



**Lighthouse**<sup>®</sup>  
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# *Journey to Recovery*

## **Evaluation Report**

The International Conference of Attachment and  
Trauma Informed Practice™

**Melbourne, 13 - 14 August 2013**



# Journey to Recovery

The International Conference of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice

Evaluation Report

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Report prepared by

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# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the presenters and delegates, evaluation respondents for their feedback, panel delegates for their contributions, Think Business Events for coordinating the conference, and our expert advisory committee for their wisdom, guidance and input. We would also like to acknowledge the support of our community partners EACH, OzChild, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Queen Elizabeth Centre, Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, Australian Catholic University and Victoria University. We are also very grateful to our sponsors who have made this event possible: City of Melbourne, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Mental Health Council of Australia, Cabrini and The Como.



# The Journey to Recovery 2013

Journey to Recovery, the International Conference of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice, was held from 13 – 14 August 2013, at The Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Conference came at a pivotal time for practitioners, policy makers, researchers, consultants, carers and survivors of trauma. It was a collaborative opportunity to tap into a growing body of knowledge, practical experience and expertise. As Attachment and Trauma Informed care is increasingly regarded as best practice in the helping professions, our work has been aided by the growth of new technologies and emerging research. More than ever before, we are gaining a greater understanding of what needs to be done – both to support efforts at prevention and early intervention, and to work to achieve positive outcomes for people with histories of trauma.

The Conference provided an opportunity to come together, to share experiences and to reflect on practice and research from diverse sectors. Focusing on recovery-oriented approaches that were grounded in an Attachment and Trauma Informed perspective, the Conference aimed to:

- Enable cross-sectoral sharing between leaders, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, carers and survivors of trauma
- Exhibit best practice in Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice and Research
- Consolidate what is currently known about attachment and trauma informed practice
- Ask important questions about what has been, what is possible, and what the future may hold for this field of work
- Highlight trauma informed approaches that are holistic and systems oriented
- Enable survivors of trauma to share their journeys, and to highlight what factors assisted their recovery

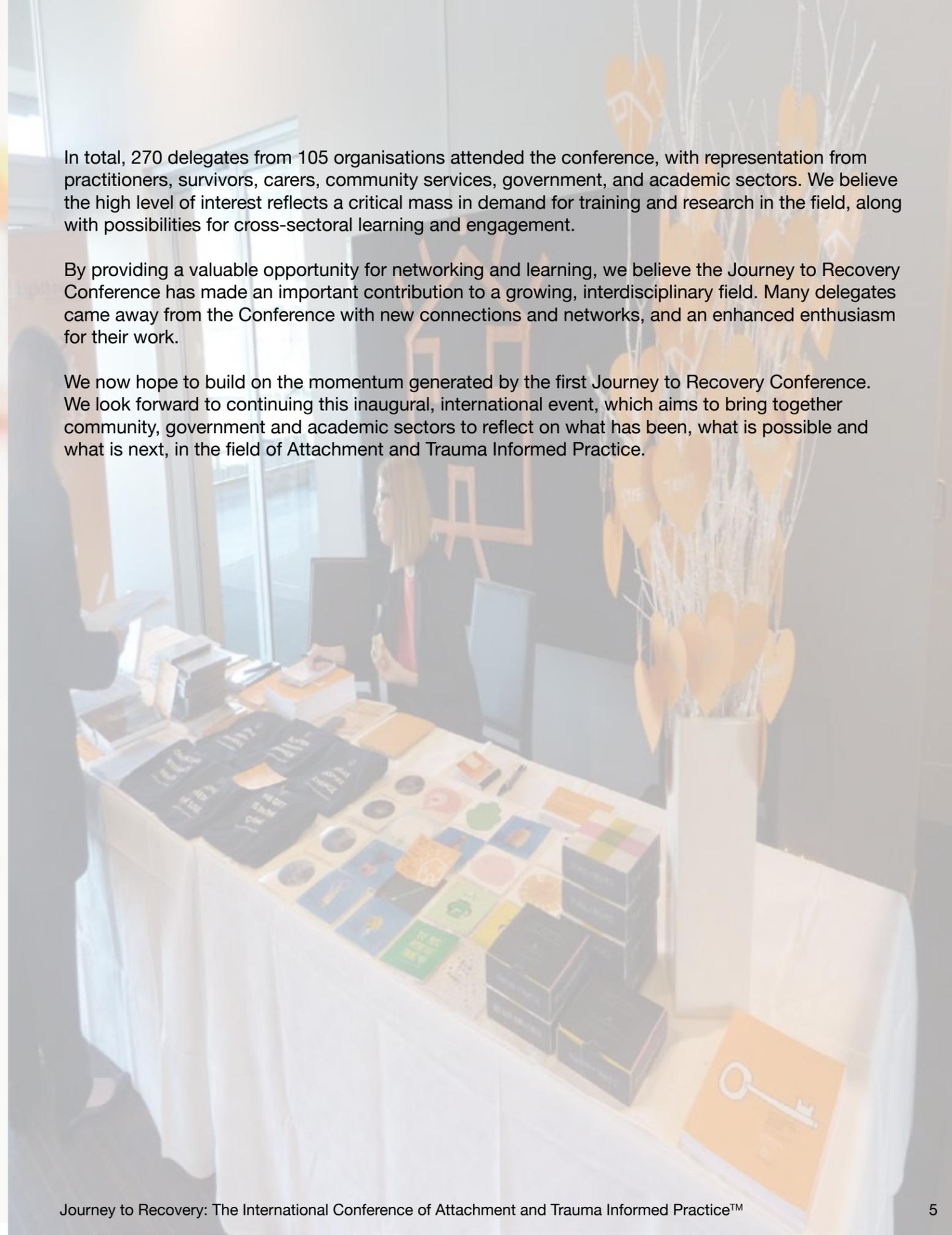
Over the course of two days, the Conference showcased twenty four presentations and practice workshops, as well as emotive presentations from a Carer and a Survivor of Trauma, about the challenges they have faced and the essential elements of the recovery process. We were also delighted to have a number of the world's greatest thinkers in the field of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice, including:

- Dr Cathy Kezelman, the President of Adults Surviving Child Abuse;
- Deborra-lee Furness, Patron, Lighthouse Foundation;
- Patrick Tomlinson, Trauma Consultant and member of the Lighthouse Institute team;
- Dr Michael Merzenich, Professor Emeritus of Neuroscience at the University of California; and
- Professor Patrick McGorry, Executive Director of Orygen Youth Health Research Centre.

