



## **14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Treatment of Personality Disorders:**

### **Early Intervention**

### **Presenter Abstracts**

Online: Friday 6 November 2020



## Presenters and abstracts

**Hareem Abbasi**, 22, is a Youth Health Consultant at Youthblock Youth Health Service and a part time student undertaking a course in community services. Hareem will discuss her lived experience with BPD and what it has been like to navigate the barriers within the health system and what she has learned from them, particularly from the perspective of a young person from Western Sydney.

**Title: What I have learnt in my recovery journey**

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**Professor Carla Sharp, Ph.D.** is Professor and Director of Training for the Clinical Psychology doctoral program at the University of Houston, Texas USA. She is also Director of the Adolescent Diagnosis Assessment Prevention and Treatment Center and the Developmental Psychopathology Lab at UH. She holds adjunct positions at University of Texas, Baylor College of Medicine, University College London and the University of the Free State in South Africa, and is current President of the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders. She has a longstanding interest in social cognition (mentalizing) as a cause and correlate of psychiatric disorder across the lifespan with a special focus on youth.

Carla has published over 250 peer reviewed publications, numerous chapters and books, including Social Cognition and Developmental Psychopathology (OUP), and Handbook of Borderline Personality Disorder in Children and Adolescents (Springer). A large proportion of her research uses Borderline Personality Disorder (and other personality pathology) to study where social-cognitive function goes awry. As such, she has significantly advanced scientific understanding of the phenomenology, causes and correlates of personality pathology in youth.

**Title: This is me: How adolescence constitutes a sensitive developmental period for the development of personality pathology**

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**A/Prof Paul Cammell** (Research Lead), **Judy O'Sullivan** (Service Development Manager), **Dr Cathy Ludbrook** (Clinical Lead), **Cathy McLeod Everett** (Training Coordinator), **Laura Cooke-O'Connor** (Advanced Clinician and Clinical Coordinator), and **Dr Dianna Bartsch** (Senior Research Officer): **BPD Co, South Australia**

**Title: So Far, So Good? Learnings from implementing a Statewide, Integrated, Stepped-Care Personality Disorder Service, one year in**

This presentation will briefly describe the history of advocacy for and design of BPD Co, and the process of implementation of its integrated, stepped model of care aimed at serving the 1.7 million people of South Australia. The discussion will involve descriptions of the design and implementation process, the clinical model, as well as the training and research frameworks for the service.

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**Professor Andrew Chanen** is Director of Clinical Programs and Services and Head of Personality Disorder Research at Orygen in Melbourne, Australia. He is also a Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Youth Mental Health, University of Melbourne. Andrew's clinical, research and knowledge translation interests lie in prevention and early intervention for severe mental disorders, principally personality disorder, along with mood and psychotic disorders. He established and directs the Helping Young People Early (HYPE) prevention and early intervention program for severe personality disorder in young people.

Andrew currently receives grant funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian Research Council. He has over 140 scientific publications. He serves on several Editorial Boards and on a number of expert mental health groups. He is a Past President of the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders (ISSPD) and the recipient of the 2017 Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Field of Severe Personality Disorders from the Borderline Personality Disorder Resource Centre and Personality Disorder Institute, New York.

**Title: A comparison of adolescent versus young adult outpatients with first-presentation borderline personality disorder: findings from the MOBY randomised controlled trial**

**Background:** The increasing focus on adolescent personality disorder has tended to ignore evidence of the developmental continuity of the period from puberty to young adulthood. The aims of this study are to: (1) describe the characteristics of a sample of young people with borderline personality disorder (BPD) who had no previous history of evidence-based treatment for the disorder; and (2) compare the characteristics of adolescents (15-17 years) and young adults (18-25 years).

**Method:** 139 care-seeking young people with BPD, newly enrolled in a randomised controlled trial (ACTRN12610000100099), completed a semi-structured interview and self-report measures assessing demographic, clinical, and functional characteristics. Adolescents (n=64) and young adults (n=75) were compared on these same variables using t-tests and chi-square tests.

**Results:** The entire sample of young people with BPD had a mean of 2.6 and 2.4 concurrent mental state and personality disorder diagnoses, respectively. Almost all (99.3%) participants had a history of self-harm and over a third (40.2%) were disengaged from vocational pursuits. The young adults had significantly greater difficulties in the areas of emotion regulation, substance use, vocational achievement/engagement, and antisocial personality disorder. The adolescents endorsed greater engagement with self-harm behaviours.

**Discussion:** Adolescents and young adults with early stage BPD both presented with severe problems, with more similarities than differences. This challenges the distinction between the two age groups and supports the concept of developmental continuity in personality disorders from puberty to the mid-20s.

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**Dr Jennifer Betts**, BA(Hons), D.Psych(Clinical), is a Senior Research Fellow who coordinates Personality Disorder (HYPE) Research at Orygen and the Centre for Youth Mental Health, The University of Melbourne. She conducts innovative research in the field of early intervention for borderline personality disorder (BPD), specialising in the implementation of clinical trials evaluating psychosocial and pharmacological interventions for young people with BPD features and their family and friends. Jennifer has successfully coordinated four clinical trials to fruition in Australia and the United Kingdom, and is currently a coordinator of/investigator on four trials in Australia and The Netherlands.

**Title: A study comparing the experiences of family and friends of young people with borderline personality disorder features with family and friends of young people with other serious illnesses and general population adults**

**Background:** Family and friends ('carers') of adults with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and carers of young people (YP) with other serious illnesses experience significant adversity but research on the experiences of caring for a YP with BPD features is sparse. This study aimed to: (i) describe the experiences of carers of YP with BPD features; (ii) compare them with published data assessing carers of YP with other serious illnesses and with adults from the general population.

