

# Editorial

Jerome Carson

## Editorial for mental health and social inclusion

I am writing this editorial only three days away from Christmas Day. It will not appear in the journal until next year, 2023. This issue will be the fourth that Julie and I have edited, since taking over from Rachel Perkins and Julie Repper. It has been a privilege to edit the journal and we continue to receive lots of high-quality submissions from across the world. I have selected a wide range of papers for this issue, which I hope readers will find as interesting as I have.

The first paper is “A tale of two Peters...”, by Patrick Hopkinson and his colleagues. This paper looked at the career of the musical genius Peter Green, the founder of Fleetwood Mac. Peter’s career was adversely affected by severe mental health problems. The authors contrast Peter’s life with that of the musician Peter Bryngelsson, who has written a book in Swedish on Peter, as well as Andrew Joyce. The paper joins a growing list of academic accounts that highlight the link between creativity and mental health problems. Rather like Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd, Peter Green was never able to fully re-capture his earlier creative genius, seen in compositions like “Albatross”.

The second paper by Melissa Husbands and Julie Prescott is a systematic review of the research literature on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the well-being of university academics. The authors could only identify eight studies in the worldwide literature. They raise concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic increasing pastoral work for academics, without them receiving adequate institutional support. In fact, they point out that this support has in fact largely been lacking, with consequent negative effects on well-being.

In the first of a series of interviews on humour and mental health, Freda Gonot-Schoupinsky interviews Arthur Asa Berger from the USA, on his research and practice in the field of humour over a 60-year period. The paper includes photographs of Arthur over the years, as well as extracts from his journals. He also shares his system of humour classification, which identifies a staggering 45 different humour techniques. Arthur has just published another book on the eve of his 90th birthday!

Jesse Omoregie and the editor present results from Jesse’s research into intrusive thoughts. Jesse conducted a large online survey with over 500 participants, who completed a range of scientifically validated questionnaires. Participants with higher levels of flourishing, emotional stability, self-compassion, greater perceived control and affective well-being were significantly less likely to experience intrusive thoughts. His work raises the question that if we could increase levels of flourishing in vulnerable groups, could we then reduce their intrusive thoughts?

Simona Karbouniaris and her colleagues from Holland conducted qualitative interviews of psychiatrists with lived experience of mental health problems. The authors have run support groups for this group of psychiatrists. The groups have helped the psychiatrists to integrate their own lived experiences of mental distress into their professional lives.

Melvin Bradley addresses the very important issue of loneliness in the community. Loneliness has attracted considerable interest from researchers in recent years, with many studies showing links between loneliness and mental health problems. Melvin runs a community

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mental health support service and is a leading advocate of the importance of self-help groups in addressing a range of mental health issues.

The next paper has Paul Makin reflecting on his on-going recovery from psychosis and the support he received from community mental health services. Paul's story is unique in that he was previously an alcoholic and had been abstinent from alcohol for some years prior to developing a psychosis. Paul's description of the lack of community support that he received from mental health services, will strike a chord with many.

Kirsty Lilley writes about how recalling happy and pleasant memories from childhood, may help in rebalancing a life troubled by traumatic memories. Kirsty argues that pleasant memories can be leveraged to improve self-confidence and reduce self-criticism. She believes that this can help us move from a position of being threat-centred, to a more soothing and contented state of being. Writing about these pleasant memories can help with re-living them and savouring the benefits they brought.

The final paper in this issue of Mental Health and Social Inclusion is from the Remarkable Lives series, now curated by Robert Hurst. In it, Ella Vadasz tells her story of childhood pregnancy and the battles for the custody of her young child. Robert then interviews Ella. The account also features two poems written by Ella. A truly uplifting story to end the issue.

**Professor Jerome Carson, Co-editor, Bolton December 2022**