

With us since day one!

Roz Nutting, registered Psychologist, has been with us since day one, referring clients to SPP for over 20 years



Rosamond Nutting, B.A.Hons. (Psych), M.Ed.Studs.(Psych), MAPS, MAS Hypnosis is a registered Psychologist who has been referring clients to South Pacific Private for over twenty years. She has been practicing for thirty two years and has been in private practice at the Bardon Counselling Centre for the past twenty three years. She was also employed by the Queensland Teacher's Health Society as a psychologist/therapist for nineteen years.

South Pacific Private approached Rosamond recently about her ongoing relationship as a referrer to SPP and her experience of that relationship over the last 20 years. In this frank and honest account Rosamond shares her thoughts, suggestions and lessons learned working with patients in crisis and the experiences they had with treatment at South Pacific Private.

How did your journey with SPP begin?

In 1990 my life was in crisis. At that stage I'd been a Registered Psychologist for eight years and knew that I needed help to sort my life out. I knew I needed to change but didn't quite know how to. I related strongly to a quote I'd been reading from M Scott Peck's book 'Further Along the Road Less Travelled':

'Many people who look like adults are actually emotional children walking around in adult's clothing. We know this not because the people who come to see us are more immature than most. On the contrary, those who come to psychotherapy with a genuine intent to grow are those relatively few who are called out of immaturity who are no longer willing to tolerate their own childishness, although they may not yet see the way out.'

The opportunity to 'grow myself back up' came during a workshop given by Pia Melody in Sydney that same year, 1990. Pia invited me to 'The Meadows' in Arizona, USA to experience their four week recovery program and after that, complete an Internship as a staff member. It was one of the greatest gifts I've ever been given. I was shown a way out of my immaturity and since that experience; I've never been the same as I was previously, an emotional child. At last, I'd found the real me! I wanted every one of my clients, friends and family to have this same experience I'd just had.

I became passionate about the need for a recovery centre in Australia and was excited when my friends Lorraine and Bill Wood decided to found one in Sydney. It was the answer to a dream I'd had since I'd left Arizona. I knew that there were so many people here who would be able to receive the same help, support and recovery that I'd experienced in Arizona. Lorraine and Bill were committed to the recovery processes developed by 'The Meadows' and it was a joyful feeling to know that so many Australian lives were about to change for ever from the extraordinary experiences their centre 'South Pacific Private' would offer.

You have been referring clients to SPP since we began; what is the value of sending clients here and why have you remained supportive of SPP for all these years?

It has now been twenty years since I sent my first clients to South Pacific Private and I love to see the difference in them when they return hopeful, joyful and treading a very different path in their lives. They learn so much about themselves and other people during their recovery processes at South Pacific Private. Their empathy and compassion increases towards themselves and others and I never ceased to be amazed and uplifted by the marvellous human spirit within even the most dysfunctional individuals returning from their experience. So many

of my clients tell me of surviving the most awful torture as children and some of them caught up in medicating their ongoing pain with substances or processes in a vain effort to try to block out these past memories. I'll always recommend that they experience the integrated and multi-disciplinary treatment at SPP in order to begin the long task of resolving their past traumatic experiences and to move on into a much happier future.

While at South Pacific Private, my clients report feeling their self-esteem improve to heights unimaginable to them prior to their therapy. They begin to feel stronger. They begin to know who they are. In many clients I hear them return saying 'I have never felt so good about myself' and in this place of self-liking for the first time in their lives it is possible for them, with the help of the experienced, insightful, caring, supportive SPP therapists, to confront their own destructive behaviours and the addictions that have the potential to destroy their lives, their relationships with their partners, children, friends and their families of origin.

It is so important for them to let go the baggage of their childhood and adolescence, resolve some of the big issues directly with family members during SPP's 'Family Program' and to open the door to a healthier future; a future of choices, of understanding and of hope. Many of them report to me the same words I heard myself saying, 'at last I'm able to own my own reality, to stand up for myself and tell my truth for the first time in my life. I have begun to grow up!'

What advice can you offer to healthcare professionals who haven't yet engaged in SPP and who perhaps don't understand what we do here?

This question really struck a chord in me. I've noticed during my long experience in private practice that if a counsellor/ therapist is confronted by a patient/ client's traumatic story, unless that professional counsellor has resolved their own past childhood traumas, mistreatments and/or neglect, they have a strong tendency to avoid, minimise or shut down their client's feelings and divert the focus of the session to a less emotionally challenging issue. What I imagine happening is that it seems to be far too threatening for them to listen because the story is most probably 'triggering' their own unprocessed touchstone memories. Also, if they don't fully understand the impact that these traumatic experiences have had on that individual sitting in front of them, how then can they possibly grasp the concept of 'recovery'? How can they understand the benefits of the SPP process for this person? My advice would be to educate yourself around options for patients who are in crisis and to consider SPP as an option for these clients. In addition my advice would be to assess your own personal triggers to working with clients in crisis.

How has SPP helped your clients to break the circle of 'hurt' they have experienced in their lives?

Unfortunately, one of the adult behavioural outcomes of trauma in childhood is the repeating of traumatic, painful experiences, either by being emotionally and/or physically hurt again in abusive relationships or 'acting out' abusive behaviours on their partners, children, friends, work colleagues/ subordinates, and if they are in positions of public office, the damage to others can be horrific. In other words, 'Hurt people; hurt people'. So, by resolving childhood and adolescent trauma which is at the heart of the SPP process, it is possible to break this destructive, toxic cycle. Wouldn't it be a better world if more people were able to break this cycle of abuse?

How does SPP help clients to move beyond their past experiences?

I've used Francine Shapiro's EMDR (Evidence Based Eye Movement Desensitisation & Reprocessing Therapy) for over twenty years in my practice for the resolution of childhood trauma in most of my clients. Francine's book 'Getting Past Your Past' emphasises the necessity of resolving the past in order to live, not just survive in the present and to look towards the future with confidence and hope. The EMDR process requires the client to be stable and fully aware of those painful issues in need of resolution. My returning clients from SPP are those that do best from this therapy. They forge ahead in their recovery processing and are able to achieve their sobriety goals, the

lifting of their depressive symptoms, the calming of their anxieties and the healing of their relationships to a much greater degree and with less failure than others. They are also more confident and have more motivation to achieve their goals.

Is there a stand-out story that you'd like to share that epitomises the working relationship between your practice and SPP?

I am continually humbled by the way people put their trust in me. Whenever someone shares their story, their feelings and their truth, I feel really honoured that they have chosen me to be close to at that moment. I always feel deep pain-filled joy when I am given the opportunity to witness a person's journey from the darkness into the light; from depression and anxiety, addiction and personality disturbances, into peace and joy. To see a lost, broken soul set off for SPP with very little hope for the future and no trust in their own ability to overcome the stranglehold an addiction has over them. Then to have them return four or five weeks later with their head held high, a smile on their face and a will to turn their life around...that's why I continue to 'trust the process' at SPP. I have a great love for people and am constantly amazed by their courage in facing their demons. I know that I share this compassion with Lorraine and the outstanding therapists, professionals and staff of SPP.

So, to Lorraine Wood, SPP managers, administrators, medical staff, therapists, lecturers and auxiliary staff at South Pacific Private, a heartfelt thank you for your dedication to your recovery process over the past twenty years. The next twenty years can only get better.

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