

## Beyond Specialisation: Exploring Generalist Treatment Approaches for People with Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma Thursday 21st March 2024

### Presenter Biographies

#### INVITED SPEAKERS

**Dr Lois W. Choi-Kain** is the Director of the Gunderson Personality Disorders Institute (GPDI). The institute provides training and supervision for numerous proven treatments, including Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (DBT-PTSD), Transference Focused Psychotherapy (TFP), and General Psychiatric Management (GPM). She works nationally and internationally to expand teaching efforts on borderline personality disorder (BPD) and its evidence-based treatments and engages in research to study resources for training clinicians who need direction and patients who need access to informed care. With her mentor, John Gunderson, Dr. Choi-Kain developed a training program for GPM and has been expanding its applications.

Her aim as a researcher is to expand the scope and reach of effective interventions for BPD as a regular fixture of routine mental health care, to allow earlier intervention and facilitation of recovery before the burdens of illness too greatly diminish developmental opportunities critical to fostering healthy personality functioning.

**Joost Hutsebaut** is a clinical psychologist. He holds a chair at the Tilburg University ('Prevention and early intervention of personality pathology'). He works as a therapist and researcher at de Viersprong, a Dutch mental health service for the assessment and treatment of personality disorders in adults and youth. His work focuses on the assessment of personality pathology (according to the alternative model), implementation of generalist treatment approaches for PDs, and early detection and intervention.

**Mary O'Hagan** was a key initiator of the psychiatric survivor movement in New Zealand in the late 1980s and was the first chairperson of the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry between 1991 and 1995. She has been an advisor to the United Nations and the World Health Organization. Mary was a full-time Mental Health Commissioner in New Zealand between 2000 and 2007. Mary established the international social enterprise PeerZone which provides peer support and resources for people with mental distress. She has written an award-winning memoir called 'Madness Made Me' and was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2015. Mary is currently Executive Director Lived Experience in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Division at the Department of Health in Victoria. All Mary's work has been driven by her quest for social justice for one of the most marginalised groups in our communities.

**Janina Tomasoni** is the Director of Psychology for Northern Health Mental Health Division with over 30 years of experience working across a range of services (specialist public mental health services, disability sector, forensic system and private sector). Prior to moving to Northern Health, Janina was a senior psychologist at Spectrum. Janina is also a psychologist member of the Victorian Forensic Leave Panel. She has extensive experience in providing individual and group treatment for personality disorder and is trained in a number of evidence based treatments. Within her various roles, Janina has provided consultation and supervision to a range of clinicians, groups, treating teams and organisations on working with personality disorder. She has extensive experience in training a broad range of mental health professionals, involved in research activities and presenting at national and international conferences on personality disorder. Janina has focused her career on developing specialist knowledge and skills in the assessment and treatment of personality disorder. In 2019 she developed and established the Personality Disorder Service for Northern Health's local area mental health service (NAMHS).

### SPECTRUM SPEAKERS

**Rita Brown** worked for nearly for 40 years as a pharmacist before embracing a career change to advocate for people impacted by BPD. Rita's passion is to work with and advocate for the needs of carers while also remaining sensitive to the needs of people with BPD and clinicians and other workers. Rita is currently the Carer Consultant for Spectrum and draws on her lived experience as a family member of someone with BPD to advocate for the needs of families and friends within Spectrum, other services and the wider community. She is a volunteer, founding and current President of the Australian BPD Foundation. Rita regularly facilitates peer to peer interactive workshops for carers run through Spectrum and presents at conferences and forum throughout the state and nationally. In addition she has contributed to numerous state and national consultations and submissions.

**Associate Professor Sathya Rao** is a psychiatrist and the Executive Clinical Director of Spectrum Personality Disorder Service. He is the Vice President of the Australian BPD Foundation. He is also an adjunct clinical associate professor at Monash University. Dr Rao is involved in clinical research and has published research papers, contributed chapters and co-authored books on borderline personality disorder. He was a member of the NHMRC Clinical Practice Guidelines development committee, 2012. He has taught clinicians across Australia and was the head of psychiatry training program of Victoria for the RANZCP previously. He is involved in treating complex personality disorder patients and provides second opinions and secondary consultations for complex clinical conditions associated with personality disorders. He was the recipient of the 2020 Meritorious Award of the Victorian Branch of RANZCP. In recognition of his contributions to psychiatry he received the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) (General Division) in June 2022.

**Cathryn Pilcher** is the Associate Director of Spectrum and an Occupational Therapist with more than 18 years' experience in Mental Health, specialising in working with people with personality disorder. She is comprehensively trained in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and was integrally involved in setting up the first regional DBT program in Western Australia. Along with clinical and strategic leadership, Cathryn provides consultation, supervision and training, translating her experience into skills for people working with those experiencing personality disorder and co-existing conditions. On a broader note, Cathryn has a keen interest in service development in public and private health systems developing models of care, team process, capacity building and workforce development. She is a passionate advocate for embedding access to appropriate and supportive treatment options for people with personality disorder and complex trauma within services.