

Marginalised Topics

Alistair Campbell calls for papers for the December issue of the *ANZJFT* in 2006 which he will be guest editing. He writes: 'I believe that health and welfare systems in Australia are pursuing an agenda of implementing "evidence-based" treatments and interventions at the service level. This is being done without consultation or involvement of the clinicians and workers doing the work. It is also being done with little or no clarity about what is meant by "evidence based". In general though, the term is used as shorthand for cognitive-behavioural treatments. I would like to stimulate a debate about this. Is there a trend at a policy level toward requiring clinicians to use 'evidence-based' treatment? Is there any consultation and debate about this at policy and workplace levels?'

But, I would also be clear that I am partisan in my views. I do not accept the view that the application of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) to evaluate the efficacy of particular treatments is good science. I am not interested in articles that describe the application of RCTs to establish evidence for one treatment over another. Rather, I would like clinicians to write papers about their experience of the push to EBP. I would like academics to write papers about the level of debate that is being pursued in implementing these policies. I would like researchers to write about projects which have involved consultation with clinicians and clients to inform a research approach that challenges the dominant paradigm. I would like papers that present the issues with clarity and balance.'

Hugh and Maureen: A journal's title *and its regular contents* tell potential authors how likely it is that its editors will be interested in the topic they hope to write about. If a journal has not published papers on a particular topic, an author is probably taking a risk in approaching that journal with a paper on that topic. Relatively few authors do their homework properly and leaf through back issues of the journal they have in mind. Instead, they will rely on word of mouth ('Does the *ANZJFT* publish articles about school counselling?' 'I don't think so') or on assumptions, often based on the journal's title alone.

Those assumptions create considerable problems for the *ANZJFT*. We have that word 'family' in our title. 'Family' can mean very positive things — like trust, reliability, growing together, and forgiveness. To some potential authors, however, the word 'family' in our title

means that we are politically to the far right, that we are wilfully ignorant of the realities of sexual abuse and domestic violence, that we disapprove of alternative sexuality, and that we will ignore any family different from two-hetero-parents-and-kids. Those individually oriented therapists who have heard of our journal avoid it because they assume that it deals only with family therapy, narrowly defined, and assume it has nothing to offer them.

As editors, we do what we can to encourage the publication of papers on marginalised topics: Glenn Lerner and Colleen Brown on Indigenous issues, therapy with clients from other cultures (Indian, Vietnamese, Spanish), rural families — and most recently the two papers on lesbian relationships in 25.3. We have been pleased to publish on other topics which we personally also consider 'marginalised': Bowenian therapy (not much taught or favoured in this country), the relationship between family therapy and ecological issues (papers by Des Casey), and on the relationship between therapy and politics (papers by Andrew Samuels and Murdoch Mackenzie). Some have told us that such papers have no place in a family therapy journal; we remind them of our subtitle, 'Innovative and Contextual Approaches to Human Problems'. That gives us a pretty broad scope!

One obvious way to address gaps is to commission papers. We do commission interviews, the extended reviews which appear as Refrains, and most of what appears in Education Update. But other than that, we rarely commission papers. Why not? We have read other journals where an entire issue was made up of commissioned papers, and many of them seem to lack some vital spark. When we have asked an author with particular expertise to write something specifically for us, it has too often seemed that he or she has simply restated previously published positions and made little attempt to come up with something new. We would much prefer to publish what authors want to write, not what they feel obliged to write, or write to please someone else.

So we second Alistair's plea for papers. But please, write because you want to, because you care, because you have something to say. And please don't assume that because our journal has 'Family' in its title, we could not possibly be interested!

Alistair Campbell, Maureen and Hugh Crago