



Personality Disorder Service for Victoria

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Ms Paresa Antoniadis Spanos
The Coroner
The Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222, Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000

25th October 2013

Response to Coroner's Recommendations



Court Reference: COR 2009 001798

I am Dr Sathya RAO, Executive Clinical Director of Spectrum, the Personality Disorder Service for Victoria.

I have prepared this response in relation to the recommendations made from the Coroners Court of Victoria, letter dated 24th July 2013. I understand the recommendations were in relation to the coronial investigation of the death of Ms Melanie Anne Reynolds (DOB: 30th June 1978).

Introduction to Spectrum:

Spectrum is the statewide personality disorder service for Victoria, funded by the Department of Health and provided through Eastern Health. Spectrum provides specialist treatment to people with severe personality disorder who are referred by the public sector clinical mental health services of Victoria, as well as offering a wide range of activities that support best treatment of patients within those services. Thus Spectrum has a dual role as a clinical service provider and trainer of public sector mental health clinicians across Victoria. These dual functions have been reflected in Spectrum's service model since its inception in 1999. As the only state-wide treatment service in Australia for treating severe personality disorders, Spectrum is a unique service.

Spectrum Service Model

Most Spectrum patients have a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD), and the majority are female (>90%). As a condition of Departmental funding, all of these patients must be treated by Victorian State Government funded adult specialist mental health or child and adolescent mental health services during Spectrum treatment. Priority is given to assisting patients who are at risk from serious self-harm or suicide, and have particularly complex needs. Spectrum provides a

Court Reference: COR 2009 001798

service to the state of Victoria through Eastern Health as part of the Continuing Care, Community and Mental Health directorate.

Following are the key clinical programs of Spectrum in pursuit of these objectives:

- **Workforce development program:** to train and provide education to Victoria's specialist mental health workforce in areas relating to the care and support of those with a diagnosis of personality disorder.
- **Secondary consultation program:** to support best practice in relation to treatment and management of personality disorder patients in Area Mental Health Service (AMHS) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CYMHS) settings, forensic settings (e.g. Dame Phyllis Frost Centre; Thomas Embling Hospital), and complex care settings (e.g. MACNI). Spectrum assists with clarification of formulation and diagnosis, treatment planning and review, discussion about clinical approaches, advice on therapeutic technique, setting up and supporting a treatment team and educational input, as required. Psychiatric second opinions for treating psychiatrists are also available on request.
- **Specialist tertiary treatment program:** to provide specialist treatment and management for patients case managed by AMHS and CYMHS for whom locally based treatment is in some ways insufficient.

Coroner's recommendations

Recommendation 1

That in order to improve the safety of people with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) who are in crisis and referred to CATT/ECATT, Spectrum should assess whether the available BPD specific training meets the needs of CATT/ECATT clinicians, whose focus is on short-term assertive follow-up, and transfer of care back to private practitioners, rather than ongoing treatment and support of people with BPD.

Response

The coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

The recommended intervention was implemented (Aug 2012) prior to receipt of the coroner's finding (July 2013).

Following initial contact from the Coroner's Court in mid 2012 seeking information regarding specific training offered to Victorian Emergency Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (ECATT) and Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT) staff, Spectrum undertook an analysis of attendance rates by this group at relevant training workshops delivered by Spectrum across the

Court Reference: COR 2009 001798

years 2009 to 2012. Results showed that staff from CATT and ED represented between five and thirteen percent of all attendees. Across these years the workshops most popular with this group included those focusing on risk management, understanding and treating self-harm, engaging with adolescents with emerging BPD, advanced therapeutic skills, narcissism, dependent personality disorder, and mentalisation based approaches.

Further, we examined the feedback of those attending relevant training workshops across these years to gauge the extent to which the BPD specific training undertaken met their professional development needs. Results showed that a clear majority of attendees indicated that training was relevant to their work and considered to be of high calibre.

Our conclusions at this point were that:

- a) the *uptake* of available BPD specific training by CATT/ECATT team members was relatively low;
- b) the *content* of BPD specific training received by CATT/ECATT team members was perceived as relevant and the *quality* was reported as high.

This led us to refining existing training packages and developing new ones designed specifically to target crisis workers (including CATT, ECATT and ED staff) and offered as part of our suite of workshops available to the Victorian public mental health workforce (see below).

Recommendation 2

If found wanting, that Spectrum work with the CATT/ECATT teams in public mental health services in Victoria, to develop BPD specific training suitable to the needs of CATT/ECATT clinicians, in order to improve the safety of people with BPD who are referred to them in crisis.

Response

The coroner's recommendation has been implemented, and continues to be refined. The recommended intervention was implemented (Feb 2013) prior to receipt of the coroner's finding (July 2013).

