

Dear Colleague,

We are happy to provide you with the 8th Air Notes newsletter - our annual review of work in the Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders. Previous Air Notes newsletters can be [viewed here](#)

Invitation to Focus on Narcissistic Personality Disorder - Free Webinar Tuesday 14th November 7pm-830pm (Sydney; Australian Standard Daylight Saving Time)



Project Air Strategy has partnered with the Mental Health Professionals Network MHPN to host a free webinar on "Collaborative Mental Health Care and the Narcissistic Personality". The webinar will discuss the case of Gary and his wife who have presented to their local medical practice with a set of complex relationship, work and social difficulties. The panel will discuss diagnosis, treatment issues and tips and strategies for effective care.

Learning outcomes: - describe the prevalence, distinguishing features of and prognosis for narcissistic personality disorder including its impact on families and carers ; identify the evidence based approaches which are most effective in supporting people with narcissistic personality disorder; name how different disciplines, as well as families and carers, contribute to supporting and managing people with narcissistic personality disorder.

Panellists are Monica Moore - GP/psychotherapist (NSW based); Andrew Staniforth - psychologist (ACT based); Tom O'Brien - social worker/psychotherapist (QLD based). Mary Emeleus: GP/psychotherapist (QLD based) will facilitate the clinical discussion.

[Register here](#)

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11th International Conference on the Treatment of Personality Disorders - 3rd November 2017 - "Understanding narcissistic personalities and other relationship complexities"

We are delighted that Dr Peggy Brown, CEO, National Mental Health Commission has accepted our invitation to open this conference. This year we will feature innovative work by Professor Elsa Ronningstam (Harvard, USA) on "Understanding narcissistic personalities: what research and clinical experience teaches us."

Professor Ronningstam is a clinical psychologist in the Gunderson Outpatient Program and the Adult Outpatient Clinic at McLean Hospital, and an Associate Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Diagnosis and treatment of narcissistic personality disorder is her prime specialty and she has over the past 25 years authored over 80 publications, and has given over 100 presentations, lectures, and courses both nationally and internationally. Dr Ronningstam was the recipient of a 2014 prize for outstanding service in McLean's borderline personality disorder programs.

On the Thursday prior to the conference we will host a Consumer and Carer Day. The Consumer and Carer Day will feature talks about lived experiences from consumer and carer perspectives, practical psychoeducation and skills based sessions, orientation to the health service discussion, and there will be a roundtable on translating the lived experience into recovery-oriented treatment guidelines.

Following the Friday conference Professor Ronningstam will present a one-day Saturday workshop on "**Psychotherapy for narcissistic personality disorder: clinical dilemmas and recommendations**". The workshop will give an overview of recent developments in identifying and diagnosing, as well as building a therapeutic alliance, with and treating, people with pathological narcissism or narcissistic personality disorder, NPD.

Once again the conference and workshop will be held in the beautiful surrounds of the University of Wollongong, one hour south of central Sydney on the coast. Details can be [viewed here](#).

Keynote presenter Elsa Ronningstam introduces herself to AirNotes ...

"I am a clinical psychologist and associate Professor at Harvard Medical School, where I provide clinical work and conduct empirical and clinical studies on narcissistic personality disorder NPD. Integrating empirically based standpoints with the processes of identifying, understanding and treating patients with NPD has been my major commitment for the past 30 years.

NPD has primarily been recognized and studied in the field of psychoanalysis, but after its inclusion in the DSM-III personality disorder section, it has reached a wider attention both in empirical studies and within other treatment modalities. Despite that, NPD still remains a controversial mental disorder. With high dropout rate and associated comorbid conditions and lethal suicidality, it is still considered a condition difficult to treat (Ronningstam, Weinberg 2013). An additional challenge relates to clinicians' often strong and unpredictable countertransference reactions evoked by patients with NPD (Tanzilli, Muzi, Ronningstam, Lingiari (2017). Recent attention to the complex multi factorial etiology of NPD, including both attachment patterns, psychological trauma and role assignments is a key development towards implementing better understanding and treatment strategies. In addition, studies in neuroscience and neuropsychology have added important understanding of compromised emotional and empathic functioning in NPD (Ronningstam 2016).

