

Editorial

We have great pleasure in introducing this special, themed issue of articles from PCE 2021, the 14th biennial conference of the World Association of Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapy & Counseling (WAPCEPC). While we are delighted to introduce this issue, we are also mindful of a number of losses in our changing world, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the recent invasion of Ukraine, and in our person-centered and experiential (PCE) community. At the beginning of the conference last year, we acknowledged the latter, including the passing of Melissa Harte, Bernie Neville, Charles O’Leary, and Peter Schmid. As we were preparing this editorial, we heard of the death of Pete Sanders who, with Maggie Taylor-Sanders, established PCCS counseling training in Manchester, UK, and, later, PCCS Books. Apart from these achievements, Pete had a huge passion for the approach; an incisive mind that he brought to bear in critiquing the medical/psychiatric model and establishment; a commitment to social justice; and a wicked sense of humour. He will be sorely missed.

As a result of the pandemic, the conference was postponed for a year, and then, for the first time in WAPCEPC’s history, conducted as a hybrid conference. The event consisted of a relatively small in-person conference held at Auckland University of Technology in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, and a larger online conference, comprising five parallel live streamed lectures and workshops taking place across eight time zones so as to offer maximum participation. It took a lot of work but, overall, it went to plan, and was well received. Notwithstanding the success of the conference, we were – and are – aware of a number of other losses associated with the conference. The first of these was the loss of the original dream of the conference organising committee, which was to welcome members of WAPCEPC to Auckland and to Aotearoa New Zealand, and also to be able to present to people in this country the breadth, depth, and richness of PCE psychotherapy and counselling. The second loss was that of contact and connection. PCE 2018 (held in Vienna, Austria) had been a wonderful, well-organised, and vibrant conference, and, following that, we and the rest of the PCE community were expecting to be able to meet, connect, and reconnect as we usually do. Instead, we had to adjust to a new reality. To some extent, this loss continues as a number of us won’t be at PCE 2022 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and will have to wait longer until we can be physically present and engaging with colleagues and friends.

So, having acknowledged those who have passed, and other losses, we now turn to the kaupapa (theme) and content of this special issue, the first contribution to which is a karakia tuturu (traditional blessing) offered by our first keynote speaker, Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan (Ngāti Kahungunu ki Nuhaka, Ngāti Ranginui ki Tauranga Moana, Ngāti Porou ki Muriwai); (Kohu-Morgan, 2022). We are grateful to Hinewirangi for this opening to the special issue which parallels her opening to the scientific programme of the conference.

The themes of the conference were “Tihei mauri ora – Contact, culture, and context”. These are elaborated in the first article of the special issue in which Keith Tudor, Brian Rodgers and Valance Smith (2022) explore each of these themes individually, and how they intersect to provide an integrated understanding of bicultural engagement in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is followed by a pair of articles based on keynote speeches given at the conference. In the first, Louise Embleton Tudor (2022) examines the role of breath in well-being, and the ways in which we connect and disconnect from ourselves and others. Taking the first theme of the conference, *Tihei mauri ora*, as a framework she brings a neuro-scientific-informed perspective to the experience of PCE therapeutic practice and life in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. In the second, Julia Ioane (2022) explores balancing ourselves in our journey with Pasifika communities in person-centred and experiential psychotherapy and counselling. Drawing on Pasifika methodology and,

specifically, a research method based on Tongan cultural practice, the article explores an approach to person-centred work that is informed by Pasifika values and practice.

The next pair of articles represent some of the creativity we experienced at PCE 2021. In the first, Deborah Green, Amanda Levey, and Heleina Dalton (2022) explore contact boundaries through the creative process, inviting us into contact with our inner and intersubjective spaces, as well as the world around us. The authors interweave various theories alongside their creative narration of the conference workshop, inviting readers into a vicarious exploration of their own experience. In the second, Emma Green (2022) reflects on the invisibility of whiteness in her identity and, through poetic inquiry, comes into contact with an enriched understanding of her own cultural heritage.

The third pair of articles tackle different aspects of culture and theory. In the first, Brian Rodgers, Shirley Rivers, Janet May, and Keith Tudor (2022) discuss bicultural engagement in Aotearoa New Zealand in the context of offering a space – and place – for engagement. Using the metaphor of a double-hulled waka to explore encounter and biculturalism, the authors frame relational engagement as (in)formed by contact, connection, journey and place. In the final article Keith Tudor (2022) considers the history of Rogers’ “relationship therapy” (that is, contacting our history); discusses two concepts, diagnosis and contact, that embody the culture of the approach, and reflects on the need for person-centered theory and practice to adapt to local conditions (that is, to its context) if it is to continue to be relational and relevant.

We close this editorial with a final reflection on the importance of genuine contact and engagement; respect for different cultures, peoples, and jurisdictions; and the global context, including the human cost of pandemics, war, and death. At this time, we suggest that the world might be a better place if we could pause, behold, and honour the precious breath of life. Tihei mauri ora!

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