

Editorial: A new era and moving forward

Jerome Carson and Julie Prescott

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I have been fortunate to have worked with Adam Pozner, who was the Editor of the previous incarnation of this journal called, “A Life in the Day”. Dr Rachel Perkins and Dr Julie Repper have been the co-editors of *Mental Health and Social Inclusion* for the past eight years. They have left behind a formidable legacy. As a clinical psychologist who once specialised in what was then called the psychiatric rehabilitation field, Rachel was an individual I looked up to. Some of her papers became classics in the field. My first encounter with her “cemented” the legend. I was attending a meeting of Clinical Psychologists working in Psychiatric Rehabilitation in the District Services Centre at the Maudsley Hospital. About 60–70 psychologists were sitting down eagerly anticipating the start of the one-day conference. Suddenly a service user walked to the front of the room and stood facing the multitude of psychologists. Of course, none of them knew what to do! Rachel appeared, put her arm around this man and walked off with him. What sort of magic was this? Rachel informed me years later that she told the man “Wouldn’t you rather have a nice cup of tea than to sit listening to a bunch of boring psychologists?” The man of course could see the wisdom of this and left willingly. Dr Julie Repper has been the co-editor of the journal, but I never got to meet Julie until years later at a conference in Exeter. Rachel and Julie will indeed be a tough act to follow.

Becoming a co-editor of *Mental Health and Social Inclusion* is a bit of a dream come true for me. I have co-authored more papers in this journal than in any other. I started with a series of five papers called Recovery Heroes. This then led to four papers on Historical Recovery Heroes. My next series was the long running Remarkable Lives. All of these papers have been co-authored with people who have lived experience of mental health problems. Down the years, many of these co-authors have become friends, and I have especially valued my close friendships with Peter Bullimore, Jo Mullen and Andrew Voyce. Andrew and I have gone on to publish some other papers together, which I am very proud of. While there will be a few more Remarkable Lives features, I have asked Robert Hurst to take over the series. Robert and myself along with other colleagues have analysed the Remarkable Lives series of papers, and our latest paper on this is in this issue of the journal.

My own background has been in the area of mental health. I worked in a number of the old asylums, before training as a clinical psychologist. I worked for 32 years in the NHS, taking early retirement in 2011, at the age of 54. The following year I managed to get the post of Professor of Psychology at the University of Bolton. I am now nearing the end of 10 years at Bolton, and I hope to do another five. I am really excited to be a co-editor of the journal and to be carrying forward the excellent work carried out by our predecessors Rachel and Julie.

Hi, I’m Julie Prescott and I am the new Head of Psychology at the University of Law. I am a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a Chartered Psychologist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. I have worked in academia for over 20 years and previously held the position of Reader in Psychology and was the programme lead for the BSc (Hons) in Psychology, Psychotherapy and Counselling at the University of Bolton. I am an active researcher with specialism in digital innovations to support mental health. I am

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particularly interested in research around young people's mental health and their use of online technologies for their mental health support. I work closely with Dr Terry Hanley at the University of Manchester and the online counselling service Kooth.com. I have edited, authored and co-authored several books and am also really excited about the opportunity to become the new co-editor of the *Mental Health and Social Inclusion* journal.

I will be writing a brief section in each edition of the journal on my specialism of digital technologies to support mental health. The aim of this section is to keep abreast of current developments within the field, as well as to consider new applications including therapeutic games, artificial intelligence, virtual reality interventions, as well as online counselling and mental health support. The section will hopefully engage readers in the application of novel interventions delivered via digital technologies. The section will also incorporate guest authors specialising in the area. The idea behind the section is to advocate the use of such technologies and consider the affordances technology can provide, whilst also recognising the limits and barriers in accessing new technologies.

Together we hope to increase the reach of the journal worldwide and to bring exciting new developments in the mental field to you, our readers.

We are keen to hear from people who are interested in submitting to the journal as a research article, as a case study or service user point of view with a particular interest in mental health and social inclusion in the areas of digital mental health, education, practice and community engagement.