Following examination of our uptake and performance data in relation to delivery of BPD specific training for ECATT and CATT staff, Spectrum implemented the following:

- i) develop a new workshop specifically targeting ECATT/CATT and ED staff titled *Managing BPD Crises: A Workshop for Emergency Department, Mental Health Clinicians and CATT Teams* (see Appendix 1)

- ii) revise and refine content of our training workshop titled *Understanding and Working with Clinical Risk in BPD* (see Appendix 1)

In 2013 Spectrum offered the newly developed training event aimed specifically at meeting the needs of ECATT/CATT staff members – *Managing BPD Crises: A Workshop for Emergency Department, Mental Health Clinicians and CATT Teams* (see Appendix 2). The workshop included reference to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, 2013) guidelines for crisis management of persons with BPD.

The event was well attended and ran at near capacity (24 attendees). We sought feedback from workshop attendees on their perceptions of the training event and to assess the extent to which the training met their needs. A summary of findings follows:

- 100% of attendees rated their overall satisfaction with the training as *good* or *very good*
- 100% of attendees indicated that they would recommend the workshop to others
- 95% of attendees rated the workshop as *very relevant* to their work; 5% (1 attendee) rated the workshop as *relevant*

We also gathered written comments from attendees in open questions asking both about positive aspects of the workshop and areas needing improvement. A sample of comments follows:

- *“Use of clinical scenarios and case examples, video were appreciated”*
- *“Fantastic, high level, relevant, information, well delivered, very informative”*
- *“Very informative”*
- *“Good theory to practice information”*
- *“This workshop exceeded my expectations and was interesting, relevant and practice-changing!”*
- *“Clear and practical, great workshop”*
- *“Make it one day”; “Not long enough”; “Too short”*
- *“Resources for clients would be helpful”*

One area commented on by several attendees was a request to consider extending the training event from a half-day to a full-day.

In consideration of the feedback received from attendees of this workshop, Spectrum’s plans for 2014 include:

- continuing to offer each year this targeted workshop, *Managing BPD Crises: A Workshop for Emergency Department, Mental Health Clinicians and CATT Teams*;

Court Reference: COR 2009 001798

- extending the event to a full-day workshop;
- continuing to monitor participant feedback and refine content, as needed;
- exploring further avenues for promoting this training event in more specific ways directly to ECATT/CATT teams across Victoria (e.g. through direct email contacts with service directors)

In addition to this training that was purpose-designed for ECATT/CATT and ED staff, Spectrum also offered two workshops covering similar material such as assessment, formulation and intervention with regard to self harm and suicide risk amongst people with borderline personality disorder. Feedback from attendees of this workshop has been equally positive and we intend to continue offering this event in 2014.

Finally, in addition to our scheduled training events and workshops held throughout the year, further training opportunities remain available from Spectrum to ECATT and CATT staff through two other avenues: purpose-designed training programs offered on request; on-site training and workforce development provided as part of secondary consultation, on request.

Thank you for asking me to respond to the recommendations. I hope the above responses are satisfactory.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Sathya Rao

MBBS, MD (Psychological Medicine), DPM, DipNB (Psychiatry), FRANZCP

Executive Clinical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist

APPENDIX 1

Description of Training Workshops Offered to ECATT/CATT Staff in 2013

Title: Managing BPD Crises: A Workshop for Emergency Department, Mental Health Clinicians and CATT Teams

Date: Monday 22 July, 9.30am to 1.30pm

Presenters: Dr Sathya Rao & Robert Trett

Overview: This workshop aims to help clinicians in Emergency Departments and CATT better manage patients diagnosed with borderline personality disorder who present in crisis with deliberate self-harm, threats to suicide and suicidal plans. The presentation will highlight the recent NHMRC guidelines for Crisis Management and present a risk assessment model that helps clinical decision making with highly suicidal BPD patients.

A brief update on current scientific understanding of BPD will also be presented.

Title: Understanding and working with clinical risk in BPD

Date: Monday 18 February, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Robert Trett and Debbie Dick

Overview: This one day workshop is designed to introduce mental health staff from the Victorian public mental health services to clinical assessment, formulation and intervention with regard to self harm and suicide risk amongst people with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

The workshop will:

- examine risk factors in relation to BPD, comparing and contrasting with other clinical populations;
- introduce Spectrum's risk assessment and formulation tool, oriented to engaging BPD patients in treatment most likely to reduce longer term risk;
- use theory, case study, role play and live demonstration to examine ways to engage BPD patients in risk assessment interview aimed to decrease risk in situ, while yielding important information regarding chronic and acute risk factors.

