



## **QPASTT Advocate Email News**

**March 2005**

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### **1. Insiders Viewpoint - from the Director**

Welcome to this edition of QPASTT's newsletter. This is the first newsletter for 2005 – a year which will be significant for us as it marks our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operating as a service agency. The history of QPASTT goes back much further than 1995 in fact, but it was in August 1995 that we officially opened for business. We anticipate the Annual General Meeting of 2005 will be held together with a great birthday celebration.

Our last AGM was held at the end of November 2004 and saw only one change to the Committee line up. We welcome Ms Judith Kamala to QPASTT's Committee for this year. The Committee is: Chair: Ian Mannion; Vice Chair: Danijel Kis; Secretary: Mary Denver and Treasurer: Rafael Pacheco. The Committee members are: Jeremy Butler, Keithia Wilson, Hassan Ghulam, Judith Kamala, Andrea Gibson and Margo Couldrey,

The priorities for this year will be looking at the office accommodation for QPASTT. It is unlikely that we will be able to be accommodated in the current two houses for much longer. The houses have been a beautiful home to us for the 7 years, but space is at a premium now and we are already cramped. We have increased our outreach work in Logan, Gold Coast and Toowoomba, but in order to fully support the work that is happening we will need more space within the next year.

The strategic vision set by the Management Committee two years ago included building better partnerships with other agencies and building our capacity to build communities. To this end Donata Rossi has devoted her position to both these strategies over the past year and this work will continue. We are delighted to be able to work in partnership with the Multicultural Development Association (MDA) to implement deliver a community development project with African communities funded by Multicultural Affairs Queensland over the next 3 years. John Diew, a valued member of our early intervention team will move to this project shortly.

### **2. Early Health Support Team**

Welcome to our latest newsletter, and more particularly, the Early Health Support Team column. It seems each time I write I am reporting on changes to the Team. This edition is no different, substantial staff changes have once again occurred as a result of increases in the Team's workload.

In December we bid farewell to Annie Hilton, her hard work and commitment had been very much appreciated by the Team and QPASTT. Unfortunately, Annie was forced to leave due to ill health. She is sorely missed. Sarah Healy joined the team to fill this position. Sarah joined us at a very busy time and was thrown right in the deep end, surpassing all expectations she has grasped the work with a passion and has quickly become a valued team member. Last month (March) we have welcomed three new staff members: Charito Hassell Llanos, who will be based in Logan, Edward Benjamin, based at the

Brisbane office and Jacob Gai Kuai who will be supporting proposed families. We warmly welcome these new staff members and feel confident they will also throw themselves into the work with both sensitivity and vigor.

The style of our work has changed substantially over recent months with large groups arriving to Brisbane. These groups have consisted of Ethiopians, Liberians and Burundians. Another group of Liberians are arriving in this month (April). Dealing with large groups (as well as arrival of the usual singles and families) has increased our workload substantially, thus the increase in staff levels. It has also required substantial input from the QIRCH Clinic.

Kristy, our Toowoomba based worker, continues to do a wonderful job in mainly working with proposed families and the development of health systems in Toowoomba. This is a very large responsibility as Toowoomba continues to receive substantial numbers of new arrivals (particularly proposed families arriving under a 202 visa category).

We of the Early Health Support Team are reluctantly preparing for the move of John Diew across to a new position in the agency. John's high performance level will be sorely missed within the team. However, we acknowledge that he will play a vital role as Community Development Worker for African Communities and Coordinator of the pilot of the 'Families in Cultural Transition' project, his new position here at QPASTT.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of QPASTT's tender for the 'new look' early intervention service which will begin in September. This will involve a consortium arrangement with other settlement services. We have been told by DIMIA that successful tender consortiums will be informed by the end of April. The next newsletter will inform readers of the outcome and will provide details of the structure of the service to be provided. The work of the Early Health Support Team continues to be interesting and demanding. Our clients are a pleasure to work with, their strength and capacity provides constant motivation.