In total, 270 delegates from 105 organisations attended the conference, with representation from practitioners, survivors, carers, community services, government, and academic sectors. We believe the high level of interest reflects a critical mass in demand for training and research in the field, along with possibilities for cross-sectoral learning and engagement.

By providing a valuable opportunity for networking and learning, we believe the Journey to Recovery Conference has made an important contribution to a growing, interdisciplinary field. Many delegates came away from the Conference with new connections and networks, and an enhanced enthusiasm for their work.

We now hope to build on the momentum generated by the first Journey to Recovery Conference. We look forward to continuing this inaugural, international event, which aims to bring together community, government and academic sectors to reflect on what has been, what is possible and what is next, in the field of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice.



**Day 1 - Tuesday 13 August 2013**

08:00	Registration		
09:00	Opening Ceremony: Kane Bowden and Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute		
09:15	Keynote address: Dr Cathy Kezelman, ASCA (Personal Perspective/Survivor of Trauma) Chair: Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute		
10:30	Morning Tea		
11:00-12:30	<b>SE-01 Identity, Attachment &amp; Psychological Wellbeing</b> Chair: <b>Patrick Tomlinson, Lighthouse Institute</b>	<b>SE-02 Diversity in Practice</b> Chair: <b>Athina Georgiou, Queen Elizabeth Centre</b>	<b>SE-03 Trauma &amp; Systems</b> Chair: <b>Anne-Maree Rogers, EACH Social and Community Health</b>
11:00	Adult attachment in looked after children and their mental health: Exploring the link between childhood adversity and the development of psychiatric disorders <b>Carly Cameron: Deakin University</b>	Helping children and young people "move on". What are the essential elements in transitioning children and young people in out-of-home-care? <b>Andrew Browning, Australian Childhood Foundation and Susan Rae, Ozchild</b>	Trauma informed practice with adolescents using multimodal creative approaches to assist neural integration of trauma <b>Sharon Duthie and Jane Steele, EACH Social and Community Health</b>
11:30	Utilising the 'internalised other' in difficult relationships - strengthening positive internal voices using storytelling with children <b>Kerry Francis, Let's Talk Ltd</b>	Developing a comprehensive mental health programme for children living in family-style children's homes (Udayan Ghars) in India for their journey to recovery <b>Kiran Modo, India</b>	Shadows of smouldering embers: A holistic, systems-orientated approach to the long-term effects and multi-generational transmission of trauma experiences by survivors of the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires <b>Laya Ross, Private Practitioner</b>
12:00	Redefining individual and social identity after the survival of violence: An integral and comprehensive assessment and psychotherapy for the liberation of the impact of violence against minority groups <b>Ana Eugenia Castro, Private Practitioner</b>	The <i>Gong Shi</i> Project: How culture, trauma and attachment interact <b>Helen Lenga: Private Practitioner</b>	'Congruence' and the therapeutic organisation <b>Stephen Friedrich, Knightlamp</b>
12:30	Lunch		
13:30-15:00	<b>SE-04 Workshop 1</b> Chair: <b>Ariane Florent, Australian Catholic University</b>	<b>SE-05 Workshop 2</b> Chair: <b>Athina Georgiou, Queen Elizabeth Centre</b>	<b>SE-06 Workshop 3</b> Chair: <b>Anne-Maree Rogers, EACH Social and Community Health</b>
	Global perspectives on holistic art therapy and trauma recovery <b>Carla Van Laar, Art2Healing Project</b>	Practice RYTHYM™ - The Wisdom of Care <b>Gregory Nicolau, Australian Childhood Trauma Group</b>	Lighthouse Therapeutic Family Model of Care™ <b>Tymur Hussein, Lighthouse Institute</b>
15:00	Afternoon Tea		
15:30	Survivor's Story: <b>Shawn Humphrey's, Senior resident, Lighthouse Foundation</b>		
15:45	Keynote address: Patrick Tomlinson. History of ATIP, Systems Approach. Chair: Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute		
17:00-17:15	Performance: Tania de Jong AM		
17:15	Session finishes/networking drinks commences		
18:15	Networking drinks conclude		

