

ASPCP NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

July 15, 1996

Welcome to the second issue of the *ASPCP Newsletter*. I have received several positive comments regarding the first issue and would like to thank those responsible for their feedback.

Submissions

The *ASPCP Newsletter* welcomes articles (in English) on any aspect of philosophical practice. Authors submitting articles should send three copies prepared for blind refereeing. Final copies of accepted manuscripts should be submitted on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks in Word Perfect 5.1 or 6.0, Word Perfect for Windows, Microsoft Word, or ASCII format.

In addition, the *ASPCP Newsletter* also welcome news items, book reviews, critical notices, and discussion notes on issues of interest to philosophical practitioners.

Contributions may be as long as 5000 words. All contributions should be typewritten with one inch margins, and double spacing between lines. If footnotes are necessary in manuscripts, they are to be placed at the end of the paper, double spaced, and numbered consecutively. All articles and critical notices should be submitted on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks in Word Perfect 5.1 or 6.0, Word Perfect for Windows, Microsoft Word, or ASCII format. News items, book reviews, and discussion notes may be submitted by email. If these latter items are not submitted by email, then they should be submitted on 3 1/2 inch floppy disks in Word Perfect 5.1 or 6.0, Word Perfect for Windows, Microsoft Word, or ASCII format. Exceptions to this requirement may be made for short items of interest.

Advisory Board of Referees

In addition to seeking contributions to the *ASPCP Newsletter*, we are still seeking qualified people for the Advisory Board of Referees to evaluate articles submitted to the *ASPCP Newsletter*. By being a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, you will use your professional knowledge and experience to ensure that only articles of the highest quality are published by the *ASPCP Newsletter*. All articles submitted for publication in the *ASPCP Newsletter* are to be prepared for blind refereeing and will be reviewed by at least two members of the Advisory Board of Referees prior to being accepted for publication in the *ASPCP Newsletter*.

As a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, your name and institutional affiliation will be included in each issue of the *ASPCP Newsletter*. Your responsibilities as a member of the Advisory Board of Referees will be threefold: 1) to review articles submitted for publication, 2) to provide

written comments about the articles (which will be returned to the author), and 3) to make a recommendation as to a) whether or not the article considered should be published in the *ASPCP Newsletter*, and b) under what conditions it should be published.

If you want to be considered as a member of the Advisory Board of Referees, please send a copy of your CV and a letter indicating this to the address below.

Contributions to the *ASPCP Newsletter*, as well as all other communications or enquires should be addressed to:

Dr. Kenneth F. T. Cust
Editor, *ASPCP Newsletter*
Department of English and Philosophy
Central Missouri State University
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Email contributions are to be sent to: kencust@2sprint.net

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Call for Nominations

The ASPCP is seeking nominations for 1) members of the Board of Directors (which are elected by the membership at large) and 2) President-elect (which is selected by the Board of Directors). All nominations should be sent to:

Dr. Paul W. Sharkey, Chair,
Board of Professional Examiners, *ASPCP*
c/o Center for Community Health
The University of Southern Mississippi,
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5122

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Summary of the ASPCP Meeting in Chicago

Maria daVenza Tillmanns, new president of the ASPCP, welcomed members, guests, and presenters at the Thursday evening session of the ASPCP, during the 94th annual meeting of the APA, Central Division, held at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, April 24-27, 1996.

Barbara Norman, from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, and Petra von Morstein, from the University of Calgary, Canada, each presented inspiring and spirited papers and workshops on philosophical counseling. These presentations were unique not only for the subtle, unusual slant on content that focused on practical application, but also because of the appearance of the unexpected. What arrived from "outside" the expected parameters offered in-the-moment evidence of the validity of their claims that philosophical counseling is rooted in life and thus can never be contained within an agenda, a theory, or the taken-for-granted.

Barbara explained the intriguing title of her workshop, "The Existentiality Of Being The Cutting Edge: Philosophical Counseling As Educative," as a way of seeing beyond absorption in the taken-for-granted, which leads the philosophical practitioner to BEING the cutting edge. Extracts of three Charlie Chaplin videos were shown to demonstrate how humor can be an effective means to move beyond the taken-for-granted.

