



Self care for health practitioners
through collegial group work

Balint Bulletin No. 22

The electronic newsletter of the Balint society of Australia and New Zealand published quarterly for interested people.

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Contents:

Article: Penny Love *former Vice President BSANZ , Convenor of the Noosa Balint Intensive 2012*

Report from the Think Tank on Balint groups for medical students

BSANZ Leadership Accreditation and Training

Local Noticeboard and International Diary of Balint Events



Penny Love
Convenor,
Noosa Balint Intensive 2012

I am just home from a Mental Health Network Balint Group.

Eleven people, a mix of GPs, Psychologists, Social Workers , and Psychotherapists, four of them new to Balint work.

This monthly open group begins with a meal provided by the hospital in which we meet, so that by the time we are talking about a patient we have already been together for an hour. Tonight I was a member of the group, a rare and enjoyable privilege, having handed over the leadership to someone else.

Being in this position brings up the question of how do experienced Balint members or leaders participate in a Balint group which is in its formative stages.

How much, if at all, should one rein in creativity and indeed authenticity, out of consideration for the tentativeness of other group members, who are just learning about how Balint groups function? After all there is not only the formation of a Balint Group going on but as well all the processes of group formation bubbling away.

It takes a while for participants to get the hang of being in a Balint group.

The urge to solve the problem, the desire to eliminate anxiety and doubt by arriving at the correct answer, the temptation to reassure the presenter that he is good, the idea of telling the presenter where he went wrong, the anxiety that some people feel when there is silence, all of these occur, especially in a beginning Balint group, and get in the road of creative thought.

The leaders work hard to hold the group in the small space, which is that of the relationship between the clinician and the patient. A small space like the Tardis. And then there is that astonishing moment when things are just getting exciting, brave new thoughts being offered and the leader calls time, and we are left to take what's happened and continue our own mental journey of discovery.

Sometimes it takes persistence over a long time to get a new Balint group up and running, but those who join in and stay get more pleasure from their work, and look forward to each meeting with real anticipation.

It is only ten years since the first meeting of our Balint Society in Melbourne. Henry Jablonski from Sweden as our guest speaker inspired us with his enthusiasm, and convinced us that the time had really come to go ahead and get groups established.

We are now planning our sixth Balint Intensive Training Workshop. Some people who come will have been to several before, some will come for the first time. Some will come to learn how to lead and others will come for the experience of participation as a group member. This mixture provides a rich texture to the experience. New professional relationships form and people leave with an expanded appreciation of their own capacities for reflection and the value of this shared time.

In our experience, new groups form after each Intensive as people return to their homes and practices and are able to get together and continue Balint work, and find other like minded practitioners.

I hope you join us in Noosa Heads in October 2013, and experience this enriching invigorating four days, from which you will return to your work with expanded horizons and new zeal.



Editor: Yes, this really is a photo of the venue for the Balint Intensive Workshop at Noosa Heads, October 24th-27th 2013!

For further information:

<http://www.racv.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/resorts/RACV+Resorts/RACV+Noosa+Resort>

Note – there is a conference rate for the accommodation at the resort, and there is also other inexpensive accommodation nearby. Spouses and families are welcome.

BALINT GROUPS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

Following the successful workshops held in Melbourne and Sydney in October 2012, a 'Think Tank' was set up with the aim of exploring how Balint groups could be incorporated into medical school curricula in Australia.

The group has met on two occasions by Skype, and has benefited from the participation of Peter Shoenberg, who spoke at the 2012 workshops, and has extensive experience in London with Balint in medical schools. The group is chaired by Alexa Gilbert-Obrart, and members include Penny Love, Bill Betts, Ruth Dunn, Sally Warmington, Sheila O'Neill from Wollongong and Kirsty Foster from Sydney.

Negotiations are underway with three Australian medical schools – at the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney, and the University of Wollongong - to set up pilot programs involving a small number of Balint groups. Evaluation of the groups will be important for the sustainability of the enterprise, so this is being designed as part of the pilot project.

Accredited Balint leaders will be needed to help run the groups once they have been set up. Members will be kept up to date on the progress of this exciting development as negotiations proceed.

Sally Warmington on behalf of Balint in Medical Schools "Think Tank"

BSANZ Leadership Accreditation Pathway

There are now fifteen of our members enrolled on the pathway.
More are interested and intending to enrol.

The training and accreditation of leaders is a major step forward in the extension and development of Balint work in Australia and New Zealand

The leadership training is being developed with careful supervision and oversight by the Leadership Accreditation Committee, and the recently formed Leadership Training Committee.

The next Bulletin will feature articles on the leadership accreditation pathway, and a further update on the Balint work being piloted in Australian and New Zealand medical schools.

International Balint Federation News

Elected office bearers for 2013 -2015
President: Don Nease (USA) Treasurer: Mark Budow (Israel),
General Secretary: Paul Sackin (UK)

Don Nease was a workshop leader at the BSANZ Intensive Workshop, Auckland 2010, and met many of the participants from Australia and New Zealand at that time.
Congratulations Don, we are delighted with your appointment as President of the IBF!

Local Noticeboard

Conference : Advances in Clinical Supervision, Innovation and Practice
4th to 6th June 2013 in Sydney

The Programme includes:

A Lecture by Frank Meumann, President, BSANZ
on
“The Use of Balint groups in Supervision”

A Balint Pre-Conference Workshop
Tuesday 4th June 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm
Leaders: Frank Meumann, Laurie Lovell-Simons

Conference website link: www.nsw.edu.au/conference.

International Diary of Balint events

International Balint Federation Council Meeting and Conference
Stockholm, Sweden

May 3rd Day Seminar for new/prospective Balint leaders

Evening of May 3rd - sightseeing trip

May 4th and morning of May 5th - Council meeting and associated Conference

Contact Paul Sackin: paulsackin@waitrose.com

Celebrating the Romanian Balint Association's 20th year

May 9th-11th 2013

“Soma and Psyche”

Main languages English and Romanian

Venue: Salvator Hotel, Miercurea Ciuc-Sumuleu

Contact : Albert Veress albert.veress@yahoo.com

Further details: www.associatabalint.ro

The 18th International Balint Congress, Heidelberg, Germany

September 7th – 11th 2013

Information and registration: www.int-balintcongress-heidelberg.com

The congress will be attended by a number of the members of the BSANZ from Australia and New Zealand, and some of our members will present papers.

All interested in Balint work are welcome, with or without previous experience.

BRITISH BALINT SOCIETY EVENTS 2013

Balint weekends:

14th – 16th June 2013: Longhirst Hall, near Morpeth, Northumberland

27th – 29th September 2013: Corpus Christi College, Oxford

[All details on www.balint.co.uk](http://www.balint.co.uk)

AMERICAN BALINT SOCIETY EVENTS 2013

Long Beach Island Balint Leadership Training Intensive

Thursday, October 17-20, 2013

Engleside Inn, Beach Haven, New Jersey

[All details on http://www.americanbalintsociety.org/](http://www.americanbalintsociety.org/)

General Information:

Two intensive leadership training workshops are held in the US each year, a spring workshop on the west coast and a fall workshop on the east coast.

[Info : americanbalintsociety.org/](http://americanbalintsociety.org/)

Enrollment is open and no prior Balint experience is required.

The United Kingdom Balint Society schedules joint study days, lectures, and 4-5 weekend workshops per year. Some are leadership training workshops, and all are a great way to meet others involved in the Balint work, and to experience the work.

[Info: balint.co.uk/](http://balint.co.uk/)

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please contact me at drdinash@gmail.com and I will remove you from the mailing list. (Ed).