



Trauma and Differential Diagnosis

Speaker Bios

Prue Walker - Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Prue Walker (BA Hons, MA (Soc Pol), BSW) is a Program Leader with Uniting Connections, managing the Adoption and Permanent Care program and the Enhanced Therapeutic Contact Service. Prue developed an interest in FASD after working in Central Australia where she found many children in the child protection system had Fetal Alcohol Syndrome but were not receiving specialist services. In 2009, Prue undertook a Churchill Fellowship, travelling to Canada and the United States to explore models of care for children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). She presented her findings at the APCCAN Asia Pacific Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Perth 2009. In 2013 Prue completed a FASD research project in conjunction with Menzies Institute of Health Research and DCF (Katherine and Northern Region) exploring the prevalence of children at risk of FASD within the child protection system. Prue presented her findings at the Australasian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Conference in Brisbane in September 2013.

Prue has been involved for over 16 years in child protection in both Victoria and the Northern Territory, including as a Practice Leader, Department of Human Services (DHS), Victoria (2013-4) and prior to that, worked for 10 years in non-government homelessness services in Melbourne. In 2014, Prue established a consultancy to further her goals of FASD education and prevention. Prue was employed by the NT Department of Children and Families (DCF) between 2006 and 2011 as a Child Protection Manager in both Alice Springs and East Arnhem where she was responsible for case management of a number of children with FASD. Prue regularly conducts FASD training for child protection workers in the Northern Territory and has expanded these workshops to include health, drug and alcohol, mental health, youth work and family services agencies.

Sonia Street - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Sonia is a psychologist with 20 years' experience, specialising in developmental disabilities and psychological issues in early childhood. She works primarily with children aged 0-12 years and their families in a Family Centred Philosophy. Through the private practice Okey Dokey Childhood Psychology, Sonia is able to offer diagnostic and assessment services, short and long-term therapies, parent education and group programs within the clinic setting or as outreach to homes, minders, childcare centres or schools. Sonia was trained in the Early Start Denver Model by Professor Sally Rogers, Mind Institute. Sonia is beginning to take on more presentations at seminars and conferences to both parents and professionals in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders, Cognitive testing and engaging with families through the fundamental elements of Family Centred Practice.

Tim Doyle - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Dr. Timothy Doyle is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice who specialises in the assessment and treatment of adolescents and adults. He is a member of the Australian Psychological Society, the APS College of Clinical Psychologists and the Society for Personality Assessment. In addition to treating patients for mental health issues such as mood, anxiety and co-morbid substance abuse disorders, Dr. Doyle also enjoys working with challenging patients using an evidenced-based, assessment-driven approach that can engage patients in therapy, specify the type or types of therapy and therapist most likely to be useful to the patient and clarify diagnoses.

Vicky Nicholls - Complex Trauma

Vicky has completed post graduate studies in Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health at Melbourne University and also completed a Master of Art Therapy at La Trobe University. She worked at the Austin CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service as a Senior Art Therapist for over 10 years. During her time there she developed a particular interest in attachment and the effects of trauma. Vicky decided to focus on this area and commenced working for Take Two Berry Street as a Therapeutic Specialist, supporting young people living in out of home care as a result of neglect and abuse.

In 2012 she was offered an opportunity to work with VACCA - The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency who were developing a therapeutic program for Aboriginal children in care. For 3 years she was part of developing this program, integrating her art therapy skills and knowledge of the impact of trauma on the developing child, whilst working alongside Aboriginal people to ensure cultural safety.

Vicky has been a lecturer at La Trobe University in the Master of Art Therapy course since 2001. She teaches various subjects including Art Therapy with Children, Trauma and the Expressive Therapies Continuum and supervises students during their placements. Alongside teaching Vicky is now focusing on her private practice where she works with children, young people and adults as well as supervising art therapists and other professionals.