**Method:** Eighty-two carers (M age = 44.74, SD = 12.86) of 54 outpatient YP (M age = 18.76, SD = 3.02) who met 3 to 9 DSM-IV BPD criteria completed self-report measures on distress, experiences of caregiving, coping, and expressed emotion. Independent-samples t-tests were employed to compare scores with those reported by convenience comparison groups of general population adults or carers of YP with eating disorders, cancer, or psychosis.

**Results:** Carers of YP with BPD features reported significantly elevated levels of distress, negative caregiving experiences, and expressed emotion, as well as maladaptive coping strategies, compared with general population adults or carers of YP with other serious illnesses.

**Discussion:** Carers of YP with BPD features experience elevated levels of adversity compared with their peers in the general adult population. This adversity is similar to, or greater than, that reported by carers of YP with other severe illnesses. Research is needed to clarify factors underlying adverse caregiving experiences and to develop and evaluate interventions to support carers of YP with BPD features.

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**Dr Louise McCutcheon** is a clinical psychologist and joint founder of the award-winning, evidence-based Helping Young People Early (HYPE) program, an early intervention program for borderline personality disorder in young people at Orygen. She coordinated the HYPE clinical program for 12 years and has been an investigator on many of the research projects conducted in the program, including a number of RCTs funded by NHMRC. She co-developed the psychologically informed approach for working with BPD called Relational Clinical Care and has been teaching this approach to mental health clinicians since 2003. In her current role as coordinator of the Orygen Clinical training service, she oversees training provided across the Victorian youth mental health sector. Her particular area of interest is in working with mental health services across Australia and internationally to develop evidence-based early intervention programs for young people with BPD. She developed the HYPE service development program and established the first Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) training program in Australasia in 2003. She is a qualified cognitive analytic therapist, supervisor and trainer and oversees the current CAT training programs in Australia. She is the current chair of the International CAT Association (ICATA) and was the founding chair of ANZACAT.

**Title: Relational Clinical Care: an Evidence Based Approach to Treating Young People with Severe Personality Disorder**

**Background:** Early detection and intervention are now an accepted part of good practice guidelines for BPD, including those in Australia (NHMRC, 2013). The evidence in adults and particularly in young people indicates that simple, structured approaches can have almost as good outcomes as the specialist therapies developed for BPD (Chanen et al, 2008). Despite this, many clinicians who do not work in specialist Personality Disorder teams or have specialist psychotherapy training, do not feel confident to work with young people with BPD. As a result, many young people with PD features are denied access to care.

**Method:** This presentation will describe an evidence-based model, Relational Clinical Care, designed specifically for young people presenting with sub-syndromal and full threshold BPD and associated problems.

**Results:** This model, developed in the Helping Young People Early (HYPE) program in Melbourne, uses psychologically informed clinical case management and psychiatric care to deliver time-limited, practical interventions that can improve outcomes for young people.

**Discussion:** This relational approach emphasizes collaboration and the development of a joint formulation with the young person that guides goal setting, risk-management, family work and psychiatric care, assisting clinicians and services to avoid unhelpful responses to challenges that can lead to iatrogenic harm. The approach is easy to teach, and training has been delivered across a variety of settings, including primary care, such as headspace, as well as in tertiary mental health.

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**Gary Lamph** is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Central Lancashire; Registered Mental Health Nurse; BABCP accredited Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist. He won the UK National Nursing Times Award in Mental Health in 2011 for leading on the development of a 'Multi-Agency Personality Disorder Strategy' and complete a National Institute of Health Research funded Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship 'Enhancing Understanding of the Experience of People with Common Mental Health Disorders and Co-morbid Personality Disorder Traits who Present to Primary Care IAPT Services' in 2017. He is Programme Director for the Offender Personality Disorder Higher Education Programme at UCLan and is interested in whole system approaches for personality disorder.

**Title: The need for a Stepped Care Approach in the UK**

There are a lack of stepped care approaches to support adults with personality disorder in the UK. Most treatments are provided to those with highest severity and risk in specialist services. In England an initiative called 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT) provides timely and accessible psychological treatment to the general population, with the aim of providing the lowest dose of psychological treatment to achieve a health benefit. Whilst IAPT is effective in the treatment of anxiety and depression, it has more recently been identified that people with co-morbid personality disorder present in high numbers, go unidentified and hence receive sub-optimal treatment and have poorer outcomes. Within this presentation we will outline some of the key findings from an NIHR funded PhD fellowship which explored the

qualitative perspectives of IAPT therapists and patients, which have led to recommendations for practice and future research plans to address the deficits.

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**Karlen Barr** is a PhD (Clinical Psychology) candidate in the School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong and a research assistant at the Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders. Her research focuses on evaluating peer support for borderline personality disorder through the perspectives of consumers, carers, peer workers, and mental health professionals. She is active in clinical practice as a provisional psychologist at Northfields Psychology Clinic.

**Mahlie Jewell** is a qualified mental health professional, peer mentor and DBT facilitator with a lived experience of BPD. Mahlie worked within the NGO sector for over 15 years and now works independently within a social justice framework. Mahlie created the Lived Experience DBT Art Group, using art practice and a peer-led strengths-based approach to support people to find their life worth living. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Art Therapy.

**Learning from Lived Experience: Peer support as an early intervention for young people living with borderline personality disorder.** A structured discussion on the opportunities, challenges, innovations and future directions.

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