



psychosis. It is designed to be a practical resource for anyone who is concerned with children in public care. The voices of children who have been in care are heard through the use of poetry, which presents a range of issues from the child's perspective.

Joughin, C. & Shaw, M. (2000) *Finding the Evidence: A Gateway to the Literature in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. London: Gaskell.

Finding the Evidence aims to provide busy clinicians with access to the best available secondary research evidence

dealing with children and adolescents. It combines a list of available evidence on a wide range of subjects relating to children's mental health with a simple guide to searching for research evidence. This book represents the first step in a range of initiatives to improve clinicians' access to evidence, and is also available on-line. Current plans are to update the resource on an annual basis in hard copy and every 6 months on the website: <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/gaskell/50.1.htm>.

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Media and the College

The Work of a DPEO: an aide memoir

I became a Divisional Public Education Officer (DPEO) for the College's External Affairs Department in 1990. My first media training day was most informative. I learned how to disseminate information; how to inform journalists about issues pertinent on the day; and ways to challenge stigma. I learned that it was safest to assume that most journalists do not usually understand the complexity of mental health issues. The health correspondent for the BBC at the time showed how adequate preparation – making written information available in a helpful question and answer format – and development of personal relationships with journalists through understanding how they work, their deadlines, pressures, etc., are important factors in trying to do the job properly. I also learned the golden rule: never say anything off the record.

National newspaper journalists usually telephone late in the day, soliciting views on something that appears to be relatively harmless or vaguely related to psychiatry, but they often have a hidden motive. I have found it helpful to try to discover the reason behind the question. Local reporters tend to be less devious, especially if they are permanent staff with whom it has been possible to establish a working relationship through being available. I have taken advantage of this when I encourage local reporters to publish articles, for example during the highly successful Defeat Depression Campaign run jointly by the College and the Royal College of General Practitioners. Local people do read local newspapers so confidentiality, especially when giving examples, must be maintained. This means more than simply leaving out names! Be prepared to hear your patients tell you what they think of your contribution though.

Television is the most influential as well as the most time-constrained medium of our time. Before appearing on TV it is vital to familiarise yourself with the format of the programme, read up on the subject

matter and determine how not to allow yourself to be dragged into issues beyond your expertise. I have never regretted applying these three rules. TV producers like us to be articulate, jargon-free and to communicate in sound bytes. Psychiatrists don't often get good press on TV, even when we make balanced comments. I was caught out some years ago when I participated in a seemingly harmless yet educative programme on community care. When the documentary was screened I discovered, to my horror, that the producer had prefaced our own good services with mention of a recent spate of suicides and homicides of homeless people in a neighbouring county to show up service shortfall there! Certainly not a good way to make friends or influence people.

The final medium DPEOs work in is radio – either nationally or locally. Making oneself available will always generate further invitations. The question and answer format, faxed or e-mailed to the radio station in advance, can be useful. I did this recently for a national programme on anxiety with questions and answers of what anxiety is; how big the problem is; what the symptoms are; how it affects the individual; what help is available; when the general practitioner needs to be consulted; if there is any self-help available; if people with anxiety get better, etc. Producers may not stick to this but they can find it useful in planning the interview. Preparing a written response also prevents being misquoted. Producers of local radio prefer information to be interpreted in a local context, so having demographic data on hand is recommended.

For the brave (or perhaps foolhardy) there is an additional radio format to consider. This is the 'regular' radio show! For the past 8 years I have been doing this for the BBC. We have tried to relate it to important events such as exam stress in May or seasonal affective disorder in January. Each theme was advertised in the



special articles

week preceding the programme. The selected topic and pertinent relevant issues were discussed before phone calls were taken from listeners for the rest of the hour-long programme, interspersed with music. This formula worked well but became boring after 3 years and we changed the format; I confronted my obsessionality and dispensed with themed presentations. We opened the network and listeners were invited to phone in on any matter that concerned them. This resulted in a more dynamic programme, although it was fortunate that I knew how to treat athlete's foot when a listener called about this. I recall one listener telephoning for advice on coping with heights. She put this advice into practice some weeks later when she telephoned

