

# Breaking free

asca

Adults Surviving Child Abuse

The Newsletter of Adults Surviving Child Abuse | ISSN 1836-6899 | July 2012

## More on Blue Knot Day: Messages of Hope & Optimism

Since 1995 ASCA has been working to advance the needs of people and communities affected by all forms of child abuse and neglect. In that time we have provided care and support to tens of thousands of Australians.

Part of ASCA's role has been to raise awareness about the long-term legacy of child abuse and neglect. In recent years we created a national day which we called Forget-me-knot Day; a day on which all Australians could unite in support of the more than two million of us who had experienced childhood abuse or neglect.

Over the last couple of years ASCA has been at the forefront of work in Australia in the area of trauma, working collaboratively with a range of other agencies and individuals around the Trauma Informed agenda and more recently in developing a set of Practice Guidelines. ASCA's Practice Guidelines focus on improving the responses of workers, practitioners and agencies to people who have experienced complex trauma.

Complex trauma most commonly stems from adverse experiences in childhood, which are usually perpetrated by one human being on another, most commonly an adult on a child. All forms of child abuse including sexual, emotional and physical as well as chronic neglect are forms of complex trauma. So also are the effects of growing up with domestic or community violence, as well as in a family in which a parent is mentally ill, abuses alcohol or drugs, is incarcerated, or in which there is loss from separation through the death of a parent or divorce.

**Sadly there are many events in childhood that can leave an adult with the impacts of complex trauma. We estimate the figure to be between four and five million Australian adults.** That's why ASCA has decided to change

the name of its national day to Blue Knot Day - a day to unite in support of all Australians who have experienced complex trauma from childhood, including all of those who have been abused or neglected.

ASCA continues to work hard to "untangle the knot of child abuse". In fact its Practice Guidelines bring good news for survivors, their families and communities. The research now clearly shows that with the right help the effects of trauma can be resolved and people can recover. We now know that the brain can change itself and that pathways can repair.

It is time to put what we have learnt from the Guidelines into practice. We have developed a number of training programs so that practitioners, workers and services will understand more about trauma and its impacts as well as how better to support all trauma survivors. Over time we will be developing and delivering more.

As we move towards this Blue Knot Day on October 29, we bring messages of hope and optimism and want to work with you to bring these messages to your communities.

For more information on how you can get involved in Blue Knot Day activities go to Page 4 or visit [www.asca.org.au/blueknotday](http://www.asca.org.au/blueknotday)

### New Logo revealed



Last issue we mentioned we were in the process of designing a logo for Blue Knot Day. Three designs were emailed to ASCA supporters this month and their feedback was sought. We also consulted with several experts in the field to come up with the final choice, which we are delighted with.

To view all 3 concepts visit [www.asca.org.au/blueknotday](http://www.asca.org.au/blueknotday)

### Standing Ovation for ASCA Guidelines!

**ASCA's Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery** are entering the final stages of production. In the meantime we wanted to share a small amount of the feedback we have received.

*Continued on page 3*

# From the Editor

We are delighted to present this July issue of *Breaking Free* which invites readers to participate in the ASCA community. This month's *My Story* features feedback on our *Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery* from survivor and community worker, Tamara Stillwell.

We also tell you about lots of ASCA activities. These include forthcoming conference presentations in which ASCA representatives speak about pathways to recovery from trauma to a range of health professionals, workers and survivors.

Feedback from our Brisbane workshop on page 5 reflects on how helpful workshops can be for survivors along the road to recovery, while ASCA in the News details a busy media month following the ABC *Four Corners* program which disclosed alleged cover-ups of abuse by the Catholic Church.



A special treat this issue is guest contributor Jacqueline Brady-Schneider's article on Trauma Sensitive Yoga Therapy on page 7.

Please see the back page for updated details of workshops for survivors, community workers and health professionals.

