



ANZAP Seminar

Living under the shadow of Osheroff: 21st century mental health care, psychotherapy and ethics

Online Webinar

Thursday, 14th November 2024

6.00 pm to 7.45pm

(Sydney/Melbourne Time)

ANZAP Members - \$90 | ANZAP Trainees - \$0 | Non-Members - \$120
| Westmead Students - \$40 | Other Students - \$60

Dr Ray Osheroff was an American physician who sued the Chestnut Lodge hospital in Maryland in the 1980s for their failure to provide him with antidepressant treatment, instead providing him with intensive residential psychoanalysis. It was a watershed moment for both psychiatry and psychoanalysis, a “showdown” between competing models of both knowledge and mental health care.

Dr Gerard Klerman provided evidence on behalf of Osheroff, in particular citing the “proposed right of the patient to effective treatment”. Harvard Professor of Psychiatry, Alan Stone, provided evidence on behalf of the hospital, arguing that the clinical situation was much more complex than one of a straightforward clinical depression. In 1990, he wrote, “Klerman’s proposals could have serious consequences for the innovation, diversity and independent thought essential to scientific progress in psychiatry”.

In this ANZAP seminar, the case of Dr Osheroff will be described in some detail, before contrasting that case with another. Contemporary paradigms of mental health care and service provision will then be discussed, in the context of some local data and literature. All will be reviewed through both psychotherapeutic and ethical perspectives. Some contemporary practices may be challenged.

About Dr Richard Benjamin: Richard Benjamin is a Tasmanian Psychiatrist with ANZAP training. For over 30 years he worked primarily in public sector community mental health teams, where his particular interest involved the long-term sequelae of childhood trauma, and how these may present in a disguised manner in adults presenting with severe and enduring mental illness.

His interest in trauma, particularly within the public sector, led him to edit, with Joan Haliburn and Serena King, the multi-author textbook 'Humanising Mental Care in Australia: A Guide to Trauma-informed Approaches', which was published by Routledge in 2019. He is interested in teaching and supervision, as well as in the promotion of an understanding of trauma and the principles of psychodynamic psychotherapy across a broad range of settings. This includes via the notions of 'branding' and of the importance of 'brand differentiation'.

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