

ISPS Australia Compassion in Psychosis Workshop and Conference

CONFERENCE SNAPSHOT

- **Conference Lived Experience Highlights Report by Amanda and Lyn**

Amanda: this was my first ISPS AU conference, and to be there from the beginning of the dream, be involved in the planning and delivery, and be there in person was such a rewarding and worthwhile journey. Being able to witness all our work as a board come to fruition was rewarding. A highlight was that through promotion of the conference, more people got to learn about us and we have been able to welcome new members.

I really loved the idea of creating a conference space open for all to come together; different clinicians as well as both individuals and family members with a lived experience, and everyone feeling they had an equal place. Through my own circles I had promoted ISPS AU and the conference, inviting and encouraging lived experience colleagues to attend and present, so it was lovely to see so many familiar faces present. I particularly enjoyed hearing from such a diverse group of people about the power of compassion and how useful it has been both personally and professionally in their lives.

Another highlight for me was co presenting a workshop on Compassionate Listening through Peer Supported Open Dialogue. I left feeling I had been professionally nourished with an increased sense of hope for the future.

I found value in the Compassion Focussed Therapy workshop as I was instantly able to apply the theory of the circles, due to their power and simplicity, into my own practice facilitating Hearing Voices Groups. Also, as a result of both the training and the conference, I noticed my own compassionate circle has strengthened and grown. Applying the compassion focused therapy approach enabled me to say 'yes' when asked to use my own lived experience live on radio; what also helped during the interview was the presenter/journalist, Lyn Malcom's real, authentic, respectful approach, which felt like 'compassionate journalism' at its best.

Amanda Waegeli
Lived Experience Board Member Perspective

Lyn: A highlight of the conference for me was being among others who are interested in compassionate approaches. I am all too often reminded of the lack of compassion I often felt when using services and how wonderful it is to know that people like Paul Gilbert, Charlie and so many other clinicians and peers are deeply interested in compassionate approaches. The conference theme struck me on a personal level too, and I was reminded of the fact that learning to allow compassion in was lifesaving for me; historically, I have been my own worst enemy with my inner critic being amplified via a voice I called 'the annihilator', which says it all I guess. When I finally invented my 'compassionate interpreter', it has changed my life and kick-started my recovery, and so listening to all the different presentations at the conference did my

heart good for sure. This is the message I would love to see get out there as I strongly believe more as self-compassion is key.

The other part of the conference which was great was the in-between session chats I had with people I know, those I am getting to know, some folk I had heard of or seen in emails, as well as new people too. Another layer which was very special for me was getting to spend time with my colleagues on the board. We meet and do the work or managing ISPS via Skype and email over the years and so getting together in person not only deepened our connection, the flow on effect of it is good for ISPS Australia too. I have nothing but appreciation to our fellow ISPS Au Board Directors for their contribution to us making this fabulous conference come to fruition and also the stewardship of our chair Dr Melissa Connell who led this process.

Lyn Mahboub

Lived Experience Board Member Perspective

- **Conference: Psychiatrist Snapshot Report by Dr David Ward**



This conference exceeded my expectations. A keynote presentation by Dr Eleanor Longden and Dr Charlie Heriot-Maitland was absolutely exceptional and truly inspiring. This story needs to be heard by all professionals aspiring to or already working in mental health. It is also very important for all medical staff from medical school to the grave.

The additional keynote by Matt Ball telling the story of a mental health professional's experience of the system was again inspiring and informative. All the workshops were informative, thought provoking and practically helpful. To close the day with another inspirational and articulate talk from an expert in lived experience Debra Lampshire, was a fitting tribute to a conference that was truly passionate about enabling recovery from those experiencing extreme states such as psychosis. ISPS continues to deliver and credit should be given to the Australian Chair Dr Melissa Connell.

Yours sincerely,
Dr David Ward
Director of Adolescent Psychiatry
Metro North Mental Health - RBWH

MEDIA SNAPSHOT REPORT

ABC Radio National:

We were delighted to have *All in the Mind* journalist and radio presenter Lynn Malcom at our Compassion Focused Therapy for Psychosis Workshop 2018. She interviewed our conference keynote Charlie Heriot Maitland as well as Board Directors Matt Ball¹ and Amanda Waegeli. You can listen to the podcast of the program ***Compassion therapy for voice-hearing: Sunday 29***

¹ Congratulations Matt on your outstanding achievement of 2017 Mental Health Nurse of the Year

April 2018 5:05PM² (see below). The program was accompanied by singer, songwriter, voice hearer and board director extraordinaire Amanda's music *Amanda's Dance*, published by Restless Music.

² See at ABC Radio National: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/compassion-therapy-for-voice-hearing/9692796>