

BSANZ DOWNUNDER

CURRENT

BALINT WEAVING SEMINARS - Adding Threads to Balint Practice

SUNDAY 30th OCTOBER
9.00-10.30 am AEDT
1100 NZ, 0830 SA, 0800 Qld, 0600 WA
REGISTER NOW!!

BOMS - Balint Online for Medical Students Stories Students Tell: First experiences of the BSANZ initiative

Enjoy an interactive presentation about our unique BSANZ initiative which offers online Balint Groups to medical students across Australia and New Zealand.

The seminar opens with a brief summary of the BOMS initiative, students and leaders sharing their experiences. Small group reflection and discussions will follow, to consider students' and leaders' stories and emerging themes. There will be opportunities to explore the implications for all Balint leaders.

Leader presenters

Daniel Brass Melbourne psychiatrist,
program co-ordinator

Meredith Waugh Gold Coast

psychotherapist, program co-ordinator
Hamish Wilson Dunedin GP and medical
Educator

Ruchi Bhalla UK trained Melbourne
psychiatrist

Student presenters

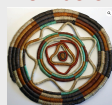
Irene Legg final year, Hobart

Ray Lau third year, Sydney

Chair

Frank Meumann Hobart GP and medical
educator

**Seminars are FREE for current financial
members. Non-members \$25**

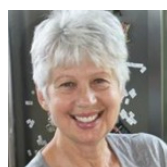


Stay tuned for Balint Weaving Seminar plans in 2023. And if there is material you want to share in a Seminar, or a topic you would like us to consider, send an email!

AGM on 12th November 2022, 11am AEDT, on Zoom. Check your inbox for agenda, nomination & proxy forms. Apologies: admin.bsanz@bigpond.com

President's Desk

Di Nash



The Society and its members have expanded our work a lot this year, raising the profile of Balint group work. International colleagues have described amazement at the extent of our activities. New initiatives include a Leader Trainer discussion group, a series of Introductory workshops for NSW medical educators, and a mini-intensive for one NSW PHN.

Continuing projects include BOMS (the Balint groups for medical students), Balint Weaving seminars, and the Shifting Ground forum for doctors. Enrolment in our Leadership Accreditation Pathway has doubled, meaning BSANZ will potentially have fifty trained and accredited Balint leaders, a rich and expanding resource.

Upcoming work includes a JMO Response Initiative following the 2022 Victorian Mental Health Report which has mandated Balint or Balint style groups for Victorian JMOs. In March 2023 the BSANZ plans to offer a weekend Balint workshop in several centres, and in October 2023 an Intensive Workshop, much awaited, in Hobart.

This year our leaders have also participated in international Balint groups, presented papers at the Brussels IBF Conference, served on the IBF Leadership Council, and been among the judges for the International Ascona essay prize. Our congratulations to Auckland medical student Thomas Swinburn, this year's Ascona winner!

A big thank you to everyone who has given time and energy to the work this year. We value your BSANZ membership and commitment, and welcome your continued support and participation.

Editorial

Hilary Ash & Nish Jayarajan

The Balint model was born to reach out to GPs suffering vicarious trauma in post-WWII London. 70-odd years later that model survives, offering a tool to respond to the rolling crises of our time. Now La Niña is dumping floods on metro & rural Australasia, just when the pandemic had reached its political use-by date. However our health systems are suffering worsening staffing and resource crises. No surprise the growing interest in Balint group work, which does not shy away from recognising tough experiences.

This is our final Downunder for 2022, to enjoy over your morning coffee. Info right here on the left about our imminent **Balint Weaving Seminar, on Sunday morning 30th October**. Take a moment to [register promptly](#). Read about a Reading Circle to join next year, a poem from Frank Meumann, word from the recent IBF Congress in Brussels, and more.

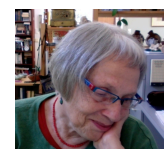
2023 will see changes for the Society and the Board, including new plans and activities. I shall retire from newsletter editorial duties, making way for a new co-editor. Interested?

You are warmly invited to contribute, such as book or article reviews or general reflections about your Balint journey. And how about a letter to the Editor?

admin.bsanz@bigpond.com

Happy reading!

H.A



BOMS

Balint Online for Medical Students Owing to popular and growing demand, BOMS will continue in 2023. If you or a medical student you know would like information or to register to join a group, email BOMS coordinator Meredith Waugh: mwaugh4221@gmail.com. Medicine and allied health students are eligible to join BSANZ for free during their studies. Apply today! (Email in footer)

Accreditation Committee

From November this year Hilary Ash has agreed to chair the AC. A daunting task! Di Nash will be able to step back as Chair after her sterling work to streamline admin and website processes, as well as being a hugely supportive go to person for trainees, and holding the fort in countless ways.

Several trainees are close to completing their accreditation pathway, while enthusiasm among current trainees remains high.

