

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE ISPS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear ISPS members,

You will recall that last year we initiated a formal annual report from the EC.

You already receive three newsletters each year and other information, questionnaires and conference and book announcements via Constant Contact, so I hope you don't feel overloaded.

NEW INITIATIVES

I am hopeful that a number of new initiatives will bear fruit if well looked after in the coming years.

More regular communication with the chairs of regional ISPS networks, initiated in Warsaw, could see more support for the development of a focus on research by ISPS members and even research between ISPS members in different countries.

It is one thing to have research evidence of effectiveness of psychosocial interventions, it is another thing to have people on the ground with the considerable skills needed to provide such interventions. A living compendium of effective trainings in the different psychosocial approaches would be very welcome. I am hopeful that shared knowledge and expertise in training will be a living part of the ISPS culture.

In the coming year I anticipate that the LEARNING TOOLS part of our website will undergo considerable further development. This will be open access and I hope a way in which we can widen the influence of ISPS. Margreet de Pater welcomes colleagues with relevant experience and knowledge to contribute to the development of these web pages.

Some of us have been struck by the very small number of nurses who are active members of ISPS in most networks. This is in spite of nurses, in most countries, being the largest mental health profession and the staff who usually spend most time with patients. Debra Lampshire, who has considerable experience in working with nurses, is heading an initiative to be thinking with leading nurses as to how ISPS can be more relevant to them. I am hopeful that some ideas will be forthcoming in time to attract nurses to our NY conference in March next year.

Last year the executive made a decision to be more active in reaching out to other organisations with overlapping goals. Under the direction of Andrew Moskowitz, we are making good headway. We have in mind experts making contributions at one another's conferences, beginning to formulate shared statements and goals over areas of common concern and needing attention and development. Good progress is being made in the former and the building of relationships will lead to the development of the latter in time. Further information can be found at www.isps.org/index.php/links

I am very pleased that after working with me for a year as Co-Editor of ISPS books, Alison Summers has agreed to continue and that Nigel Bunker has taken over from me. I know that they are working hard with a number of editors and the book series will continue to expand. We continue to seek ways in which we can improve sales and ideas will be welcome. Routledge have also started to develop an ISPS academic hard back series for academic books of a good standard that are not going to be attractive enough for the wider public and Andrew Moskowitz has taken on the editorship.

OUR FOUNDERS

At a time of continuing our development, we remain acutely aware of the recent passing of both our founders. Our loss of Professor Müller happened within the year of my last annual report but all members will be aware of Professor Benedetti's passing on December 2nd 2013. I represented ISPS at a moving memorial service that followed his funeral near Basle in Switzerland. Maurizio Peciccia will give a memorial lecture at our conference in New York in March. It is a matter of personal regret that Benedetti's very deep understanding of the inner world of those who experience psychosis has only had limited exposure in the English language. This has not been for lack of trying within ISPS but sadly it has not been easy to render his most highly nuanced work into English. It was of note to me that Germany and France was well represented at his memorial service. I found recently that an illustrated book of his 'Trauma and Art' (Karger) has only one copy available on Amazon at a cost of over £500. This book won a British Medical Association award in 2004 for its illustrated account of an individual who suffered sexual abuse, psychosis and recovered using artistic expression and Professor Benedetti's expert assistance. Its reviewer at the time described this touching work as "revealing" artistically as well as an important step in "acknowledging the role of art in therapy".

CONFERENCES

The decision made in 2009 to hold our international conferences every two years rather than three, often organised by enthusiastic members but with no previous experience of international conferences, has put a great burden and demand on the executive. For some time we have been searching without success for conference administrators with expertise and interest in our field who can offer us continuity, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel every two years. We are therefore very pleased to have an agreement in principle to be working on a longer term basis with Natalie Shear Associates who are the conference organisers for the ISPS New York 2015 conference and plans are well advanced to be working with NS for **the 2017 conference which will be held in the exciting city of Liverpool in the UK, 29th August - 3rd September, 2017**. Please put these dates into your diary. Many of our networks are now organising very good and popular conferences. These are such important occasions not only for sharing information but for building up morale and a sense of solidarity in the long term struggle to develop psychosocial interventions as mainstream.

THE DIRECTION OF ISPS

ISPS has become 'broader church' over recent years. We encompass the full range of psychosocial interventions and the voices of experts by experience and family members is now much louder in the organisation and will continue to develop. Many members have been very successful in their own localities and countries of positively influencing practice within main stream services and others have developed alternatives. The future strength of ISPS depends very much on respect for the strivings of all our members and not getting caught up in either /or approach.

I am very pleased to have witnessed since 1997 the success of the initiative to foster regional ISPS groups. It is easy to overlook the fact that before this time there was no local activity. Some of our ISPS groups are very active indeed; in other area they are surprisingly quiescent. Clearly skilled leadership is needed throughout the organisation. During the early part of this year, In 2004 I have spent a number of days in the East, in St Petersburg, in Kislovosk (with the Russian speaking ISPS) and in Minsk. I am hopeful that these visits will bear fruit. Certainly I found no shortage of interest in psychological approaches and plenty of growing expertise in my own specialist approach which is making use of psychodynamic understanding to assist individuals and families where there is psychosis.

The Finnish Open Dialogue approach is receiving much attention within ISPS and internationally.

CONCRETE OBJECTIVES

The ISPS executive is moving towards having more explicit objectives and clearer plans and realistic time scales for achieving these. I would like to encourage regional networks to also consider having tangible development plans of their own and to be sharing these as a way of mutual encouragement. Many of us do not work in environments that are very supportive of the focus of ISPS so we need to do all we can to make sure we support one another both locally and internationally in concrete goals.

THE ISPS EXECUTIVE TEAM

I want to thank my colleagues on the executive for all their 'volunteer' work most of which takes place through Skype and Email. This year we felt it necessary to have a face to face meeting and this took place in New York where we spent half of our time getting close to the conference and its excellent facilities for next year, meeting NY ISPS colleagues and having discussions with Natalie Shear about future cooperation. These were very satisfying and productive activities. The rest of the time was spent reviewing and developing our activities and goals. The weekend helped renew our vitality as a team. One of the things we need to consider in the future, is the fact that we are a small team and when one member's energies are focussed on a very successful aspect of ISPS - John Read with our journal, another Brian Koehler is putting all his energies into an international ISPS conference, a third Klaus Lehtinen takes such excellent care of our finances, it does leave a very small group to attend to the rest of ISPS business. I think there are different ways of thinking about this; one thing is sure, changes are most likely to happen at local level and therefore the more the EC can encourage regional development the better; knowledge of successes in one area will assist morale and energy in other regional groups.

I therefore hope that our conference in New York and its exciting theme of dialogue between us will be a considerable source of inspiration to our membership and that we will see a very big attendance of our American colleagues from all over the US as well as colleagues from the rest of the world in such an exciting city.

Besides the EC members already mentioned I want to thank Jan Olav Johannessen for facilitating the generosity of Stavanger (Norway) colleagues in providing some of the graphic design for New York, funding two of the plenary speakers, for suggesting the pioneering nursing meeting and for chairing the International Conference Advisory Group. Debra Lampshire has been involved in a number of international meetings where her expertise and encouragement has been openly much appreciated.

Antonia Svensson has been our ISPS International Organiser for more than ten years now and continues to be worth her weight in gold.

The executive and I look forward to welcoming a large number of you in person in New York next March.

Brian Martindale, Chair ISPS on behalf of the ISPS Executive Committee
September 2014

[Financial report 2013](#)