**Day 2 - Wednesday 14 August 2013**

08:00	Registration opens		
09:00	Opening: <b>Bernie Geary, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People</b> Chair: <b>Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute</b>		
09:15	Keynote address: <b>Dr Michael Merzenich, University of California</b> <b>Neuroplasticity and the Brain's Ability to Adapt Itself into Adulthood</b> Chair: <b>Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute</b>		
10:30	Morning Tea		
11:00-13:00	<b>SE-07 Multiple Contexts of Trauma Recovery</b> Chair: <b>Patrick Tomlinson, Lighthouse Institute</b>	<b>SE-08 Cross-Sectorial Applications</b> Chair: <b>Nina Springle, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.</b>	<b>SE-09 Towards a New Paradigm</b> Chair: <b>Michelle Van Doon</b>
11:00	Brain-based trauma intervention: The role of safety in facilitating an enriched therapeutic environment <b>Kobie Alison, University of Queensland</b>	The Sanctuary Model in action in an Australia out of home care context <b>Kerryn Toth and Chantal Leigh-Smith, Churches of Christ Care</b>	Careful conversations <b>Maryanne Jacobs, Uniting Care Burnside</b>
11:30	Innovations in trauma informed approaches to facilitating the recovery of survivors of trauma <b>Jon Carnegie, Victoria University/ RMIT/Charles Darwin University</b>	Substance use as trauma adaptation: Developing a trauma informed alcohol & drug counselling program in the outer east region <b>Jenni Thompson, Knox Community Health &amp; Anne-Maree Rogers, EACH Social and Community Health</b>	Trauma-informed care and practice (TCIP): Towards a cultural shift in mental health and human services in Australia <b>Corinne Henderson, Mental Health Coordinating Council</b>
12:00	Measuring the recovery of children with complex trauma: Therapeutic Outcomes Assessment™ <b>Patrick Tomlinson and Dr Pauline McLoughlin, Lighthouse Institute</b>	Minimising school exclusion for students from trauma histories and suffering disorganised attachment: A neuroscience response to managing behaviour crises in schools <b>Judith Howard, Department of Education, Training and Employment</b>	ASCA Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery <b>Cathy Kezelman, Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)</b>
12:30	Trauma informed training that doesn't traumatise the trainees <b>Vaughan Bowie, University of Western Sydney</b>	Young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Victoria: Responding to trauma by strengthening support services for dual clients of child protection and youth justice <b>Susan Baidawi, Monash University</b>	An Australian network to increase the capacity of the community to respond to childhood trauma and adversity <b>Amanda Harris, Australian Child &amp; Adolescent Trauma, Loss &amp; Grief Network</b>
13:00	Lunch		
14:00	Introduction: <b>Deputy Lord Mayor, Susan Riley</b> Keynote Address: <b>Professor Patrick McGorry, University of Melbourne</b> Chair: <b>Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute</b>		
15:15	Afternoon Tea		
15:45	Carer's Story: <b>Cheyne Bull, Residential and Community Care Manager, Lighthouse Foundation</b>		
16:00	Panel Discussion: <b>Bernie Geary, Dr Cathy Kezelman, Dr Michael Merenich, Moira Kelly AO, Prof Patrick McGorry, Patrick Tomlinson</b> "Where to from here?" Chair: <b>Rudy Gonzalez, Lighthouse Institute</b>		
17:00	Sessions Finish		

## Poster Program

Poster Number	Presenters	Organisation	Presentation Title
1	Eliza-Jane Henry-Jones	Odyssey House Victoria	Not just “horsing around”: Equine-assisted therapy for children of substance-dependent parents
2	Phillipa Castle	Connections: Child, Youth and Family Services	Psychological consultation within the foster care environment: An incomparable therapeutic opportunity
3	Linda Smith	Matlec Apps	Mobile applications and their use in a therapeutic setting
4	Claudia Paretilla	Unviersity of Barcelona	Satisfaction with relationships and internalizing and externalizing problems: Promoting resilience in traumatized youth

## Keynote Speakers



**Deborra-lee Furness**  
Patron of Lighthouse Foundation

Deborra-lee Furness is an internationally acclaimed actress as well as a passionate supporter of children and defender of their human rights across the globe. It is her passion that children all over the world be given every chance to live a fulfilled and joyous life and achieve their full potential. Deborra-lee is Patron of the Lighthouse Foundation for displaced children in Melbourne Australia, Patron of the Fight Cancer foundation Australia and Patron of International Adoption Families for Queensland. As a World Vision ambassador Deborra-lee has travelled through Asia and Africa to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding poverty and the enormity of the Global Orphan Crisis. Deborra-lee is Executive Director for the Worldwide Orphans Foundation Australia and was honoured at the Worldwide Orphans Gala in New York City for all her work in advocacy for vulnerable children. She will be honoured in Washington later this year by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. Deborra-lee founded National Adoption Awareness Week in Australia when she recognized the great need to address serving abandoned and vulnerable children around the world.



**Rudy Gonzalez**  
Executive Director, Lighthouse Institute

Rudy is the founding Executive Director of Lighthouse Institute, an attachment and trauma informed knowledge centre that provides clinical supervision, training and consultancy to practitioners and organisations working with survivors of trauma, as well as conducting research on trauma informed therapeutic systems. He is a psychologist and a member of the Australian Psychological Society. Rudy previously worked as the Director of Care Services at Lighthouse Foundation where he managed the therapeutic care program for homeless young people. His professional experience spans work in Family Services as a family counsellor, in a forensic setting as a psychologist for male violent offenders in a therapeutic community, and in private practice working with children, young people and families. Rudy is a lecturer with the School of Psychology and Social Sciences at Victoria University. Rudy has also co-authored the book *Therapeutic Residential for Children and Young People: An Attachment and Trauma Informed Model for Practice*.



**Dr Cathy Kezelman**  
President, Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)

Cathy is a mental health consumer, medical practitioner by training and current President of Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), a national peak body for adults who have experienced childhood trauma in all its forms. She is also a director of MHCC (Mental Health Co-ordinating Council) NSW, member of Mental Health Community Advisory Council (NSW), foundation member of national Trauma Informed Care and Practice Advisory Working Group, reference group member of ACSSA (Australian Centre for Study of Sexual Assault), Advisory panel member of Batyr and Advisory Board member of Tzedek. Cathy was short-listed for CLW's Leadership Achievement Award for Women in 2009 and appointed an ambassador for National Families Week 2009/10/11/12/13. She is an advocate for the need of adults with a lived experience of complex trauma to be better met and for the integration of a trauma informed approach to care into practice across the human and health service sectors. She is a prominent voice in the media and at conferences, as well as author of her own memoir chronicling her journey of recovery from childhood trauma: *Innocence Revisited – A Tale in Parts*. Cathy is co-author of ASCA's Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery.



