

Issue # 5, March 2005

This Issue

1. The Department of Human Services Active Participation Strategy - *Strengthening and Building Participatory Practice Project*
2. 'Working with monsters' – a review of John Clarke's recent book on "How to identify and protect yourself from the workplace psychopath".

DHS Disability Services: Active Participation Strategy - *Strengthening and Building Participatory Practice Project*

LDC in partnership with Service Quality Australia, is currently developing a Policy Framework, Guidelines and Action Plan in order to identify, strengthen and build the active participation of people with a disability and their families in the planning, delivery, monitoring and review of government and non-government disability support services.

This is a statewide project that includes the involvement of people with a disability, their families and carers including people from CALD and Koori backgrounds; people with complex communication needs; disability support providers (Government and non government); and disability managers in Department of Human Services regions.

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A reference group has been established to oversee the project which will be completed by September 2005, and a group of individuals with disabilities are currently being engaged in the role of Community Participation Consultants.

The project will include the collation and analysis of information about how people with disabilities are participating in services and their community; and it will provide opportunities for exchanging this information through regional exhibitions.

Community Participation Consultants will be mentored to develop skills and processes that can help all people with disabilities to actively participate in the community and in service development that meets their needs.

A suite of learning activities including conferences, learning groups and individual coaching are being established to support the Community Participation Consultants.

Information about the project is currently being distributed across Victoria. If you would like more information about this project or information about how your organisation could be involved please contact us.

Book Review: 'Working with Monsters'

John Clarke, a psychologist with experience in working with psychopaths in the workplace has written a book about 'How to identify and protect yourself from the workplace psychopath'.

In organisational consulting we are sometimes faced with the possibility that someone we are working with has some specific personal problems that may be affecting the way they approach their work role and the way they relate to their colleagues; and so this book by John Clarke is of interest.

Clarke states he has '...discovered that there is very little difference between compiling a psychological profile of a serial rapist and developing a profile of an organisational psychopath' (p. 6).

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Although generic in its approach, the book provides a profile of the types of individuals that may be considered psychopaths and their behaviour at work. However, Clarke emphasises the risk of people stereotyping or reaching inaccurate conclusions about their colleagues in the absence of professional psychological assessments.

The increasing discussions and analysis of workplace bullying in the past few years has identified the psychological and physical dangers that workplace bullying can present. Clarke's analysis of how workplace psychopaths can bully their colleagues, presenting case examples of this, is of particular interest as it provides some insights into bullying behaviour and its motivation.

Also important is Clarke's discussion and examples of workplace psychopaths who advance to senior positions within organisations using bullying and other tactics that cause harm to their colleagues.

The book is an interesting read however, it is very generic in its presentation and although it may be tempting, the book

should not be used to draw conclusions about the behaviour of colleagues.

This is an informative book that may assist people who feel they are being mistreated at work by their colleagues. It is not however, a handbook on dealing with the issues.

Book

Clarke John (2005). *Working with monsters. How to identify and protect yourself from the workplace psychopath.* Sydney, Random House Australia Pty Ltd.

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