On completion of this training the participant will:

- have an understanding of risk factors pertinent to BPD patients;
- be familiar with clinical interview techniques that focus on a patient engagement, yield important risk data & reduce iatrogenic enactments in the assessment process
- practice risk formulation using clinical risk tool developed by Spectrum and endorsed by the NHMRC clinical guidelines for BPD treatment;
- be familiar with a clinical intervention hierarchy for managing self harm presentations aimed to increase patient awareness, self-discovery, strength and eventual mastery of self harm.

APPENDIX 2

Spectrum Annual Training Calendar for 2013



Spectrum Professional Development Calendar 2013



Spectrum Professional Development Workshops are designed primarily for staff within Victorian public Mental Health Services. Some workshops are open to staff from other organisations (see www.spectrumbpd.com.au for details).

FEBRUARY

Wise Choices for Families and Carers of People Diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD).

Dates: Wednesdays Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 & March 6, 13, 20, 27. 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Presenters: Michelle Gopold & Debbie Dick **Venue:** Spectrum
The Wise Choices group is based on principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), looking at what is important in your life as a family, and as an individual within a family, exploring some of the struggles that get in the way and ways to work with those struggles. This series is for families and carers.

Understanding and Working with Clinical Risk in BPD

Date: Monday 18 February, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Presenters: Robert Trett & Debbie Dick **Venue:** Turning Point
This one day workshop is designed to introduce mental health staff from the Victorian public mental health services to clinical assessment, formulation and intervention in relation to self harm and suicide risk amongst people with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

MARCH

Mentalisation Based Treatment Skills for Public Sector Mental Health Clinicians & Case Managers: Two Day Workshop

Dates: Friday 8 & 15 March, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Dr Jo Beatson & Robert Trett **Venue:** Turning Point
This workshop offers an introduction to Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT), an evidence based approach for treating Borderline Personality Disorder principally developed by Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy (British National Health Service). The approach is readily useable by nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists.

Spectrum Supervision Group

Dates: Monday 4 March then fortnightly til December 2013, 1.30pm – 2.45pm

Facilitator: Peta Welsh **Venue:** TBA
The supervision group aims to promote further understanding of psychotherapeutic approaches. Reading and discussion will relate to both psychotherapy and supervision including: assessment, formulation, treatment and the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship.

Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) Workshop: Introduction

Date: Thursday 21 March, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenter: Michelle Gopold **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This workshop will focus on: using the ACT framework to understand BPD clients' difficulties and experiences, learning about the six core ACT processes and how these might apply to BPD; and learning about ACT interventions which can be useful in working with BPD clients.

APRIL

Foundation Workshop: Understanding & Treating People with a Diagnosis of BPD

Date: Wednesday 17 April, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Debbie Dick & Julian Browne **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This training will focus on building an understanding of the person with BPD in order to develop appropriate treatment and therapeutic work. It includes an overview of the basic principles of assessment and management of risk within the context of public mental health services.

Treatment Planning: Demonstration Workshop and Case Examples

Date: Monday 22 April, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Dr Sathya Rao & Jan Giffin **Venue:** Mindful Centre
This workshop is aimed at assisting clinicians who are directly managing persons with Borderline Personality Disorder. The workshop will help clinicians with practical skills in developing treatment and crisis management plans for those with BPD.

MAY

(CANCELLED) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Supervision Group for Individual Work (CANCELLED)

Dates: THIS WILL NOT BE RUNNING IN 2013

Facilitator: TBA **Venue:** Carlton
An ongoing closed supervision group with the goal of working through the application of ACT with your work with BPD clients. Other goals might emerge based on the needs of the group.

Client Centred Secondary Consultation and Systems of Care

Date: Wednesday 15 May, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenter: Jan Giffin **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This workshop is for providers and recipients of secondary consultation. We will explore secondary consultation in terms of theory, form and process. The workshop will focus on the secondary consultation task, particularly where there are multiple agencies and/or workers.

It Doesn't Have to be Therapy to be Therapeutic: For Mental Health Staff

Date: Monday 20 May, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Kelly McMahon & Kate Cooke **Venue:** Mindful Centre
This one-day workshop is for people who work directly with clients who have severe or Borderline Personality Disorder. It provides a mix of learning opportunities including group discussion, experiential role plays and some didactic teaching, and will introduce attendees to 3 theoretical models: Conversational Model, Mentalisation, and Relationship Management.

Learning More About BPD: A Workshop for Families

Date: Wednesday 29 May, 9.30am-4.30pm

Presenters: Debbie Dick & Jan Giffin **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This workshop is an opportunity to learn more about borderline personality disorder and explore common questions. We will cover topics including understanding BPD, working with the system, how to communicate with the person with BPD, and looking after yourself.

