

Digital Communications Committee Report 18/05/2024

Vision Statement

I find it hard to carry on as a member of Council without an NZAP Vision Statement. Post-Registration we are becoming a different Association and we need a vision in response:

- our branches have changed greatly;
- we have had to centralise much of what we do;
- we are increasingly short of volunteer energy to fill our positions;
- our korero and business is increasingly online, and where we are also publicly visible
- we are shortly facing a possible name change

So, I am proposing this as a vision for our future: NZAP - For Excellence in Psychotherapy.

If we use a vision to help us engage with what is important whenever we meet we will feel energised and we may attract others to engage with our mission. To me this makes sense of all the work we do – we all need our friendships, holding, and professional development for excellence in psychotherapy.

If members have a perspective of a subject where we don't meet our vision of excellence in psychotherapy, as a council our power is that we can devise processes where the disempowered have a voice and these issues can be metabolised by the association, not by council being the authority. We decentralise our power.

Council Meetings

Long ago, Caroline Garland wrote a great group analysis paper on "Taking the non-problem seriously". Our non-problem is our changing identity which, as a Council, we don't directly discuss. So we cannot also propose a vision that will gather us together, in a way that PBANZ can never do.

I wonder, then, if we should not be discussing our portfolios directly at monthly council meetings, but discuss our common non-problem. John Farnsworth's accompanying report on the Academy describes its non-problem beautifully in terms of the difficulties it currently faces. I suggest that just like groupwork, we can engage everyone when we raise directly what it is happening in the group - and it helps everyone to work, and thrive, together.

Proposals

Just one change in managing Council business is far from enough. What follows are some other ideas – in the hope they may stimulate others. They recognise, however, the reality of our digital footprint and how we need to support this if we are to thrive and sustain a vision of excellence.

Personnel – Engagement

The Council needs to consider appointing a Digital Chair and to have a clear committee with more members. Some could be drawn from the existing Academy team, but we need to attract more tech-savvy members for support. Our website, social media activity, and the Academy, are all stymied by this lack of focus.

Replace the Newsletter with the Members Area Blog

- I propose that we replace the newsletter with blog posts and we continue to send weekly Mailchimp round ups as we do now. An editor would still be valuable and could also be a member of the Digital Committee.
- I propose instead of council reports we do blog posts to the entire membership about interesting events in our portfolio – in a reader friendly and connected to the vision way.
- For example, Victoria's ACC information is perfect to go straight to membership. She is talking to influential politicians, it is exciting: our membership should be following that and getting inspired to jump in with such things as a media plan as was suggested at the conference.
- We could report to the Association and to council/digital comms committee on the numbers of people engaging with posts, and then devise ways to encourage members engage with posts more if they are in fact important to our vision of *excellence in psychotherapy*.

Online discussion in NZAP

- Like John Farnsworth, I also think we need to face that we are a part of a very online world. We can use any platform; we can use several. We can try things, and abandon them if they don't function. Digital activity allows us to do this. I am dying for the Academy to launch but, as he reports, we have no team to launch it. Likewise, the new members' area blog is also still not ready to show you unfortunately.
- I believe we should not eliminate debate – but we need to moderate it. **Connect** goes straight to people's inbox. Once an email is sent, we can't actually moderate it. In the meantime, I think we should have as a footer that NZAP does not endorse the views of individual members.

- From the conference experience I think we need online forums where members can safely be - email does now seem antiquated. The internet is filled with successful, lively, safe and effective examples. What you can't do with email is 'like' comments, up and down vote comments, block people, ratio people. The internet can be sophisticated and reflects what happens in person. If you say bigoted things in real life you probably get ignored rather than have endless access to a captive audience.
- Do we need to start using an app like TikTok ([like Nancy McWilliams](#)) to convey information; or use moderated Facebook group/s, Instagram group/s? There are groups in twitter/X – should we let members initiate things and congregate wherever they like? We are a pluralistic association and my impression is that centralised governance is not experienced like it used to be. Just as the 6 o'clock news is not watched anymore maybe council's centrality may also be on the wane. How do we stay relevant into the future and maintain a standard of excellence in psychotherapy.

These are just a few proposals to support a vision for excellence in psychotherapy. We need to do them to reinvigorate our Association. We need to invite and attract our newer members, in particular, many of whom currently exist on our fringes. So, where and when can we finally discuss these issues?