

Dear Dr Alfred Pritz and members of the World Council for Psychotherapy

Kia ora tatou, (Greetings to you all)

I am available for re-election to the board of the World Council for Psychotherapy

I am disappointed not to be with you in Durban but I was not able to access funds to travel this time.

I was particularly regretful when I had to decline the warm invitation to be an invited speaker as Dr Madu has been a friend and encourager to me.

I will miss the new knowledge and collegiality each conference brings.

My very best wishes to Dr Sylvester Madu and his team. I am sure they will have established an exciting and visionary conference for all to enjoy.

My best wishes to all my colleagues on the board of the World Council for Psychotherapy. I will be most interested to read your reports and learn more about psychotherapy around the globe.

Report from New Zealand

New Zealand psychotherapy is strengthening as more psychotherapists become registered after an increase in the numbers being trained. The Auckland University of Technology is also in the process of establishing a PhD programme in psychotherapy and this will lift the academic status of the profession and contribute to enhanced practice methods.

The Auckland University of Technology programme is also encouraging more publications from academically orientated therapists and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists has reestablished its national journal titled 'Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand'. (i)

State registration (achieved in 2008) has been a difficult journey particularly for therapists who work from an indigenous base. The Registration Board accredits practitioners after they have completed trainings the board approves of. This means that not all modalities are yet approved and a hiatus is still present for those whose indigenous practices do not follow the academic pathways that European models adhere to.

On the other hand, state registration has been accorded to practitioners who have trained in allied professions and completed psychotherapy trainings within those professions (psychology, counselling, and psychiatry).

Consequently many newly registered psychotherapists have joined the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists swelling the numbers in our Association. Since the advent of state registration the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists is not now responsible for accreditation processes leaving it free to focus on further training opportunities for members. The New Zealand Association is concentrating on being a body that enhances the professional life of its members without having to approve their practice. However, the Association has also established an advanced membership pathway which permits members to increase their profile and knowledge by gaining the diploma.

Four indigenous (Maori) psychotherapists have been accredited by the Association in a special ceremony designed to acknowledge their cultural knowledge and experience. Those therapists had already completed the Masters in Health Sciences programme at the Auckland University of Technology.

World Council colleagues will be interested to know that connections between Maori therapists in New Zealand and indigenous therapists in Australia have been established after a hui (meeting) in New Zealand and ongoing connections are being encouraged. This was a significant outcome which was a result of connections established during the World Council conference in Sydney.

Publication pending

I am currently writing a book titled 'The Past, Present and future of Psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand'. The publication should be available in early 2016 and is based on interviews with colleagues throughout New Zealand.

To date 35 interviews with psychotherapists and associated health professionals have been conducted and the information will be used to promote the profession in New Zealand as well as comment on the future for psychotherapy in Aotearoa.

International

New Zealand does not usually experience traumatic events which require therapeutic interventions on a large scale. The Christchurch earthquake was a huge shock literally and emotionally and the life style effects have reverberated through the whole country. We have not had the time to be focused further out internationally as we learn how to attend to the trauma many of our own residents are still facing.

Psychotherapists in many parts of New Zealand have been supporting colleagues in Christchurch by finding practice that is relevant to people who are trying to re-establish their lives and resources.

South Pacific nations are facing the effects of climate change and some island nations face the loss of land and resources as a result of the sea encroaching on their land. The situation in a number of these countries is serious and sometimes sits alongside political ferment as well. New Zealand psychotherapists are attuned to the needs of Pacific peoples and the largest city in New Zealand (Auckland) has so many different ethnic groups living there it is difficult to keep pace with the way psychotherapy can meet personal needs in ways that align with each cultural group.

There are a number of moves to integrate psychotherapists into wider health and welfare team settings. Traditional practice with a psychotherapist practising out of a small room and talking with an individual is being challenged as different cultures need family and group structures to enhance health and welfare. The historical and current separation of professional groups into their own territories and organisations may not be the way into the future for New Zealand psychotherapists. Interdisciplinary teams are more likely to meet health and welfare needs effectively in New Zealand.

The future of the World Council for Psychotherapy :

I have enjoyed being part of World Council conferences since 1998 and particularly enjoyed working alongside my colleague Dr Anthony Korner when we co-hosted the Sydney conference in 2011.

I expect the World Council is facing some important issues with regard to hosting conferences in this era. It may be that regional conferences become more common as it becomes more and more difficult to encourage people to travel long distances to a world event. The digital age has brought more opportunities to communicate regularly and immediately and it seems to me we could use internet based communication in a more extensive fashion.

I would enjoy communicating more often with council members and colleagues but I believe we need a centralised base which is monitored at least monthly. A web site that keeps World Council knowledge and events up to date and has pages which publish information about what we are all doing would be more helpful. It has always bothered me that we communicate every three years with few connections in between.

Finances and the World Council

I concur that financial membership of the World Council has been unclear and I have not received a request for membership fees for some years.

I concur with the proposal from Dr Nemeth viz: Dues should be graded. Fellows pay \$150 for 3 years, members pay \$100 for 3 years, students pay \$30 for 3 years, and gatekeepers pay \$75 for 3 years.

The proposal that each conference organizing body add a fee to the conference fee to cover the expenses of the board would make attendance by international representatives easier to manage. However, this may increase the conference fee to a level that makes it difficult for psychotherapists who are not funded by universities, agencies or institutions to attend. I imagine those points will both be made during the council meeting and I wish I was going to be present to hear the ways which might be suggested to overcome the dilemmas.

Clarity is needed to understand which speakers, board members and conference attendees receive financial assistance to attend conferences. Once clarity is established the information needs to be published so those who wish to attend conferences can align themselves with funding that is available.

Board meetings

Board meetings need to take place more often than every three years. With the advent of communication using media such as Skype we could meet once a year and update board members on international developments and developments with psychotherapy across the globe.

Regional focus

Another way forward for the World Council would be to consider linking regional contributors through media such as the Skype format and encourage debates and discussions rather than lengthy papers. If we joined to discuss topics of interest or issues clients face we would learn from each other by hearing ideas rather than carefully honed presentations.

While it is exciting and informative to meet in one place in the world every three years and meet at smaller but significant regional conferences it may also be valuable for the World Council to approve (sanction) groups of health professionals who meet easily between two or three countries (for example across the Pacific Island groupings, or Australia and New Zealand). These conferences could engage speakers and contributors within their own geographical region without the expense of contracting with speakers from countries that are far away. They may still be called 'Conferences of the World Council'.

Again, my best wishes and encouragement for the work of the World Council

*A. Roy Bowden
New Zealand representative
August 2014*

- (i) Ata: referring to early morning; before dawn; form; shape; shadow; reflection; etc.