Many factors and circumstances influence narcissistic self-esteem regulation. The recognition of the co-occurrence and fluctuations between self-enhanced grandiosity and deflated inferiority and vulnerability in individuals with NPD has been a major step forward. Self-esteem is affected by internal self-criticism and inferiority and emotion regulation as well as by external feedback and affiliations.

My recent studies integrating empirical findings and clinical observations have focused on the nature and impact of compromised emotion regulation and empathic functioning on self-esteem regulation (Ronningstam, 2017; Baskin-Sommers, Krusemark, Ronningstam 2014) as well as on the role of fear in narcissistic personality functioning and decision making (Ronningstam, Baskin-Sommers 2013). Developing strategies in alliance building with patients with NPD must take into consideration both hyper-vigilance, self-esteem fluctuations, and compromised emotional processing (Ronningstam 2012, 2014; Weinberg, Ronningstam 2015).



In this Keynote presentation I will summarize recent research and outline strategies for alliance building and treatment focused on change in pathological narcissism. I will also address specific challenges and evaluation of treatability and suicide risk in patients with NPD. This extends into a whole day clinical workshop with a practical demonstration-focused approach to learning."

Baskin-Sommers A, Krusemark E, Ronningstam E. Empathy in narcissistic personality disorder: From clinical and empirical perspectives. Personality Disorder: Theory, Research and Treatment. 2014, 5(3): 323-333.
Ronningstam E. Alliance building and the diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 2012, 68 (8): 943 - 953.
Ronningstam E. Beyond the diagnostic traits: A collaborative exploratory diagnostic process for dimensions and underpinnings of narcissistic personality disorder. Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment, 2014, 5(4): 434-438
Ronningstam E. Pathological Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder - Recent research and clinical implications. Current Behavioral Neuroscience Reports. 2016, (1): 34-42. DOI 10.1007/s40473-016-0060-y
Ronningstam E. Intersect between self-esteem and emotion regulation in narcissistic personality disorder - Implications for alliance building and treatment. Borderline Personality Disorder and Emotion Dysregulation. 2017, 4(3):1-13. DOI 10.1186/s40479-017-0054-8
Ronningstam E, Baskin-Sommers A. Fear and Decision-making in Narcissistic Personality Disorder - A link between psychoanalysis and neuroscience. Dialogues in Clinical NeuroScience, 2013, 15(2):191-201
Ronningstam E, Weinberg I. Narcissistic Personality Disorder - Progress in recognition and treatment. American Psychiatric Association. Focus: The Journal of Lifelong Learning in Psychiatry. 2013 11(2): 167-177.
Tanzilli A, Muzi L, Ronningstam E, Lingiardi V. Countertransference when Working with Narcissistic Personality Disorder: An Empirical Investigation. Psychotherapy; 2017, 54(2):184 - 194.
Weinberg I. & Ronningstam E. Examination of factors contributing to improvement in NPD patients in psychotherapy. 14th Congress of the International Society for Study of Personality Disorders; Montreal, Canada, October, 2015

Elsa is presenting a keynote and workshop at the [11th Treatment of Personality Disorders conference](#)

Project Air Peer Support Group Intervention for Personality Disorders program being launched at Consumer and Carer Day

The Consumer and Carer Day, which will be hosted at the University of Wollongong on 2nd November 2017 in conjunction with the 11th International Conference on the Treatment of Personality Disorders, will see the launch of a new program "Peer Support for People with Borderline Personality Disorder: A Peer and Clinician Co-Facilitated Group Intervention."

This program was developed for individuals with lived experience of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) seeking support from others with similar experiences. Attendees will learn about the model, develop understanding into how to run a peer-led group for BPD and engage in some psychoeducation and skills training.

18 Scientific lightening talks to be presented at the 11th International conference

The 11th International Conference features 18 reports of scientific work presented in the form of a lightening talk and poster session. Example presentations include:

Stephanie Kors, Gretchen Kurdziel, Rebecca Mahan & Jenny Macfie (Child and Adolescent Development Lab, The University of Tennessee-Knoxville, United States) "Implications for intervention: The intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment in mothers with borderline personality disorder to their adolescent offspring"

Caroline Andrew (International Masterson Institute) "From narcissistic personality disorder to maternal availability: Break the cycle of the intergenerational transmission of psychopathology"

Lisa Dawson (Edith Cowan University WA) "How practitioners decide which diagnostic system to use for diagnosing personality disorder"

SANE Australia highlights research on recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder from the Project Air Strategy

SANE Australia - a national charity helping all Australians affected by mental illness has highlighted the following research: Ng, F.Y.Y., Bourke, M.E., Grenyer, B.F.S., (2016) Recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder: A systematic review of the perspectives of Consumers, Clinicians, Family and Carers. PLoS ONE 11(8): e0160515.

