

GLIP News

Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology
An Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the second edition of GLIP News for 2004. It has again taken a little longer than usual to get this one out. This time, we were waiting for the opportunity to include abstracts from *Out in the Antipodes*. What an exciting time it has been the past 12 months. Our first stand alone conference and now a monograph. These activities take time and have taken us away from other activities. As a small Interest Group, we are incredibly active.

Gordon's regular report is on pages 2-3 and a selection of abstracts from *Out in the Antipodes*, can be read on pages 3 through to 5. A big thank you to Damien Riggs for his tireless efforts and endless energy in ensuring the book come together.

I hope to see some members in Sydney.

Graeme Kane
National Secretary &
GLIP News Editor

GLIP Dinner—Melbourne

Next Melbourne get together is on 14th October at 7.30 pm, at Warung Agus, 305 Victoria Street, West Melbourne.

If you would like more information, venue details or to RSVP, please contact Ela Jodko - GLIP Committee Member (Victoria): elaexplore@iprimus.com.au or 0419 155 707 or 9539 1557



Launch of *Out in the Antipodes* & AGM - Sydney

The Launch: As promised, *Out in the Antipodes* will be launched at this year's APS conference in Sydney. Getting it ready for printing was a much bigger job than Damien or Gordon ever anticipated, but with Vivienne Cass's considerable assistance in her role as Director of her own publishing company Brightfire Press, we finally made it. I hope you are as pleased with it as we are. Ordering details are on page 3.

The launch will take place as part of the APS Interest Groups – Social Issues Forum in the timeslot 12.00-3.00 pm on Thursday, 30 September. Hope to see some of you there.

The AGM: It would be great to see some of our Sydney members at the AGM, which is on Saturday 2nd October

between 1-2pm. You do not need to register as a conference delegate in order to attend. GLIP New's ongoing relevance will be discussed as outlined in the last edition. The British Psychological Society's Gay and Lesbian Section re-developed their newsletter and now edit a review journal. Let us know what you think.

Graeme Kane

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National Convener's Report - The year in review!



The focus of attention in my report is very clearly on the APS Annual Conference in Sydney 28 Sept. – 3 Oct. A number of things that we have been working on for some time will be featured there.

OUT IN THE ANTIPODES: Australian and New Zealand Perspectives on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology

Antipodes — *def* **1.** The country of those who live on the opposite side of the globe. **2.** Anything exactly opposite or contrary.

Out in the Antipodes is a long-awaited addition to the literature on gay and lesbian psychology. The first book in this field to specifically address Australian and New Zealand perspectives, it highlights the diversity and richness of lesbian and gay experience in the antipodes.

Bringing together a diverse collection of work by respected theorists and researchers, *Out in the Antipodes* confronts the invisibility of gay and lesbian psychology within mainstream psychology in Australia and New Zealand.

Taking a wide-ranging perspective, this book provides the stimulus to critical dialogue on a number of important questions:

- Why it is important to question the value of claiming a distinct identity as a gay, lesbian or bisexual person.
- How claiming such an identity can contribute to the very dominance of heterosexuality that gay, lesbian and bisexual people are seeking to challenge.
- What the advantages might be of resisting being labelled as having a particular sexual orientation.
- What is queer theory and what it has to contribute to lesbian and gay psychology.
- Why we might question the usefulness of the construct of identity in our own lives.
- What the limitations might be of accepting same-sex attraction as being 'a normal variant of human sexuality'.
- The pros and cons of a strong identification with a gay, lesbian and bisexual community.
- How culturally determined our concept of identity is.
- How psychologists might position themselves in order to do better work with same-sex attracted individuals.

- The challenges that same-sex attracted families present to the dominant notion of family in Western societies.
- How same sex attracted people are sometimes constrained by discourses and narratives dominant in the wider society.
- The impact of cultural values and the heterosexual context on health policy and practice in relation to same-sex attracted individuals.

GLIP Award

Also happening in the same APS Interest Groups – Social Issues Forum (12.00-3.00 pm on Thursday, 30 September) will be a presentation to this year's winner of the GLIP Award – Sharon Dane. The judges comments are as follows: Sharon's study, "Taking a closer look: The role of perceived heterosexual acceptance and perceived support from sexual minority friends in predicting same-sex attracted youths' well-being," was very well executed in all stages of the thesis. The literature review integrated the existing literature succinctly and provided a clear rationale for the study. The methodology and analyses were appropriate to the aims of the research and the findings were clearly articulated. While heterosexual acceptance was a significant predictor of well-being for all same sex attracted youth, of interest were the findings that support from sexual minority friends and mother's acceptance of sexual orientation contributed to the prediction of well-being only for lesbian youth. A particular pleasing aspect of the study was that the findings and the limitations of the study were discussed in an in-depth manner, thoughtfully and coherently. The thesis was very well written and demonstrated an excellent command of clear argument and structure throughout.