**Prof. Patrick D. McGorry**  
Professor of Youth Mental Health,  
University of Melbourne  
Executive Director, Orygen Youth Health  
Research Centre  
Director of Clinical Services, Orygen  
Youth Health

Prof McGorry received his medical degree from the University of Sydney and his doctorates from Monash University and the University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. He is a world-leading clinician, researcher, and reformer in the areas of early psychosis, early intervention and youth mental health. Prof McGorry's work has played an integral role in the development of safe, effective treatments and innovative research involving the needs of young people with emerging mental disorders, notably psychotic and severe mood disorders. The result has been the creation, evaluation and upscaling of stigma-free, holistic and recovery oriented models of care for young people and their families. The work of Prof McGorry and key research colleagues at EPPIC and Orygen has influenced health policy in Australia and many other countries and he has advised governments and health systems in many jurisdictions.



**Dr Michael Merzenich**  
Professor Emeritus of Neuroscience  
University of California

Dr Merzenich is Professor Emeritus of Neuroscience at the University of California, San Francisco. Known internationally as one of the foremost researchers of neuroplasticity, Dr Merzenich's work has shown that the brain retains its ability to alter itself well into adulthood, suggesting that brains with injuries or disease might be able to recover function, even later in life. This holds extraordinary implications for our work with survivors of trauma. He has also explored the way the senses are mapped in each the brain to recognise new patterns. Dr Merzenich wants to bring the powerful plasticity of the brain into practical use through technologies and methods that harness it to improve learning. Dr. Merzenich has published more than 150 articles in leading peer-reviewed journals, received numerous awards and prizes (including the Ipsen Prize, Zülch Prize, Thomas Alva Edison Patent Award and Purkinje Medal), and been granted nearly 100 patents for his work. He and his work have been highlighted in hundreds of books about the brain, learning, rehabilitation, and plasticity. Dr. Merzenich's work is also often covered in the popular press, including the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Time, Forbes, Discover, and Newsweek. He has appeared extensively on television, and his work has been featured on four PBS specials: "The Brain Fitness Program," "Brain Fitness 2: Sight and Sound," "The New Science of Learning," and "Brain Fitness Frontiers".



**Patrick Tomlinson**

Patrick's work with traumatised children spans from 1985, as a residential care worker, operational manager, organisation director, clinician, consultant and author. He began his career at the Cotswold Community in the UK, a 'therapeutic community for emotionally disturbed boys'. He spent fourteen years there, the last six as Assistant Principal. Following a two-year period working with Young Options (UK) as Head of Therapy and Regional Director, he joined SACCS (UK) as a Director in 2002. SACCS provides an integrated treatment program for traumatized children, in residential and foster care. Working with Mary Walsh, he was central to the development of the SACCS Recovery Program. He remained with SACCS until 2008. Since then he has been working independently as a consultant. Patrick specialises in the development of Therapeutic Models of Care for children and young people who have been traumatized by abuse and neglect. His qualifications include an MA in Therapeutic Child Care and Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Social Care Leadership. He is the author, co-author and series editor of seven books and numerous papers, including *Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Young People: An Attachment and Trauma Informed Model for Practice* (2011), co-authored with Rudy Gonzales and Susan Barton from the Lighthouse Foundation.

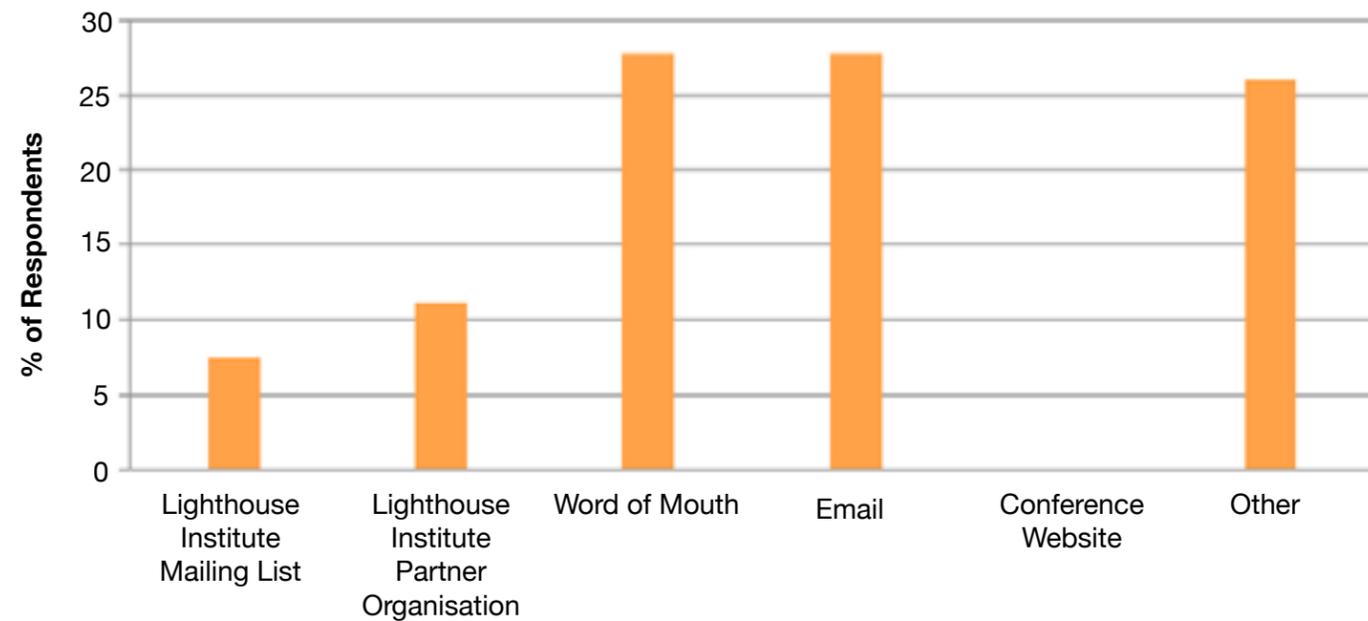
# Evaluation Results

An independent evaluation of the Conference was carried out by Think Business Events, between 26 August 2013 and 6 September 2013. Sixty four respondents completed the survey out of 254 Conference delegates. The following provides a summary of the key results and feedback.

