

Pacific Connections

Newsletter for past clients and friends

Spring 2012

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Tracey Hammett, Chief Clinical Officer



Lorraine and Bill Wood founded South Pacific Private in 1993 after their experience of treatment at "The Meadows" in Arizona, USA. Bill had been sober for many years but by the late 80's their relationship was suffering despite the many wonderful things happening in their lives. Bill had become "dry drunk" and Lorraine was depressed, neither of them was working their 12-step program, and both of them were despairing about their future together.

Such was their commitment to addressing the issues that Bill travelled to the US, on the advice of his counsellor, for a 5-week inpatient treatment program at "The Meadows" and Lorraine followed, joining him for the Family Program before returning to Australia together.

In treatment Bill experienced a "therapeutic community", just as it is these days at SPP, where he was able to focus, without distraction, for the first time ever, on himself and his life story.

His treatment program was shaped by the 'Model' (The Developmental Immaturity Model developed by Pia Mellody); a framework, or map, around which his treatment was structured, allowing him to see for the first time an holistic picture of how he had been impacted by his life experiences and influences, including his trauma history, and how he could create the change he needed to heal himself and his relationships, and to reconnect with his once great 'joy of life.'

Bill addressed his alcoholism, reconnecting with AA and working the steps, starting with a new appreciation for Step One "We admitted that we were powerless of alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable." However, it was the journey of discovery that he went on in 'getting his history straight' that made the difference, changing his understanding of himself, and which helped him leave the Meadows with his two feet set squarely on the ground, ready to step into a conscious way of living in Recovery from not only alcoholism, but also the unresolved grief (his much loved father had died when Bill was just 12 years old) and trauma, and the co-dependency which had subconsciously shaped the way he had been living, creating the "dry drunk" attitudes and behaviours.

This experience changed Lorraine and Bills' lives such that they became deeply motivated to bring this powerful therapeutic program to Australia, where this type of approach to inpatient treatment for addictions, mental illness and trauma related conditions was not yet available.

All these years later South Pacific Private continues to lead the way in treatment for addictions and mental illness in Australia by addressing the underlying core issues, trauma, and family dynamics, which are likely to have fuelled the development of the presenting problems, as a treatment priority.

At SPP we understand trauma as an emotional and/or psychological injury resulting from distressing and/or overwhelming experiences that require people to adapt by developing defence and coping mechanisms

Continued...

There are four aspects of trauma that need to be recognised when reviewing your life:

<p>Isolated traumatic events such as car accidents, or natural disasters</p>	<p>Chronic or repeated trauma where traumatic experiences such as domestic violence, or physical, sexual, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual abuse or neglect have been experienced over a period of time</p>
<p>Developmental Trauma refers to the impact of traumatic experiences such as abuse and neglect, or grief and loss issues, on the developing child and adolescent</p>	<p>Complex Trauma or PTSD refers to conditions resulting from a significant history of trauma which has given rise to a broad range of symptoms that add complexity to the treatment needs and pathways to healing, such as dissociation ('tuning out', 'losing time'), suicidal thoughts or self harming behaviours, overwhelming emotions, problematic thought processes and beliefs related to the trauma involving shame, guilt, and complicated grief issues.</p>

that lead to long-term problems, and fuelling the development of addictions, mental illness such as depression and anxiety disorders, and trauma related conditions such as PTSD.

There is a great deal of research being done in this field currently across the world and the evidence all points to the importance of addressing these trauma issues at the same time as the presenting problems, such as addictions or depression, in order to support effective and enduring recovery, and to prevent the vicious cycle of relapse that is often an indicator that there is some underlying and unaddressed trauma sabotaging your efforts to maintain sobriety or abstinence.

At South Pacific Private treatment for trauma is interwoven through all aspects of the program. From your very first assessment interview, whether by phone or face-to-face, there is an initial gentle exploration of your trauma history in the context of your life and presenting problems. Thus begins the task of reviewing your life experiences utilizing a variety of therapeutic techniques, to increase self-awareness and understanding of why you have landed in treatment at this point in your life, and what the path toward recovery requires from you, and from your treatment team.

The psychotherapeutic group therapy, the assignments or tasks such as your Timeline, Step One or Trauma Egg, the psycho-educational lectures, and specific programs such as Changes 1 & 2, and the new PTSD day/evening program are all designed to support you in exploring, identifying and addressing differing aspects of your trauma story.