*Carolyn Cox  
Team Leader*

### **3. Book Reviews**



#### **Mechanisms for the implementation of Minority**

This publication offers a comprehensive and critical overview of the political and legal mechanisms that are available at both European and international levels for the implementation of minority rights standards. Amongst the aspects covered in separate chapters are: the United Nations treaty monitoring bodies; the proceedings before the International Court of Justice; the Council of Europe's treaties and mechanisms (the European Court of Human Rights mechanism, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages); the OSCE political commitments and mechanisms in the human dimension, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the EU contribution to the protection of minorities and the prevention of discrimination. For each chapter, the authors discuss prospects for the future and provide practical guidance for minority rights practitioners. This work will be of interest to human rights scholars, students of international law and international relations, non-governmental organisations and other institutions involved in minority issues.

#### **Child sexual abuse in Europe (2005)**

Child sexual abuse and exploitation are significant problems in Europe today and it is estimated that between 10% and 20% of children are sexually assaulted during their childhood. There are many forms of abuse including incest, prostitution, pornography, date rape, peer sexual violence and institutional

sexual abuse, and all are considered abnormal sexual behaviour. Since the 1996 Stockholm World Congress considerable progress has been made in developing measures to combat the sexual abuse and exploitation of children but there is still a long way to go, particularly because the crime usually happens in private and victims are often threatened or sworn to secrecy.

Child sexual abuse in Europe offers a pan-European perspective on the issue, drawing on the rapidly growing evidence base and current policy. Individual country case studies highlight the difficulties facing Germany, Poland, Romania and the UK and key issues facing all countries are discussed. What known treatments are there to help prevent perpetrators from reoffending? How are cases dealt with in comparative legal processes? How can children and their family's best be helped therapeutically? All of these questions are addressed by the European researchers and practitioners who have contributed to this book, which will be of interest to parents, teachers, social workers and all those who are interested in seeing how children's rights can be protected.

#### **4. Hints & Tips 'Looking after Yourself' – Grief Loss and Mourning**

How does one grieve for what they have lost in life? Especially when it is not just one loss that would be hard enough. But when the losses are multiple, when loss is not only about loss of loved ones but of one's home, one's homeland, and in many ways oneself, the person you used to be before the war, before all this happened? How does one grieve this and if you do will it help anyway?

It is true that mourning hurts. It really hurts. Avoiding it and trying to make the most of the present may feel better in the short run but unfortunately this only keeps the loss alive and is not successful in the long term. What often causes ongoing problems is not so much the loss itself but not letting yourself feel it, talk about it and go through the whole process of mourning.

#### **What then does it mean to grieve, to mourn?**

To grieve you will need to allow yourself to let go allowing your emotions to surface. This can be quite scary. The emotions are usually big ones and can include fear, resentment, anger, despair, rage, confusion, guilt, feelings of abandonment and desertion and overwhelming sadness. It can feel as if you might break apart or that if you start it will never stop. But even though it might feel this way what usually happens is that there is a cycle, feelings surge up, are felt and then subside. This may happen again and again with different feelings coming up at different times or the same ones resurfacing but perhaps in a different way.

Often people talk about the stages of grief. They talk of denial of the loss when it is just too hard to let yourself know what has happened. Anger and outrage that such a thing could happen. Bargaining with God or someone for a return to how things were before. Disorganisation, feeling chaotic and shattered, and finally acceptance of the loss.

These stages do not happen in a linear way one after the other, rather, grief is like the seasons, it is cyclical. That does not mean that in grieving you are continually repeating the same thing, stuck in a never changing pattern. It is more that at different times as you go through your life, as you reach the different stages of your own life cycle, your grief for the losses of your life may resurface. You face another aspect of it, another level of it and come to know it and yourself in a deeper way.

