

Editorial

The character of a nation can be investigated when major occasions are celebrated. The Bicentennial celebrations, and World Expo 88 in particular, have given Australians the opportunity to demonstrate their 'coming of age'. The atmosphere generated at Expo has contributed greatly to the removal of barriers that many people have in regard to their 'personal space' - there hasn't been much personal space to go around at Expo in any case. People are learning to communicate and share experiences with others.

There is a lesson in this for those of us who work in the helping professions - communication is possible in almost all situations if the atmosphere is right. Communication has always been seen as an important component of the counsellor-client relationship, and in many cases improving communications with others has been a major goal of counselling.

However, an aspect of communication which has attracted less attention from helping professionals is in the interaction between the different groups of helping professionals, between the helping professions and the general public, and with groups of people who have a strong interest in the services and/or the clientele served.

Each of these aspects is being addressed to varying degrees, but I believe it is time to make the issue of communication a priority of all helping professions - to ensure that all providers and users are aware of the types of help available. A start has been made, for instance the annual Psychology Week organised by the Australian Psychological Society; the Interagency Colloquium organised by the State Government Departments of Health, Education and Welfare; transdisciplinary workshops catering for a wide range of professionals, organised by professional associations such as our own QGCA. Expansion of these types of activities can only improve the quality of services provided.

Within education, parents are increasingly being invited to participate more actively in the education of their children - a new policy on parental access to student records has been implemented, and in future parents will be involved in the formulation of school development plans. It is important that the helping professions play a part in the negotiations that take place in the development of school philosophies and practices.

This edition of the journal looks at a number of issues that should be considered when considering school based programming, e.g. the effectiveness of guidance officers working in secondary schools in Queensland; the consideration of special groups of students - gifted underachievers, 'hyperactive' children, Down's Syndrome children, school phobics/refusals; and the need for an affective support resource in schools.

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