Sharon completed her research as part of her fourth year studies in the degree of Bachelor of Psychological Science at the University of Queensland under the supervision of Dr. Geoff MacDonald

As the winner of this year's GLIP award, Sharon will receive a certificate and a cheque to the value of \$250.

A special commendation goes to Benjamin Bavinton for his study entitled "Gay men's stereotypes of gay men: A personal construct investigation into stereotyping, sex roles and identity". The research is highly original and broad in scope and has made a significant contribution to the field. Furthermore, the study was firmly grounded in theory and the rationale and aims of the study were clearly communicated. Notable amongst a range of findings was that gay men who rejected negative stereotypes had a more favourable view of themselves.

Benjamin completed his research as part of the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at the University of Wollongong under the supervision of Dr. Beverly

Walker. Benjamin is being awarded a \$50 book voucher in recognition of this commendation.

The GLIP Award is made annually to promote and encourage excellence in research into psychological issues of same-sex attraction

GLIP Drinks & Dinner

6.00-7.00 pm, Thursday, 30 September. Here's where we really celebrate Sharon's win and the launch of the book. We will even sell you an autographed copy!!!

However, drinks will only be an hour as we will then head out to dinner in order to continue the celebration!!! Where to? - a mystery destination organised by one of our Sydney members!!! Be prepared for adventure!

Here's to a very good conference!!

Best wishes
Gordon Walker
National Convener

Out in the Antipodes: Australian & New Zealand Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues in Psychology. Eds, Damien Riggs and Gordon Walker. Brightfire, Perth

Orders can be made via Brightfire's website:

www.brightfire.com.au and further information is available at www.outintheantipodes.vze.com

1 Quite Contrary: Lesbian and Gay Psychology in the Antipodes

Damien W. Riggs & Gordon Walker

In this introductory chapter we start off by defining our terms of reference – what we mean by ‘antipodes’, and how we use it to explicate some of the issues facing lesbian and gay psychology as it is being developed in Australia and New Zealand. From this perspective, we outline an approach to understanding psychology as a cultural practice – rather than accepting the disciplines truth claims unproblematically, we challenge the notions of objectivity and universalism that have shaped the discipline. This may allow (we believe) for a more critical and transparent starting place from which to develop lesbian and gay psychology ‘in the antipodes’. In order to outline some of the pitfalls and potentialities that inhere to the subject area, we provide a brief history of lesbian and gay psychology from within both the Australian Psychological Society and the New Zealand Psychological Society, focusing on the similarities between the two, and the points of difference that can inform one another. We conclude by drawing together these strands of thought, and propose a research agenda for research into lesbian and gay psychology that critically evaluates existing research, and which seeks to move beyond narrow, heteronormative understandings of the lives of lesbians and gay men.

PART I

Working Together: Accountability and Reflexivity in Practice

3 Queer on the Inside: Interviews with Lesbian and Gay Staff of Public Mental Health Services in Aotearoa/New Zealand
David Semp

Research frequently suggests that having lesbian and gay staff within mental health services will improve services for lesbian and gay clients. Queer staff in public mental health services (pmhs) may be considered ‘inside’ in two ways – being located inside pmhs and being ‘queer on the inside’ – as part of their identity. The assumption is that queer staff can use this

dual location as ‘insiders’ to improve services for queer clients. However, whilst homosexuality is no longer a disorder in the DSM, heteronormative practices tend to render homosexuality invisible. Utilising Foucauldian discourse analysis I examine how heteronormative discourses of mental health and sexuality are constructed within pmhs. I illustrate how medical discourses are largely blind to cultural contributions in the construction of ‘mental health problems’, and how ‘psy’ discourses, whilst acknowledging the relationship between culture and mental health problems, still tend to make queer staff invisible, or at least silent. I also outline a critical discourse of mental health – one which makes visible the assumptions of heterosexuality that structure pmhs, and supports utilising the queer presence already existing inside pmhs. Using talk from interviews with twelve queer staff of pmhs, I demonstrate how these discourses (co)operate, making available subject positions that both support and complicate the possibility of queer staff improving pmhs for men who have sex with men.