Your feedback about the newsletter is very welcome. I can be contacted via [newsletter@asca.org.au](mailto:newsletter@asca.org.au)

**Kath O'Sullivan | Editor**

## Taking care of business

ASCA recently received \$195,266 funding under the Child Aware Approaches initiative. This initiative is part of the Australian Government's commitment to the *Second Action Plan* under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*. It is aimed at reducing risk factors of child abuse and neglect. The major initiative funded will be the development of a trauma informed training package for community services and pilot of the training in four sites nationally. We will also develop a strategy for national roll-out of the training. ASCA would like to thank the Federal government for its support in this initiative.

Project funding is vital for ASCA to deliver its programs into communities across the nation. However, ASCA still does not receive either core or recurrent government funding and there is a lot more we can and want to do to help survivors around the country. For this reason, fundraising is integral to our needs and we are deeply grateful to all of our supporters.

On that note, a huge thank you to our **Everyday Heroes** who have been raising money for us through events like the Sydney Morning Herald Half-Marathon. Anna Lindsay created a fundraising page through the Everyday Hero website, raised \$600 for ASCA – and ran a great time! Our thanks also to Amanda Ellis who did the same thing for The Age event in Melbourne this month. On a creative note, Asti Berner is organising an exhibition of artwork in Brisbane to raise funds for ASCA – *'On Recovery Road'*. To find out how you can support Asti, visit her Everyday Hero page: [http://www.everydayhero.com.au/asti\\_berners\\_hope](http://www.everydayhero.com.au/asti_berners_hope) Thank you all so very much. You really are our heroes.

We are pleased to welcome on board **Len Kaspar** as our new Operations Manager and also **Jo Miller** as administrator. Len has worked in various positions across many industries in the finance, education and not for profit sectors. He has worked for a number of large corporations, medium sized enterprises and smaller family businesses as well as running his own consultancy business for over 10 years. He is currently studying his Masters in Counselling & Applied Psychotherapy at the Jansen Newman Institute. Jo comes to us with a range of experience including customer service, office administration, project management, and traditional PA/EA roles.

Over the past few months we have been changing the role structure within the ASCA head office to give staff the capacity to focus in on areas of expertise. All staff in the ASCA office are part-time and now cover the following key areas operations, events, business development and administration

**Margaret Price | COO ASCA**



### ASCA Administration

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### National Office Hours

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
Information & Support Line: **1300 657 380**

**Donations** can be made online at [www.asca.org.au](http://www.asca.org.au) Donations to ASCA of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

### Newsletter

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Thomas Keneally AO

### Ambassadors

Anthony and Chrissie Foster

### Have your contact details changed?

If your contact details have changed, you can update them at [www.asca.org.au](http://www.asca.org.au) (or contact ASCA on (02) 8920 3611 if you do not have access to the internet or email).

### Forgotten your Username and Password?

If you have forgotten your username and/or password, go to join/login on our website and click on *Forgot your User Name?* or *Forgot your Password?* as appropriate.

### Follow Us

 [www.twitter.com/ascaorg](http://www.twitter.com/ascaorg)

 [www.facebook.com/groups/adults\\_survivingchildabuse](http://www.facebook.com/groups/adults_survivingchildabuse)

### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter have been included to allow our members to consider a variety of therapeutic options and spiritual views. ASCA does not support any particular spiritual stance over another; nor does it uphold any particular therapy as superior. The Editorial Team accepts responsibility for all editorial comment.

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As a complex trauma patient who has had a long involvement with the Australian mental health system, I am all too aware of its shortcomings and pitfalls that specifically affect someone with my condition at so many professional and institutional levels. For me the ASCA guidelines were extremely validating, as many of the aspects covered in them were things I had personally experienced. As a patient, I had come to the same conclusions about the system, although not in such elegant terms. I felt from the perspective of the patient, you and your colleagues are precise in your recommendations for change.

I suffered ill-treatment from medical professionals who did not recognise or did not know how to effectively handle trauma. I suffered five years of misdiagnosis, maltreatment and forced hospitalisation, in which retraumatisation was prevalent.