A common mistake served to play an important role in supporting Barbara's assertion. The preposition "on" (as in "being on the cutting edge") -- was incorrectly added to the title printed in the APA program description. Noting its presence in the APA program and its absence in Barbara's printed material served in an unexpected way to jar attention. This quick shifting of perspective quite effectively demonstrated Barbara's thesis: that philosophical counseling is a way of seeing in which our usual identity -- embedded in the taken-for-granted -- is turned upside down. This process leaves us in a position that is no position: we become -- for the moment -- the moment itself.

In this case, the simultaneous presence and absence of the preposition "on" served to dislodge attention from the predictable, expected assumption: that a counselor ought to be positioned "on" the cutting edge of (for example) the therapeutic interaction with the client. Thus, the timely APA error, rather than just intruding itself as an annoying editing mistake -- from an arbitrary "outside" -- instead becomes included in the reconstellation or shake-up necessary for being the cutting edge. Even the error shakes off "its being as error" in the ordinary sense, and becomes instead the means or portal by which attention awakes into the moment. When attention wakes up, one's identity as counselor/expert -- whatever role we play that is created by difference/exclusion of client or Other -- simply leaves as we become the moment.

Petra von Morstein's workshop, "Philosophical Counseling and History of Philosophy: Contemporary Dialogues with Past Philosophers" effectively illustrated her claim that philosophical inquiry is grounded in intensely lived experience. The immediacy, indeterminacy, and unpredictability

of living experience precludes the possibility of containing or controlling it by means of any theory or technique. Conversations with philosophers -- dialogue with great minds through philosophical scholarship -- informs and enriches the understanding so that it can guide the practitioner through the shifting, intense, ungraspable present moments of experience.

Petra gave a practical demonstration of philosophical counseling with a volunteer who told the group about a recent crisis: Through a series of questions, the subject was invited to explore the multiple dimensions of her relation to the problem. This focus on practice generated a lot of excitement. It seemed just as though the events and conversation that happened subsequent to her talk were cooperating to illustrate Petra's argument that lived experience always remains outside explanation. In this case, the line of questioning and comments from several people seemed particularly intense, driven perhaps by a necessity to relate the material to their own perspective and needs, arriving from "outside" the framework of understanding being presented.

It was as though the audience unwittingly took on the role of interlocutor to Petra's role of philosophical counselor. They became, to use Petra's phrase, a group of "uniquely singular individuals each presenting humanity," bringing forth the moment of "intensely lived experience" that forever remains beyond the grasp of even the most subtle, inclusive, and universal explanation. Petra's argument that philosophy must, for these reasons "be practical and experimental," was advanced by the twist of events, the very unpredictability that forever remains beyond our control.

The workshops -- each with its own unique interpretation, content, and technique -- invited participants to move beyond the comfort and predictability of fulfilled expectations, controlled agendas, and self-referential theoretical systems. Thus, conditions were created that encouraged participants -- if they so chose -- to engage in that most exciting venture of circulating understanding into the alchemy of emotion, conditioning, language, and relationship that contextualizes the living experience we share with others.

Kathleen Damiani

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Conference News

2nd International Congress of Philosophical Practice

This Congress is organized by The International School for Philosophy in cooperation with the Society for Philosophical Practice (VFP).

Special emphasis will be laid on the practical and demonstrative aspects of Philosophical Practice and Counseling. Methods and starting points of participants will be outlined in a series of papers, formal and informal discussions, and workshops. Subjects will include: Counseling, The Socratic Method, Advisory Practice. There will be speakers from Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, South Africa, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the

USA. The language of the Congress will be English.

For more information, Email: isvw@pi.net

Send the following information to:

International School voor Wijsbegeerte
Dodeweg 8, NL-3832 RD LEUSDEN
The Netherlands

Name:
Address:
City:
State:

will attend the Second International Congress of Philosophical Practice.

