

BSANZ DOWNUNDER

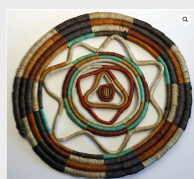
CURRENT

Newly Accredited Leaders

Congratulations to our two recently accredited Balint group leaders:
Cathy Warburton in Melbourne
Bec Wild in Sunshine Coast

The Leadership Accreditation Pathway (LAP) has been attracting growing numbers. Are you interested in Balint leader training? e: admin.bsanzt@bigpond.com

Balint Weaving Seminars - ADDING THREADS



Three events for our enrichment:

SATURDAY 20th AUGUST - 9.30am AEST **BIGO - Balint International Group Online**

Come and hear about an innovative project, which grew out of the ashes of Covid. Three members of an international group for Balint leaders will share their experience:

Hilary Ash has been a facilitator
Judy Griffiths has been a member, as has
Suely Grossman, joining us from Brazil (hence the unusual time!)

SUNDAY 11th SEPTEMBER - 5pm AEST
Creating through a Balint lens - UK Balint leader and medical educator **Shake Seigel**, has agreed to workshop this session. Some of us remember Shake from his extended stints in rural Vic and SA between 2009-2015. He's currently Chair of British Balint's leadership training group.

SATURDAY 29th OCTOBER - afternoon
BOMS - medical student learning - a 2-way street How does this expanding initiative benefit students and leaders?

Seminars FREE for current financial members. Non-members \$25 per seminar. Further details when they come to hand.

Editorial

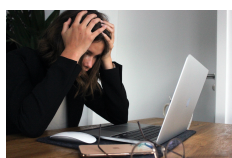
Nish Jayarajan & Hilary Ash

Here's a bursting newsletter to warm you up in this harsh winter season. Beating the cold, the Society has been active on various fronts! First of all, check out this year's 3 online seminar series - **Balint Weaving: ADDING THREADS**, in August, September & October. We have updates on the leadership training pathway, leadership groups and the BOMS initiative. In this edition see the latest news on the left here, stay up-to-date with regular and upcoming activities, read a summary of a runner-up essay from 2019, check out the Members' corner, see our Balint autobiographies section which features John Salinsky, and see a little of overseas Balint. Lots of surprises scattered around these pages!

As always, we invite write ups suggestions and contributions from leaders, trainees and members. These might relate to research, to your journey in the Balint world, or to any other ideas or reflections about Balint. Also please feel free to contact us if you are interested in joining the editorial team. Tell us what you think - send a Letter to the Editor! admin.bsanzt@bigpond.com

We hope you enjoy this edition.

N.J.



President's Desk

Di Nash

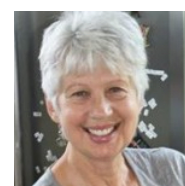
What a busy six months or so! Both leadership trainee enrolments and students participating in Balint groups online for medical students (BOMS) have doubled since last year.

Three willing people have joined the hard working Board, which is essentially a hard-working, and much appreciated, management committee of volunteers. The Accreditation Committee has shifted again, and welcomes Daniel Brass. If you have the time and interest, there are a number of jobs, great and small, which could use your help; email me at president@balintanz.org.

Appreciation to Anne Malecki, Vanessa Stemberge and Simon Gurnsey, the administrative team, who shoulder a lot of our Society's day to day routine and expanding activities.

Some large organisations are proceeding with plans to set up Balint groups and to train leaders, and are asking for our input. And the Royal Commission on Mental Health in Victoria has just mandated Balint or Balint type reflective practice groups for junior medical officers in Victorian hospitals.

Thank you to all of you who have believed in and valued the Balint process since 2005 when the BSANZ was incorporated, and have supported the Society ever since. It's an exciting and challenging time. Do keep in touch, and of course your contributions to the work are most welcome.



BOMS

Balint Online for Medical Students

(BOMS) continues to meet with enthusiastic interest - very gratifying. Group cycles consist of six sessions once a week. The 6 groups this year (two complete, two underway and two more to go, with **some spaces in the sixth one**) are testament to growing recognition. Interested to know more? Email BOMS coordinator Meredith Waugh:

mwaugh4221@gmail.com

Reminder that Med and allied health students are eligible for free BSANZ membership. Apply today! (Email in footer)

Shifting Ground

This BSANZ project for Australian and New Zealand doctors, which has been running for years now, continues to attract old and new faces. Originally established as a



response to bushfires, floods and the pandemic, there is always plenty to talk about. We meet

monthly on the last Sunday of the month for an hour. Never a shortage of discussion, Covid-related in particular. There is no charge. Medicos interested to join or to be on the mailing list? e: admin.bsanz@bigpond.com and include a word about where you practise.

