A New Zealander Visits Wraparound Programs in the Northwest

20 July 2011

My name is Roy Bergquist. I am the Team Manager of the Intensive Clinical Support Service. This service is part of the Child Youth and Family portfolio, District Mental Health at the Waitemata District Health Board (WDHB). We are situated in Auckland, New Zealand. Our referrals are children and young people (0-20) with a mental health diagnosis as well as care and protection issues. The practice model we use is the Wraparound Systems of Care model.

Having come from working in juvenile justice using MST, picking up a wraparound team in NZ has been an exciting challenge. I found we were very isolated as a wraparound team. Although there were a couple of others in NZ, they were not adhering to the wraparound practice model. There was a lack of knowledge and experience about wraparound and it was very difficult to access training. I was very blessed to employ a social worker, Annie Thomas, from Oregon, who had trained at Portland State University and worked for wraparound programmes in America. She brought a lot of helpful knowledge and experience to our team and also connected me to some great contacts.

After attempting to create a wraparound community in NZ, I made contact with people in the US to discuss our training needs. This path quickly led me to people such as Katherine Cahn at Portland State University and Connie Conklin from the Michigan Wraparound programme. A workforce development organisation, 'The Werry Centre' in NZ, offered to support us to get a trainer from the States: Connie Conklin. However, because of the recession, unfortunately the WDHB was unable to support this. We proceeded with our national wraparound training forum and Connie very kindly sent over some training material for us to use. Thanks Connie—we are eternally grateful for your support.

It became obvious that to advance as a wraparound team we needed to make sure we were adhering to the wraparound model, and of course to do this we needed to implement the Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System. Anyway, last year I had the opportunity to attend a conference in LA. This created a golden opportunity for me to visit wraparound people in the Pacific Northwest. After leaving LA I flew to Eugene and stayed with Annie's parents in Springfield. They were extremely hospitable and gave me somewhere to stay. They also lent me a car to head off on my adventure north. After a visit to the Oregon Social Learning Center I headed to Portland.

Through email contact with Sandy Bumpus and Shari Clark before I left NZ, my trip was extremely well organised. Shari, a social work intern, hosted me at her family home and I was very well looked after. My exposure to wraparound over the next three to four days was absolutely awesome. I attended lots of meetings and had lots of stimulating discussions with people involved with the three wraparound teams in Portland. I learned so much about wraparound and it was great, at last, to be surrounded by wraparound people who spoke the same language as I did when it came to working with families and young people. I was able to share some of the knowledge and experience I had in working with a bicultural model, with Maori (indigenous people), in New Zealand. In return I learned a lot about family partners and how valuable they were in the wraparound process. It was a fun few days with lots of breakfast and lunch meetings, lots of stimulating conversations, and even a visit to City Hall with Katherine.

While I was in Portland I met with Drs. Eric Bruns and Janet Walker to discuss the Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System and how we could apply it in New Zealand. To top the week off, on Friday evening, a reception was organised for me at the School of Social Work at Portland State University. It was a lovely catered reception where I was able to do a presentation on our New Zealand wraparound programme. The reception also offered an opportunity to catch up with and thank the people I had met in Portland.

From there I moved on to Seattle. After a fine sunny, spring weekend I caught up with Eric and some of his team at the University of Washington. I was able to discuss and learn more about the Fidelity Assessment System, and further look at how to start using it. I also managed to catch up with an ex MST colleague, Josh Leblang, who had previously worked as my consultant in New

Zealand. It was great to see wraparound and MST people working together from the same building. The following day my trip was topped off by a visit to the Echo Glen Children's Center, a juvenile rehabilitation programme using a DBT philosophy.

In reflection the trip was an amazing opportunity to learn and network. Our team is still progressing with wraround. We still have not implemented the Fidelity System; however, we have recently been granted permission to do so and hope to have it up and running before the end of the year. There has been a lot more interest in wraparound in New Zealand this year, partly because of the presentations I have done and also a visit from Bruce Kamradt from the Milwaukee Wraparound programme. The Ministry of Education has formed a wraparound programme as part of their Intensive Behavioural Programme. The wraparound community is growing in New Zealand; I have had the great fortune of connecting with Dr. Ruth Gammon, a social worker and a psychologist who is currently working at Massey University in Wellington. Ruth is originally from San Francisco and has had many years of experience with wraparound.

The passion and the hospitality of the wraparound people in Portland/Seattle left a lasting impression on me and I feel really blessed to have shared this experience with them and to gain some more knowledge. Part of what I experienced and learned will be helpful towards my doctoral thesis as well as the continuation and growth of wraparound in New Zealand. It is always great to put faces to names and form international connections for support in the challenging work that we do. I would also like to acknowledge my team for their amazing work as wraparound pioneers in New Zealand.

Roy Bergquist
Team Manager
Intensive Clinical Support Service
09 489 0555 Extn: 2885
Mobile: 021 784 270
Email: Roy.Bergquist@Waitematadhb.govt.nz