My journey started with functional depression which was treated by a general practitioner with an antidepressant. When that did not work I was referred to a psychologist with no specialisation, to engage in talk therapy, without any framework and where no skills or management tools were provided.

## Trauma survivor gives thumbs up for ASCA's *Practice Guidelines*

She continued to see me and watched as I declined in my ability to live a normal life. I began to self-harm in a state of disassociation, which she did not recognise. She watched as my weight dropped drastically, and finally after several months she decided that maybe my needs were beyond her skills level and she referred me to a psychiatrist to see in tandem with her. The psychiatrist was geographically a long way from where I lived in Melbourne, but I was desperate and confused and thought that the medical profession was capable to handle my problems better than I was. The psychiatrist refused to talk to the psychologist even though I gave them permission to have full disclosure about my case, and this psychiatrist's treatment plans revolved almost solely on medications, E.C.T. and ICU hospitalisation to contain my now out of control behaviours.

Being an expert of a sort, because I have firsthand experience about the aspects these guidelines address, I feel confident in saying that by reading them I developed new hope that there are professionals who truly understand the complexities and necessities for change in treatment and services for those of us who suffer complex trauma, and are working to create industry changes to shift and educate the professionals, policy makers and funding bodies through which complex trauma is identified and treated. Coming from the patient perspective I have an enormous amount of respect and confidence in the stated guidelines.

People with complex trauma will often respond better to treatment when they are

empowered in ways that are unique to them, and the professionals and institutions should not underestimate the patient's ability to be very useful and active in their own treatment. Also, if you begin by treating the patient as an adult with basic human rights, more often than not the patient will rise to fill that adult role. This decreases the need to restrain, over medicate, and treat patients in a punitive way.

I fully endorse the guidelines and hope that they are put into place to help so many other people, both consumers and professionals, as well as the country. I think about not only what cost it was to me and my family because professionals did not have the training to understand my issues, but what it cost the government in trying to "deal" with me while I was wrongly diagnosed and medicated and at risk in many ways. The financial cost alone was huge both for us privately and also for the government, as I was using resources at many levels and getting nowhere

**Tamara Stillwell | Mental Health Consumer, Community Worker**

### Submitting your story...

The word limit for *My Story* is 700. This may not fully express your personal experience, perhaps no words can. Should your story be edited, we do not mean to diminish your personal experience, but to enable that experience to be shared within the limited space of our newsletter.

## Standing Ovation for ASCA Guidelines *(continued from page 1)*

The comment below is from an international leader in the complex trauma field, Christine Courtois

*"The Last Frontier: Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery* is true to its title. These guidelines tackle the last frontier of mental health and medical services, namely, the recognition of the major role of trauma in the development of emotional disorders and medical illnesses and its unacceptably high individual, familial, and social/economic cost.

"The first set of guidelines address the foundations of adequate and state of the art treatment; the second tackle the system of care, long known to be inadequate and stigmatising to the traumatised. Both guidelines show how treatment and service delivery can be humane, trauma-focused, and trauma-informed to the benefit of all. This document is a singular and pioneering achievement in its depth

and scope. While developed for the Australian system, it has global applicability and establishes a model of treatment and care for other countries to emulate. Bravo to all involved in its development!"

**Christine A. Courtois, PhD, ABPP | Licensed Psychologist, Private Practice, Courtois & Associates, PC, Washington, DC**

Author: *Healing the incest wound: Adult survivors in therapy* (Revised edition); *Treating complex traumatic stress disorders: An evidence-based guide* (co-edited with Julian Ford, PhD); *Recollections of sexual abuse: Treatment principles and guidelines*; *The treatment of complex trauma: A sequenced, relationship-based approach* (co-authored with Julian Ford)—forthcoming, October 2012; *Treating complex traumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents* (co-edited with Julian Ford)—forthcoming March 2013.

Chair: Joint Complex Trauma Treatment Guidelines Committee, *Division 56 (Psychological Trauma)*, American Psychological Association and the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation and Co-Chair of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Complex Trauma Task Force.

