

BSANZ NEWSLETTER

CURRENT

LAP - Groups for Leader Accreditation Pathway

The monthly groups for leader accreditation pathway have started this month coordinated by Leonie Sullivan. During the recent board meeting it was decided that two sessions of this group supervision would count towards the training pathway each year.

Newly Accredited Leaders

Congratulations to our two most recently accredited Balint group leaders:

Jan Hanson - Adelaide GP

Daniel Brass - Melbourne psychiatrist

Interested in Balint leader training?

e: admin@balintaustrianewzealand.org

Leader Trainer Project

In order to build strength into the society, leader trainers have begun meeting bi-monthly to workshop their group work. The current coordinator is Marion Lustig. The plan is for this nucleus to evolve into a leader enrichment opportunity.

Shifting Ground

A BSANZ project, regulars and some occasional drop-ins continue to meet monthly for an hour on a Sunday morning.

Participation is free and open to all medicos.

Three senior Balint leaders facilitate meetings. The forum

started about two years ago to offer doctors a place to share

experiences post bushfires and during the pandemic. Medicos interested to join? e:

admin@balintaustrianewzealand.org and

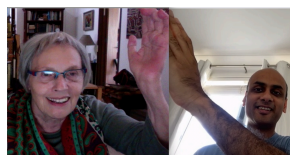
include a word about where you practise.



Editorial

Hilary Ash & Nish Jayarajan

Y our editors, who collaborate on Zoom between Brisbane and Melbourne, have built you a bumper edition. Enjoy it over a cup of (expensive?) coffee as you read about our current and upcoming activities, as well as several stories of interest. For example, there's a Balint research article column, IBF info, introductions to a couple of our board members, profile of Distinguished Member Marion Lustig, and a taster about a winning essay from our popular medical students' essay competition. And Poetic Balint is a spot to welcome your creative juices.



Among the ideas for future editions are a Leaders Corner, for leaders to share ideas about Balint work, choice snippets from writers about Balint experience and wisdom, and possibly an interview, such as with a student, a local or overseas leader, or a trainee. We invite you to join the editorial team to build future newsletters, and to include your own ideas.

And naturally, you can tell us what you think by writing a [Letter to the Editor](#)!

President's Desk

Di Nash

C ovid has changed so much, but some of the changes are proving to be positive.

Balint work has greatly extended its outreach via online platforms. People can now join groups with diverse membership drawn from across Australia and New Zealand, and leaders can co-lead and/or train with senior leaders while living far away from each other, where previously the gold standard of face to face training and face to face Balint groups was limited by geography.

As we all know, Zoom has disadvantages, but there has been an extension and resurgence of interest in Balint groups, most of which have run online in the last two years.

In 2022 a Leader Trainers' group, and the Shifting Ground forum for doctors, will meet online monthly, enrolments are up for Balint Online for Medical Students (BOMS) programme, we plan introductory Workshops, an online Seminar programme, and we are keen to run an Intensive Workshop in early 2023.

Enrolments in the leadership training programme have increased, necessitating an expansion in our capacity for training, so we have employed a part time administrator for the training programme and introduced the option of group supervision into the Leadership Accreditation Pathway.

At the 2021 AGM we welcomed three outstanding new members onto the Board, Dr Jenny Presser as Chair of the Accreditation Committee, and Meredith Waugh and Dr Nish Jayarajan, both of whom have willingly stepped into subcommittee roles.

Thank you so much to all the Board, the BSANZ depends upon your time and enthusiasm given so generously to drive the programmes and initiatives of the Society, and thank you to all of you as BSANZ members for your continuing involvement and support of this work, there is great need for it and value in it in these tough times.



BOMS

Balint Online for Medical students (BOMS) is bombing forward. We are delighted to have a truckload of interested students and willing leaders. The first group is expected to kick off from the 27th April 2022 between 6 pm – 7:30 pm with Frank Meumann and Kathy Watson as leaders. Another group is scheduled to begin from the second of May. Each group cycle is for six weekly sessions. Interested to know more? Email BOMS coordinator Meredith Waugh:

mwaugh4221@gmail.com

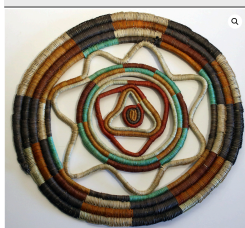


Accreditation Committee

Jenny Presser was recently appointed chair of the AC, whose members are Penny Love and Leonie Sullivan. Di Nash's role as deputy chair will end this month.