## 1. Promotion of the Conference

The majority of the evaluation respondents first heard about the Conference through email communications in their own networks (28 per cent), word of mouth (28 per cent) or by other means not specified.

Figure 1. How did you hear about the Conference?



## 2. Conference Organisation, Venue and Catering

Respondents were satisfied with the organisation of the Conference, including the registration process and the provision of pre-conference information. On average, respondents rated all aspects of the Conference organisation as 'very good'. Most respondents rated the venue and catering as 'excellent'. Overall, the feedback was that respondents thought the event organisation was fantastic and did not need to change.

Figure 2. Satisfaction with the Conference organisation

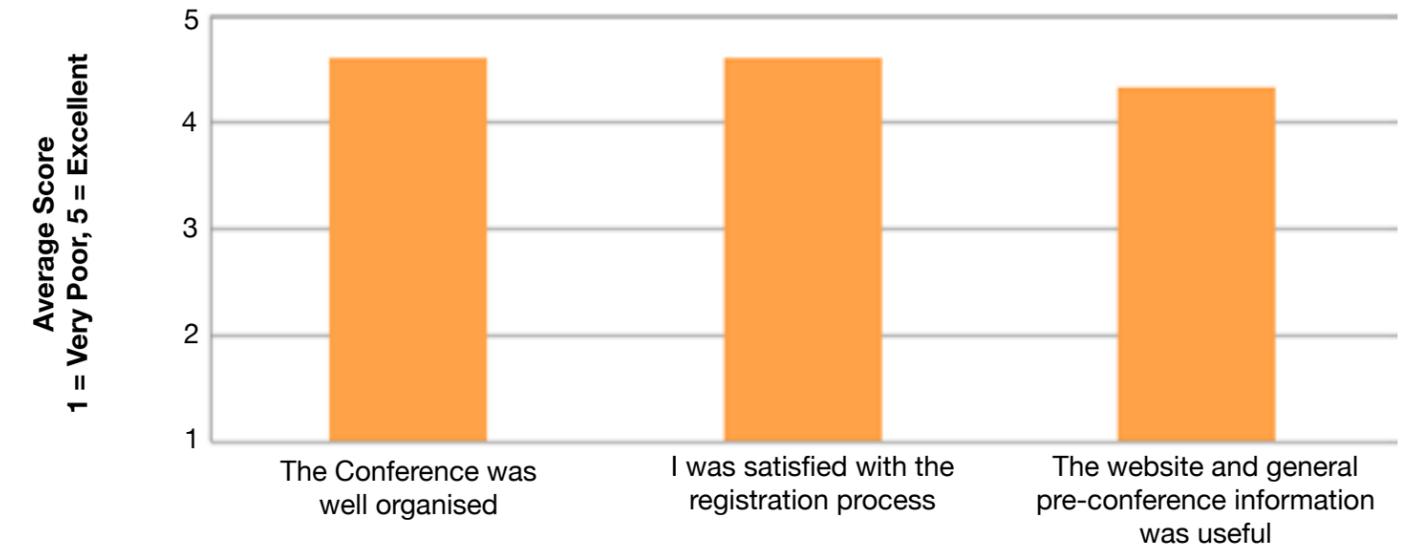
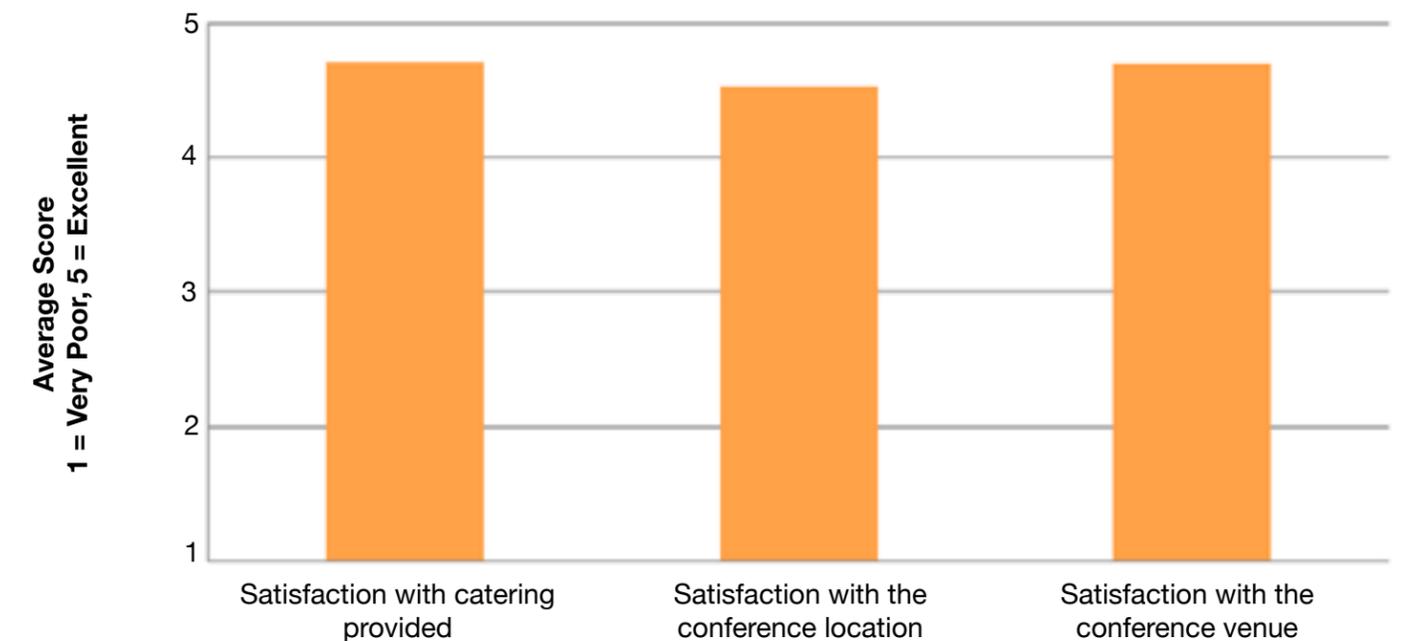


Figure 3. Satisfaction with the Conference venue and catering



Respondents' reflections included:

"A well organised conference, efficiently and effectively run ... all aspects of the event were very good."

