

COMMUNICATION AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AIM: To discuss the relationships between science, emotion, health and the environment.
To explain the concept of post-industrial society and the role of information in development.

THE 'SOCIAL LIFE WORLD' AND THE 'WORLDLESS UNIVERSE OF FACTS'

Early in the 20th century, Weber appeared to view the lawyer and the university academic as typically conservative when he said:

'As soon as intellectual and aesthetic education becomes a profession, its representatives are bound by an inner affinity to all the carriers of ancient social culture who doubt that the dominion of capital can give better, more lasting guarantees to personal liberty and to the development of intellectual, aesthetic and social culture than the aristocracy of the past has given'... They want to be ruled only by persons who social culture they consider equivalent to their own and they prefer the dominion of the economically independent aristocracy to the dominion of the professional politician.... (They) stand in deep antipathy opposed to the inevitable development of capitalism and refuse cooperation in the rearing of the structures of the future'. (Seidman 1983, p. 211).

However, World War II increased taxation and the related powers of national governments which worked cooperatively with business and scientists to advance the kind of production which could win the war. The government role in social reconstruction in the post-war period was also highly significant in the development of the welfare states that current European and Australian citizens have inherited. In 1959, at Cambridge, CP Snow gave an influential lecture which claimed that the intellectual life of the whole of Western society was being increasingly split into two polar camps – with scientists on one hand and literary intellectuals on the other, studiously ignoring each others' approaches, sometimes with mutual dislike, as well as incomprehension. Snow saw intense specialization as unhealthy and dictated by the Oxford and Cambridge scholarship examinations. His benign view of the accidental growth of British Empire is perhaps what one might expect of a scholarship boy from a poor family, lucky enough to find himself among new friends at Cambridge. Nevertheless, Snow stated that the main post-war issue of the scientific revolution is that people in the industrialised countries are getting richer, and there is a widening gap between the rich and poor. He offered few solutions, but the importance of the problems he identified remains.

Huxley wrote about the same two cultures. Literature makes statements mainly about emotional and often private experiences. The sciences describe human experiences which are accessible across all or nearly all subjective states. The latter kind of experiences can be expressed in a formalized or 'scientific' language, which may become universally accepted by scientists through their collective means of promoting definitions and related expectations which are the result of repeated experimental practices which have achieved consistent results. In contrast, the language of literature must verbalize what is, in principle, a unique individual's unrepeatably emotional response to the environment. This is done to generate some kind of emotional identification or enrichment in the reader, with perhaps no other kind of understanding being involved. In 'Towards a Rational Society', Jurgen Habermas quotes from Huxley at length, in order to describe the differences between 'the social life world' which sentient individuals and communities inhabit, and the 'worldless universe of facts', where scientists usually try to spend their time. Huxley said:

The world with which literature deals is the world in which human beings are born and live and finally die; the world in which they love and hate, in which they experience triumph and humiliation, hope and despair; the world of suffering and enjoyments of madness and common sense, of silliness, cunning and wisdom; the

world of social pressures and individual impulses, of reason against passion, of instincts and conventions, of shared language and unsharable feelings and sensations...

He compares this world with the scientific world of 'quantifiable regularities' and comes to the conclusion that knowledge is power and that scientists have acquired enormous and growing power to control, direct and modify the 'social life world' in which all human beings, including themselves, are 'condemned and privileged' to live. He asks how it is possible to translate technically exploitable knowledge into the practical consciousness of the social life world and suggests that:

Until some great artist comes along and tells us what to do, we shall not know how the muddled words of the tribe and the too precise words of the textbooks should be poetically purified, so as to make them capable of harmonizing our private and unsharable experiences with the scientific hypotheses in terms of which they may be explained.

Perhaps David Attenborough was one of the greatest of those artists in the 20th century. His influence in bringing the truth and beauty of the natural world to generations depended on the invention of television and the mission of the British Broadcasting Commission. Huxley said the problem of most contemporary interest was the appropriate relationship of technology and democracy, including the need to bring the power of technical control within the range 'of the consensus of acting and transacting citizens'. Is this is the still unrealised democratic potential of mass media such as television and, increasingly, computers?

THE NEW INFORMATION SOCIETY

Currently, the US accounts for around 45% of all research and development spending world wide and Australia is a minnow in this global knowledge market. Tiffen and Gittens' (2004) comparison of seventeen developed democracies shows the US has the highest level of total investment in knowledge, and that when Germany, France and the United Kingdom expenditures are added to this picture, 85% of total international research and development expenditure is covered. The US also tops the list of seventeen nations in levels of educational attainment of the adult population and is the world leader in telecommunications, computing and related development. None of the seventeen nations discussed by Tiffen and Gittens had a government-owned newspaper. However, in all these countries, except the US, television began with a public broadcaster playing a central development role. Only the US has no publicly owned TV channel.