Accreditation Committee

Current AC members Daniel Brass and Di Nash, (yes, another AC membership change - welcome Daniel!) with admin sec Vanessa Stembridge, have been busily streamlining trainee admin procedures. If you are on the LAP, you will now be able to record and keep track of your own progress on the pathway using confidential templates on the website. In the past, the Accreditation Committee matched up trainees with supervisors based on location. These days, when supervision is largely on Zoom, the options are wide open. Trainees will soon be able to peruse available Leader Trainer profiles and make their own selection.

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## Medical Students Essay Competition

Have you read the prizewinning essays from our 2021 competition? [Beyond the Medical](#) by Stephanie Lee and [Too Momentous for Words](#) by Madison Booth are both on the website.

[One Person, Two Lives](#) by Yoshua Selvadurai from UNSW was a 2019 runner-up.

The essay appears to be an end-of-life story about an engagement with Ed, a terminally ill GP. As Yoshua takes time to sit with Ed, he observes his own shifting understanding of this relationship, and by extension of the kind of doctor he would like to be. Ever the caring GP, Ed shares his passion for cars, apparently as a diversion away from his illness, all the while subtly mentoring the attentive medical student.

Since Ed's death, Yoshua reflects on how that seminal doctor-patient relationship continues to percolate through his approach to patients. He describes the value discovered from attending to the relationship with patients, and how much he can learn when he takes the time to listen. With a poem about his grandmother's Covid, Yoshua has gone to enjoy more success with his sensitive writing: in 2020 he was joint winner of the inaugural Global Creative Competition launched by Medical Education Innovation and Research Centre, Imperial College, London.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/school-public-health/primary-care-and-public-health/research/medic/global-creative-competition-medical-student-responses-to-covid-19/literary-winners/before-you-leave/>

To read more of his writing, google Yoshua Selvadurai!

H.A.

### About the competition:

A reminder to med students in Australia & New Zealand - our next biennial competition will be in 2023. Your essay could be submitted for publication in international Balint journals. Our students have also fared particularly well in the IBF Ascona prize, as well as other international writing competitions.

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**Domain name** - In case you haven't noticed. we've streamlined our domain name to [balintanz.org.au](http://balintanz.org.au) - much less cumbersome!

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Extract from **The Doctor, His patient and the Illness** by Michael Balint - pp 306-7

### Attitude of the Group Leader

Perhaps the most important factor is the behaviour of the leader of the group. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that if he finds the right attitude he will teach more by his example than by everything else combined. After all, the technique we advocate is based on exactly the same sort of listening that we expect the doctors to learn and then to practise with their patients. By allowing everybody to be themselves, to have their say in their own way and in their own time, by watching for proper cues - that is, speaking only when something is *really* expected from him and making his point in a form which, instead of prescribing *the* right way, opens up possibilities for the doctors to discover by themselves *some* right way of dealing with the patients problems - the leader can demonstrate in the "here and now" situation what he wants to teach.

Obviously no one can live up to these exacting standards. Fortunately there is no need for perfection. The group leader may make mistakes - in fact he often does - without causing much harm if he can accept criticism in the same or even somewhat sharper and then he expects his group to accept. This must be watched very carefully, and any hesitation by the group in exposing the leaders mistakes must be pointed out. Obviously this freedom cannot develop if the leader tries to hedge or to explain away his failings. It is a wholesome sign if the group can run him down, even if they have some fun at his expense, provided they can do so without rejecting him or turning hostile to him.

## LAP Group

The current cycle of the LAP (Leadership Accreditation Pathway) group for trainee leaders, which Leonie Sullivan is leading, has completed three sessions. The experiential training group provides trainees with opportunities for group s/v, fine-tuning of leadership skills and more. Participants find the group a valuable source of leadership enrichment.

## UPCOMING

### Intensive Workshop 2023

We are planning an Intensive Workshop in 2023, most likely in the Spring. Covid is guilty of messing up this regular project of ours! I know, just like the rest of the world. Optimistically, by Spring next year we will feel free to participate safely.

## RANDOM BALINT

**What would you like to see or add here? A poem perhaps?**



At a recent international group meeting, a Brazilian member loaded this image onto his green screen. It felt like they were there with us, Enid and Michael, their spirits encouraging our work and enlivening our imagination.

~ ~ ~

Wikipedia tells us: While preparing for a PhD in biochemistry, Bálint worked in the laboratory of physiologist [Otto Heinrich Warburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Heinrich_Warburg) (1883–1970), who won a Nobel Prize in 1931 after 46 nominations!. Three scientists who worked in Warburg's lab, including Sir [Hans Adolf Krebs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Adolf_Krebs), went on to win Nobel Prizes in subsequent years. Bálint's biochemistry research coincided with working half time at the Berlin Institute of psychoanalysis.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Balint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Balint)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto\\_Heinrich\\_Warburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Heinrich_Warburg)

## Members corner

### Membership renewals NOW due!

Did you realise leadership accreditation is linked to financial membership? Your membership also supports the Board's volunteer work, including admin support, website development and maintenance, advertising and more. Demonstrate your support for our Society and renew today!

