

First words



Well that was quite an election, wasn't it? Pretty exciting, really. The live TV debates provided a bit of gloss and glamour as each leader sought to win over a head-scratching public with typical British political mudslinging. More than

ever before, there was interest in manifesto documents, with record downloads from the various party websites.

And the debates and discussions on the streets seemed more open and intense. The normally sceptical young also joined in more enthusiastically. Many of us seemed to become seasoned experts on how to manage the country's debt. A pal of mine came up with a blindingly brilliant strategy – that of banning Mondays. Or at least Monday as a work day. Essentially back to the four-day working week but his emphasis was on the creation of a three-day weekend.

Where it was possible to get a clear differentiation between the political parties, the election forced us to consider what was important to us... and the country; to reflect on our own values, beliefs and opinions. I had several enjoyable scraps with friends as we teased out our own arguments for and against different views. Debate is positively healthy.

And we have a positively healthy debate emerging in this journal. This was triggered by the recent BACP Workplace 'Fit for business' conference in March this year. The topic was the replacement of the 'sick note' with the 'fit note' and how this might impact on workplace counsellors. What emerged from this during the conference plenary discussion, and beyond, was an issue about the sanctity of counselling in the workplace. It brought up points that I remember were being discussed 15 years ago when I first started work as a workplace counsellor.

Thanks to Emma Cruse (p16) who has written a thought-provoking article where she seeks to differentiate between workplace counselling and counselling in the workplace. You might agree or disagree – either way, please do feel free to add to the debate and send me your views so we can publish them in future issues. This could be in the form of an article, like Emma's, or a 'letter to the

editor' which is what we have from Angie Gaspar and colleagues (p28). Thanks to Angie, too.

As you all clamour to email me your innermost secrets, you might be advised to read the excellent Peter Jenkins article on data protection (p2), where he brings us a timely update regarding legislation.

I stumbled across Anita Silvester just before she presented at this year's BACP research conference. Some of you might also have met her there.

Anita's ongoing research focuses on the impact of counselling practice for client, practitioner and employer all under the same public sector organisation (p6). This is a really interesting article that goes some way to reflect the potentially tailored provision that can exist for workplace counselling provision. Thanks to Anita and I know we all wish her well as she concludes her research. If anyone else is involved in research, please do get in touch so we can help profile your work in the journal.

Tony Buckley from Transport for London gives us a fascinating insight into what he refers to as the 'sensational body', where he presents a new perspective on trauma and how this is often internalised (p11). It's an important development to the trauma support debate and well worth a read. Thanks, Tony.

Many thanks also to those budding book reviewers who responded to the call in a recent BACP Workplace e-bulletin. Watch out for future e-bulletins for further book reviewer requests.

And finally, look out for the prospective parliamentary candidate for the constituency of North Perth and Kinross in five years' time, waving the banner for the 'Ban Mondays' party.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name is a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right, serving as a decorative flourish or underline.

Rick Hughes, Editor

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