In, 'The Coming of Post Industrial Society', Daniel Bell wrote that as society becomes increasingly conscious and seeks to control its own fortunes, the political order necessarily becomes paramount. Bell stated that the dominant figures of the past hundred years have been the entrepreneur, the business man and the industrial executive but that in the post-industrial society, production and business decisions will be subordinated to or derive from political and technical forces in society. The significance of a post-industrial society is that it strengthens the role of science and cognitive values as basic institutional necessities. By making decisions more technical it brings the scientist or economist more directly into the political process. By broadening and deepening existing tendencies towards the bureaucratisation of intellectual work, it also creates a set of strains for the traditional definitions of intellectual pursuits and values. By creating and extending a technical intelligentsia it raises crucial questions about the relation of the technical to the literary and artistic. The importance of science for technological development must also be reflected in a diminution of past political differences, because decisions must increasingly be subordinated to expert evidence. Does Bell's theory about the increasing importance of expertise explain an apparent convergence in global and Australian party politics?

In 2003, in 'The Rise of the Creative Class', Richard Florida discussed the apparently increasing productive role of creativity in US and other communities. In Australia, Latham has addressed similar themes, which are also reflected in the Creative Nation: Australian Cultural Policy Statement. Florida defines creativity as the useful combination of new forms out of existing knowledge. The tools and materials of creativity are knowledge and information. Creativity supposedly flourishes in environments which are stable enough to allow continuity of effort, yet diverse and broad-minded enough to nourish creativity in all its subversive forms. Florida follows Bell and Drucker in believing that knowledge is increasingly the major means of production rather than capital, natural resources or labour. Knowledge production is said to be different to other forms of production because its value to the community multiplies and increases through its creation, spread and use, rather than the product being used up or the production destroying the 'global commons' for private gain, as is the case in agriculture, mining or manufacturing production. Florida argues that all traditional societies overprotect intellectual property and so reduce their opportunities for creativity. A good idea should be used over and over, as it can produce more value for the community the more it is used and built on. This produces increasing returns on production rather than the diminishing returns, which more traditional economists may see as the outcome of increased production.

Florida defines the core of the new creative class as including:

- Computer and mathematical occupations;
- Architecture and engineering occupations;
- Life, physical and social science occupations
- Education, training and library occupations
- Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations

He sees three T's as necessary for the creative society - technology, talent and tolerance. Those in the creative class are primarily paid to create and have considerably more autonomy and flexibility than people working in other areas of the economy who are primarily paid to execute according to plan. Florida says that creativity involves the ability to synthesize and that Einstein captured the concept when he called his own work 'combinatory play'. He argues that creativity requires self-assurance and the ability to take risks since it usually requires 'the process of destroying one's gestalt in favour of a better one'. He also cites research which shows that core creative workers generally value challenge, responsibility, the ability to work a flexible schedule and having a stable work environment, ahead of money. Florida is a professed Democrat, yet his book does not discuss the central role that education and health play in creativity and development other than obliquely. He prefers to focus on universities as 'centres for cutting edge research in fields from software to biotechnology and important sources of new technologies and spin-off companies'.

I doubt whether many Australians or others outside the US would share Florida's confidence in the benign and self-correcting capacities of markets if left to their own devices. However, Australia appears comparatively well placed for global competition in the future. It is a developed, English speaking nation, geographically close to potentially large Asian markets, which also has the highest immigration rate of the developed nations. Its community health management, including HIV/AIDS, and crime related death rates are comparatively good, whereas the US does comparatively poorly in protecting community health and law and order (Tiffen and Gittens, 2004). Australian policy makers need to build on productive strengths, including Australia's status as a multicultural, English speaking nation with strong community health and governance capacities and high quality education. However, as the combination of American money and communications are powerful driving tools in global development, it is not easy to do other than follow the US commercially driven footprint, which poses dangers for our health and cultural diversity. Government, professionals and

Australian communities need to discuss alternatives where this seems a healthier approach to development.

New broadband technology is designed to assist carriage of many different forms of communication more effectively and faster. The Australian national broadband strategy provided \$142.8 million to assist regional development. It resulted from an independent regional telecommunications inquiry held in 2002 which aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment of telecommunications services in regional Australia and make recommendations to ensure that regional, rural and remote areas share in the benefits of new technologies. The strategy is designed to allow broadband investment across all levels of government to be coordinated with regional development priorities and the needs of key industry sectors such as health and education, while providing a national focus to all activities. This strategy may also be justified by any related state or local government, as part of a joint regional, national and local response to all sustainable development problems. It might logically start with fixing skills shortages, promoting effective health governance and preventing unemployment problems arising in an environment based on free trade. The Australian Council for the Arts raised all these risks with the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (2004) in relation to a free trade agreement between Australia and the US.