[Read More](#)

NSW Minister for Mental Health, the Honourable Tanya Davies MP launches 4 Project Air Strategy Gold Card Clinics in South Western Sydney

South Western Sydney Local Health District was delighted to host a visit by NSW Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies MP (Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) in August to Liverpool Hospital to launch new Project Air Strategy Gold Card Clinics in Bowral, Campbelltown, Bankstown and Liverpool/Fairfield.

Gold Card Clinics are part of a stepped care model of integrated, collaborative, personality disorders service. The model integrates a brief intervention program with longer-term evidence based group skills approaches.

It focuses not only on the person with personality disorder but also supports carers, health services and clinicians. The clinics are a brief intervention that can act as the first step in a treatment journey for people with this disorder.

The establishment of these programs supports better patient outcomes. They are designed to divert people from emergency and inpatient units to the rapid follow up brief clinics, which act as a gateway to longer term treatment options when indicated. The programs also help to develop a more confident and skilled staff workforce working with these disorders.

The Minister and her advisers met with the Chief Executive, Amanda Larkin, clinicians and the Project Air Strategy team.



Left to right: Amanda Larkin (Chief Executive, SWSLHD), Melanie Gibbons MP, Member for Holsworthy, Professor Brin Grenyer (Project Air Strategy), The Hon Tanya Davies MP, Janice Gregory (Gold Card Clinic Coordinator Campbelltown) and Dr Claire Jones (Director Mental Health Services, SWSLHD)

New videos from the Project Air Strategy

BPD in the Emergency Department: recommendations for effective care. Joe Russ talks about a compassionate and respectful approach to helping people get the care they need.

Mahlie Jewell shares her lived experiences of "Good treatment for personality disorder", and "Being in psychotherapy"

Professor Otto Kernberg (New York) talked to the Project Air Strategy on his recent visit to Sydney on "Transference Focused Psychotherapy (TFP) for Personality Disorder"



[Find out more >>](#)

New Partnerships

Project Air Strategy was recently approved as a trusted [Healthdirect](#) information partner site.

Funded by the governments of Australia, Healthdirect's National Health Services Directory is the single source for comprehensive, reliable and accurate information about health and related services.



Samples of new research findings from Project Air Strategy team

Grenyer, B.F.S., Ng, F.Y.Y., Townsend, M.L., Rao, S. (2017). *Personality disorder: A mental health priority area. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. Early online view. DOI: 10.1177/0004867417717798

Grenyer, B.F.S., Bailey, R., Lewis, K.L., Matthias, M., Garrety, T., Bickerton, A. (in press). *A randomised controlled trial of group psychoeducation for carers of persons with borderline personality disorder. Journal of Personality Disorders*. Accepted 12 July 2017.

Huxley, E., & Bizumic, B. (2017). *Parental Invalidation and the Development of Narcissism. The Journal of Psychology*, 151(2), 130–147. doi:10.1080/00223980.2016.1248807

Pickard, JA, Townsend M, Caputi P, and Grenyer BFS. (2017). *Observing the influence of mindfulness and attachment styles through mother and infant interaction: A longitudinal study. Infant Mental Health Journal*. Early view DOI: 10.1002/imhj.21645

Bourke, MB, Grenyer BFS. (2017). *Therapists' metacognitive monitoring of the psychotherapeutic process with patients with Borderline Personality Disorder. Journal of Psychiatric Practice*. 23, 246-253. DOI: 10.1097/PRA.000000000000247

Meuldijk D, McCarthy A, Bourke ME, Grenyer BFS (2017). *The value of psychological treatment for borderline personality disorder: Systematic review and cost offset analysis of economic evaluations. PLoS ONE* 2017;12(3): e0171592. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0171592

Project Air For Schools

The NSW Department of Education and NSW Ministry of Health have sponsored Project Air to develop a new program for schools to assist them work with young people with complex mental health issues. The project aims to support education staff to understand and respond to emerging personality disorder, trauma history, self-harm and suicidal behaviour and difficulties with identity, emotions and relationships. The first component is a professional development day for School Counsellors and Psychologists (n = 290). The second component trains this group of School Counsellors and Psychologists (n= 145) to deliver the third component; accredited workshops in schools with teachers (n = 16 sites, n= 300 participants). A poster presentation will be at the conference providing more information about this successful initiative. All of the resources are freely available on our website.

