

FROM THE EDITOR

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It is a great privilege to take over the role of editor of BACP's *HEALTHCARE Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal*. Having worked as a counsellor in private practice for the past five years, it is fascinating to now immerse myself in the world of counsellors and psychotherapists working for the NHS and third sector organisations. I look forward to learning from your wealth of experience. I have already had the opportunity to meet a number of you at the BACP Practitioners' Conference in April. For those of you who were unable to attend, you can read about the highlights of the conference in Neville Tomlinson's succinct report on page 5.

In my new role, I have the good fortune to work alongside the BACP Healthcare Executive, headed up by the new Chair, Satinder Panesar. Satinder and her team are full of ideas for the BACP Healthcare division and I know they would welcome the input of all members, as Satinder underlines in her first report as Chair.

In her position as Chair, Satinder is very keen to promote the dissemination of best practice from throughout the UK. In line with this, in our lead article Jane Simms and Michael McGibbon provide an excellent overview of community and voluntary-based counselling provision in Northern Ireland. They highlight how, in addition to the challenges of funding cuts and lack of investment faced by service providers throughout the UK, those in Northern Ireland face additional pressures as a result of the sociopolitical landscape in which they operate. Michael and Jane end their article with a number of robust recommendations for improving the counselling sector in Northern Ireland. Rachel Johnston, Deputy Chair of the BACP Healthcare Executive, responds to the points raised in the article.

One of the criticisms often levelled at NHS mental health provision is its intensive focus on cognitive behavioural therapy over and above other forms of therapy. Chris Athanasiadis writes about the role for psychodynamic psychotherapy in public healthcare and raises his concern about the shrinking role for this therapeutic approach within the NHS. He succinctly describes the key concepts of psychodynamic therapy, and argues that studies do not demonstrate any difference in efficacy between CBT and psychodynamic therapy. He therefore contends that the ever-expanding evidence base for psychodynamic therapy underscores the importance of making this type of therapy available through the NHS.