Dfl. 580, - (all in)/ students Dfl. 435,-

Dfl. 440, - (without bed and breakfast)/ students Dfl. 330,-

Dfl. 130, - (day price, meals included)/ students Dfl. 95,-

Dfl. 50, - (day price students, meals excluded)

I will be present from _____ to _____

I am a student and enclose a copy of my student card.

I will remit Dfl _____ before 10 August, 1996 to bank account nr. 33.59.98.976, ISVW, Leusden, The Netherlands (mention 'Congress VFP').

Phone:
Fax:
E-Mail:
Date:
Signature:

SYMPOSIUM PERSPECTIVES ON PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELING

Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology - Division 24
American Psychological Association (APA),
Annual Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
August 9-13, 1996
Westin Harbour Castle

Recently an Interdisciplinary Dialogue Group was formed to create a scholarly network for the exploration of ideas across disciplinary boundaries. As the founders of this group and as psychologists, we seek opportunities for dialogue that involves psychology through interchange at the levels of theory and philosophy.

We want to let you know of a Symposium on Philosophical Counseling to be presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (APA). We welcome your bringing to the discussion at this Symposium your expertise, experience, and views in this important area. We anticipate that the symposium will attract significant

interest, and provide a means for people to meet relevant others with this area in mind.

Philosophical counseling is a growing field of applied philosophy. First introduced by Gerd Achenbach in Germany in 1981, it has spread to other European countries and to North America. Recently, the first book in English on philosophical counseling has been published by Ran Lahav and Maria Tillmanns (eds.). This symposium intends to take a serious look at this growing field of applied philosophy for three purposes: theory construction, clinical application, and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Chair: Louise Sundararajan

"Philosophical Counseling and the Search for Wisdom"
by Ran Lahav

Philosophical counseling focuses on the realm of philosophical meanings by which a person may construct a life animated by lived ideas, aimed at wisdom. This presentation describes the bases of this approach by the organizer of the First International Conference on Philosophical Counseling.

"Take away the life-lie . . .": Positive Illusions and Creative Self-Deception
by David Jopling

This paper provides a philosophical and methodological critique of recent studies by Taylor and Brown (1988) that link positive self illusions with the maintenance of mental health. In addition to methodological critique, this paper argues that the cultivation of positive illusions can have maladaptive moral and practical consequences, because it diminishes the available range of reactive and morally significant other-regarding attitudes and emotions. A literary case history is drawn from Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* to illustrate this argument.

"Can Psychotherapists Counsel Philosophically"
by Rachel B. Blass

The author, a clinical psychologist and contributor to the training of philosophical counselors in Israel, discusses the mutual relevance of psychotherapy and philosophical counseling. Her work describes as well the uneasy ground shared by these approaches in practice, as illustrated by vignettes from her psychoanalytically oriented practice of psychotherapy.

"Can Socrates Help Us to Make a Paradigm Shift?"
by Louise Sundararajan

This paper discusses three dimensions along which Socratic discourse may offer a new metaphor and viable alternative to several prevalent models in clinical and counseling psychology: 1) openness to new horizons of meaning as Rorty (1979) has described them, 2) the kindling of 'metaphysical desire' that 'does not seek to consume' (Levinas) but to know and to sustain, and 3) the cultivation of a 'discovery orientation' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1976) in contrast to a 'coping skills' paradigm with 'presented problems.'

Discussants: Mary Fox & Jeffrey Spike

CONVENTION, ADVANCE INFORMATION:
American Psychological Association (APA),
APA Convention Office: (202) 336-6020
Annual Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
August 9-13, 1996

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Call for Papers

ASPCP, CENTRAL APA MEETING

April 23 - 26, 1997

Pittsburgh, PA

The American Society for Philosophy, Counseling, & Psychotherapy (ASPCP) will meet in conjunction with the APA Central Division Meeting. Papers are welcome on any topic concerning philosophical counseling. In addition, contributors can submit proposals for workshops. Finally, if you are interested in chairing a session, serving as a commentator, or participating in some other manner, please let me know ASAP. All contributions should be sent to the program chair at the address below. While there is no deadline specified as yet for receipt of submissions, one will be set in the near future.