"Catering was excellent."

"I thought the conference was extremely well organized and everything from the catering to the content of the presentations to the "wellness room" was fantastic!"

"Please hold this conference again!"

"The Venue was amazing."

"Venue, catering, general organisation was terrific."

"The location was great and accessible, the catering was delicious, the hand outs and information was very useful. Overall a very well organised conference."

3. Design of the Conference Program

The feedback from respondents suggested there was an abundance to see in the course of the two day program. The theme of self-awareness and self-care was strong throughout the Conference presentations and through the provision of the Wellness Program. The majority (77 per cent) of respondents felt that the number of concurrent sessions was 'just right' and 82 per cent also felt that the length of the Conference overall was 'just right'.

Overall, respondents were very satisfied with the overall quality of the content and presenters.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with the Conference Program

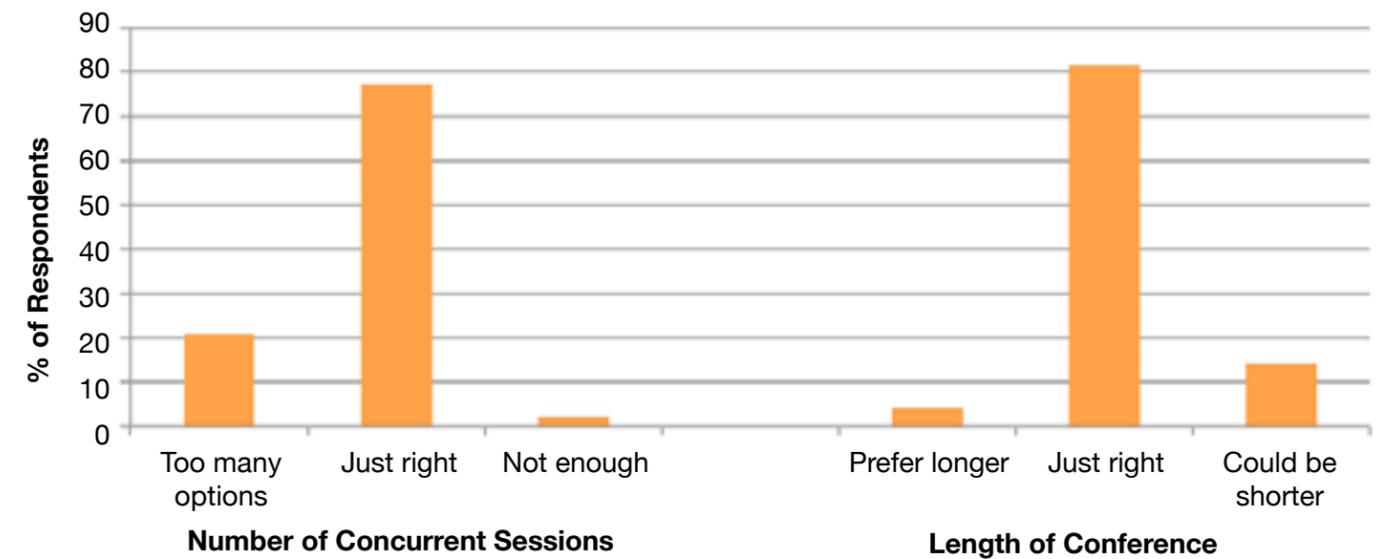
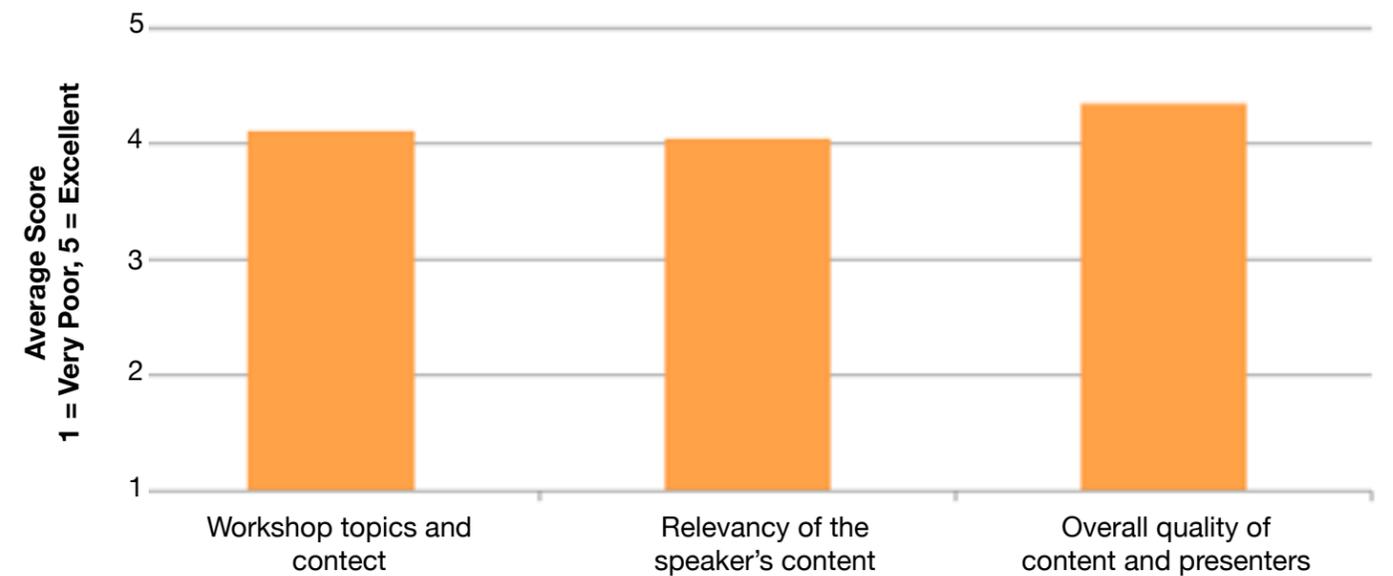


Figure 5. Satisfaction with workshops, relevancy of speakers and quality of presentation content



Comments included:

“It was excellent. Good mix of theory and practice.”