It is when grieving is avoided that one can get stuck in the loss clinging to or longing for what is no longer there. There may be a fear that "if I enjoy life now, make a new life, I will move further and further away from what was once so dear to me." To live life then seems like a betrayal of the loved one lost, or it may be a refusal to accept that what was once there is no longer there for you. These are extremely painful feelings and can make the thought of mourning unbearable and undesirable.

Or, it may be that you turn to look only at all the positives that are still in life. "I've still got this, I've still got that" – "I'm safe now and my children are doing well in school." All of these things are of course very true and important to see and celebrate but if they are focused on alone and any feelings of sadness or grief are denied then it is impossible to reach a stage of acceptance and peace.

To grieve then takes many things. To do it one needs to feel safe, not just physically safe but emotionally too. It means having someone around you whom you trust. It means having patience with your self. It means recognising that grief is cyclical, that when it resurfaces again and again this is not a reason for accusing yourself of failure but rather accepting that this is part of the nature of grief. It means having the courage to allow yourself to feel the hurt and not to see it as a weakness. It also means not blaming yourself when you want to run away from the pain but accepting that you will come to it when the right conditions are there for you.

Grieving is a natural process and all cultures will have rituals and practices which can guide and support a grieving person. It may be helpful to find an elder, religious leader or other trusted person who can help you mark your way through grief. If such a person is not available to you the support of a counsellor may be helpful. This may be especially important if you find yourself overwhelmed by your feelings or conversely feeling numb, unable to feel at all.

## Ways to Grieve

Some ways to grieve may be:

- Holding ceremonies on important days and anniversaries in remembrance of loved ones lost.
- Performing a ritual in remembrance of the day you lost your home or were forced to leave your country.
- Telling stories to the next generation of your past and those who are lost to you so that something of that life is passed on for the future.

To support your self through all this it is important to find ways that you can take care of your self.

- Planning your day so that there is a balance between time to your self and time with others.
- Choosing who you mix with, that they are people who support you and who don't undermine you.
- Making sure you eat well and regularly and get enough rest.
- Taking time to be in nature and to get some gentle exercise.
- Practices such as Tai Chi and yoga can be particularly nourishing.

While making room for the sadness to have its place, also make time for humour and fun. Try to avoid depressing movies and the news and choose entertainment that is light and soothing. These are just a few suggestions. Each person knows them self best and with a nurturing attitude toward yourself you will be able to develop a lifestyle that supports them through periods of grief.

*References: Edelmann, Hope, Motherless Daughters, The Legacy of Loss, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997*

***This article is taken from the QPASTT 'Hints & Tips' Resource Kit. It contains 14 information sheets which are the result of putting together all the practical coping strategies that clients of QPASTT have told us are useful and also suggestions that we have noted in our work with survivors of torture and trauma. This Multi-Lingual Resource Kit is an important resource for all, including service providers and clients. To obtain your copy please contact us on 33916677.***

## 5. Conferences 2005 - International Society of Health and Human Rights

I would like to thank QPASTT's Committee for supporting me to attend the International Society of Health Human Rights Conference in India in February. I presented at this conference a paper which was written by Daniel Zingifuaboro (community development worker at ACCESS Inc) and myself. Here is a brief report from that conference.

A group of about 20 Australians attended the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Health and Human Rights in Vadodara in India from, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

The conference theme was "Resilience: Recovery: Reconciliation – Promoting Human Rights Integrity and Social Responsibility". It was attended by approximately 200 delegates from all over the world with the largest numbers coming from India, Norway and Australia. The papers included an examination of current treatment models utilized by health services, examined the relevance of concepts such as "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder", current developments in the prevention and treatment of torture, research

issues, building community resilience learning from efforts in reconciliation, and several roundtables on spirituality and healing.

The conference ended on a very powerful presentation from a local Gujurati women's group who talked about their efforts to rebuild their community following the riots and carnage of 2002 when Muslim, Hindu and caste violence overflowed into the streets leaving thousands dead and many more injured and traumatised. The effects still reverberate and the women are seeking to rebuild the community spirit of this devastated community.

