



April 6, 2010

Comments on the draft RANZCP talking therapies for older adults: best and promising practice guide

General comment

The inclusion of the relevance of family therapy

There is often a lack of involvement of 'family' in therapy. The emphasis tends to be on the individual, with family involvement being in terms of 'getting information about' rather than active engagement with the older person. As the draft guidance states – family and friends are a key support network for older New Zealanders (pg 7), therefore we suggest that the guidance place a greater emphasis on appropriate methods for the inclusion of family within an individual's therapy. Whilst many of the therapeutic approaches outlined in the draft guidance may be effective, they may not necessarily give people the skills to work with family groups and systems. The inclusion within the guidance of narrative approaches which are considered to offer much in terms of working in this area, or of therapeutic approaches which privilege and emphasis work with family systems (families in the broad sense) would be appropriate and helpful.

Information regarding specific need groups within aged care.

It would be helpful for the guidance to make reference to the specific needs groups within this area, such as appropriate care for the growing number of people with intellectual disabilities and those suffering from serious cognitive decline and a range of neuropsychiatric complications due to alcohol for example.

Pg 15 – Working with Maori

A major deficiency in this section is the lack of reference to the importance of 'spirituality' for Maori in terms of their wellbeing (tahu wairua) – please see the website link below. It is essential that therapists identify this and reflect upon it in their client relationship (as the guidance suggests in reference to working with Pacific Peoples).

<http://www.maorihealth.govt.nz/moh.nsf/0/1C22C439DDC5F5CACC2571BD00682750>

Pg 30 – Group therapy

The therapist should also be referred to investigating the availability of local marae based activities. Interactive drawing therapy is also useful when literacy fails or is not the most enabling communicative form.