HEALTH, MIND AND ENVIRONMENT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Our psychological and physical states are intimately related. For example, facing examinations or other stressful situations may give us physical symptoms related to fear and anxiety, such as diarrhoea, headaches, trembling of the limbs or flushing. Physical abnormalities such as cancers, cause pain, fear and depression. Safer times (the majority of people are living longer), increasing tolerance of cultural outsiders, and the comparatively recent historical passage of anti-discrimination legislation should have reduced people's anxiety about sickness and maltreatment by others, at least to some extent. On the other hand, increased expectations have been the product of increased competition. We are also more aware of what may go wrong. As a result of this, generalised social anxiety has probably grown about whether one is in danger, or can meet a high enough standard, and whether one is producing and consuming in the ways one's parents, employer or peers would find most acceptable. We may be increasingly uncertain about what to do to be happy.

Freud and many of his followers and critics in the psychoanalytic tradition saw sickness as the result of more or less successful attempts to master anxiety. Talcott Parsons, the noted structural functionalist sociologist, took a similar position in his discussion of the sick role. For Parsons, sickness and criminality may be seen as the only available escapes from the unwelcome performance demands of others. Goffman's perspective in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1969) is from an interactionist sociological framework in which speech may be seen as a performance put on for others, and sickness may be seen as a form of protection seeking. In Goffman's account, social relations constitute a stage on which the actor presents a performance, either individually or in the company of a team. Social actors are primarily motivated by self-regard, and by the desire to maintain their 'face' at all costs. Order exists insofar as social actors seek to avoid stigmatisation and embarrassment in public gatherings. Social life is a game in which there is little scope for trust, since all human action is simply bluff and counter bluff. Survival in this competitive world of desperate normality or higher approval seeking and related espionage, hinges on the ability to select the most advantageous set of interpersonal tactics. The person who feels threatened may fall sick.

Because individuals and their health are the products of genetic make-up and environmental influences, it is useful to distinguish between the body, its brain and its mind when discussing health. The medical model of mental health tends to categorize and treat mental illness

primarily as a physiological disturbance or imbalance located in the organ of the brain, which may be treated with drugs. The DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition) is the official manual of mental health disorders developed by the American Psychiatric Association. Psychiatrists, psychologists, or other medical practitioners may use this reference book to try to identify supposed symptoms of bodily and related behavioural malfunction in presenting clients, in order to name and treat supposed illnesses. Social workers, insurance companies, expert witnesses in court and others may also refer to terms and descriptions in this book or others like it, when discussing apparently abnormal people and their mental health problems. Psychiatrists and others who are medically trained may provide drugs or other treatment. The introduction of the DSM 4th edition repudiates its own title by stating that it implies a distinction between 'mental' disorders and 'physical' disorders that is 'a reductionist anachronism of mind/body dualism'. It states that there is much that is 'physical' in 'mental' disorders and much that is 'mental' in physical disorders. How can the reality of 'life world' of people judged according to this classification system be expressed?

Is mental illness primarily located in the physiology of the brain or in the mind which is the product of interaction of the person with the environment? This is a matter for continuing research and debate. George Herbert Mead, a sociologist, stated that the mind refers to the relationship between modern society and the independent, responsible individual. Thomas Szasz, a contemporary psychiatrist, said the distinguishing trait of selfhood is the capacity of the minded animal to be an object to itself. In his view all thought is conversation with the self and what we 'mind' is who we are. He believes the greatest injury a person can inflict upon himself is to treat his mind as if its business were not worth minding. He also wrote that feelings of love and hate, loyalty and betrayal, productivity and parasitism as well as other personal dispositions and qualities may have little or nothing to do with physiological imbalance or with science. However, the fact that something in the world is not subject to effective scientific analysis or control does not mean that we cannot try to look at it carefully and describe it truthfully, as it appears to relate to any surrounding environment. Szasz also notes honesty may not be a scientific concept, but it is the 'slender reed' on which all sciences rest. Perhaps we should all practice carefully investigating ourselves in our environment, in order to try to learn about ourselves and others, so as to try to treat all more honestly and helpfully. This was the method of Sigmund Freud, the founding father of psychiatry and psychology. He thought his research practice was scientific. Whether it was or not, I think it is a vital part of any education aimed at human understanding and proper treatment of others.