“Thanks for the speakers you had on the program this time. I think these are priceless!”

“The sessions were very informative.”

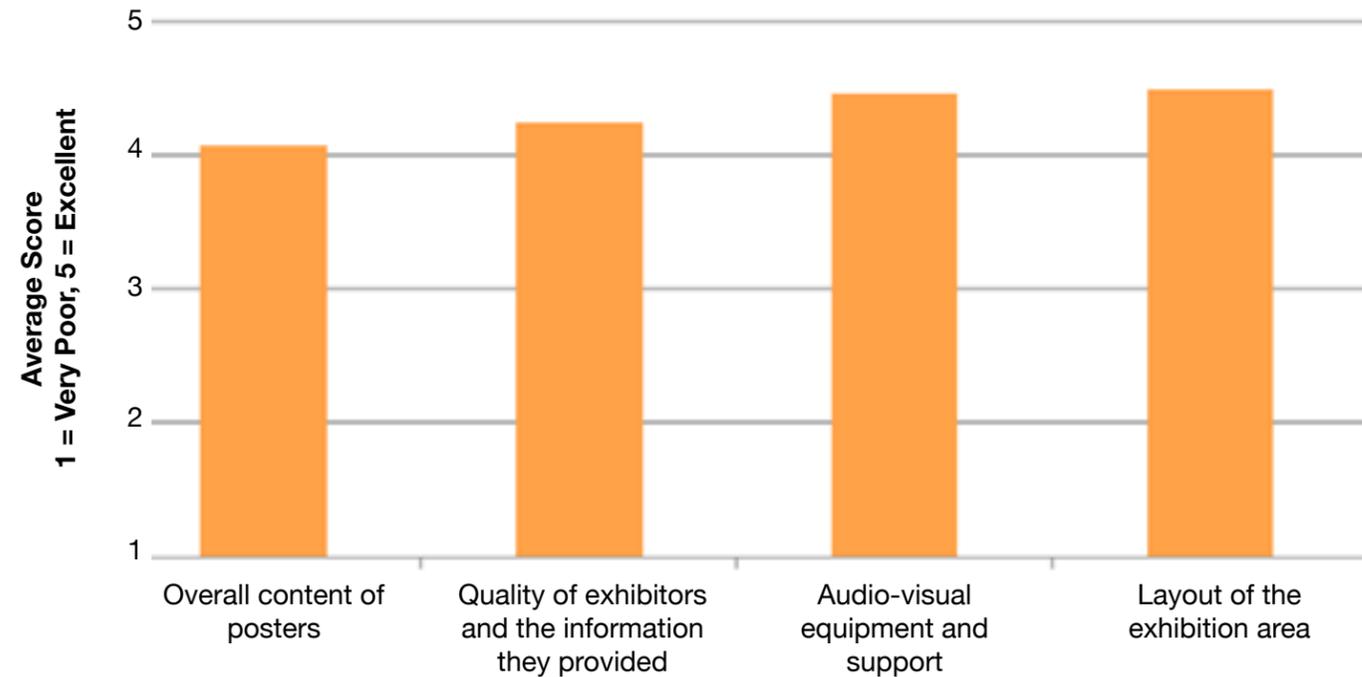
“I have continued to think about the different presentations that I attended. Some heart felt, inspiring, occasionally funny and extremely thought provoking.”

“The conference was well run, had great catering, and was inspiring.”

“Stories from carers and foster kids were useful.”

The poster presentations, exhibition and audiovisual equipment were all rated highly by the respondents. Most respondents felt that the layout of the exhibition area, and the quality of audiovisual equipment and support were excellent.

Figure 6. Satisfaction with audio-visual equipment, poster content, layout and exhibition



4. Key Learnings from the Conference

The evaluation survey sought detailed written feedback on respondents’ expectations of the conference, what they gained from it, and recommendations and suggestions. The results are presented below.

Question 1. What did you hope to gain from the Conference?

Most respondents hoped to develop networks and contacts, as well as opportunities for professional development. There was also a strong theme of wanting to broaden knowledge and understanding of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice frameworks and their application across sectors, and to learn new ways of working with people from a range of trauma backgrounds. Most respondents also indicated that they hoped to gain a better awareness of new and emerging research.

Comments included:

“Great knowledge about topic and how trauma-informed sensitive practice is primary to mindset of services and assessment process. Great examples of improved quality of service provision. Many examples that can be applied to own organisation. Broad range of examples.”

“How to implement a trauma informed practice in a non-clinical setting.”

“Contacts. Hearing where other organisations are at in terms of integrating trauma framework.”

“Inspiration and confidence in working with complex trauma.”

“The opportunity to learn more about the effects of trauma and current treatment.”

“To gain more up to date info, in order to perform to our best ability as Foster Carers, with useful “tools”! Also to meet up with others and exchange ideas and experiences.”

Question 2. What did you take away from the Conference?

Many respondents felt that the Conference had reaffirmed the importance of their work and enhanced their sense of connection with others in the field. The Conference was also said to be thought provoking and inspiring.

