

Developing the TC training curriculum: what do we need in a TC worker?

Training and Research Symposium
October 2010



My story of training to be a TC worker...



- In April, 1974, appointed to the Ley Community in Oxford as a “Group Worker”.
- First time the Ley, which had only been established in 1971, had appointed anyone who had not come through the ranks as a graduate of the Ley or Alpha House, the first UK therapeutic community.
- Alpha House established three years earlier than the Ley by Psychiatrist Ian Christie and his psychologist wife, Jane Green, who had also been “TC trained” by placing themselves as residents in US programs in late 1960s.



- John McCabe, graduate of Phoenix House in New York and Director of the Ley Community.

- Dr Bertram Mandlebrote and Dr Peter Agulnik (on right) – were psychiatrists from



the Littlemore Hospital who established the Ley Unit, initially as a therapeutic community within the hospital. The Ley Community was established in a beautiful house that had once belonged to potter Bernard Leach, on Cumnor Hill in 1974 and re-establishing to Yarnton in 1979.

- Marvin seated next to Peter, Charlie Blatch on left.

The training begins!



Setting out
– and the
arrival at
Alpha
House!



- After about three weeks, living in the girl's dorm, had gone from hating it to loving it.
- Arrival of two friends from Australia, alarmed about lack of contact - in the house and searching for me!
- When nothing else was going to appease them, I was brought to see them, at which point they grabbed me and tried to run for the front door! I stayed!



- Five weeks later I had moved through all stages of the program.
- Been on the kitchen crew, an Expeditor, Assistant Manager, Department Head and House Coordinator.
- Shouted at in encounter groups - these were the early days of encounters when shouting to express pent up anger was expected.



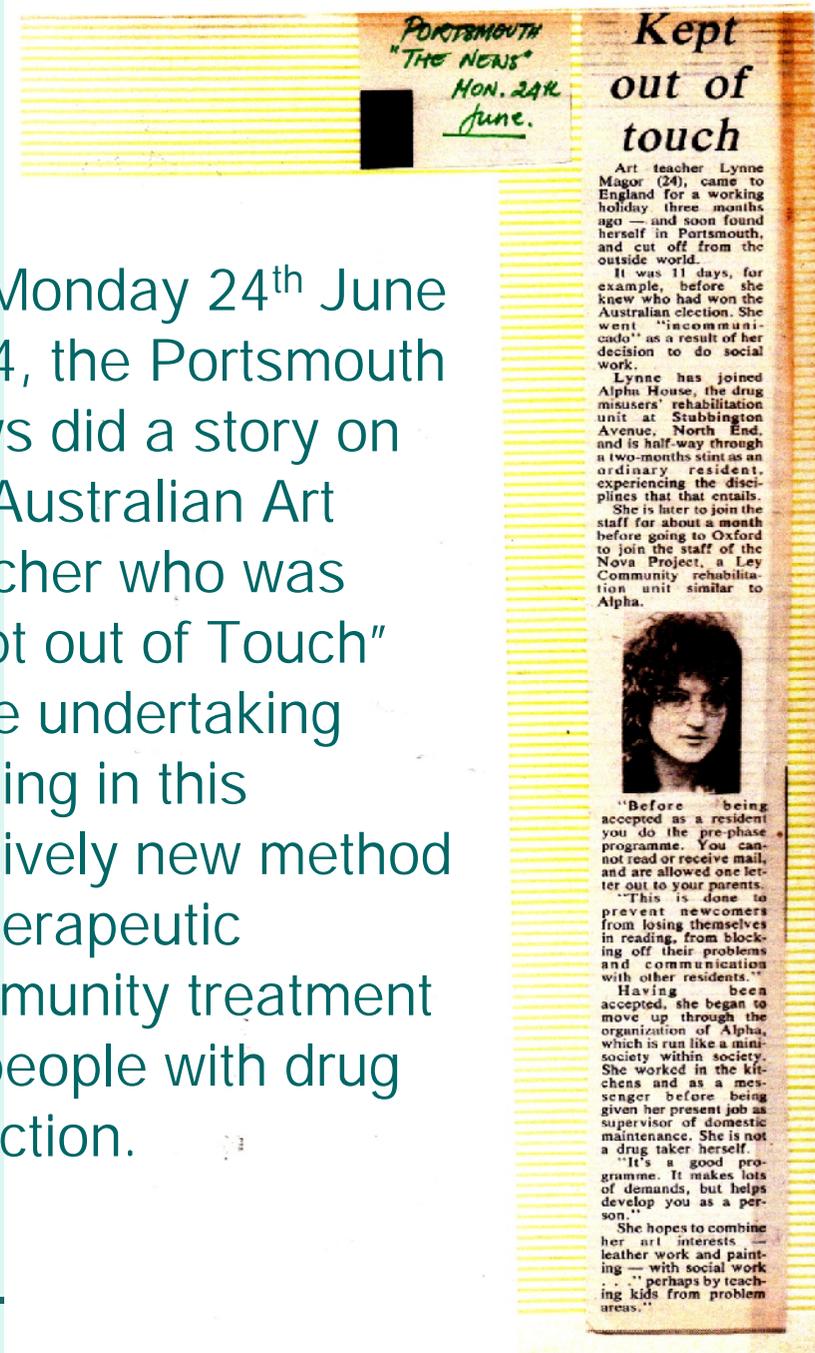
- And performed some wonderful Image breakers!