UPCOMING

Balint Weaving 2022



The Balint Weaving subcommittee (Meredith Waugh, Judy Griffiths, Hilary Ash) is working on a series of Zoom seminars. Details to follow.

Intensive Workshop 2023

Melbourne again - the venue hunt is ON for March 2023. Stirrings in the air that social distancing may still be on the table. How will that complicate the task?

Reading Circle?

There has been talk of a **Balint reading circle**, an opportunity for members to get together in small Zoom or f2f groups to discuss chapters or articles about Balint work. Admin support available. Interested to make this happen? e:

admin@balintaustralianewzealand.org

Medical Students Essay Competition

Finalists have been announced for our popular biennial competition, with winners' beautiful essays published on the website. We had one winner, and two runners up.

In a winning essay, Rebecca Ghandi, a final year student at University of Auckland, describes her experience with a Maori patient, a woman of her own age, who was dying in great pain. This patient continues to stir questions in Rebecca's mind including about the value of gathering a deep history, about building conversations to explore cultural differences, and crucially, about the meaning of home. Rebecca also became aware that identifying with a patient, in this case of the same age, might interfere with her capacity to be the best doctor she can be. How can she remain alert to her own processes and become a better doctor as a result? You can read the full text of Rebecca's sensitive essay here: <https://balintaustralianewzealand.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Homecoming.pdf>

About the competition:

Our next biennial competition for med students in Australia and New Zealand will run in 2023. Winning essays are submitted for publication in international Balint journals. We also draw your attention to the IBF Ascona prize. Our students have met with great success there in the past. So students, sharpen your pencils!

Members corner

Meet BSANZ Board members

President: Di Nash

Treasurer: Swapnil Sharma

Secretary: Hilary Ash

Ordinary Members: Jenny Presser, Meredith Waugh, Nish Jayarajan

In this edition we invite you to meet the blokes on the board:



Dr Swapnil Sharma is a Consultant-Liaison Psychiatrist, accredited Balint leader and Psychotherapist based in Sydney. He applies psychoanalytic principles in all domains of his clinical and teaching work. He is currently leading Balint groups for psychiatry trainees and pain medicine clinicians and supervises a registrar-led Balint group for medical students. Swapnil has been the treasurer on the board for the past two years.

Dr Nish Jayarajan is based in Brisbane and works as an Adult Psychiatrist across the public and private sector. Nish started attending Balint groups as an alternative to pulling his hair out and got addicted. He currently leads groups for interns, senior health care professionals and medical students. With no more hair left to pull, Nish assumed this was the perfect time to join the board when the SOS call went out from the president. Currently Nish assists Swapnil with the financial side of things and Hilary with the newsletter.



Poetic Balint

The Balint mind is like that of an octopus, a central mind which attends to the individual minds in each of the tentacles as they explore the ocean floor curiously. NJ



Code of Ethics Draft

At the Board's recent weekend Screen2Screen meeting, we discussed the draft Code of Ethics. After weighing the pros and cons, we decided not to continue with the process at this stage. So a BSANZ Code of Ethics is now off the table.

Members' corner

What are you up to?

Keep us posted for upcoming newsletters - Deadlines for 2022 editions: 1 July, 1 October

Newsletter naming competition

For those who love naming things, here is a chance to go wild! Entries are invited for naming our Newsletter. Submit your entries (as many as you wish) to admin@balintastraliannewzealand.org. The winner might even score a gift voucher as well the fame.

New Balint groups?

A Balint taster series - online for 6 consecutive weeks - will start Thurs 14th July, 7.30-8.30pm AEST. Interested? Email co-ordinator Daniel Brass: drdbrass@gmail.com

See our website group pages for Daniel's other groups, and for comprehensive listings of current groups.