Bowlby's work at the British Tavistock School on the importance of effective parenting heavily influenced the Australian psychoanalyst Russell Meares, who presents the concept of the secret as an early and positive social development, which may induct the child into a particular world of group belonging and its related identity and intimacies. However, he also describes the role secrecy plays in protecting people who feel the lack of a comfortable or consistent sense of personal identity. He quotes an example of an eighteen-year-old boy who says:

I don't know what the real me is. My own impression of myself is a feed back of what other people think of me. I behave differently with different people....I tend to despise the group I have just left'

Meares says the boy has no sure reference point of a 'real me' and as a result has a feeling of discomfort or unease in the presence of others. Meares also says it may often be the case that one's role and aspirations seem to have been given rather than chosen, and that as a result of this one's relationships may appear to approach triviality and are confined to 'scripted' exchanges. He says there are those whose choice against intimacy is extreme, because they feel all too easily under the social control of others. They avoid all risk of openness, even to the extent of living by trickery and lying. They wish to remain hidden and may avoid self-

revelation or play out a 'sham' which is a disguise. He quotes Winnicott, who earlier pointed out that:

Even in the most extreme case of compliance and the establishment of a false personality, hidden away somewhere there exists a secret life that is satisfactory because of its being creative and original to the human being. Its satisfactoriness must be measured in terms of its being hidden, its lack of enrichment through experience. (Mearns, 1977, 19.)

Turner's account of anorexia involves a power struggle in the family, which is centred on the symbol of food. The continuous purchase, preparation and consumption of food is a central pillar of family life and meaning, especially in early childhood. In Turner's view, the anorexic may be acutely aware of a sense of powerlessness within a middle-class family, which is usually also socially successful. Diet is seen as one of the few areas of personal control, discipline and rebellion which young women from close but competitive environments can exercise as an act of personal autonomy. Anorexia thus transforms the previously compliant 'good girl' into a naughty but determined rebel. The rebellion is seen as a symbolic gesture, which cuts off the nurturing bond the girl also feels as bondage. In this account, the society's equation of slimness with beauty may be an element in the construction of the illness. Turner writes that the personal rebellion of the anorexic youth is frequently commented on in the literature, but the significance of it is also frequently lost. Why do you think this might be? Perhaps the understandable desire to avoid blaming parents purely on the basis of constructing hypothetical and judgmental social scenarios, has now made close examination of family relations unfashionable. I think this natural tendency to avoid possibly unhelpful and incorrect labelling, has also been influenced by the rise of feminism. On the other hand, the general extension of the medical and related psychological diagnosis, supported by the introduction of Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme, now seems to have swamped a wide range of earlier perceptions based on the study of families and other close relationships within particular environments.

Does the conventional scientific approach and the related sale of drugs conveniently obscure the environmental stresses which have constructed and which may remain part of our social life world? Psychoanalytic, psychological and sociological perspectives all depend upon the view that we perceive and feel about ourselves and others as a result of learning through interaction with the environment. We may also teach ourselves. From these experiential and related learning perspectives, how effectively we can act to achieve our purpose and equanimity, when faced with events or surroundings perceived as challenging, is a key sign of our mental health. Thus, mental health may be seen as the product of how we are first taught and also how we may teach ourselves to look historically and effectively at our surroundings, thoughts and actions, as well as those of other people. Mental illness is accordingly seen as a perceived problem which is experienced by a presenting client, family or community, and which ideally needs to be solved, so that all people involved in a stressful environment can get on with their lives more happily and effectively. From this perspective, drugs may be oppressive if they make the user feel more confused, sad or anxious.

TOWARDS MORE HONEST COMMUNICATION

Primo Levi, a chemist who spent years in a Nazi death camp wrote in 'The Drowned and the Saved':

Except for cases of pathological incapacity, one can and must communicate; it is a useful and easy way to contribute to the peace of others and one's own, because silence, the absence of signals, is in its turn a signal, but it is ambiguous, and ambiguity generates anxiety and suspicion. To say that it is impossible to

communicate is false; one always can. To refuse to communicate is a failing; we are biologically and socially predisposed to communication.

A recent television documentary dealt with the treatment of children dying of cancer. To see such a program is to be directly faced with the often completely unexpected, forceful and tragic reality of sickness. It is also to be strongly reminded of the great progress which has been made over the past century in the treatment of illness through medical science and the application of the medical (biogenic) model. One is also made aware of the intensely difficult decisions which patients, their families and practitioners may be confronted with on a daily basis, while many others of us apparently need never bear such intense levels of personal pain or responsibility.

Effective communication is vital in such circumstances. Patients, families and practitioners on the program stated that loving, honest and full communication by all parties should usually assist informed self-determination of treatment by the patient, even when he or she is a child who has cancer. Even so, there can be no hard and fast rules, as every patient and family is different. One mother sought to protect her young child from the knowledge he had cancer, in case it sapped his hopes for recovery. His therapist thought he knew the truth, perhaps from talking to other sick children, and that feeling he had to deny his knowledge was an added burden complicating his situation. How can one ever know what is a right analysis or decision? We can only try to understand the key requirements of a situation, attempt to do our best for others and for ourselves, as honestly as possible, and then review the outcome of this. We can admire and be guided by those many people from all walks of life who, in having to manage great pain and sadness, often appear to do so with great courage, discipline, generosity and love.