Dr. Kenneth F.T. Cust
Department of English and Philosophy
Central Missouri State University
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Email: Kencust@2sprint.net

ASPCP, PACIFIC APA MEETING

April, 1997

Berkeley, CA

CALL FOR PAPERS, PANELS, PROPOSALS for a session sponsored by the American Society for Philosophy, Counseling and Psychotherapy at the Pacific APA Meetings in Berkeley, April 1997.

If you are interesting in presenting work on any topic of interest to the Society or participating as a commentator or session chair for the Society's session at the Pacific APA next year, please send an abstract, proposal, or relevant information by August 1st to the program chair:

Professor Julien Murphy
Philosophy Department
University of Southern Maine
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300

Email: JMURPHY@MAINE.EDU

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Profile of an ASPCP Board Member

Maria daVenza Tillmanns

My background and training is in Philosophy, Critical and Creative Thinking, and in Philosophical Counseling. My prime interest in these fields is in being a "go-between" between theory and practice. Throughout my life, I have been translating languages, cultures, concepts, etc. I also see this as my main objective in philosophical counseling, to serve as a "go-between"/translator between thought and action. I serve as the cutting edge of thought/action (to use Barbara Norman's phrase).

In 1986 I was given the legal approval of sharing office space with a friend of mine, who is a psychologist. I was going to start my own private practice as philosophical counselor in the US. To not create any confusion regarding my practice, I intentionally shared the office with a psychologist. We could also refer patients/clients to each other.

I ended up going to Europe, however, and the plans never materialized at that point in time. Instead I opened my own practice in Holland, which I had for four years until I returned to the US. I became very involved with the Philosophical Counseling movement in Holland and Germany, and served on the Board of the Dutch Association for Philosophical Practice for a year.

Dr. Ran Lahav and myself edited an anthology on Philosophical Counseling called: *Essays on Philosophical Counseling*. It was published in 1995 by the University Press of America. It is the first book in English in this field.

I returned to the US in 1993. In December of 1995 I became President-elect of the American Society for Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy, and am presently the President.

Since I have returned to the US, I have given six presentations throughout the US and Canada. This past April I chaired our meeting at the APA, Central division meeting in Chicago. I invited Barbara Norman from South Africa, and Petra von Morstein from Canada to speak at our conference. It was very well received.

Presently, I am a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign, and am writing my dissertation on Philosophical Counseling.

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Book Review

EITE P. VEENING *Thinking-Work*. Culemborg: Phaedon, 1994. Pp. 123.

Thinking-work, (written in Dutch as *Denkwerk*) is material for thought, written to help professional helpers to think through their professional activities. However, it is free of professional jargon and accessible to anyone interested in philosophy and well-being. The book grew out of Veening's experience as one of the first philosophical counselors in the Netherlands.¹ Veening is exceptional among a continuously

growing number of philosophical counselors worldwide in having a loyalty to social work as well as to philosophy and philosophical counseling. *Thinking-work* bridges the gap somewhat between Veening's two loyalties in that it offers thinking tools to the established, institutionalized helping professions as well as others. Veening does not fuse his two loyalties as some "philosophical-therapists" do; these therapists do not separate their philosophical and therapeutic practices. *Thinking-work* would be uselessly old-fashioned if Veening had introduced philosophical tools (such as analytical, existentialist or phenomenological ones) as counseling tools. But Veening's approach is new; it proposes a Bateson-like philosophical "metalogue," a meta-reflection, in the work-place of the professional helper. As a philosopher he contends that therapists, social workers, nurses, and others, have a professional duty to think profoundly about their contacts and work. To aid these helpers in their often neglected thinking-work, Veening introduces his readers to philosophy as the discipline of thought.

Veening describes people as traveling through an empirical, subjective, and conceptual world (*i.e.* Karl Popper's "three worlds"); often without the "maps" which could bring direction in their behavioral movements. To aid people to "travel" in the three different dimensions of existence, philosophical activity is proposed, and compared to the help provided by a travel agency. The "three worlds" are described as a grand puzzle. To solve this puzzle, and the puzzles within the puzzle, we can use Veening-designed thinking tools. Firstly, he distinguishes among knowledge puzzles, evaluation puzzles and practical puzzles. Secondly, he distinguishes personal, scientific and philosophical narratives. The various puzzles and narratives form a matrix which the professional helper can fill out for clients, or for him or herself.