the radio show from Bristol while she crossed the Clifton Suspension Bridge! I couldn't have stage managed it better if I had tried. The switchboard was jammed with callers offering encouragement and praise when we invited her to participate live during the following week's programme. Neither she nor I had any regrets. Thankfully I did not have to confess that I could never do what she had just done. I have learnt a great deal about how to do things and how to avoid some of the obvious pitfalls, but it would take many years before I would feel confident enough to be the Frasier of the Midlands!

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Web guide: journals on-line

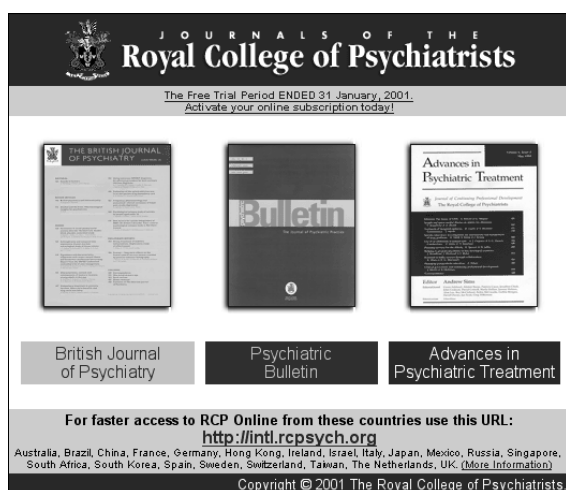


Fig. 1 Royal College of Psychiatrists journals homepage

Journals on-line

The *British Journal of Psychiatry* (*BJP*), *Psychiatric Bulletin* and *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* have been available at www.rcpsych.org since May 2000 (Fig. 1). During the initial free trial period all users of the internet had access to the full content of these journals on-line. This period ended on 31 January 2001. Access to full text is now limited to subscribers only; but access to electronic tables of contents (eTOCs), abstracts and the ability to search full text will continue to be available. Individuals or institutions who subscribe to *BJP* in print or are Members of the College are now able to activate an on-line subscription and select a username and password by entering a subscriber number. The eTOC service allows anyone who registers his or her e-mail address to be notified via e-mail when new content goes on-line. Users may choose

to receive any or all of the following: notification that a new issue of *BJP* is on-line; a complete eTOC for new issues; and special announcements from the College.

Each journal has a 'view current and future titles' facility and an issue can be selected from the archive. *BJP* has an archive of all on-line issues from September 1965 to the present. There is an archive containing eTOCs only from September 1965 to September 1975, while abstracts are available from March 1975 to December 1999. Full texts and abstracts are available for all three journals from January 2000 to the present. Older issues of *BJP* can be ordered from services such as LoansomeDoc (www.nlm.nih.gov/loansomedoc/loansome.home.html).

All three journals have a 'search' facility and 'browse by topic' function. On-line archives can be searched by citation, author or keywords. To search *BJP* on-line the search terms are entered in the spaces provided. Search by citation will always take precedence over the search by authors or keywords and if the exact citation is known then no other information need be entered. Full titles or fragments thereof, should be entered in "quotation marks". This results in a phrase search rather than each word being searched for separately. Titles of articles retrieved as a result of searching are returned in relevance ranked order. Further advice with searching is contained within the *BJP* 'help' facility. After performing a search you can perform the same search in other journals by using the 'pulldown menu' at the top of the search page entitled 'Try this search in . . .'. Selecting a journal title and clicking the search button will start a search using the previously specified criteria in the selected journal. Alternatively you can return to the search page and click the 'search multiple journals' link.

Topics that can be browsed include highlights of each issue, editorials, review articles, original papers and preliminary reports. Supplements can be viewed via the *BJP* site from July 2000 and for example, include