UPCOMING

Reading Circle



Would you really enjoy an opportunity to discuss your ideas and thoughts about interesting articles in a small enthusiastic group? Of late a few

people have expressed interest in meeting to read and meet to share reading on Balint work. We hope together enough to start a small group in 2023. The group will decide when and how often. Interested? Questions? Contact Meredith mwaugh4221@gmail.com or Ethel ethelt@inet.net.au

Online Workshops 2023

Watch out for news of our second Zoom workshops, currently planned for Autumn 2023. Already interested to participate, and want to be kept in the loop? email admin.bsan@bigpond.com

Intensive Workshop 2023

At last, after what will be a break of 4 years, October 2023 in Hobart is the venue planned for our next Intensive. These workshops are always in high demand, with applications exceeding limited vacancies. More information as it comes to hand.

Medical Students Essay Competition

A selection of prizewinning essays are on the website. Definitely worth your attention!

About the competition:

Sharpen your pencils, all you med students in Australia & New Zealand, for our 2023 essay competition. Your essay could be submitted for publication in international Balint journals. Works of our local student essayists also do well in international competitions, with a New Zealander winning the 2022 IBF Ascona prize.



Balint Articles Corner

N.J.

In this edition of Balint in the Balint biographies section, we cover Albert Lichtenstein, who writes about his love affair with Balint since the early 1990s. He was initially mentored by Dr. Frank Dornfest who was subsequently president of the IBF. His Balint experience evolved from co-leading with Frank and he became heavily involved with the ABS. Starting as an ABS council member in 1998, he gradually ascended to the role of president in 2013.

Lichtenstein's presidency tenure oversaw several advances, such as the Enid Balint essay competition, the first national meeting, and the expansion of the society into paediatrics. He recounts his contribution to the initiation of the history committee in a 2013 meeting wherein members recorded their part in the development of the society and their personal history in Balint on a 23-foot long sheet of paper!

In 2014, worried by a lack of Balint leaders, he oversaw the development of a training procedure short of credentialing called the Balint Group Leader Education Fellowship (BGLEF). This was a success, and several fellows went on to complete full credentialing.

From 2015 to 2017, Lichtenstein facilitated one of the first online groups for early career doctors, and presented the evaluation at the IBF Congress in Metz, France. A live fishbowl demonstration of online groups was held in Oxford in 2017, which allayed prior concerns about online Balint groups. The online Balint group movement gathered momentum with the backing of the IBF and the ABS, and led to the first online groups in the USA in 2018.

By virtue of his role in the ABS Lichtenstein was able to help societies in many countries. At the behest of Dr. Marion Lustig he traveled to Australia and helped form the Balint Society of Australia (BSA), as it was known at the time. He co-authored an article with Marion about how Balint work helped medical decision-making and participated as a consultant at the 2011 BSANZ Intensive workshop.

Through his Balint journey, Lichtenstein developed an understanding of concepts of safety and a nonjudgemental focus on the doctor-patient relationship, which allowed participants to voice internal feelings and thoughts that are demoralizing and can lead to burnout. He viewed Balint groups as nurturing the lagging parts of emotional development which can get played out in the doctor-patient relationship. He was part of the first Leader Credentialing Intensive in Sayre, Pennsylvania, in 1999, and led at several Intensives, which contributed to the development of concepts around leadership training. At the 2013 IBF congress, he proposed that much like positive, authoritative parenting, leadership consisted of setting appropriate boundaries while limiting criticism and encouraging personal growth through freedom of expression.

Lichtenstein, A. (2020). *Balint autobiography—Albert Lichtenstein. The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 55(3), 219-222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091217420919020>



Leadership Tips:

Leonie Sullivan has kindly provided the material for this section. Hopefully, people on the leadership pathway will find this helpful in your leadership journey.

Recording a Balint session can be a challenging experience. There is no fixed format, and styles differ. It can be useful to create a table for yourself, and over time to keep track of your thoughts and experience about your own and the group's evolution.

Membership: Present / Absent / New members

Presenter:

Significant pre-case events: Within the group / In the external world

The case: Brief description of the case / Central doctor-patient dilemma

PROCESS:

Emotional aspects: & Changes throughout the discussion in-

Anxiety level / Mood changes

Leadership Interventions:

Successful - taken up by group, increased focus on task/improved speculations

Unsuccessful - not taken up by group/lack of focus

Group performance:

Level of speculation

Effect of speculation - distance/cohesion

Ability to stick to task of understanding the doctor/patient relationship

Self-reflection and areas of learning for leaders

Since May 2020, a fairly regular contingent of Australian and New Zealand doctors have joined our free monthly one-hour discussion forum on a Sunday morning. Through this project, open to all doctors, BSANZ responded to 2 1/2 years of rolling crises. The forum will wind up at the end of this year. Special thanks to my co-facilitators, Bill Betts & Di Nash.