In addition to the theoretical explanations of how the puzzles and narratives fit together, Veening's book is practical in its approach: every chapter is followed by thought exercises and a lucid monologue from "Mam," a client (or would "patient" be a better label?). The anecdotal, humorous, but also sensitive and tragic story of "Mam" supplies quite cool common sense feedback on what Veening has to say. For a kleptomaniac, alcoholic, gambling, debt-ridden, desperate, 41 year-old divorced mother of two, Mam is exemplarily rational in her personal commentary on reflective guidelines for her helpers.

Whereas part I and II of the book are "macro-thinking-work," *i.e.*, introductions, part III is "micro-thinking-work": a detailed analysis and samples of the three types of puzzles. For example, knowledge or epistemological puzzles are best solved by five criteria: correspondence, coherence, pragmatic, existential, or communication criteria. Correspondence and coherence criteria are verifiable through empirical observations or logical argumentation. Or, as Mam's commentary has it (free translation): "If my helper cannot see or measure the mess I'm in, and if he or she wants to explain how it all comes together, then they ought to use their heads. And let us hope they have learned to use their heads logically" (p. 75). As a consequence of the particular criteria chosen for solving a puzzle, different conclusions emerge. This explains why different solutions of the

same puzzle do not instantly imply a wrong observation or faulty argument.

Evaluation puzzles can be solved with ethical or aesthetic criteria. For example, with these two criteria in mind, a firefighter might no longer remain paralyzed when he has to decide between saving a Rembrandt or a cat from a sea of flames. Veening considers that the choice of specific knowledge criteria effects how evaluation puzzles and practical puzzles are resolved; knowledge puzzles, evaluation puzzles and practical puzzles are layered one on another. For practical puzzles Veening seems to introduce an application of economics' utility theory. For practical puzzles Veening subscribes to a preference criterion: $P(d) = K(e) \times W(e)$. In words: "The preference for an act is the product of the likelihood of a certain effect and the value of that effect" (p. 114).

It seems to me that professional helpers aware of Veening's conceptual matrix, puzzles and thinking tools may hear, and indeed see, more nuances in their clients' or patients' stories. And Veening's reflections can widen the range of intelligent, justifiable choices for counselor and counselee.

Notes: (1) For a concise report on European philosophical counselors see: Shlomit C. Schuster, (1991) "Philosophical Counselling," *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 8:2, pp. 219-223; Shlomit C. Schuster, (1992) "Philosophy as If It Matters: The Practice of Philosophical Counseling," *Critical Review* 6:4, pp. 587-599.

Shlomit C. Schuster
c/o the Philosophy Department
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Announcement

ISPPI is the translation into Latin letters of the Hebrew initials representing the contact group "Israel Philosophical Practice and Counseling."

Since I started philosophical practice in Israel in 1989 I have been contacted by philosophers for information on this new profession that seemed so known and yet unknown to them. Between me and most of these philosophers grew a relation of common professional interest. In May 1996, I, my fellow philosophical counselors, and some other interested philosophers agreed on forming a contact group. The aim of this group is to promote affirmative contact among philosophical practitioners and to encourage the development of philosophical counseling through sharing professional experience, knowledge and information. Participation is free and open to all who have at least an M.A. in philosophy. For more information contact:

ISPPI: c/o Shlomit Schuster
Horkania 23, apt. 2
Jerusalem, 93305, Israel
Ph: (972) 2-795090
Email: msshstar@pluto.mscc.huji.ac.il
<http://mathcs11.haifa.ac.il/MISC/pc.html>

Notes of Interest

Bibliography on Philosophical Counseling

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____ *Caution: Faulty Thinking Can Be Harmful to Your Happiness*, (Fort Pierce, Florida: Trace-Wilco), 1992.

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____ "Detecting and Disputing Prejudiced Beliefs Within the Counseling Process," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* (4:2) 1988, pp. 33-34.