### Meet BSANZ Board members

President: Di Nash

Treasurer: Swapnil Sharma

Secretary: Hilary Ash

Ordinary Hardworking Members: Meredith Waugh, Nish Jayarajan, Daniel Brass

Winter introduces BSANZ Board's two social workers:



**Meredith Waugh**, a Gold Coast social worker & psychologist, joined the Board this year, and got right to work. Her name pops up here as BOMS student co-ordinator and on the Balint Weaving subcommittee. Meredith joined BSANZ in 2017 for her first Intensive in Hobart and is currently on the LAP. She leads BOMS groups, a group for university counsellors, and recently started an innovative Balint group for

Anglican ministers. Meredith links her Balint work to her lifelong interest in stress and burnout in helping professions. She previously worked in child and youth mental health and childhood complex trauma, and her current part-time private practice offers supervision, Balint Groups, and online training programs.

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Melbourne social worker, **Hilary Ash**, joined the Board at the 2018 AGM, and has been Secretary since 2020. You'll also find her in other corners of BSANZ, such as editing this Newsletter with Nish, facilitation Shifting Ground forum for doctors, and shaping Balint Weaving seminars with Meredith and Judy Griffiths. Hilary has been in private practice since the early 90's as a counsellor for individuals and couples. Her Masters in Group Analytic Studies has been an asset in her Balint work. She joined BSANZ in 2007 for the first Intensive in Hobart. When Australia's new Mental Health Professionals Network <https://www.mhpn.org.au> sought network co-ordinators in about 2009 she offered, creating her first Balint group with Ruth Dunn. She now leads three groups, and facilitates one international group.



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### Looking to join a Balint groups or refer a colleague?

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

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### Deadline for our Spring edition: 1 October.

We welcome your thoughts and contributions, ideas and more.

## Balint Articles Corner

We are sharing relevant Balint research or articles in this section. In this edition's autobiography section, John Salinsky takes us through his 50 year journey in the Balint world, a journey which almost stopped as soon as it started. In the beginning he recalls a lot of frustration around the Balint process, seeking solutions from wise leaders as opposed to engaging in uncertainties the process induced. This was nicknamed "Dr Salinsky's problem" to which his leaders devoted an entire session. Salinsky reports he was not convinced after this session, but the kindness and concern displayed for his predicament led him to stay on.

After four years of participating, Salinsky went on to lead his own resident group. By now he had come to terms with his so-called problem, and gained a better appreciation of the core focus of the process on emotional interactions within doctor-patient relationships. However he felt himself unprepared for leadership, especially as there was no formal training program at that stage. Fortunately Enid Balint was co-leading a group which Salinsky joined as an invited "associate leader". He subsequently developed a rapport with Enid in the process of giving her a lift home every week after the group.

Over time Salinsky started representing the UK at IBF congresses, becoming its treasurer and later secretary for 10 years. He also held the post of president of the UK Balint society and editor of the Journal of the Balint Society from 1991 to 2001.

Salinsky makes several references to his diary in the section on his connections with Balint in the USA. He describes his meetings with Clive Brock and various others in Charleston, which became one of his favourite places in the world.

One of the diary excerpts describes how he felt like an astronaut who had just discovered human life on another planet when realising how similar a US resident group felt to his own resident group 3000 miles away. He recounts anecdotes around the formation of the American Balint Society (ABS) including mistakenly splattering his salad dressing on the original ABS constitution. The honorary title of "midwife" to the ABS paid tribute to Salinsky's contributions to its formation.

Interestingly, one of his major contributions to Balint groups in the ABS and UK Balint worlds was the introduction of the "pushback", so familiar to us today. He apparently picked up the idea from German Balint groups and spends the last section debating its pros and cons.

Salinsky J. Balint autobiography - John Salinsky. *Int J Psychiatry Med.* 2020 May;55(3):167-172. doi: 10.1177/0091217420919004. PMID:

N.J.

## IBF ! and World Balint

### BRUSSELS CONGRESS

#### Balint core values : cohesion and flexibility

The International Balint Federation 22nd International Balint Congress will be at the Maison Notre Dame du Chant-d'Oiseau in Brussels, 31st August to 4th September 2022. For info and application details see <https://www.balint2022.be>.

NewZealand Leader Trainer, Renske van den Brink, has been invited to present a new version of her beautiful paper *Learning to lead: a Balint river journey*