Minister for Mental Health launches Project Air Schools

The NSW Minister for Mental Health opened the 10th Personality Disorders conference in November 2016. Here is some of what the Honourable Pru Goward MP, had to say:

"Whether it be the young man in drug and alcohol rehabilitation who has a personality disorder comorbidity, or the young schoolgirl who's struggling with self-harm and ostracised by her fellow students, Project Air has been working on those referral pathways to help these individuals in our community. And it is adaptive, cooperative models of care that will help people with borderline personality disorder. It's critical for this disorder and that helps people live well, in the community, for longer and better lives. And as I say lives in which they can also contribute because they want to contribute.

I congratulate the work of Project Air in asking these questions and delivering on a strategy now across the state which embraces new models. Finally we have the beginning of a systematic state wide response. I'm not saying it's there yet but we are now on that path. In supporting clinicians, providing an academic hub and disseminating information and

resources you Brin and your team are pivotal to making this change for the better. And the New South Wales government is therefore proud to continue to support Project Air as we do, and we've committed to another five years, across the state.

I have been very pleased to hear of the work of Project Air with each local health district, the way they've redesigned pathways of care, ensuring staff possess the skills and the capabilities to deliver high quality care to people with personality disorders. Let me assure you, to systematise anything in a health system, as large and complex as ours, is no mean feat. And what Project Air has done under the leadership, here, is in those terms quite remarkable. The evaluated pilot of Project Air, demonstrates this. Reductions in presentations in emergency departments, reduced length of stay in hospital and of course, improved experience of families and carers.

And of course as part of our reforms Project Air, one of our success stories, is instrumental in our efforts to better address self-harming behaviours and reducing suicide risk. And finally I am delighted to see that the success of Project Air can now be extended to help or young people. And this morning I am very proud to announce the launch of Project Air Schools, collaboration between New South Wales Health and the Department of Education. Project Air Schools aims to upskill teachers, school counsellors and health staff to better recognise and respond to young people with complex mental health problems. Project Air for Schools will assist school staff in developing further knowledge of the steps they can take to assist in crisis situations. Thankyou"



Left to right: Dr Michelle Townsend (Research Manager Project Air), Professor Brin Grenyer (Director Project Air), The Honourable Pru Goward, MP, and Professor Paul Wellings (Vice Chancellor University of Wollongong)

Project Air continues to deliver its message nationally and internationally

Over the past year the Project Air Strategy team has presented at events to spread the hopeful messages about early intervention, treatability and recovery of personality disorders.

The Project Air Strategy continues to expand across NSW Local Health Districts

The Ministry for Health Mental Health Branch, and Drug and Alcohol Branch, leads the Project Air Advisory Committee, which is co-chaired by Dr Murray Wright, NSW Chief Psychiatrist and A/Professor Adrian Dunlop, Chief Addiction Medicine Specialist. The Project Air team works with local health district (LHD) staff to develop their skills and confidence in responding to the needs of people with personality disorders. We also work with consumers, carers and families, and develop clinical pathways for patients to be referred for evidence-based treatments.

Project Air has visited services in Western Sydney (including Westmead and Blacktown), Mid North Coast (including Port Macquarie, Kempsey and Coffs Harbour), Northern NSW (including Ballina, Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Lismore and Grafton), Far West NSW (including Broken Hill and Dareton) and Western NSW (including Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Cowra).

Project Air both visits services and provides telehealth consulting through two video links from the headquarters of Project Air to every health service across NSW for consultations, complex care reviews, and follow up interviews with people who have accessed services.



