

Introduction

Welcome to this special issue of the International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work on *African-American perspectives: healing past and present*.*

The process of putting together this edition has challenged, inspired, confronted and moved us. The papers and interviews included here are wide ranging and of considerable scholarship. In Part One of this journal you will find descriptions of an inspiring community research process, a startling oral history project, and a practice-based framework for moving towards 'post colonial' or culturally appropriate therapy. You'll also find heartfelt interviews in relation to the meaning of home, the significance of reparations and honouring ancestry, and the implications for therapists in questioning the concept of punishment. All of these writings are based in African-American history and experience.

From here, the journal branches out to include voices from Indigenous Australia, Samoa, Ghana and South Africa. These are thought provoking pieces of writing.

The second part of this journal consists of two collaborations which we hope will be of significant assistance to therapists engaging with poststructuralist ideas and with externalising practices. The question and answer documents that are provided in this section are easy-to-read and yet have been crafted with great care so that the substance and thoroughness of ideas are still conveyed. Whether you are a seasoned narrative therapist or new to the ideas we hope you will find these two pieces highly relevant and helpful to your practice. We would love to hear your feedback about this.

Towards the end of the journal we've also included two reviews of recent training events - one a conference in relation to the experience of Holocaust survivors and their families, and the other a workshop that was held in South Africa earlier this year.

As you can see, within this journal are many stories, many ideas. We look forward to hearing about your experience of reading them.

Before you do so, we would just like to thank the authors who have contributed to this issue as well as all those people who have worked hard behind the scenes and who have participated in the conversations that made this journal possible. These conversations have taken place over some years in Adelaide, in Atlanta, on the banks of the Murray River in South Australia, on the Cape Coast of Ghana, in Samoa, in Oklahoma, in the UK and in South Africa (not to mention those phone calls that have criss-crossed the globe!) This journal edition has certainly been a collaborative effort. Thanks to all of you who have been a part of the process.

David Denborough,
Staff writer.

* Regular readers will notice that for this special issue we have used North American spelling for those articles within the African-American section. For some reason, it didn't seem appropriate to convert the spelling to Australian English!