Transforming trauma through treatment is a profound journey of discovery requiring the courage to slow down, turn around and face the past while staying firmly grounded in the present. Learning to seek support, self soothe, regulate emotions and celebrate resilience are life skills that help you overcome the trauma and pave the way to a life of hope, health and happiness.

After all...

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it is about learning to dance in the rain...

INSPIRATION

“Leah”

Much more than just a daughter,
A gift from up above.
Sent to me from heaven,
To stay in touch with love.

Each day you grew a little more,
There was so much to see.
Not noticing each little thing,
Was so remiss of me.
A baby, then a toddler,
A pretty lass for sure.
A beautiful young woman,
A little girl no more.

Each day I should have told you,
What I hid deep inside.
How special that I knew you were,
An endless source of pride.
So talented and gifted,
So warm and friendly too.
I like so much about you,
But I love the fact you're "you".

Dad

Written during the Family Program by Steve K and read to his daughter Leah during a very moving transition ceremony

(This poem was published in the Winter edition of Pacific Connections with the last line omitted in error. We apologise for this.)



Your Health in Early Recovery

Looking after your physical health is important for everyone, but it can be an extra challenge when you are recovering from the misuse of alcohol or other drugs. Here are some simple but effective ways to look after yourself.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

- Eating and drinking healthily
- Being physically active in your daily life
- Managing stress
- Staying in touch with others
- Stopping (or cutting down) smoking

Have regular check-ups

If you don't have a regular doctor, it is a good idea to be registered with a local GP and to have a health checks regularly.

Regular checks are important to identify early signs of any problems. Early detection of health problem means earlier treatment and a better outcome.

In a health check, the doctor may:

- Ask about your physical health history and that of your family members
- Ask about your lifestyle
- Check your blood pressure and your heart rate
- The doctor will listen to your heart beat, lungs and examine your abdomen. Some doctors may also check your mouth, ears, lymph nodes, thyroid and scan your skin for signs of cancer.
- Test your blood for fats (lipids) and sugars (glucose), and test how well your liver, kidney and thyroid are working. If you are at risk of sexually transmitted diseases, you will have blood test for sexually transmitted illnesses such as syphilis, HIV, hepatitis and a urine test for Chlamydia.
- Take an ECG measurement of your heart
- Measure your weight and height
- Ask you about contraception and any sexual difficulties, and for women changes relating to periods
- Ensure regular pap smears and breast screening for women, and prostate checks for men

See a dentist yearly and optometrist at least every two years to check the health of your teeth and eyes.

By Dr Alana Gimpel

Dr. Alana Gimpel is our ward medical doctor. Her interests are: general medicine, mental health, adolescent health, women's health, addiction medicine and preventive health. Alana is an approved provider of focussed psychological therapies.



Take a balanced and holistic approach

When it comes to the health of a recovering addict/alcoholic the approach of combining traditional and natural medicine is important.

I support my patients from several perspectives including mental, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects.

I encourage a diet with minimum sugar content. My advice is to eat frequent meals to regulate blood sugar; three moderate meals a day with two snacks in between.

Protein is important to help the body to repair tissues and a recovering alcoholic/addict needs it to restore organs affected by their substance use. Fish, egg, lean meat, nuts are healthy choices.

An intake of fats is essential for absorption of vitamins and nutrients and for cellular repair. Olive oil, flaxseed oil, coconut oil and avocado are good sources.

I ask my recovering addicts and alcoholics to substitute coffee intake with coffee substitutes. Coffee overstimulates the nervous system causing increased anxiety and insomnia.

It is advisable for people in recovery to eat avoid artificial foods in order to ease the load on the liver, which has to struggle to break down chemicals and preservatives.

Vitamins play an important role in your recovery from alcohol and drugs.

It is advisable to take a good quality of B complex supplement.

It's important to facilitate your physical recovery so that the emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of recovery have a better chance of succeeding.

The sooner a newly-sober person feels physically strong, the sooner he or she will begin to accept a life free of crippling attachments to substances – the life they are truly meant to live.

