agreed to join the committee. Sue brings a keen intelligence and a longstanding interest in philosophy and ethics to our group. Our committee also intends to maintain close ties with psychotherapy training organisations through our members: Margot Woods and Andrew Duncan (AUT) Ros Lewis and Marilyn Morgan (EIT) and Peter Hubbard (Psychosynthesis). Once the shape of registration becomes clearer, we will be in a better position to support students in their journey towards both registration and NZAP membership.

Jonathan Fay, Chair EPSC