4 ‘The Unintended Use of a Pronoun’: Coming Out in the Counselling Environment

Graeme Kane

This paper explores how an unplanned self-disclosure in my work as a therapist resulted in the unexpected therapeutic outcome of a previously self-identified 28-year old ‘heterosexual’ client redefining his sexuality. The issue of self-disclosure, and the professional, therapeutic and ethical challenges in working with a client from one's own community, is explored in relation to the Australian Psychological Society's *Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay and bisexual clients* (2002). Such an outcome highlights that counselling is a dynamic interaction that both involves and influences the client and therapist alike. Self-disclosure can be a powerful catalyst but needs to be guided by empirical investigations and discussions.

PART II

Negotiating Relationships: Parenting and Families as Dynamic Practices

6 *Living with Contradictions: Experiences of Same-sex Attracted Men within Heterosexual Marriage*

Daryl Higgins

In this chapter, I explore issues of self-identity and the challenge of negotiating transitions and perceived contradictions in personal and public identity for married men who are attracted to other men. The chapter is based a discourse analysis of data collected during in-depth interviews with men who have sex with men and who were previously—or currently—married to a woman covering a range of topics, including childhood experiences, identity and disclosure issues, reasons for marriage, sexual behaviours with men and women (before, during, and after marriage), the nature of their relationships with their wife/ex-wife and children, their regrets, and their hopes for the future. Some of the men thought of themselves as ‘gay’ before they married; some realised after, and many experienced feelings of ‘adolescence’ after accepting their attraction to other men. A few saw themselves as genuinely attracted to both men and women. Identity can be seen as a developmental phenomenon, with participants reflecting fluidity and transition—particularly in terms of self-acceptance—rather than rigid binary categories. A common theme was the importance of children – as a reason for marriage (along with other societal pressures and the internal pressure to be ‘straight’), and as one of the best things about their life.

7 Baby Love: Gay Donor Father Narratives of Intimacy
Paul van Reyk

Since the mid 1990s, there has been considerable international interest in, and reportage of, lesbians choosing to have children either as single parents or within lesbian partnerships through donor insemination. This has led to a burgeoning literature speaking to both lesbians and the public. There has, however, been little written about gay male donors in Australia. Drawing on my own experience of donation (now a father of 6 children from four sets of parents) and interviews conducted with other gay donors, I explore the way we gay men are forming relationships of intimacy with both the women to whom we have been the donating partner and also with our children. I throw down a challenge to heteropatriarchal con-

structions of the parent-child dyad and also raise questions about the current trend among gays and lesbians to seek legal sanction for practices that may only reinforce heteronormative structures and practices, such as marriage and family rights.

PART III

Shaping ‘Healthy Bodies’: Public and Private Discourses

10 Framing gay men's health: A critical review of policy documents
Jeffery Adams, Virginia Braun, Timothy McCreanor

While gay men's health is comparatively poorer than men's health in general, it is only relatively recently that health organisations (internationally and within Australia) have produced policy statements or position papers about gay men's health. This chapter presents an analysis of such documents, with the aim of identifying constructions of the area of gay men's health. Written with the best of intentions (to improve LGBT health), but often with an alarming lack of insight and sensitivity, these documents also provide a (semi) public framing of gay (and LBT etc) health issues. They offer an identification of problems, including causes and possible solutions, mostly without a sense of the contexts of the lives of LGBT people and sometimes apparently without consultation with relevant communities and expertise. The policy documents all recognised biomedical aspects of health, and incorporated psycho-social factors to differing degrees. The documents focused on deficits in the population of gay men, with either a disease orientation, or a combination of a disease orientation and a risk factor approach. A central role for medical practitioners was also identified – and this is consistent with the biomedical aspects apparent in all the documents. The involvement of gay men, organisations and communities was apparent in only two documents – and in both of these psycho-social factors were noted. We

Editorial Policy

Continued next page

Aims and Objectives

The Newsletter of the APS Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Interest Group is produced by the National Executive, in collaboration with State Branch Committees. Its target audience is GLIP Interest Group members. It serves as a means of communication among Interest Group members. The Newsletter also promotes the work of Interest Group members, acts as a forum for discussion and keeps members aware of forthcoming events and professional development activities.

Contents

The contents will vary from issue to issue, but will attempt to include an editorial comment, a National Convener's report, State Branch reports, national news, promotion of training and professional development activities, brief notices and, assorted reviews and news from members. The views expressed by contributors to GLIP News are not necessarily those of the Australian Psychological Society Ltd or GLIP. Please note: final content is at the discretion of the editor.

Solicited articles

The Editor may approach suitable authors to write on relevant issues.