Other friends from Australia, both fellow art teachers, had also arrived – and spent the weekend engaged with the residents in an art program.



I always knew the residents would do wonderful art work!

On Monday 24th June 1974, the Portsmouth News did a story on the Australian Art Teacher who was “Kept out of Touch” while undertaking training in this relatively new method of therapeutic community treatment for people with drug addiction.





Martin Evans (now with NSW Health) & David Kennard – relieved they were not sent for training!



- Completed my three months – with the seven weeks following my period as a resident spent as a staff member.
- Others not so fortunate in the training!
- Marvin kept as resident for the whole 3 months.
- The next staff member “split” from training

- Sold on the idea of TCs, and despite meandering back into the arts for a short period of time, have maintained my involvement in TCs for over 36 years.



- I was lucky, because despite the sometimes difficult experience of being a resident, Alpha House was enormous fun – and it worked!
- Both Alpha and the Ley provided tremendous opportunities for training with sound clinical oversight provided by psychiatrists and trained staff.



- Adaption of the classic on the job training model.
- Certainly it could be seen as somewhat of an extreme form – most on the job training methods don't involve the worker becoming a client.
- Nevertheless on the job training is a model that has been used across many work areas over a long period of time – usually teamed with training through TaFE, universities and other institutions or training organisations.

A 1974 Charlie Blatch (top) and Jane Green and Ian Christie, who I met up with last year in The Hague, 35 years after Alpha House – TC people are stayers!

- Both the Ley and Alpha House were established as units of psychiatric hospitals, the UK model was underpinned by sound clinical direction and governance.
- Peter Agulnik very involved in both clinical supervision and training.
- Opportunity to engage in psychotherapy training – including gestalt therapy and encounter group training – both the theory and the practice.
- Bertram Mandelbrote, Ian Christie and Peter Agulnik were all members of an innovative and creative group of psychiatrists in the 1960s and 1970s who were looking for a different way of treating substance use and mental health problems.
- Ian Christie and Jane Green established Alpha House after visiting America and undertaking training by putting themselves into therapeutic communities as residents.

George De Leon talks about three distinct issues which confront TCs as they move closer to the mainstream in working with diverse populations and complex issues -

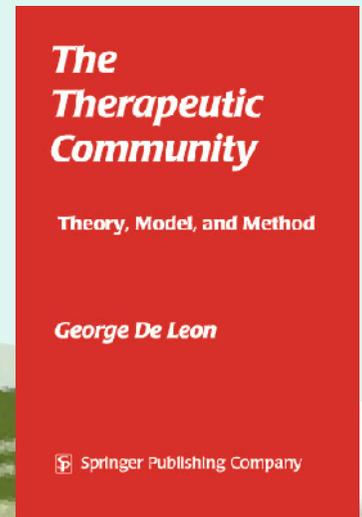
1. The need to upgrade skills of clinicians.
2. Broaden skills as general counsellors to work effectively with problems in relation to chemical dependency.
- The third issue reflects the training needs resulting from the changes to the composition of the TC.
3. As increasing numbers of professional staff come to work in the TC, new concepts, language and methods are introduced.
 - The warning given by De Leon is that these staff members may counter or even subvert the fundamental self-help features of the TC – is this warning justified?