A set of Open Disclosure Principles has been developed for the Australian Safety and Quality Council. These state that the health and safety of consumers is the primary focus of good communication, including open disclosure when things go wrong. Consumers should be fully informed of the potential risks of any procedure. They should also expect to be fully informed of the issues surrounding an adverse event or unexpected outcome. Information should be given in a manner appropriate to the consumer's needs. They have a right to be treated in a respectful and dignified manner and to have any questions, issues or suggestions acted upon. Information about something that has gone wrong should be given to consumers in a truthful and open manner. The provider should acknowledge that an adverse event has occurred and convey a clear message of empathy to the consumer. This process should be enacted in a timely manner, with information communicated to consumers as soon as practical following an event. Any unexpected outcome should be communicated in the earliest stages of concern, in order to minimise the human costs and further adverse outcomes.

Advice on any system or process issue that may minimise, reduce or avoid a similar incident recurring should be fed back to the organization and consumers should be informed of the steps being taken to prevent recurrence. There should be promotion of an organisational culture, which encourages greater openness and information sharing, and focuses on 'learning for quality improvement' rather than the actions of any one individual or team of individuals. Health professionals should expect to work in a non-punitive environment, which provides support when things go wrong, and encourages open discussion and review.

MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

In a recent Australian study Kenny points out that unexplained pain appears to be extremely common in the population. The organic causes for patient symptoms can be identified in fewer than 15% of patients presenting to primary care physicians, and in 20% of those presenting with low back pain to orthopaedic specialists. Kenny states that the danger for doctors is to engage in diagnosis without supporting pathology, and to undertake disability

determination based on expressed levels of pain rather than apparent physiological impairment. In an older person, even when musculo-skeletal or other physical impairment is clearly present, it may often be difficult to know what remedies other than appropriate diet, exercise and stress management techniques might possibly improve their physical condition. Regular exercises to improve one's strength, flexibility and endurance are commonly recommended. Perhaps these are also the mental qualities we may need to learn to practice most. Whether others can help or teach us how to achieve this is likely to depend significantly on whether we experience our relationship with them in positive or negative terms.

In her examination of the changing interactions between doctors and their patients over the course of investigations for medically unexplained pain, Kenny found some apparently typical interactions, which appear to contribute to the transition to chronic pain. At the basis of these interactions was the doctor's implicit communication that he or she could do little or nothing to alleviate the patient's pain, and that it seemed likely to be primarily related to a poor mental state. The patient, on the other hand, commonly became increasingly convinced of the biological causes of their pain. A wide range of treatment methods which seek to avoid such an impasse appear necessary for any chronic pain sufferers, in order to provide an appropriate range of options which can be tailored to meet individual and community perceptions of need, and also monitored to see how effectively they appear to achieve their goals. Kenny's work primarily addressed the situation of patients such as those who had pain of average duration of seven years, and who were more functionally and occupationally impaired than most in the community. Fifty percent of these patients were diagnosed as clinically depressed, had undergone one surgery and were taking opioid medication.

Open communication and client self-determination in a supportive, mutually informing and very broad environment should be major community management goals. The goals for individuals should be established in the context of broader national and regional goals to improve health and sustainable development. This approach is particularly important in the light of some of the major difficulties of professional diagnosis and treatment which are often related to the unique and little known nature of the person, their history and environment. Kenny argues that acknowledgement of pain and co-development of the treatment to follow, provides the chronic pain sufferer with the support necessary for maintaining an often fragile sense of identity and integrity. Acceptance of the reality of pain is vital prior to exploring a potential range of possible answers to it with the client. Berwick claims that when clients become co-equal with health care providers in controlling care, making decisions, and treating themselves with coaching, then outcomes improve, costs fall, satisfaction rises, and even physiological measures look better. This needs to be tested in regard to a wide range of potential treatment and education methods, including appropriate community based employment opportunities

PLAY, SELF-EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION

The practice of the medical model of health is based primarily on the use of surgery or drugs to correct apparent physical abnormality. Good diet, exercise and sport are also seen as vital methods of promoting health. On the other hand, artistic expression and other cultural play are typically seen as outside the realm of health and research. However, as Freud pointed out in 'Civilization and its Discontents' and in many other writings, creative expression or play may have educational, social and therapeutic powers, like work. Florida and Sen's contemporary discussions of 'human security' and its related values of creativity and dignity also suggest that human health, safety and play should all go together and can also relate well to work. Regular exercises to improve one's strength, flexibility and endurance are commonly recommended by physiotherapists or doctors. Perhaps these are also the mental qualities we need to work towards most. Self expression and communication through play may be practice for the more demanding communication disciplines of independent living in a

diverse, multicultural community. Whether others can help or teach us how to express ourselves and gain more self-confidence in our capacity for successful work and study through play, is likely to depend significantly on whether we experience our relationship with them and their community in positive or negative terms. To play we need to make our own choices, otherwise it is work or worse.