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Tillmanns, L. A. Maria. "Philosophical Counseling: The Art of Hearing Through Experience," *Inquiry: Critical Thinking*

Across the Disciplines, (13), 1994, pp. 3-8.

K. A. Zoe. "Philosophical Counseling: Bridging the Narrative Rift," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 2:2 (Summer 1995), pp. 23-28.

Philosophical Counseling on the INTERNET

There are now several sites on the INTERNET concerned with philosophical counseling. The content of these sites vary and the addresses are given below. If you have an INTERNET site concerned with philosophical counseling, please let me know and I will include your site in the next *ASPCP Newsletter*.

Philosophical Counseling Links

- American Society for Philosophy, Counseling & Psychotherapy (ASPCP)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6553/aspcp.html>

- Center Sophon: Philosophical Counseling (Israel)

<http://mathcs11.haifa.ac.il/MISC/pc.html>

- Face To Face: Philosophical Counseling (UK)

<http://www.facetoface.org.uk>

- H. Zimmermann: Philosophical Counselor (Vancouver, BC)

<http://www.islandnet.com/~hendrik/homepage.html#3>

- Philosophical Midwifery

<http://www.gwc.cccd.edu/MEET/FAC//GRIMP/GrimP.html>

- Philosophical Services

<http://www.geocities.cpm/Athens/6553>

Philosophical Counseling Chat Line

Philosophical Services is making available, on a trial basis, a Philosophical Counseling Chat Line. This line is open to both philosophical counselors and nonphilosophical counselors. To access the chat line go to the address below for complete instructions. Anyone who can use TELNET can have access to the Chat Line. NOTE: If you have a university email address, you probably have access to TELNET. Check with your university computer services department and they will be able to assist you. If you need further information or assistance, email me at kencust@2sprint.net and I will help you if I can.

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6553/chat.html>

Philosophical Counseling Discussion List

There is a discussion list on philosophical counseling on the Internet. The list is called Phil-Counsel and is made available by Lance Fletcher. If you are interested in subscribing to this list then type the following command in the body of your email message (substituting your name where my YourNameHere is) and send to

the address below:

SUB Phil-Counsel YourNameHere

listserv@freelance.com

Philosophical Counseling Societies

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Letters to the Editor

July 2, 1996

Dear Dr Cust

Many thanks for your e-mail replying to my enquiry about the ASPCP. As promised, I am forwarding you some more information about our forthcoming Core Concepts in Therapy series.

This new publishing venture takes as its starting point the significant shift in the relations between different schools of therapy in recent years. Instead of the competitive and often hostile reactions they once expected from each other, therapists from across the spectrum of approaches seem much more interested in where they overlap and where they differ. This series seeks to make the most of this new sense of openness to cross orientation learning. It aims to examine theoretical models, and the similarities and differences in the use of technical concepts, which form the language of psychotherapy.

The idea is that the series will compare and contrast the use of similar terms across a range of the therapeutic models, and seek to identify where different terms appear to denote similar concepts. Each book will be authored by two or more therapists, each one from a distinctly different orientation; and where possible each one from a different continent, so that an international dimension will become a feature of this network of ideas.

Concepts across the whole spectrum of psychological therapies will be examined, with each book concerned to set out comparative positions in a spirit of free and critical enquiry, but without the need to prove one model superior to another. The idea is that all the books will be fully referenced and point beyond themselves to the wider literature on each topic. Titles we are planning include:

- conscious and unconscious
- core conditions and facilitating environment
- words and symbols
- empathy and counter-transference
- objectives and outcomes
- barriers and defences
- identification and internalization
- needs and emotions
- psychopathology
- self and personality structure
- personal development
- transference and projections
- character and typology

I hope this gives you enough background information on the series. If you, or any of the members of ASPCP are interested in participating in Core Concepts in Therapy, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me, or the series editor, Michael Jacobs, Email mm@mac475.demon.co.uk.

I'll hope to hear from you soon.

With best wishes,
Jacinta Evans
Editorial Director

Email: jevans@openup.co.uk