Unsolicited articles

The editor encourages GLIP members to contribute unsolicited articles to the Newsletter. Publication of unsolicited articles cannot be guaranteed. The Editor in consultation with regional representatives has the final decision for inclusion of material and the form that it takes. Unsolicited articles should not exceed 500 words, except with prior arrangement.

Advertising

Placement of an advertisement in the Newsletter is not necessarily an endorsement of the advertiser by GLIP. Approval of advertisements rests with the Editor who may consult with the National Executive. Advertising is at present free of charge, which may be reviewed at a later date.

Submission of material

Material should be submitted to the Editor by the relevant deadline. Submissions are to be in electronic format only via email to graeme.kane@iechs.org.au. Documents are to be in Microsoft Word, or text only format.

conclude with an examination of research and policy needs to move gay men's health forward.

PART IV

Challenging Identities: Coming Out of Heterosexist Binaries

13 Narratives of Coming Out: Developing Understandings of Same Sex Identifications

Heidi Jansen

For most same-sex attracted individuals, coming out - the act of disclosing one's same-sex attracted identity - is fundamentally important. In this chapter I propose that a narrative discourse is a useful theoretical approach to understanding identity development in same-sex attracted women. Pathology-based approaches to same-sex attraction have been vigorously challenged and are no longer widely accepted; however, mainstream psychological epistemologies still fail to encompass the issues involved in same-sex attraction, as can be seen in the promotion and maintenance of heteronormative practices. Considering some of the ways same-sex attraction is constructed in this context, the metaphor of the 'closet' and 'coming out' of it becomes an important process in the development of a positive same-sex attracted identity. Historically, the alternative discourses that have developed to replace pathological understandings of same-sex attraction assume the underlying commonality of coming out narratives, and have developed models to explain this process. With this in mind, the current research explores some of the coming out experiences of 44 self-identified same-sex attracted women. In doing this, Cass's (1979, 1984, 1996) model of homosexual identity formation is evaluated and McAdams's (1996) narrative framework was applied to understand individual coming out stories.

PART V

The Politics of Lesbian and Gay Psychology

17 *Problematizing Gender and Sexual Identities*

Valerie Harwood and Mary Lou Rasmussen

In this chapter we question the notion of essentialised sexual

and gender identities - and the truths that are associated with these in psychological discourse. In so doing, we seek to engage a critique that can interrogate both the notion of these essentialised identities and the discursive practices that construct them. To do this we draw on Michel Foucault's writing on 'problematization' and on Judith Butler's notion of 'performativity'. We argue that 'problematization' needs to be cultivated as an ongoing practice that can be used to continually interrogate the ways in which sexual and gender identity are conceptualised as problems in psychological discourse.

17 Talking About Heterosexism: Politics, Complicity and Identification

Damien W. Riggs & Lauren D. Riggs

In this chapter we take advantage of our relationship as sister and brother, by using an interview transcription to explore some of the issues that arise for lesbians and gay men within the context of heterosexism. Together we talk about our own experiences of heterosexism, both within the work place and within our friendship groups, and we connect this to some of the ways in which we have been 'made complicit' with heterosexist assumptions about lesbians and gay men. In drawing out these points, we suggest that it is important to recognize the multiple axes of experience that we have, and how the concept of 'identity politics' may often work to subsume this multiplicity, the result being that (we as) gay men and lesbians may neglect to recognize and challenge our privileges (for example, we explore what it means to be white and middle-class, and how this shapes our experiences as a lesbian and gay man). We propose that a 'politics of identification' may help to shift the focus from singular identifications, and instead enable an examination of how the context of heterosexism encourages a 'one size fits all' model of subjectivity that does little to destabilise heteropatriarchy. We suggest that such an approach to understanding the experiences of lesbians and gay men may allow for a recentering of the political, and hence a more radical approach to lesbian and gay psychology that is not content with simply 'gaining equality'.

Should GLIP join the International Lesbian and Gay Association? www.ilga.org

I am keen to hear your thoughts on GLIP joining the International Lesbian and Gay Association. We currently have informal links with the BPS Gay and Lesbian Section and Division 44. And are currently canvassing the idea of sharing resources to develop Press Releases with a global perspective on Lesbian and Gay issues.

The International Lesbian and Gay Association is a world-wide federation of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people everywhere.

Founded in 1978, it now has more than 400 member organisations. Every continent and around 90 countries are represented. ILGA member groups range from small collectives to national groups and entire cities.

ILGA is to this day the only international non-profit and non-governmental community-based federation focused on presenting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as a global issue.

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