Play is a form of self expression which is associated with release or escape from the normal social demands of independent living, and also with rehearsal or experimentation for the future. Sports, arts and humour are often liberating activities in that they permit social expression and acknowledgement of emotions which otherwise may have the potential to be disruptive if bottled up. Sports, for example, may provide disciplined outlets for potentially aggressive energy, generate wider recognition of physical prowess, and promote social bonding. Sometimes the arts or humour are subversive and educational, revealing conditions which the dominant society may normally wish to pretend do not exist. For example, American gospel and blues songs had expressed the suffering and longing of slaves for generations. However, when affluent white audiences saw the musical 'Showboat', many were also emotionally responding for the first time, to the fact of racial oppression and its determination of black public and private lives. In seeking to imitate or express life and its gamut of emotions, art may tell us about the subjective experience which is often hidden under the constraining shell of dominant or 'normal' (majority or expected) social requirements. Play may facilitate mutual learning through expression of a forbidden truth, offer outlets, suggest solutions to problems or pass time happily – which is no small feat in some environments.

Language is also a form of self expression, like playing music, painting, dancing or sports. Szasz points out that there are many readily discernable reasons why there have always been and always will be people who choose to express themselves in unconventional ways. The inner worlds and their attempted emotional and rational expression deserve more inquiry through all forms of personal and imaginative communication. The scientific, bureaucratic and related restrictions on emotional discourse provide at very best a limited and partial truth about existence. In some accounts, play may be seen as an important means of an individual maintaining secrecy whilst asserting a subordinated self. Play (or pretending) may be not just an exhibition of self; it may also provide a kind of personal liberation or rebellion through the active creation of the self for others to gaze on. Mearns, for example, quotes Baldwin who said that:

Play is a swing of the pendulum toward control that has the psychic value of freedom. The self, the playing self, is not content with being its own self, with asserting itself, with denying all sorts of foreign control. It goes further, saying: 'I will prove this to you by being, according as I will, some other self, by choosing what sort of self I will to be.....Yea, verily, I will perchance lose my life to find it; I will prove my self-hood by un-selfing self.

Self-expression, even in fantasy, is a potential form of honest communication, whether others appreciate it or not. Humour also often involves the expression of a negative or aggressive feeling, which may also be acknowledged as a commonly held but unacceptable social 'truth'. (Who was that lady I saw you with last night? That was no lady, that was my wife. Boom boom.) Humour usually involves the release of tension which social pretence and its related anxiety build up. In order to express oneself one must usually feel safe, or perhaps one may partly want to be discovered.

The novel has been called a lie created in the service of a greater truth. In general, one may learn much about the emotional life and potential health of individuals or a group by listening to their songs, watching or playing their games, or by reading novels or watching films or television programs about them. Artistic expression may provide an alternative form of

knowledge seeking to positivist social research which assumes that people will comprehendingly, effectively and truthfully respond to those advancing upon them with questionnaires or tape recorders to ask them about thoughts and feelings which the interviewers themselves have been told to keep private. Why do they appear to believe that others will respond to their questions openly and honestly? You might like to read Kate Jennings recent novel, 'Moral Hazard' instead. The Australian heroine works as a corporate speech writer on Wall Street, while trying to support her much older husband who is declining into Alzheimer's disease and a death which she eventually assists, apparently against the wishes of her husband's care facility and the mainstream medical system. In offering this largely autobiographical work as a novel, Jennings also provides a commentary on herself. The heroine says on page one that she seeks to speak 'as straight as anyone's crooked recollections allow', and in her own voice, even if this invites criticism.

Read the book and do your own analysis. I, for example, am reminded of Mersault, the hero of the novel 'The Outsider' by the French existentialist philosopher, Camus. He felt he had been found guilty by the jury, not primarily of killing an Arab, as correctly charged, but of giving the jury the impression that he wasn't upset by the recent death of his mother. This relatively timid, French Algerian, rebel without a cause felt a triumphant separation from an enclosing common herd in feeling their angry rejection of his truth. Jennings' book partly expresses the existentialist theme of the relationship between feelings of social entrapment and opportunities for personal choice. It is partly about 'bad faith', which is living with something that feels like a lie, but feeling compelled (some would say choosing), to support a pretense. It is also about how the market driven, public and private spheres of life are commonly treated separately, but may often explain and provide reinforcement for each other, in a silent, dishonest, or oppressive manner at least from the perception of some. Unlike most academic and professionally driven accounts, the book shows that in the pursuit of personal and vested interests, a scaffolding of self-serving language may hide many more substantial barriers to clear and relatively honest communication about the apparent state of things - from other peoples' money to their husbands - thus preventing their being taken care of well.

