



A BALINT WEEKEND

for GPs and other Clinicians

Christchurch - February 20th and 21st, 2010

The Goodfellow Unit of the Department of General Practice & Primary Health Care, University of Auckland, is delighted to offer a weekend workshop for GPs and other professional people including Psychotherapists, Nurses, Psychologists, Chaplains, Family Court Lawyers and others to experience a Balint group.

What is Balint work?

Balint groups are named after Hungarian born psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Michael Balint who, with his wife Enid Balint, developed a unique method for understanding the doctor-patient relationship in London in the 1950s. This method has been refined over the past fifty years and there are now many groups in UK, Europe (for GPs, Obstetricians and Psychiatrists) and USA (in about one third of GP training programs) and a growing number in NZ and Australia.

This weekend is taking a new approach to Balint work and will contain a mixture of people from different fields. It is expected that differences between participants, in training, experience and attitudes, will enrich the group and that the work will be a positive collaboration. The list of possible participants above is not exclusive; Colleagues in other disciplines and senior trainees who are clinically active will be most welcome.

Workshop Description

This workshop offers the opportunity for professional people to reflect upon difficult or intriguing cases, with a focus on the doctor-patient (clinician-client) relationship. The clear structure of a Balint group provides a safe and supportive setting.

The participants will be invited to present cases where they have experienced a strong reaction, such as: distress, delight, frustration or uncertainty. The case is presented briefly and informally, emphasising the nature of the presenter-patient interaction and including the presenter's feelings and reactions. The group members then discuss the case with emphasis on the relationship rather than the clinical material.

The group is asked to empathize with both the presenter's and the patient's experience and to speculate about what thoughts and feelings each might be having. Diverse views often emerge, reflecting the group members' varied personalities and experiences. All ideas are allowed to "exist in the room" and there is no attempt to reach a "right" answer. The leaders facilitate this process and do not act as experts. The underlying assumption is that "the knowledge is in the group".

A Balint group is very different from the usual medical case presentation in that the members are strongly discouraged from making judgements, giving advice, or offering solutions and no attempt is made to reach a conclusion. Discussion of clinical management is actively discouraged. We assume that all the group members are

competent and know how to manage their patients/clients. This structure creates a place of safety where the participants can feel comfortable discussing the uncomfortable moments in the consultation.

This way of working can be difficult at first, but once learnt is a liberating experience, stimulating deeper thought and understanding. If you would like more information about Balint work please contact John Barton. (jbarton@aapt.net.au)

This workshop is for people who are clinically active.

Leaders: Dr John Barton, FRACGP, GP/psychotherapist and Balint leader practising in Melbourne since 1997. GP in Taihape and then Huntly 1983 to 1997.

Dr Ali Begg, FRNZCGP, GP, Psychodramatist and Medical Educator in Christchurch, outdoor enthusiast.

Timetable: Saturday 20th February: 10:00 am to 4:30 pm
Sunday 21st February: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Cost: \$225.00 (GST included) The workshop is limited to nine participants.

Important note

It is important to participate in the entire program. The success of these workshops depends on group cohesiveness. Please do not plan to arrive late, leave early or miss sessions. Please do not apply if you cannot commit to the whole workshop.

Venue

Presbyterian Support, 44 Bealey Ave, Christchurch.

Morning and afternoon teas

These will be provided. Lunch is not included. The venue is near many good food outlets.

Enquiries

Peter Huggard
Director, Goodfellow Unit
09 63767599 extn 84500
p.huggard@auckland.ac.nz

John Barton
+61 3 9480 6335
jbarton@aapt.net.au

Registration

- 1) Email Cecile Pilkington at c.pilkington@auckland.ac.nz stating you wish to attend.
- 2) We will then send you a registration form which confirms your attendance and payment details.

CME points

This Balint workshop has been endorsed by The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP), and has been approved for 9 hours CME for General Practice Educational Programme Stage 2 (formerly AVE) and Maintenance of Professional Standards (MOPS) purposes).