

## TCs and our global reach

The final edition of the journal this year has papers which capture some of the international reach of Therapeutic Community practice, with papers from the USA, Thailand and the UK. The papers also point to the rich variety of research and work that is happening in and around therapeutic communities, and also the different types of clients that Therapeutic Communities are seeking to help. There has always been a debate about whether or not therapeutic communities should be finely tuned with standards and clearly defined protocols. Surely it is a good idea to have a finessed model with clarity whereby clients and commissioners know what they are getting? Well, as maybe, but some colleagues disagree. When the Community of Communities was established in the UK with the task of taking forward the idea of standards, the late Stuart Whitley at the opening event mused that standards could lead to stasis. There was a similar discussion among our Italian colleagues at their annual conference where opposing speakers argued for and against TCs being standardized vs TCs being more spontaneous? After a passionate debate delegates were invited to cast their vote in favor of one or other, standards vs spontaneity. And the outcome? The vote was tied. This was not necessarily a democratic impasse (and we know something about the precarious nature of democracy in the UK at the moment), but rather the vote pointed to neat ideal combination of standards and spontaneity sitting together. We need standards to consolidate a good idea, but we also need to remain open and alert to new ways of thinking and working.

And there can be no better way of learning than by sharing ideas with colleagues all over the world. I am pleased that we now have re-structured the editorial board so we now have continental receiving editors as follows:

- European: Rowdy Yates, University of Stirling, UK
- Australasian: Lynne Magor-Blatch, University Woollagong, Australia
- Americas: Keith Warren, Ohio State University, USA
- UK: Richard Shuker, HMP Grendon, UK

The receiving editors sit alongside the board and advisory board. This new structure means the journal reaches out to the main TC organizations: The UK Consortium of Therapeutic Communities (TCTC), the Association of Therapeutic Communities Australia (ATCA), World Federation of Therapeutic Communities (WFTC) and European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC). The aim is to have global reach and global appeal. For those of us who are concerned with journal metrics (and this is important if we want commissioners and policy makers to pay attention to our work) global reach is one way of increasing our status. I am pleased to say a number of the journal board managed to get together at the EFTC conference a few weeks ago, where there were over 500 delegates representing 40 countries. There are new TCs springing up all over the place, Moldova and Romania have new prison TCs, there are a couple of hundred members who part of the new Brazilian Federation, a new network of TCs in Russia. It is all very encouraging.

As we look forward to next year, I am in some discussion about possible special editions, and I am keen to hear more ideas. In 2020, we are due to publish 4 issues, each of 6 papers (i.e. a total of 24 papers). If we imagine that the journal is reaching out to new frontiers as well as appealing to well established TCs and colleagues, then I would say we need a broad type of paper, from empirical accounts of outcome, as well descriptive accounts of TC practice and philosophy that map trajectory and biography. All of this will bring great enlightenment to our TC “family.”

The *TC* journal is broad church of academia that reflects the scope of application across the lifespan, from cradle to grave. One thing I would like to propose is some form of co-authoring cooperative, by this I mean some way of connecting English speaking colleagues with overseas TC colleagues who are writing in English as a second language. This could lead to data sharing and data build, but also an increase the number of papers, and also the quality of papers. One of the fall shorts for us working in the fields of mental health, education, psychology, psychiatry, nursing, restorative practices and so on, is that we do not do enough collaborative writing. Our scientist colleagues do not blink an eye at having a dozen co-authors, many hands make light work. It seems paradoxical that in TCs we spend so much time co-constructing conversations, one might expect that co-authoring papers would come easier. So that would be my challenge to colleagues going forward, look for more opportunities for co-authorship.

As I enter my third year as Editor-in-Chief, I feel optimistic about the future for TCs, and I am hoping to see the journal flourish likewise with a growing number of pages. Since Bob Hinshelwood established the journal in 1978 it has been an essential platform for a diverse range of practitioners, theoreticians, researchers, thinkers and experts by experience who are interested in education, culture, politics, social and restorative justice, arts, groups and communities. By my calculations, next year will be the 42nd year of the *TC* journal, and according to Douglas Adams, 42 is the answer to life, the universe and everything! Let us hope we have a vintage year.

Just a reminder of the some of the key links for the journal that you may like to use and pass onto any colleagues who may write for us:

Submissions can be made at: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tcj>

General information about the Journal at: [www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/tc.htm](http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/tc.htm)

Guidelines for contributors: [www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/journals/author\\_guidelines.htm?id=tc](http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=tc)