

# THE TRAUMA AND DISSOCIATION UNIT

Belmont Hospital, Carina, Brisbane

The Trauma and Dissociation Unit, originally named the Dissociative Disorders Unit, was established at Belmont Private Hospital in January 1997. The Unit Director is Assoc. Prof. Warwick Middleton and the Nurse Unit Manager is Mr David Higson. The unit's prime aim is to provide a focussed and effective mode of treatment for the many people experiencing significant distress and dysfunction associated with the trauma that generates dissociative defences.

For over seven years the unit has maintained a regular throughput of inpatients, with the outpatient management of some patients supported by a day program. The average length of stay for inpatients has consistently been under three weeks.

An active research program has been an integral part of the unit. A doctoral thesis (University of New England) based on research carried out with patients associated with the unit was passed in 2002. Martin Dorahy's was the first PhD awarded for research into dissociation, in Australia.

The most recent publication relating to this doctoral research project was Dorahy, M.J., Irwin, H.J. & Middleton, W. (2004). Assessing markers of working memory function in dissociative identity disorder using neutral stimuli: a comparison with clinical and general population samples. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 38:1/2, 47-55.

The unit treats patients with dissociative and related disorders. Admissions, other than short-term crisis related are generally geared to a 3-5 week duration. There is a consistent emphasis in the program on approaches, which emphasise personal responsibility, consideration of others, and patients' active involvement in their treatment. On discharge, patients are able to attend the Day Program Support Group which meets each Tuesday and Friday (9.30am -3.00pm).

**Further information can be obtained by contacting the unit on  
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## Other Selected Relevant Publications by Researchers/Staff Associated with the Trauma & Dissociation Unit, Belmont Hospital.

- Dorahy, M. J. (2000). Dissociative Experiences Scale. In J. Maltby, C. A. Lewis & A. Hill (Eds.), *Commissioned reviews of 300 psychological tests, Vol. 1* (pp. 182- 187). Cardiff, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Dorahy, M. J. (2001). Culture, cognition and Dissociative identity disorder. In J. F. Schumaker & T. Ward (Eds.), *Culture, cognition and psychopathology* (pp. 157- 169). Westport, Conn: Praeger.
- Dorahy, M. J. (2001). Dissociative identity disorder and memory dysfunction: The current state of experimental research, and its future directions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 21: 771- 795.
- Dorahy, M. J., & Lewis, C. A. (2002). Dissociative identity disorder in Northern Ireland: A survey of attitudes and experience among clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 190, 707- 710.
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- Dorahy, M. J., & Middleton, W. (2002). Dissociative identity disorder and the complicated clinical presentation. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 18: 35- 41.
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- Dorahy, M.J., Middleton, W. & Irwin, H. (2004). In Press: The effect of emotional context on cognitive inhibition and attentional processing in dissociative identity disorder, *Journal Behaviour Research and Therapy*.
- Leslie, H., & McAllister, M. (2002). The benefits of being a nurse in social research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12 (5): 700- 712.
- McAllister, M. (2000). Dissociative Identity Disorder: A literature review. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 7(1): 25- 34.
- McAllister, M. (2001). In harm's way: Hidden aspects of deliberate self harm. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 8(5): 391- 398.
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- Middleton, W. (1996). Dichotomies, polarisations and dissociative processes, *Psychotherapy In Australia*, 1:43- 47.
- Middleton, W. (2002). Trespassing over sexual boundaries. *Australian Doctor*, 29 March, 41- 42.
- Middleton, W. (2003). The 'in house' solution for major ethical breaches. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 11: 265- 266.
- Middleton, W. (2004). In Press: The dissociative disorders: a personal 'work in progress'. *Australasian Psychiatry*.
- Middleton, W., & Butler, J. (1997). Commentary on paper, 'Memory Repression and Recovery: What is the Evidence?' *Health Care Analysis*, 5: 128- 132.
- Middleton, W., & Butler, J. (1998). Dissociative identity disorder: an Australian series. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 32: 794- 804.
- Middleton, W. & Higson, D. (2004). In Press: Establishing and running a trauma and dissociation unit: a contemporary experience, *Australasian Psychiatry*.