# Blue Knot Day Activities – Oct 29

On Blue Knot Day, ASCA asks all Australians to unite in support of the estimated 4-5 million Australian adults who have experienced some form of childhood trauma

## Swimming Upstream – Get involved!

### A storytelling & weaving artwork initiative

*Are you a survivor living in Sydney?*

*Playwright Alana Valentine would like to hear from you.*

Alana has proposed a combined visual art and performance activity to be conducted in the lead up to **Blue Knot Day** in 2012 and 2013. It will comprise a visual art installation and a public reading of the stories of adult survivors of child abuse. This project will comprise two elements:

- 1) the weaving of thousands of small 'ribbon fish' with both blue ribbons and ribbons of text gathered from the stories and statements of adult survivors of child abuse and
- 2) the gathering, transcribing and presentation of stories and statements of adult survivors of child abuse.

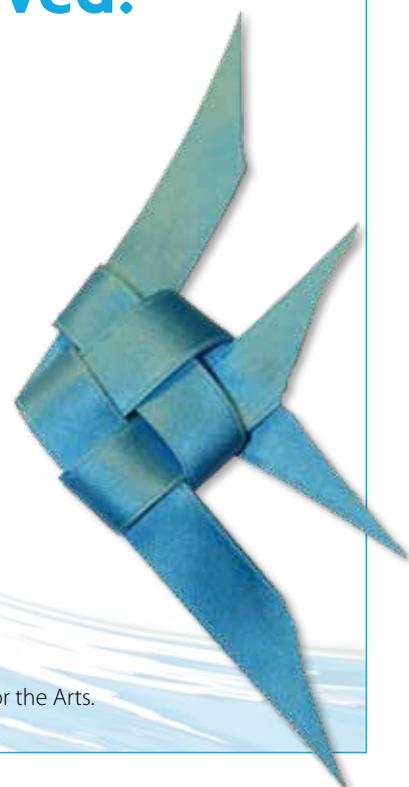
You can share aspects of your story for anonymous presentation by calling **Alana 0416 003 798**.

Or come along to the next church service and gathering for weaving 2-5pm August 18 at SSUC, 56a Raglan Street, Waterloo NSW.

More information at [www.asca.org.au/upcomingevents](http://www.asca.org.au/upcomingevents)

Alana Valentine is a recognised Australian playwright. Her plays 'Parramatta Girls' and 'Run Rabbit Run' are currently on the NSW HSC Drama Syllabus. Her most recent play 'Head Full of Love', set at the world-renowned Alice Springs Beanie Festival, was performed in English and Pitjantjatjara at the 2010 Darwin Festival and then toured to Cairns and Alice Springs. It was nominated for a 2011 Queensland Premier's

Literary Award. Alana is currently the recipient of a Literature Board Fellowship from the Australia Council for the Arts.



## How Can You Get Involved?

**Blue Knot Day is only 3 months away with a week of activities planned for Monday Oct 29 – Sunday Nov 4.**

We are reaching out to communities and individuals around the country and inviting you all to get involved by organising a local Blue Knot Day activity. Here are some ideas:

### Ask your local faith-based community to hold a service

If you belong to a faith-based community, talk to your minister/religious leader and ask them to hold a Blue Knot Day service. Some congregations will be holding a minute's silence or dedicating part of a service to adult survivors of child abuse.

You can order **blue knot friendship bracelets** to wear and buy ribbon for decorating the pulpit or other parts of the church/synagogue or mosque with blue knots.

### Hold a fundraising event in your community

For example:

- A morning or afternoon tea, lunch or barbecue
- A picnic get-together in the park
- An open garden • Garage sale

You can order blue knot friendship bracelets to wear and buy ribbon for decorating objects to symbolically display the tangled knot of child abuse at your event.

