

Gary Winship

I am delighted to be taking over the Editorship of the *The International Journal for Therapeutic Communities (IJTC)* from April 2016. The *IJTC* was established in 1978 by Bob Hinshelwood and 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. Mental health should be a shared and co-operative endeavour of developmental human relations and therapeutic communities (TCs) have a long tradition emerging from progressive schooling, through psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, social psychiatry, anti-psychiatry and group analysis, always committed to democratic critical reflection combined with a radical utopian ambition. This has been the direction of travel for the journal and so should it continue.

On behalf of the editorial collective, our thanks go to the out-going Editor Steve Pearce for his work in keeping the journal buoyant. The journal is a public sphere platform for a range of innovative scholarly papers, from in-depth qualitative studies including reflective descriptive accounts of user voice, to quantitative outcomes facing research. We should embrace TCs in the wider sense of the word, so alongside residential TCs, or day TCs, we should be looking to see how TC ideas can shape a range of encounters, this might be in a school, a secure unit or even in groups, organisations, and perhaps even whole neighbourhoods. A therapeutic community is an idea without walls. The key ingredients of a therapeutic community are curiosity into process: how do people live and work together to create the optimal conditions for well-being, what are the key psychological, social and political constituents of community that make it therapeutic, what are the blocks, and how can we describe, research and evaluate the dynamics of these therapeutic community events?

So what are you doing (or what have you done) to create a therapeutic community? Your community might be a transitional or short-term therapeutic community (a cohort of trainees, a transitional event for service users) as well as an established TC. What are the features of your TC practice which colleagues ought to know about, what has worked and what has not worked, and what has been unexpected? To incentivise papers, a selection will be published as short-term open access and one (or two) paper(s) each year are awarded permanent open access by Emerald. I am looking forward to seeing your papers. If you have any ideas, by all means get in touch with me: gary.winship@nottingham.ac.uk. I'm delighted to welcome you to this current edition of the journal with a representative range of quality papers which capture some of the innovative work and research that is happening today.

I need to end with a brief note about the death of Eric Broekaert who passed away a few weeks ago. Eric has been a Member of the editorial collective for a number of years and his work is known all around the world. He will be sorely missed. We were already planning a special edition of the journal to celebrate Eric's work, so this will now have even greater poignancy.