

Professional Issues – Marketing and Promotion

Entrepreneurial Michelle Royal



As reported under Australian Moves, Michelle has been very active in marketing and promoting dmt. This came about partly because of the difficulties she had experienced in finding employment as a dmt in Melbourne.

Michelle wrote to the DTAA telling us about this last year, saying she had "spent many months applying for jobs in hospitals and clinics - in response to advertisements for PLAY, ART, MUSIC and CREATIVE therapists", and "Despite meeting ALL of the key selection criteria for these positions, follow up phone calls confirmed that people with a discrete degree in PLAY therapy got the Play Therapy job over anyone with a Dance Therapy degree. And she said "In fact, NONE of the Human Resources people I spoke with had ever heard of DMT! They responded to me with 'It sounds very interesting, put in your application but applications from people with the qualifications we have specified will have priority over your qualifications'. Michelle says that her findings were that "in situations like this, people with little or no experience in their field fared better than an experienced DM therapist".

Michelle did not let this situation daunt her but went out and promoted DMT. She put in submissions to present her work at the City of Kingston, 2009 Mental Health Expo, and they were accepted. The Expo focussed on connecting the local community and surrounds with mental health professionals and services in their area. There were apparently lots of submissions from people wanting to run movement to music

sessions and even people who said they were dance therapists. But when it came down to providing proof of credentials for those who submitted, Michelle was the only qualified dance therapist - which she said was a credit to the organisers for sourcing proof.

The dmt sessions she presented were titled "Waltzing with Wisdom", for spritely seniors and the frail elderly, and "Inside Out" for the general community. Michelle was well prepared for the event with information about dmt, which included DTAA brochures and her own business cards, to hand to participants and interested parties.

Michelle says she genuinely feels that DMT is being overlooked, and passed by, and that it is being dominated by other alternative therapies in the employment sector before it even gets off the ground. She says that even people at the Royal Children's Hospital, in Melbourne - where Dance Therapy has been used - say 'Has it (been overlooked)?' And that it seems to her that we simply can't assume that it has the profile of the future that we think it has. And this is why Michelle has also made every one of her job applications an opportunity to inform organisations about DMT and refer them to the DTAA website.

She also points out that "The fact that we (dmt's) are not part of the health rebate scheme for alternative therapies seriously affects private practice opportunities. Especially with the expected increase in the Medicare levy for people over 31, it is given that more and more people will be taking out private health cover and we can expect that this will include alternative therapies 'extras'."

We feel that Michelle, in her situation, has turned a negative into a positive. She didn't let the response daunt her but came out fighting to promote DMT. Something we should all be doing at every opportunity.

But fighting and promoting does need an internationally integrated approach, which involves using materials available from the DTAA that are already prepared - as Michelle did. Contact the DTAA about this:

dtaa@alphalink.com.au

Ed.Note: See p.62 for Michelle's bio