To register an event go to [www.asca.org.au/blueknotday](http://www.asca.org.au/blueknotday) and click on 'Co-ordinate An Activity'

To create your very own fundraising event for **Blue Knot Day** using the **Everyday Hero** platform follow the prompts at: <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/charity/view?charity=355>

### Run for ASCA

There are several fun runs being held around the country in November, for which you can register and nominate ASCA as your charity of choice. Check out these two for starters:

- **November 4 in SYDNEY** Rebel Sport Run4Fun, presented by The Sun-Herald at <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/run4fun2012>
- **November 11 in MELBOURNE** The Sunday Age City2Sea go to <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/city2sea2012>

### Untangle the Knot Photographic Competition

Entries to our third annual Untangle the Knot photographic competition will open in mid-August.

The theme will be 'hope and optimism' building on ASCA's research around possibilities for recovery. All images must include a 'blue knot' which can be displayed with as much artistic device as the entrant chooses within the terms and conditions of the competition. This year entries will be displayed via a 'virtual' gallery online only.

There will be a generous cash prize so look out for further announcements and be sure to enter.

ASCA will be holding some major events, details of which will be available at [www.asca.org.au/blueknotday](http://www.asca.org.au/blueknotday) over the coming weeks.

## Workshop Feedback



ASCA was delighted to receive the following email from a recent workshop participant who has given permission for its publication. We hope that its positive message will resonate with others.

I recently attended the workshop for adult survivors in Brisbane. I learned so much and am very thankful to have attended. It is the first time that I have ever done anything like this, and I hope it will not be the last.

The workshop put many things in perspective for me and I need some help for keeping strong; and in my thinking of how to make sense of things. I guess I must be ready to deal with more things and not to keep wasting energy on pushing them away/ denying them/pretending they are not there/ or that they are not real.

It is a very painful process emotionally. However despite all, I am alive and can see now that it was my childhood coping strategies that kept me alive. Instead of being angry and pushing those parts and their legacies aside, I am now thinking that I should honour and own them and be very proud

for the huge job they did for me to survive. I would not be here if it were not for those incredible child survival mechanisms.

However, now I am a 56 year old adult and it is my turn to care for (myself) and heal from my childhood coping strategies as they have done their job. It is now my turn to finally be the adult they worked so hard to protect, and set them free. They have kept so many memories and feelings safely away from me for so long. **It is time for me to face these, acknowledge and finally deal with them. It is time for me to finally grow up and be as brave, as strong, and as ingenious as I was in my childhood.**

My childhood self took on all the blame, guilt and shame that was so readily dumped on me through my life to keep the 'relationship' with my carers. This was and still is a sham relationship.

I cannot change my past, or the impacts from what my child-self felt she had to do to survive. But I can now acknowledge and honour my protective childhood survival mechanisms to be the best and most authentic adult I can, forever in their debt.

## Expert from WA joins Advisory Panel



**Dr Jan Resnick** is a Senior Psychotherapist and (Past) Founding President of the Psychotherapists & Counsellors Association of Western Australia, (Inc.), Founding Director of Training at The Churchill Clinic (Inc) (1991-2008) – a Registered Training Organisation and Registered Health Promotion Charity – Editorial Advisory Board member of the national journal *Psychotherapy in Australia* since 1993, current Clinical Member of the PACFA Register (the Psychotherapists & Counsellors Federation of Australia), Accredited Supervisor (of Psychotherapy) by the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and a regular contributor to the RANZCP Section of Psychotherapy conferences.

## Helpful Strategies

Drawn from our *Creating New Possibilities Workshop* material (for survivors)

### Calming the body: Breathing control exercises

Over-breathing is one of the body's fight/flight responses.

Trauma survivors can chronically over-breathe as the breathing rate normally increases in the presence of a perceived threat, causing hyperventilation and contributing to panic attacks in some people (*Giarratano, 2004b*).

It is helpful to use controlled breathing techniques at the first sign of anxiety or panic.

The idea is to bring your awareness to your breath and actively slow your breathing down. This decreases arousal by calming the nervous system, sending your brain the message it does not need to keep the fight/flight response mobilised.

People who tend to over-breathe or suffer panic attacks will benefit from breathing exercises before tackling difficult situations, and whenever they are feeling tense or anxious.