- De Leon - Need for professional staff to have both theoretical and experiential training in “traditional” TCs to be effectively integrated into the TC approach.
- TCA (Therapeutic Communities America) - established criteria and procedures for evaluating counselling staff by formal training in theory and methods of the TC, which complements and upgrades the experientially based competencies of TC workers who have come through programs.
- De Leon makes the point that TC counsellors must also be grounded in the skills and knowledge of the generalist counsellor to enhance their professional stature in the human services hierarchy.

- Professional staff who come from outside the TC environment need to be trained in TC methods and through both theoretical and experiential training.
- Conversely, staff who have experiential training – ie have been through a program, and are referred to by De Leon as “traditional” TC workers, need to gain the skills and knowledge of other counsellors in order to achieve the professional stature and credibility necessary to advance in the wider human services field.

The TC Curriculum, developed because Leaders in the therapeutic community (TC) model of treatment identified a critical need for entry-level staff training in the basics of the TC model. 11 Modules:

1. Introduction to the Therapeutic Community Curriculum
2. The History and Evolution of the Therapeutic Community
3. Treatment and Recovery—The TC View
4. The Community-as-Method Approach
5. The TC Social Structure and Physical Environment
6. Peer Interpersonal Relationships
7. Staff Roles and Rational Authority
8. TC Treatment Methods
9. Work as Therapy and Education
10. Stages of the TC Program and the Phases of Treatment
11. How Residents Change in a TC



Australasian AOD Therapeutic Communities Standards & Support Package

- In 2009, the ATCA launched the Standards, developed by Jill Rundle and distributed to members over the past 12 months.
- These include a training package that picks up on all the vital components of the US TC Curriculum, and places them within the Australasian context.
- Our objective was to ensure the integrity of the “Therapeutic Community” principle is maintained and will continue to stand as a model of best practice in the treatment of substance misuse and co-occurring disorders.

[Welcome](#)[Background](#)[How To Use This Package](#)[Modules](#)[Additional Benefits](#)[Welcome](#)[Background](#)[How To Use This Package](#)[Modules](#)[Know the TC](#) S[The TC Sector](#) L[Reviewing the TC](#) A[Staff at the TC](#) A[Working with Resident
Members of the TC](#) S[Data at the TC](#) A[Safety at the TC](#) A[Planning at the TC](#) L[Additional Benefits](#)[Self Review Worksheet](#)

Legend

S Staff L Leaders A All

Modules

Know the TC

- [Community as Method](#)
- [Staged Approach](#)
- [Holistic and Multidimensional Approach](#)
- [Treatment Matching](#)
- [Treatment Plans](#)
- [Residents and Health & Safety](#)
- [Residents and TC Values](#)
- [Overseeing Tasks](#)
- [Guidelines For Staff](#)
- [Feedback On Module 1](#)

The TC Sector

- [The TC Model and Principles for TC Leaders](#)
- [TC Promotion](#)
- [Contribution to Sector Research](#)
- [Feedback on Module 2](#)

Reviewing the TC

- [Review using the ATCEEs](#)
- [Reviewing Staff Capacity](#)
- [Reviewing Staff Practices](#)
- [Reviewing Risk](#)
- [Reviewing Policies and Procedures](#)

Training Package

- The supporting training package was developed for the professional development of management and staff working within the Therapeutic Community (TC) sector.
- Includes an induction kit for staff entering the TC field.

Questions and issues...

- Are we there yet in our training programs?
- What do we need in the TC worker?
- George De Leon, in Byron Bay in 2008, talked about Centres of Excellence along the lines of the “teaching hospital” model where TC staff could be trained – is this a good idea?
- Should the ATCA, in partnership with some of its member groups be establishing teaching and training centres?
- Or are we already well served by the sector through minimum qualification requirements?