

Editorial Ch- ch- change

One area that has received very little attention in the youth field is that of bereavement in young people. While deaths among 12–24-year-olds in 2004 were less than half of those in 1980, land transport accidents accounted for 30.1% of deaths in this age range and intentional self-harm (suicide) accounted for another 18.5%. In other words, most of the deaths that young people face among their peers and siblings are shocking and sudden. Andrew McNess has undertaken important research on the effect on young people of the private or public nature of the death of a sibling and also the effectiveness of varying support strategies.

Sexuality education, on the other hand, appears to be one area of the youth field that has been extensively researched. However, our second paper suggests that the serious problem of sexual violence has not been effectively tackled in sexuality education. Anastasia Powell's research finds that young women and young men both want more knowledge about negotiating the social aspects of safe and consensual sex.

There is a lot of talk about the difference that communication technology has made to the ways that young people communicate, and the frequency with which they do so. And the statistics do suggest that technological means of communication are ubiquitous in the youth population. However, are we generalising from the experience of urban young people, or even from a subsection within this demographic, to all Australian young people? Research into the use of multimedia to reduce social isolation among rural youth suggests that access to effective means of technological communication is less than adequate in rural areas and that face-to-face communication is still a priority for young people.

Participation is a buzz word in youth research fields, and while youth empowerment is an important aim of youth work, Jen Couch points out that facilitating the empowerment of refugee youth requires youth workers to consider factors other than just the application of Western participation practices in a 'more is always better' approach.

Finally we feature a discussion of a model of service delivery that might appear to be the antithesis of a public service approach: collabora-

tive, individualised, integrated and strength-based. The paper includes an examination and evaluation of its application within ACT government services. Those responsible for the implementation of this model are to be applauded for their commitment to improvement in service outcomes for their clients, and the results of the evaluation already suggest that they can be cautiously optimistic that the approach will have benefits well into the future.

In addition to these papers, the edition also contains our annual index, information about two surveys conducted by ACYS, and two book reviews.

For ACYS staff, the most momentous item in this edition is Sheila Allison's final contribution to the journal. Sheila is retiring after 18 years as our manager and publisher, and we will be bereft in her absence. Her wisdom, knowledge, compassion and diplomacy will be irreplaceable. The youth field has Sheila to thank for her vision of a clearing-house to provide the field with one-stop access to information, news, research, and facts and stats from around the country and the world. The accessibility, reliability, consistency and quality of ACYS resources, including this journal, reflect the standards of excellence that Sheila has set.

Sheila also sets us an amazing example of how to live a considered, considerate, creative and caring life. It is no accident that the staff at ACYS work in an environment that is characterised by respectfulness, independent thought, loyalty and joy. At a personal level, I cannot thank her enough for being the best mentor and editing teacher anybody could have wished for.

While we will miss Sheila, we don't begrudge her leaving and wish her much happiness in her new life as a writer. Watch out for her first novel – Sheila's writing is breathtakingly brilliant! Go girl!

Kate Gross, Nick Gross, Sue Headley, Anne Hugo, Kathleen Robinson and Rob White