Most of the conference delegates were working in the field of refugee services for survivors of torture and trauma. Paula Peterson from QPASTT and Daniel Zingifuaboro from ACCESS wrote a paper for the conference entitled "Building Community Resilience ; A Case Study of Community and Service Engagement." There were some very powerful papers and presentations. These can be accessed on the internet by going to ISHHR's web site at [www.ISHHR2005.org](http://www.ISHHR2005.org).

*Paula Peterson*

## 6. Young People have their Say



### "My name is Mathew James"

Dear students and teachers. I invite you to listen to my story. When I came here in Australia on 14/7/03, I entered to Milpera first. I had three months to study there. I have responsibility when I entered in, with my teachers, students and friends. I respect them carefully. I have the responsibility to protect my health and not smoke, take drugs or alcoholic drinks or encourage

others to do so.

My friends you are faithful I never do anything in Australia you know except God.

- Peace
- Respect
- Love
- Friend

My friend, if you do wrong things life is tomorrow. Never see again. Make peace to your people and your planet and humans. I love you my brothers and sisters. You are part of community and your family. You have to be responsible in school and peoples. Examination, assignment and projects are a part of plan to do an integral part of a work program in the secondary curriculum. Whenever God gives us an assignment he always equips us with what we need to accomplish it.

This custom combination of capabilities is called your SHAPE:

- Spiritual gifts
- Heart
- Abilities
- Personality
- Experience

Students I invite you to respect leaders, teachers and help teachers. Please could you respect everyone's different cultivation of study.

## 8. Noticeboard Cyber Search

**Moodgym Training Program:** [www.mhca.com.au](http://www.mhca.com.au) - Developed by the Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National Website. This site teaches alternative ways of thinking to prevent depression. This is CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) based.

**Multicultural Mental Health Australia:** [www.mmha.org.au](http://www.mmha.org.au) – Multicultural Mental Health is a new national program in multicultural mental health and suicide prevention, funded under the National Mental Health Strategy and National Suicide Prevention Strategy by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The site includes a list of events and training, publications, research projects as well as resources and services data base. Information is available in different languages.

**Mental Health and Wellbeing:** [www.mentalhealth.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealth.gov.au) – A source of mental health information for consumers, carers and families, education and the media, and the health sector. Site includes a list of crisis and support contacts, press releases, newsletters, publications and resources.

## Conferences

**The Impact of Childhood Trauma Across the Lifespan: Historical Denial – Current Challenges:** - Perth, 15-17 Sept 2005. This conference is the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of the Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Preliminary program highlights include workshops on: Phase-oriented Treatment of Complex PTSD and Dissociative Disorders, Treatment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma, The Challenge of Traumatized Populations, Trauma and the Justice System and Trans-generational Impact of Trauma. For more information: [www.astss.org.au/conference/](http://www.astss.org.au/conference/)

**A Philipino Community's Perspective of Mental Health and Mental Illness (Cross Cultural Perspectives in Mental Health):** - Brisbane, 14 April 2005, 10-12noon. The Multicultural community Participation in Mental Health Project is pleased to present a series of cross-cultural seminars of benefit to Mental Health workers and Clinicians, Health and Community workers, Academics, Students and community members. Seats are limited – cost is free. Video conferencing within the local area can be arranged. Please RSVP to the QTMHC by 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 ph: 32402833 or fax: 32402282

## Support Groups

**Regeneration:** a group for men who have experienced childhood sexual abuse or assault. The Regeneration group provides a supportive environment where men can work to build a future free from the influences of sexual assault and abuse. There is no charge for the initial meeting or group attendance. The group is open to all men irrespective of sexual orientation. Group commences 4<sup>th</sup> May 2005 and runs for ten weeks. For further information please contact Kinections on 34354300.

***Disclaimer:** the views expressed by groups or support services listed in this Newsletter are not necessarily representative of the official views of QPASTT of any staff member of QPASTT. QPASTT is politically neutral and has no political affiliation.*

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