

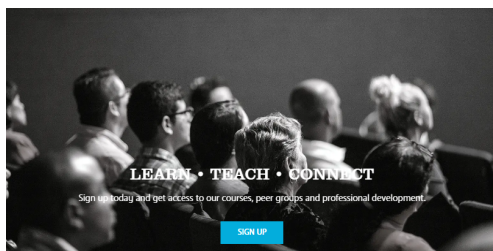
## The Academy – May 2024 Update

### Introduction

The following paragraphs outline where the Academy stands after learning that John Farnsworth has had to pull back over the next six months for health reasons. Since then, the full Academy team, convened by Lynne Holdem and without John present, met in April to consider the implications for its development and launch. John provided several scenarios to assist the discussion and a brief version is included at the end of this report.

There are two main points that can be made:

1. The architecture of the site is nearly complete.



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The next step is testing before the launch. The final step is marketing the Academy, through Mailchimp, word of mouth and other ways. However, that takes more energy and people than are currently available. In effect, the Academy is stalled at this point. Comments about this follow below.

2. The site development team of Claire, John and Matt are largely unavailable. Claire can outline the background in person if needed. We have discussed recruiting new tech-savvy members but this will take time. For now, it means we can make little progress with testing and marketing. All of this is hugely frustrating, particularly because the Academy is close to demonstrating what it will offer to NZAP and psychotherapy as a whole.

## **Implications**

We cannot launch, let alone launch effectively, until we have the resources, energy and personnel to do so. This was agreed in the full Academy meeting. Consequently, we must delay any launch until some time in the second half of this year. By then, we may have the means to do so. We do not now. In the meantime, the site needs to keep ticking over so that its potential can remain alive, and so that we can recruit and keep development alive within our means.

I will raise two related implications from this.

The Academy is part of NZAP increasingly moving online and reinventing itself as a competent, effective online presence. The Academy's teething troubles are symptomatic of the difficulty in doing this – and relate to the second implication below. Its troubles, and other digital changes overseen by Claire, highlight an urgent need for NZAP and the Council to commit to an explicit digital strategy central to its future. This requires a Chair and a standing Committee responsible for all digital matters: the NZAP site, the Academy, database and record management, newsletters and blogs – perhaps Ata as well. At present, all these matters are handled separately which is increasingly cumbersome and difficult for our small Association, relying almost entirely on goodwill, to manage.

And this is the second implication: the limits of goodwill. NZAP is a volunteer body; but the problem of launching and sustaining the Academy indicates we appear to have reached the limit of volunteer assistance.

The same experience is repeated across the Association and points to the need for discussion well beyond this report. But the Academy experience emphasizes the predicament: we can no longer rely on voluntary labour, as NZAP has done historically. Ironically, in this case, to launch a venture designed to be largely self-funding.

I remain optimistic that we can deliver the Academy: that it will provide new forms and means of association for our members and to the wider mental health community. However, it can only be within our means, and this report suggests we must, urgently, reexamine those means.

**John Farnsworth**

18 May 2024