JULY

Remission, Lived Recovery: A Psychiatrist-Patient Dialogue

Date: Friday 5 July 2013

Presenters: Sathya Rao & Catherine Bennett **Venue:** Turning Point
This workshop aims to discuss management of BPD clients both from a clinician's perspective and a recovered patient's perspective. Catherine makes a candid presentation that inspires clinicians to hold hope of remission and recovery. Sathya will describe the scientific evidence that supports this position. Demonstration of challenging clinical scenarios will be included.

8 Week Clinical Seminar Series: Working with Clients with a Personality Disorder

Dates: Wednesdays July 17, 31 & August 14, 28 & September 11

Presenters: Harry Constantinou & Peta Welsh **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This is a closed 8 week seminar series for a maximum of eight participants which aims to introduce aspects of clinical method and technique for working with clients with BPD. The seminar will cover topics such as establishing and maintaining a therapeutic stance, questions of transference and the direction of treatment.

Managing BPD Crises: A Workshop for Emergency Department, Mental Health Clinicians and CATT Teams

Date: Monday 22 July 9.30am-1.30pm

Presenters: Dr Sathya Rao & Robert Trett **Venue:** Turning Point
This half-day workshop aims to help clinicians in Emergency Departments and CATT better manage patients diagnosed with BPD who present in crisis with deliberate self-harm and/or threats to suicide. The presentation will cover new NHMRC guidelines for Crisis Management and present a risk assessment model to help clinical decision making with suicidal patients.

AUGUST

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Workshop: Advanced

Date: Thursday 22 August

Presenter: Katie Wyman **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This workshop draws from the experience of using ACT with BPD clients in Spectrum's Wise Choices groups. Specific aims are to consider how to present and facilitate ACT interventions with clients with BPD, reflect on how the ACT concepts apply to ourselves and the therapeutic relationship, and to use your case examples to illustrate the work.
NOTE: There is a pre-requisite for this workshop. Participants must have completed a 2 day ACT Training before attending this advanced workshop. See Spectrum website.

OCTOBER

Wise Choices for Families and Carers of People Diagnosed with BPD

Dates: Wednesdays Oct 8, 15, 22, 29 & Nov 12, 19, 26 & Dec 3, 10

Presenters: Debbie Dick & Natasha Tisbury **Venue:** Spectrum
[See workshop description under same title in FEBRUARY.]

Challenges in Managing Clients with BPD in Inpatient Settings

Date: Thursday 24 October

Presenters: Dr Sathya Rao & Anne Brahm **Venue:** Treacy Centre
This workshop is for nurses, registrars and psychiatrists working in psychiatric inpatient units. Topics covered will include: responding to suicidal and self-harm behaviours on the ward, discharge practice and ongoing suicidality; managing co-morbidity; psychological dynamics in patients, staff and systems. Case examples of clinical situations will be considered.

NOVEMBER

It Doesn't Have to be Therapy to be Therapeutic: For Mental Health Staff

Date: Monday 11 November

Presenters: Kelly Mc Mahon & Kate Cooke **Venue:** Mindful Centre
[See workshop description under same title in MAY.]

Workshop for Psychiatrists: What works and What Doesn't for BPD

Date: Friday 15 November

Presenters: Dr Sathya Rao & Dr Jo Beatson **Venue:** Mindful Centre
An interactive workshop to discuss treatment approaches for BPD. We will draw on clinical experience and research about what works for patients with BPD, illustrating using real-world case examples. Participants are invited to send in summaries of any cases they would like included in the workshop.

Understanding & Working with Clinical Risk in BPD

Date: Friday 22 November

Presenters: Robert Trett & Debbie Dick **Venue:** Turning Point
This one day workshop is designed to introduce mental health staff from the Victorian public mental health services to clinical assessment, formulation and intervention in relation to self harm and suicide risk amongst people with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Workshop Arrangements (unless otherwise stated on website)

- Venues: Treacy Conference Centre, 126 The Avenue, Parkville
Mindful Centre, Building C, 50 Flemington St, Flemington
Turning Point, 142 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy
- Catering: provided for full day workshops only

- Registration forms: available on the Spectrum website
- Cost: most full-day workshops - \$99 for clinicians from Victorian Area Mental Health Services; \$ 176 for all others. See website for fees & details of other workshops and training series
- Enquiries: contact Spectrum Training Office, 8833 3050

Additional introductory workshops on BPD will be held in conjunction with the 3 Victorian mental health training clusters (Southern, North Eastern, Western).
See Spectrum website for dates and booking details.

Additional BPD workshops designed for PDRS staff will be held in conjunction with VICSERV. See www.vicserv.org.au for details