## ASCA goes international

**STOP PRESS** – The co-authors of ASCA's *Practice Guidelines*, Drs Cathy Kezelman and Pam Stavropoulos have been invited by the President of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) to run a workshop in Longbeach, California as part of the Annual ISSTD Conference at the end of October. This honour not only provides an opportunity for ASCA's leadership work in this area to be showcased internationally but also the possibility to establish networks across the globe.

# ASCA in the News

## Unholy Silence | July 2



### Editor's Note

ASCA advocates for justice and support for victims of child abuse regardless of where the abuse has been perpetrated. In this case the Catholic Church is the subject of the report.

July has been a busy media month for ASCA. In particular, we joined the conversation following an ABC *Four Corners* program aired on July 2 which alleged cover-ups of abuse by the Catholic Church.

The program presented a chilling and tragic story of lives lost and destroyed as the result of Catholic clergy abuse. It included fresh allegations of cover-up at all levels of the Catholic Church. ASCA supports the call raised by *Four Corners* for the Federal government to hold a national inquiry which is open and transparent, which prioritises accountability, justice and child protection as well as redress, appropriate care, and support for victims.

Our calls for a Royal Commission into institutional abuse gained wide national coverage through the following statement:

Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) president Cathy Kezelman said the report aired by the ABC on Monday, showed the Catholic Church had failed to report an alleged criminal act to the police.

"ASCA supports the call for an urgent national royal commission into religious and institutional child sexual abuse," Dr Kezelman said.

She said failure to report and bring perpetrators to account "has compounded the crimes, with more victims and repeated abuses of existing victims".

A royal commission was needed to identify the ways in which cover-ups occurred "and the cost of those cover-ups in human terms".

Coverage of ASCA commentary related to this story appeared in:

- Sydney Morning Herald
- The Age
- Brisbane Times
- Herald Sun
- Daily Telegraph
- The Australian
- News.com.au
- Courier Mail
- Perth Now
- Adelaide Now
- Nine News
- SBS World Today
- Sky News

For details of the full coverage visit ASCA in the News at [www.asca.org.au/media](http://www.asca.org.au/media) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

## Parents face police checks

July 8 | Perth Now

WA Child Protection Minister Robyn McSweeney wants tougher checks put in place to monitor who is working with children.

Parents who volunteer at schools would undergo background checks if the overhaul of WA child protection laws proceeds. Contractors who occasionally visit schools such as plumbers, electricians, delivery drivers and waste collectors could also face police security checks for the first time under the changes being considered by the State Government.

Adults Surviving Child Abuse president Cathy Kezelman said she did not believe any adults who visit schools should be exempt from the background checks because the "protection of children is always the priority".

"It is about access and exposure and possibility. To optimise the protection of children, we would be seeking checks as well for volunteers who do have access to other people's children," she said.

"Why wouldn't you do that? Obviously you're never going to be 100 per cent sure, but one needs to do as much as one can."

For the full story, visit ASCA in the News at [www.asca.org.au/media](http://www.asca.org.au/media) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

### AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD in a research study about women who have survived abuse during adolescence

#### WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

The study is interested in finding out about your experiences of coping with abuse during adolescence. Questions include: What support / help did you receive? How useful was it? What would you recommend to practitioners working with young people who have experienced abuse? How are things going for you now? The purpose of the research is to improve services provided to young people experiencing abuse.

#### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Women who experienced abuse as an adolescent, within a family relationship.

#### WHAT IS INVOLVED?

A face-to-face or telephone interview with Emma Tseris, who is a PhD student at the University of Sydney, which will take up to one hour. Emma is a qualified social worker, with experience in trauma counselling.

#### PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** Please call **Emma Tseris on 0415 365 726** if you are interested in participating, or **email: [emmatseris@hotmail.com](mailto:emmatseris@hotmail.com)**

## Trauma Sensitive Yoga Therapy – An informed teaching approach by Jacqueline Brady-Schneider

Yoga is an ancient healing practice, which has gained significant attention in the Western world. In recent years western scientists have verified yoga as a healing modality and as an effective adjunctive treatment for trauma survivors. Trauma profoundly affects the body and many symptoms of traumatised individuals are somatically based.<sup>1</sup> At The Trauma Centre at Justice Research Institute, Boston USA, Bessel A. van der Kolk incorporated yoga classes with the trauma clinic so that survivors could make peace with their body and reclaim it as their own.

Trauma is the perception of the nervous system that survival is in question. We can illustrate the difference between a regulated nervous system and deregulated nervous system with the visualisation of parallel lines, like train tracks. For a healthy regulated nervous system the ups and downs of daily life move like gentle waves, between the boundaries of those lines. For a traumatised person, the same ups and downs can pierce through the safe boundaries of optimal arousal to states of hyper arousal and hypo arousal; causing a perceived danger or threat. Trauma arousal is fast, can manifest in a myriad of ways, be paralysing, startling, and rage invoking. It is a result of event(s) that have not been integrated and are of a sufficient severity to decrease a person's ability to function in life.<sup>2</sup> It is disturbing, often unexplainable internal triggers with undesirable mental, physical and emotional side effects.

It is possible to bring the nervous system back into balance and restore the gentle flowing wave with yoga. In his delivery of the yoga sutras, the ancient sage Patanjali outlined the tools designed to restore health and equilibrium. His system has proven to be as relevant and effective today as it was then. Referred to as the eight fold path or Ashtanga Yoga, the system is grounded in ethical principles which include non-harm, truthfulness, respect and compassion. Within it the art of breath awareness, physical postures, focus, concentration and meditation are taught to cleanse and strengthen the

body, mind and nervous system.

In the research at The Trauma Centre at Justice Research Institute, it was found that many popular styles of yoga didn't accommodate for people with trauma. As a long time daily practitioner of the Patanjali eight fold Ashtanga yoga practice and a person healing from trauma this research verified my own experiences. The yoga practice restored health, wellbeing and gave a renewed sense of joy, control and safety within my body. However, as a student in a yoga class I was at times left discombobulated in mind and body because the teacher was unaware of the signs and symptoms of trauma. There are many stories of students being pushed, disrespected, shamed or made to feel unsafe by teachers who may have had good intentions but were unprepared to work with trauma.

In Trauma Sensitive Yoga the role of the teacher is that of a compassionate companion, one who asks permission before interventions, such as physical adjustments, provides safety and meets the student in the space where they are at, in the moment, and consequently follows their lead. Choice and respect for boundaries are fundamental to the teaching; these are often missing experiences for trauma survivors and are therefore learnt and embodied in yoga. We learn to listen, befriend the body and make healthy choices in relation to signals from the body.

As a western teacher of an eastern practice I have experienced the benefits of Patanjali's yoga system by adapting it to the western condition and applying an informed trauma sensitive approach. Studies in Hakomi (mindfulness based somatic experiential psychotherapy) have helped to incorporate mindfulness and bear witness to the self through focusing on the internal world. In addition it has provided the tools for navigating the landscape of trauma. This has proved invaluable for my own personal development and for working with others.

In this method of teaching there are no absolutes. It provides the right soil to unfold



organically, in one's own time and at one's own pace. Classes are given one-on-one or in small groups. One-on-one classes enable exclusive space to establish grounding in one's own yoga practice. Benefits of small group classes include creation of interpersonal rhythms whilst working with like-minded companions. In essence, Trauma Sensitive Yoga is the embodiment of kindness and compassion for healing trauma and restoring wholeness, joy and wellbeing.

