

Notes on the ISPSO Melbourne Regional Event

Held upstairs at The Kent Hotel, Carlton from 4pm-10.00pm on Thursday 17 November 2016.

Convenors: Rob Ryan and Nuala Dent

The event had two components, a workshop followed by a dinner, and was open to current and prospective members of ISPSO. There were 10 people at the workshop and 9 at the dinner.

Attendees: Jim Walker, Mike Faris, Nuala Dent, Rob Ryan, Katherine Mc Pherson, Hannah Piterman, Kate Dempsey, Michelle Wells, Jenny Smith, Jennifer Burrows, James Dalgleish (guest)

Apologies: Jinette de Gooijer, Judy Kent, Allan Schafer, Joy Humphries, Caroline Farmer, Stan Gold, Brigid Nossal, Susan Long, Rob Cairns, Susan Mravlek, Wendy Harding, Alan Sandford, Kerri Stevens

Setting the scene

Ten members and a guest presenter met for a combined workshop and dinner event in an atmosphere which was designed to be professionally stimulating, convivial and engaging.

We returned to The Kent Hotel and had sole use of its function room upstairs. It does not provide lift access, although disability access was not an issue for this event. The room is a good size, with a built-in screen for presentations, a bar area and an outdoor space.

The convenors had some challenges in deciding whether to proceed with the event given the smaller than usual numbers of participants. Fortunately, the venue waived the 'minimum spend' rule for the room use, so we decided, on balance, to proceed. It does highlight a potential limitation of using a commercial venue and being dependent on a certain level of income for the event to be viable.

The Workshop (4.00 - 6.30pm)

An invitation had been extended to members to present a workshop session. We had two presenters who took up the offer in different ways.

Session 1: Authority for Task in Practice – James Dalgleish

This paper had been presented at the Granada AM. The presentation and ensuing discussion explored the application of authority for task as a counter to unethical or politically self-serving disruptions to a project and its task. It is often difficult to operationalise system psychodynamics concepts and to bring them into effective practice in an enterprise. The paper looked at how this was done in one setting and the constructive cascade of outcomes that flowed from it.

James' presentation stimulated an engaged group discussion around the paper's key themes.

Session 2: Explorations and reflections on engaging with the psychoanalytic approach

Rob Ryan presented his brief reflections on Shelley Recienello's keynote presentation at the recent AM as a stimulus to us thinking about the ways in which we can bring our way of working to a broader audience.

Participants then engaged individually with the task of 'drawing their experience of ISPSO'. Once the drawings were completed, pairs of participants initially worked with the drawings and explored meaning and associations. Each member of a pair then presented their partner's drawing to the whole group and it had an opportunity to respond to the drawing. We explored a total of 10 drawings and they are shown below.



There was a variety of emerging themes with great diversity evident across the group. Themes included: gender influences; power and potency; death and creation; communication; splitting; optimism; remoteness; and, connection with both other members and the organisation.

The transition

At 6.30pm, we all moved out to the bar area as the room was reset for dinner and one member left. This time/space provided a useful transition from the workshop to the dinner.

The Dinner (7pm-10pm)

This was a more informal opportunity to connect and discuss themes that had emerged in the workshop, and discuss ISPSO more generally.

The conversation was wide ranging and convivial. Unlike the event held in March this year, the format was more informal, the conversation flowed equitably across the small dinner table, and

we didn't need to use Emmy (the 'authorising Emu') to identify and provide sanctioned space for speakers.

Reflections after the Regional meeting

We were concerned about the lower participant numbers at this event and wondered whether the format was sufficiently attractive. We established that this event clashed with some others that members needed to attend (e.g. the NIODA Board meeting) and we hypothesise that the late November timing created difficulties for members because of the start of the Christmas event build up.

It also seems that some members didn't perceive the email with advertised workshop space as an opportunity to present papers that they had presented at the Granada AM to a local audience. We also noted some inaccuracies in the ISPSO member contact data base.

Rob and Nuala agreed to circulate this report to dinner attendees for their comment, and then to forward the final document to Richard Morgan-Jones.