One might discuss for hours the strengths and weaknesses of the scientific or artistic approaches to addressing life in order to bear, understand or change it. One might learn a lot about the desires and anxieties of young people by reading research into youth suicide. Other useful information may be gained by hearing and watching the music video and talk programs which sell millions of records and TV time by appealing to the interests, fantasies, fears, humour and related concerns of the young. Personally, I have always found it hard to go past the popular song as one of the most powerful emotional, intellectual, or spiritual experiences. I have often felt, and more generally perceive pop songs to be, the multifaceted expression of the collective consciousness of the coming generation. Throughout my life, the pop song has thrilled or cheered me up enormously, by perfectly expressing some emotion I could not, and by giving further food for thought and pleasure. Sales show that, for whatever reason, I am not alone in this. Popular songs come in a constant, changing stream. They possibly have great potential for promoting health and education through promoting play, self expression, and levels of honesty which may be prohibited or considered threatening in normal life. For example, take the young, black, quadriplegic, defaulting father, I've seen a lot of in my local gym, cheerily singing about his incremental decline in a ditty commencing 'I was gonna go to class, but I got high. I could have cheated, and I could have passed, but instead I got high'. Doesn't this send a message to all of us? What about 'Who Let the Dogs Out?' 'Why do you see right through me?' (Don't take me too seriously, I'm over sixty). And then there's dancing.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

Szasz has argued that our deep seated dread of silence as loneliness explains why religion and madness – faith and prayer, or hearing and talking to voices – are two of the most enduring

elements in human life. Both constitute attempted 'cures' for the elemental fear of abandonment and death. I do not wish to be dogmatic about the importance of religion or a spiritual life. Many people may find their deepest and most meaningful connections to life primarily through other people, music, sport, politics, or many other things. However, by spiritual, I think of a sense of connexion to a life force - a reality broader and deeper than ourselves, and which we serve, in order to derive our deepest nourishment, knowledge and pleasure. For Jung and for some other followers of Freud, who nevertheless saw his historical context and limitations, this ideally is our symbolic mother and the earth. The Chinese call the life force 'chi'. I wonder whether this might also be related to the concept of the ego, and also the immune system as it is described in the medical model. (I have absolutely no idea.)

I want briefly to discuss the Buddhist religious tradition, partly because I think it provides an antidote to the anxieties which are inherent in the tradition of Western capitalist development. In meditation one learns to minutely observe one's own reactions. Long meditation teaches the body and mind to recognise and accept the inevitability of constant change in all physical and mental states, and to be less fearful of them as a result. Meditation may also allow the mind to eventually see a much wider range of different perspectives from which any troubling personal issues may be viewed. Increasing the breadth of understanding in this manner may often refine and reduce negative emotional responses. Finally one may even see the funny side. Through the holistic practice and discipline of meditation, one aims to come to view the process, even of one's death, from a detached, broadly scientific, yet constructive perspective.

In the Western capitalist tradition, happiness is often seen as gained through effective acquisition and control. In the Buddhist tradition, on the other hand, personal tranquility is sought through close observation and acceptance of the constantly changing nature of all beings, starting with the self. Buddhism is mainly about learning how to let go, rather than how to control. It involves a quest to rise above the ego and its passions, rather than to use the ego to dominate the environment. The central task is for the individual to attain equanimity. This freedom from craving and aversion is gained partly through coming to accept that sorrow is an inevitable part of existence, just as change is a constant aspect of the personal cycle of birth and death. Through hours of meditation one may acquire greater discipline over mind and body. The constant and inevitable nature of physical and mental change may be more deeply perceived and felt during this process, and fear of it may therefore be reduced. Formerly hidden sorrows may then rise to the surface of the mind, and may be examined with greater detachment, less dogmatism, and more flexibility than is possible when one is more distressed or angry.

Buddhist teaching and practice provide a useful contrast to an international, national and regional quality management approach to continuous health and environment improvement. I generally support and teach the former, but sometimes fear it may become another iron cage. I think Buddhism offers a different perspective, which, through teaching detached perception and discipline of subjectivity, seeks to come to terms with the inevitability of change. In its practice we may reduce anxiety, and also diminish self-importance to a level more in keeping with the scientific and social need for a greater respect for the connectedness and value of all life on the planet. This necessarily involves the redirection of resources towards community based management systems, which are centred equally on the needs of the individual, and also on the need for broader forms of social and environment protection.

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

Many management issues spring from the discussion outlined above. Transparent and flexible management systems are vital, so that the outcomes of various service packages, which are designed to meet individual and community goals, can be effectively compared for their outcomes and cost. Florida regards the university as the key institution of a creative economy because of its fostering combination of technology, talent and tolerance. However,

the broader the reach of primary, secondary and all continuing education into local and global communities, the broader the dissemination of knowledge and all related productive and creative strategies. In Australia, the problem of skills shortages in trades and other areas has long required a better coordinated approach to identifying and meeting community needs at regional and state levels. This may be facilitated through more effective design of national communications policy, including educational and creative TV. National communications policy should also be designed to meet health and other national and regional need, starting with those areas where vital skill shortages are greatest.