Over half (51 per cent) of the respondents felt that their understanding of attachment and trauma informed practice had been significantly impacted by the Conference.

Feedback included:

“Hope! That this small but growing field of expertise has a platform for professionals to exchange ideas. I thought that it was a rare thing to have so many accomplished authors and leaders in the field in one place, and that they were accessible to everyone there.”

“Increased knowledge in regards to the Lighthouse model.”

“That future technology could be very useful in better understanding the brain and help us to work with trauma.”

“A couple of new therapeutic strategies and some awe inspiring stories of resilience and healing.”

“New information and contacts with other agencies.”

“New contacts. New ideas. Renewed appreciation for how the organisation I work for already integrates a trauma framework.”

Question 3. What issues, topics or ideas would you like to see at a future Conference?

“Early intervention, brain plasticity and technology, working in partnership e.g. with child protection, more real life stories.”

“I found the conference very light on anything specific to Aboriginal people - I would like more information on how a trauma informed approach can be made culturally appropriate.”

“In relation to young people, more of the link between care providers and schools.”

“It would be great to hear people talk about trauma and strategies/ways/thoughts on how to work better with people.”

“More focus on adults survivors of childhood trauma.”

“More neuroscience.”

“I found a lot of it focussed on working with highly traumatised and complex children and families where trauma has already occurred, ie those in the child protection system. Maybe some focus on early intervention- working with those with minimal trauma symptoms but with potential to escalate if not treated?”

Question 4. How could this Conference be improved?

Overall, the respondents were positive in their feedback. Some of the comments included:

“I believe that the Conference was as best as could possibly be expected.”

“It really was fantastic...it was only disappointing that I couldn't be in 3 rooms at once!”

Delegates suggested:

- More opportunities to network during sessions.
- More practical workshops and practical applications, rather than oral presentations. When there were workshops, some felt these were not long enough. The breakout sessions needed to be better defined.
- A small number (14 per cent) of the respondents felt the conference could be shorter.
- The Conference should be more cost effective, e.g. offer concession tickets.
- Greater diversity of content and representation of marginalised groups, and need for more focus on the role of culture in shaping Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice.
- Some felt that the content of some of the presentations also overlapped too much in places, although this did not detract from the overall experience. More time spent on practical workshops and presentations that provide ideas on best practice and how to work with a range of clients and settings.

## Reflections on the Journey to Recovery

Over the course of the Journey to Recovery Conference, we were able to draw inspiration and insight from the stories of survivors, carers, researchers and practitioners – all of whom are leading the way in starting projects and interventions, changing lives, and creating social and political change. As one delegate stated:

“Stories from Carers as well as former Foster kids, are proving a wealth of experiences and are very inspiring.”

What stood out about the Conference was the sense of having come together in a unique space, granting access to new resources and shared knowledge about Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice. It was interesting to see that the atmosphere of the Conference strongly reflected the atmosphere of any trauma-informed setting and quickly became a space of nurture, caring and safety – a therapeutic environment in which delegates were encouraged and supported to respond to the potential negative consequences of traumatic material. This was captured in some of the comments from delegates:

“This is the most nurturing and heart centred conference I have ever been to.”

“Well-being stuff and general mood of collaboration and safety was incredible.”

Throughout the Conference, there was a strong emphasis on the need to address trauma holistically. There was interest in the use of multiple modalities, and tailoring practice to individual and community needs. It was also clear that we need to continue to work across multiple layers: engaging not only at the individual level, but also focusing on the familial, organisational, community and social policy contexts in which trauma and damaged attachment take place.

Another overriding theme of the Conference was the need to continuously question and add to our knowledge base. There was a feeling that this is crucial, if we are to improve our standards of working, and to better intervene in the processes that perpetuate trauma. There was a strong enthusiasm for a better understanding of the ways that research, theory and practice might inform each other more closely. In particular, there was an appetite for more practical examples of how to apply novel research and useful therapeutic modalities to work with a range of clients and across different settings. This included a strong interest in exploring the interactions between culture, trauma and attachment; more understanding of how trauma impacts upon marginalised groups, and more best-practice examples of working with adult survivors of trauma, adoption and foster care, and meeting the needs of Carers. There was also strong interest in the implications of new research into trauma neurobiology, including the promising field of neuroplasticity.

What was also striking about the Conference was the understanding that having a stronger knowledge base is not enough. While there was much interest in the theory and research presented, the panel discussion at the end of the Conference challenged us to take a closer look at the capacity to translate evidence into concrete outcomes. During this session, it was suggested that evidence of what works (and what doesn't) could be much more effectively utilised in practice, and with a range of settings and clients than it is currently. This session reminded us that effecting change that is truly binding upon society will take time.

There was a sense that the next step in the conversation about trauma is the need for collective action and stronger cross-sectoral partnerships. As one delegate reflected:

“[The conference confirmed] that trauma informed care and practice is really being spoken about across services and that it is timely to push a national strategic agenda.”

Trauma occurs in a social and political context which needs to be addressed in both a 'top-down' policy and 'grass-roots' direction. This was linked to advocacy and awareness raising efforts:

“[The conference] emphasises the importance of raising awareness within communities. Nurturing relationships builds communities.”

At the level of 'macro' action, the Conference highlighted the need for stronger policy capacity to address child abuse and neglect in our communities, and the urgent need for practice guidelines to aid those who work with survivors of trauma.

Above all, perhaps the most affecting and inspiring moments of the Conference were those that illuminated the stories of survivors and carers. Indeed, one of the most important messages of the *Journey to Recovery* Conference was that recovery from trauma is possible, and that our capacity for prevention and early intervention is growing every day, through partnership and shared knowledge.

We look forward to being a part of this continuing journey.

*Rudy Gonzalez, Executive Director, Lighthouse Institute  
Dr Pauline McLoughlin, Research Manager, Lighthouse Institute,  
and Catherine Keating, Learning and Development Manager, Lighthouse Institute*



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