HA.



A faded rose

Her wistful voice pipes up:
'a flying teacup
smack, between my eyes,
it was a smashing party - my wedding day'

Frank Meumann
2 October 2022

Hippocrates said it's more important to know what kind of patient the disease has than what kind of disease the patient has.

VALE - Mary Cameron ~ who some members may remember. An active member of our society in the past, she died recently and suddenly in hospital of a heart attack.

Check your inbox for agenda, nomination & proxy forms. Apologies:
admin.bsanz@bigpond.com

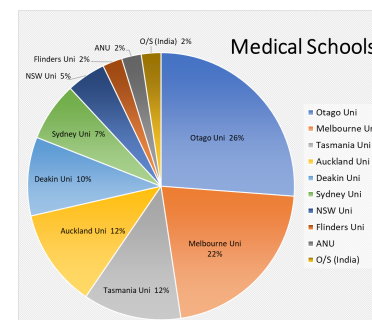
Members are now able to access recordings of the Balint Weaving seminars 1 and 2 through the website. Just use your login name & password.

Pictured: Claudia Gross receives her Leadership Accreditation certificate from Di Nash in a stunning New Zealand location.



See our website group pages for a comprehensive listings of current groups. <https://balintanz.org/about/join-a-balint-group/>

Meredith Waugh, Student Coordinator mwaugh4221@gmail.com



IBF - and World Balint

BRUSSELS CONGRESS: Balint core values : cohesion and flexibility

The 22nd International Parliament Congress was held in Brussels this year, and I arrived rather hot and sweaty, by bicycle from Amsterdam to a generously warm welcome in the middle of the summer heat wave. The venue was a beautiful Franciscan convent, set in stunning parklike grounds with lots of beautiful cooling trees that hosted many a lively small group discussion.

The Congress theme was reflected in so many aspects of the program and also the seamless organisation of five-day event.

I had selected to be in a Balint psychodrama group and we had five thoroughly enriching group experiences of utilising this creative application of psychodrama to the Balint method. Our group experiences were intertwined with stimulating plenary sessions challenging us to revisit both the underlying principles and values of our Balint work, and the frame with which we hold it all. Inviting the flexibility to question and evaluate the need for pushback was particularly thought provoking for me, and after every 20 minute paper a good robust discussion was facilitated, which really brought the theory and practice of the work to life.

There was an exciting and very enjoyable social program on offer, with an absolutely stunning walking tour of the old city of Brussels, followed by an elaborate and awe-inspiring gala dinner at Château de Grand Bigard a 14th Century castle which had been booked out for us to enjoy for the entire evening.

I highly recommend reading the proceedings to get a taste of what was on offer; you can send away for a copy from Christian Linclau by emailing: Docteur Linclau doclinclau@gmail.com

Renske van den Brink Renske42@gmail.com

NewZealander wins Ascona Prize!

Yes, once more our region has produced a winner of this



this competitive essay, Thomas Swinburn, pictured here with Michèle Parée, IBF past president, and Christian Linclau at the IBF Congress dinner.

Photo courtesy Daniel Brass

Will you be in the UK in December?

The Balint Society ~ Bristol Study Day, AGM & Dinner Friday 2nd December 2022

We are excited to be able to offer a Bristol study day this year and delighted to welcome back Gearoid Fitzgerald who will be giving the introductory talk. This will be followed by our AGM and Dinner. (Original message included the menu!)

The Study Day will take place at Engineers House in Bristol, and will be of interest to clinicians and trainees from a range of disciplines and those interested in Balint, in leading Balint groups, and for experienced Balint leaders and supervisors. See the link for the programme for the day along with the menu if you'd like to join us for dinner.

For further information and to register please take a look at our website: [Bristol Study day 2022](https://www.balintanz.org/bristol-study-day-2022)

Questions? Contact: judy.malone.work@gmail.com.

~~~~~ Bookshelf & Resources

H.A

- Based on this review in the Guardian, you might agree that doctors-tell-all has become a new genre for the current generation. The review covers several Australian titles – all interesting – published since Adam Kay's memorable memoir (*This is Going to Hurt*) of his years in British NHS hospitals.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/sep/27/australian-medicine-can-be-an-awful-place-to-work-and-now-doctors-are-writing-about-it>

- Recently finished reading Norman Swan's *So you think you know what's good for you?* The book offers wry, unpretentious and levelheaded advice on all manner of questions about health.

- Currently reading *Thought: The Invisible Essence* by Sydney psychoanalyst Maurice Whelan, published this year. Part one includes a searing indictment of the Catholic Church's corrupted power in Ireland, and elsewhere, which has created a trail of trauma and hidden sexual abuse.

- Check out YLE - Your Local Epidemiologist <https://yourlocalepidemiologist.substack.com>