We are also active in working with the NGO sector, and in May Project Air conducted a workshop for 100 NGO clinicians. The “Clinical skills for working with people with self-harm and complex mental health problems including personality disorder” workshop presented the latest research and updates on evidence-based developments in the field, and an introduction to DBT; mindfulness and distress tolerance skills; interpersonal effectiveness and emotion regulation skills; and emotion regulation skills continued, and implementing a group. There is strong, ongoing interest in Project Air from NGOs and community groups.



Project Air visits Northern NSW, Mid North Coast and Far West LHDs

Other presentations included:

- Nicholas Day - Project Air Strategy presented on "Living with pathological narcissism: A study of burden on partners and family" to 80 colleagues at the Society for Psychotherapy Research Meeting at Victoria University Toronto, Canada.



(Project Air in Toronto) L:R Ueli Kramer (Lausanne), John Ogrodniczuk (U British Columbia), Ken Levy (Penn State), Nicholas Day (Project Air), Professor Brin Grenyer (Project Air)

- Project Air gave a major grand rounds presentation to 60 staff, registrars and local clinicians at Penn State University on the approach to complex care reviews and clinical supervision.
- Project Air presented a panel at the XVth International Congress of the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders (ISSPD) - 25-28 September 2017, Hiedelberg, Germany

Some current research

Project Air Strategy partners with Mission Australia

Project Air Strategy is proud to be partnering with Mission Australia - Triple Care Farm to evaluate their Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) program at Triple Care Farm. The project is funded by NSW Health under its Alcohol and other Drugs NGO Evaluation Grant Scheme. Project Title: Evaluating the effectiveness of a Modified Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Group Program in treating adolescents and young adults experiencing substance misuse.

Triple Care Farm, located on 110 acres in the Southern Highlands, is a residential program for young people (aged 16-24) experiencing homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, or acute behavioural problems.

The research team will evaluate the effectiveness of DBT in treating adolescents and young adults experiencing substance misuse over a two-year period. DBT combines practices from cognitive behaviour therapies and eastern philosophy, including the practice of mindfulness.

Project Air Strategy partners with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Improving accessibility to evidence based treatment for borderline personality disorder is a key priority for Project Air Strategy. Hence, we are excited to be partnering with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District to evaluate the implementation of a stepped care treatment program, incorporating the Gold Card Clinic and a Modified Dialectical Behaviour Therapy group program. The project is funded by the NSW Health Translational Research Grant Scheme. Project title: Assessing the efficacy of a stepped care treatment program for Borderline Personality Disorder. The research priorities for the project focus on evaluating the efficacy of treatment, identifying variables predictive of treatment needs and mechanisms of change.

Project Air in Malaysia

Arina Baharin in partnership with the Project Air Strategy is implementing a randomised controlled trial of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in the Malaysian Prison system for young offenders. Members of the project team include (pictured) Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Muhsin Ahmad Zahari and Professor Dr Sarinah Low, Professor Brin Grenyer and Arina Baharin.



Air Academy Launch



Gold Card Clinics are a brief intervention service designed as part of a stepped care approach to take the pressure off emergency and inpatient units, by offering brief structured care planning and psychological intervention for people with challenging personality features, impulsive and self-destructive behaviour, changing emotions and strong overwhelming

feelings, problems with identity and sense of self, and thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

On 1st September the inaugural Air Academy meeting was attended by 23 NSW Gold Card Clinic coordinators.

As we now have over a dozen active Gold Card Clinics across 6 Local Health Districts and more being developed each month, it was timely to bring together coordinators to share their experiences and learn from each other, and to get extra ongoing information and support from the Project Air Strategy Team.

Economic evaluation wins international prize



Project Air's Dr Denise Meuldijk has been awarded the 2017 Excellence in Mental Health Policy and Economics Research award, presented at the 13th Workshop on Costs and Assessment in Psychiatry - Mental Health Policy and Economics, Venice - Italy. Dr Meuldijk presented on the recent Project Air publication "The value of psychological treatment for borderline personality disorder: Systematic review and cost offset analysis of economic evaluations" Meuldijk D, McCarthy A, Bourke ME, Grenyer BFS (2017). *PLoS ONE* 2017;12(3): e0171592.doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0171592.

The Project Air Strategy acknowledges the major support of NSW Health. The Project works with mental health clinicians, consumers and carers to deliver effective treatments, implements research strategies supporting scientific discoveries, and offers high quality training and education.

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