Distinguished Member Award

At our AGM in November 2021, members voted unanimously in favour of changing our Honorary Member category to Distinguished Member. Marion Lustig was promptly accorded that recognition at the

December Board meeting. Recently on behalf of the Board Hilary Ash was delighted to present Marion's certificate in a lovely Covid safe outdoor setting.



In 2005 Marion, a former GP, was founding president of the Balint Society of Australia (later BSANZ). From 1998 she poured energy into generating interest in Balint

work in Australia and building the Society. Through her work, participants and prospective leaders discovered Balint work at conferences, workshops, and the Society's first Intensives. Following her formal leader training overseas, plus collaborations with IBF members, Marion was able to involve senior international leaders in the Society's development. Her involvements have included supporting new Balint leaders, establishing a website and newsletter, organising scientific meetings, speaking widely about Balint work, and publishing articles and papers.

Marion still works as a psychotherapist and Balint group leader, including with psychotherapy trainees. She continues to contribute to BSANZ, most recently as co-ordinator of our Leader Trainer network.

Balint Articles Corner

We will share a relevant Balint research article in our newsletters, beginning with Balint autobiography – Clive D. Brock, which is readily available online.

There has been quite a series of these Balint autobiographies. In this one, Dr Clive Brock talks about his 50 year journey through the world of Balint. He started off like many doctors – too indoctrinated in the biomedical model to appreciate the value of Balint work. His “Aha” moment came during a discussion with Balint oriented colleagues about how one would know that one is a good doctor? Becoming aware of the centrality of doctor-patient relationship, he decided to explore the mysterious process further. When a senior colleague commented that participation in a Balint group was the most important work that he did as a doctor, it piqued his interest.

Dr Brock became acquainted with Enid Balint at an International Balint Federation (IBF) conference and began slowly to imbibe some of her ideas about the goals of Balint training, and the need to resist the temptation of moving from the doctor-patient relationship to the doctor-family relationship. After migrating to the United States from South Africa, he threw himself in the deep end of Balint group leadership with assistance from a Jungian trained therapist. He later developed a concept of “meta-group” work, during which several Balint leaders would analyse their videotaped Balint seminars. This became a progressively bigger group as many senior Balint leaders joined in. In the article, Brock shares many insights he gained along the way, such as the role of empathy in recognising and making sense of the connections in the doctor-patient relationship.

A section in the article describes the birth of the American Balint society (ABS) in 1990, of which Brock was the first vice-president. He collaborated with the IBF and the British Balint society with an objective to wed Balint training with qualitative research. He describes his interest in training Balint group leaders and collaborating in efforts to develop tangible parameters to evaluate training, such as Balint leaders’ Intensive Training curriculum. The research into Balint threw up some interesting observations about the process. His group’s research found that clues and cues hidden in the opening presentation (especially the opening sentence) could signal troubles lying in wait in the doctor patient relationship.

The author also refers to research into why some participants left Balint groups, based on differences in the Myers Briggs personality inventory, which suggested

that participants who valued practical connections between things were less likely to attend Balint groups. He further observed that pre-case chatter would often act as a substrate for the case. In addition, Brock attempted to look at what made a relationship troubling and was able to identify a few patterns such as the heroic “White Knight” doctor, expected to rescue a patient from distress. This led him and colleagues to develop a typology of patient cases presented in Balint.

Brock concludes with mention of his efforts to support Balint training as a tool for doctors to hold onto their authentic role: as Enid Balint stated, the core purpose of Balint is “to make better doctors.”

Brock, C. D. (2020). Balint autobiography – Clive D. Brock. *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 55(3), 183-190.

IBF - and World Balint

The IBF is sponsoring two international events this year:

May 20-22 in Aachen, Germany - Council Meeting & Conference. **STOP PRESS Registrations close on 20th April.** See details on the IBF website [here](#)

August 31-September 4 at the Maison Notre Dame du Chant-d'Oiseau in Brussels - International Balint Congress. Details to follow.

Your prize for reading this far? A 30-minute movie from the Hungarian Balint Society, with English subtitles! In case you haven’t already watched it, five insightful participants reflect on their experience of being in a group. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLcfWm89NO0&t=7s> It’s a moving and revealing snapshot about how participants make use of their group experience, and is recommended viewing.