The President of the Australian National Tertiary Education Union, some time ago lamented the global divide, after pointing out that only 2% of the world's population is connected and that countries with 15% of the world's population are home to 88% of Internet users. A broadly planned and more competitive approach to all community development is needed. Recent Australian models of governance stress the importance of consultatively developed policy and service aims, supported by transparent product and service delivery systems and outcomes. Australian health planning, health promotion, workplace risk management, action research and program budgeting ideally reflect such requirements. State occupational health and safety acts require all employers to undertake risk management supported by education and communication. Australian critics of increased competitive contracting by government have often failed to discuss the relationship this may bear to broader management processes which have progressively extended government and industry ownership of funds and the ability to manage them competitively and in the public interest. Australian governments are repeatedly inquiring into the management of health and related insurance funds. This has led many to the view that funds should be regulated and underwritten by government and industry stakeholders but openly and competitively managed to achieve scheme injury and rehabilitation aims and all related competitive service outcomes, including effective fund investment in the public interest, rather than the narrower, shareholder interest. National education and communication policy deserve to be analysed in a related context.

At the end of this chapter I have included a copy of the Model Format for Disability Action Plans for state government agencies and participating local councils. I think it could provide a clear and simple basis for much wider and effectively coordinated use and comparison of relative treatment plans and outcomes in a wide range of institutional, community and environment settings. The difficulty in identifying or treating the problems of the individual, is that each person's history and current situation may be unique. If a person appears to have pain of unknown cause, it may be vitally important to sympathetically grasp their unique perspective on their total environment, in order to help them decide on an appropriate course of treatment, education or action. This might be delivered in cooperation with other relevant community members.

Treatments for chronic pain and other disorders, which are based on apparent similarities between situations, as they are described from the comparatively narrow perspectives of key professional diagnoses, may be less helpful than a more holistic approach to gaining evidence. Different approaches should be tried as necessary, and the outcomes of this process should be compared in the interests of the individual and community. Recording variations to planned treatment according to the individual needs of the patient provides an important tool for the analysis of the efficacy of treatments. A variance is not a failure in care. Its documentation provides information, which can shed light on how to improve future care outcomes for certain types of patients, or for all of them. I have no doubt that it would be comparatively easy for communities and individuals to design imaginative programs which can meet a wide range of health and environment needs more effectively than the current structures which are predominantly driven by bureaucratic and professional interests on one hand or by commercial interests on the other. This is the logic of the post-industrial society.

PERSONAL DATA COLLECTION

In encouraging the kind of open environment, which is necessary for effective and equitable treatment, community development, good management and useful research, it is vital to be aware of the requirements of the ten National Principles for the Fair Handling of Personal Information (NPPs). The Privacy Commission released these in 1998. The Commonwealth Privacy Act requires the implementation of these principles in Commonwealth Government bodies and certain credit providers and credit reporting agencies. Such requirements do not cover private sector organizations but they should use an equivalent code of practice. According to the national personal information principles, in relation to collection an organization should:

- Only collect personal information that is necessary for what it does
- Be fair in the way it collects personal information
- Identify itself to the subject, and inform the subject of the purpose for which the information is being collected and to whom the organization usually discloses that kind of information
- Where practicable, only collect personal information directly from the subject; and
- If it collects personal information about the subject from someone else, wherever possible, inform the subject that it has done so

The following requirements should also be implemented:

Use and disclosure: an organization must only use or disclose personal information in ways that are consistent with the expectations of the subject of the information or are required in the public interest.

Data quality: an organization must ensure that personal information of an individual is accurate when it collects or uses that information

Data security: an organization must keep personal information secure.

Openness: an organization must set out in a document, available to anyone who asks for it, clearly expressed policies on its management of personal information

Access and correction: whenever possible an organization must allow a person to see the information it holds about that person and correct the information if it is wrong

Identifiers: an organization must not use as its own identifier of an individual an identifier assigned to the individual by a Government agency, for example, a person's tax file number

Anonymity: wherever lawful and practicable individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves when entering into transactions with an organization

CONCLUSION

Open communication and client self-determination in a supportive, mutually informing and very broad environment should be major community management goals. The goals for individuals should be established in the context of broader national and regional goals to improve health and sustainable development. This approach is particularly important in the light of some of the major difficulties of professional diagnosis and treatment which are often related to the unique and little known nature of the person, their history and environment. Kenny argues that acknowledgement of pain and co-development of the treatment to follow, provides the chronic pain sufferer with the support necessary for maintaining an often fragile

sense of identity and integrity. Acceptance of the reality of pain is vital prior to exploring a potential range of possible answers to it with the client. It has been claimed that when clients become co-equal with health care providers in controlling care, making decisions, and treating themselves with coaching, then outcomes improve, costs fall, satisfaction rises, and even physiological measures look better. This needs to be openly tested in regard to a wide range of potential treatment and education methods which may also lead to employment.

FURTHER READING

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