**Jacqueline Brady-Schneider has practiced yoga with senior teachers in Europe, India and Australia. She continues studies in Hakomi Therapy and offers Experiential Yoga Therapy classes in Sydney.**

**Contact: [yoga.therapy@me.com](mailto:yoga.therapy@me.com)**

### Editor's Note

While ASCA does not promote any one approach to trauma over another the following is taken from ASCA's *Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery*: Effective trauma therapy, then, should incorporate movement and body-based awareness – 'we must attend to all three levels: cognitive processing (thoughts, beliefs, interpretations, and other cognitions), emotional processing (emotion and affect), and sensorimotor processing (physical and sensory responses, sensations and movement)'.<sup>3</sup>

1 Emerson and Hopper, 2011, *Overcoming Trauma through Yoga, Reclaiming your Body*

2 Rothschild, 2000, *The Body Remembers, The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*

3 Ogden, P., Minton K. & Pain, C. (2006) *Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy*. New York: Norton

## Workshops for Health Professionals

Our workshop, **Best Practice for Working with Adults Surviving Child Abuse**, is designed specifically for health care professionals and is suitable for counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers, psychologists, clinical psychologists, GPs and psychiatrists.

### This workshop covers:

- Understanding abuse and its impacts
- Coping strategies and defence mechanisms used by survivors of child abuse
- Common impacts of child abuse
- Treatment models and best practice guidelines for working with adults surviving child abuse

**Full-day workshop:** 9.00am – 5.00pm

**Cost:** \$250 or \$190 concession

**Professional development endorsement:**

**APS Endorsed Activity:**

7 CPD hours

**AASW Approved Activity:**

14 AASW points

**ACMHN Endorsed Activity:**

7 ACMHN CPE points

**Register your interest online:**

[www.asca.org.au/workshops](http://www.asca.org.au/workshops)

register  
now

Date	Location
9 November	Parramatta
16 November	Melbourne

## Workshops for Community Workers

*This whole day training for community workers provides information and tools to better equip workers in their daily interactions with clients who have experienced trauma, particularly the complex trauma of childhood. Studies show that more than 2/3 of those seeking mental health services have experienced complex trauma.*

Date	Location	Time
17 August	Darwin	9am – 5pm
20 August	Katherine	9am – 5pm
23 August	Tennant Creek NT	9am – 5pm
27 August	Alice Springs	9am – 5pm
5 October	Hobart	9am – 5pm

**Register your interest online:**

[www.asca.org.au/workshops](http://www.asca.org.au/workshops)

**2013 workshops coming for Gold Coast, Bendigo and Wollongong.**

## Workshops for Survivors

**Creating New Possibilities** workshops are designed specifically for adult survivors of child abuse.

ASCA's workshops give survivors and those supporting them information about child abuse and how it is linked to a range of survival and coping strategies, as well as tools for recovery.

These half-day workshops (9.30am – 12.30pm) are open to all adult survivors and their supporters.

**Cost\*\*:** \$50 or \$25 concession.

*\*\* ASCA's philosophy is for our Creating New Possibilities workshops to be accessible to all survivors. If you are experiencing financial difficulties please do contact us.*

register  
now

**Register your interest online:**

[www.asca.org.au/workshops](http://www.asca.org.au/workshops)

Date	Location
18 August	Darwin
22 August	Tennant Creek NT
2 September	Parramatta
8 September	Adelaide
15 September	Perth
10 November	Brisbane
17 November	Melbourne
24 November	Hobart

**2013 workshops coming for Gold Coast, Bendigo and Wollongong.**

## ASCA In-house workshops: tailored to your needs

ASCA in-house workshops for health professionals, community workers and/or volunteers provide current information incorporating best practice guidelines for working with adults surviving child abuse.

Your team can also request topics of interest to your organisation and focus on issues pertinent to your clients and practice. Whilst workshops are generally one day in duration, two-day and half-day workshops can be arranged.

In-house workshops for survivors can also be arranged on request.

Recent in-house workshops have successfully been delivered for Stepping Out, Lyndon Community and Sydney Women's Counselling Centre.

*"Clients responded positively to the well prepared information and compassionate approach indicating they felt safe and respected throughout. We are thrilled with the outcomes and are working toward targeted fund-raising for future opportunities!"*

For more information about in-house workshops, please call **02 8920 3611** or email [events@asca.org.au](mailto:events@asca.org.au)