Symptoms of Withdrawal

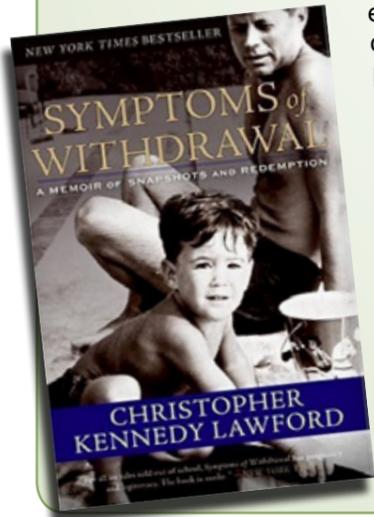
by Christopher Kennedy Lawford
416 pages, RRP \$23.95 US

Very few people are born into the privileged and glamorous world that Christopher Kennedy Lawford was. To an outsider, it may have appeared to be the most amazing start in life – movie star parent (famed Rat Pack actor Peter Lawford was his father) and presidents and senators as close relatives (John F Kennedy his uncle) offer a lifestyle that few of us could imagine.

This book certainly offers a glimpse into that world. Filled with anecdotes about Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor and summers in the Kennedy compound, it is funny and fascinating – and not just to readers who are interested in all things Kennedy.

But that is not the only reason to read this book.

In the preface CKL cites a quote from Amos Oz, “every true writer becomes a writer because



of a profound trauma experienced in youth or childhood”. It is possible that the same can be said for addicts. And this book is an honest and unflinching account of Lawford’s struggle with addiction. His frank examination of the less than nurturing experiences of his childhood are surprising and sad, and his

messy journey through addiction is recounted honestly, without an attempt to spare embarrassment (for himself or others!).

This book offers insight into how a life seemingly so perfect from the outside was a very different reality for the person experiencing it.

Happily this is also a story of hope and recovery. Chapter 31 includes a note to the reader..

“Okay. So I just want to be sure you’ve got it. In a nutshell: I was born with the American dream fulfilled. I blew it all, drowning in a sea of alcohol and drugs. My best friend and father died. I was alone and bankrupt in all categories.

For those of you who bought this book for stories about my descent into darkness, the Rat Pack, and the Kennedy’s – you can stop reading now. For the rest, I’m here to tell you that the most interesting part of my story is not what happened in the dark alley but what has happened in the sunlight room”

“Symptoms of Withdrawal” is book well written, very human and honest and often funny. It has moments of heartbreaking sadness, but ultimately is bright with hope.

About the Author

Christopher Kennedy Lawford is an actor, writer and activist in the substance abuse recovery movement who lives in Southern California and enjoys a warm and close relationship with his extended family.



SPP EVENTS

Past client special event!

We are very excited to have Christopher Kennedy Lawford make an address at our testimonial ceremony on Monday 5 November. Christopher Kennedy Lawford is a member of the famous Kennedy clan, nephew of John F Kennedy and son of actor Peter Lawford. He has been living in recovery from addictions for over 24 years. He is the CEO of the of the Global Recovery Initiative, serves as the United

Nations first Goodwill Ambassador for Drug Treatment and Care Issues and works with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

We have 5 places available for our alumni and friends – if you are interested in attending this ceremony, please email your interest to cbarber@southpacificprivate.com.au

Understanding PTSD

Recent studies have shown that three-quarters of the Australian population have experienced at least one potentially traumatic event (such as a car accident, natural disaster, exposure to crime, loss of loved one, or the violence of war) over their lifetime.

Trauma affects people in different ways and, for some, the effects are so great that they develop the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which interferes with their ability to cope in daily life.

Many people with PTSD will also suffer with associated conditions such as addictions or mental illness, which require specialist assessment and treatment planning.

Three symptoms of PTSD

1. Re-living the traumatic experience

Disturbing nightmares, recurring “flashbacks” of distressing memories, and intense emotional and physical reactions to reminders of the event.

2. Hyper-arousal

Being overly alert, having sleep difficulties and being unable to relax, often feeling “wound up”, irritable, having poor concentration, feeling “on the look-out” for signs of danger (hyper-vigilance) and being easily startled.

3. Avoidance behaviours

Avoiding people, places, activities, thoughts and feelings associated with the traumatic event, which trigger distressing reminders. This can result in feeling detached or withdrawing from friends and family, losing interest in daily activities, or feeling numb and/or flat or “down”.

The SPP PTSD Program offers holistic and integrated assessment and treatment planning, psychiatric review, psychological assessments across the duration of treatment, and a psychotherapeutic program that has been designed utilising evidence-based clinical practice and internationally recognised treatments that work.

A multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, psychologists, general practitioners, registered nurses, psychotherapists and allied health professionals supervise all SPP programs.

The SPP PTSD Program

The SPP PTSD Program provides:

- Comprehensive clinical assessment
- Individualised treatment planning
- Phased PTSD treatment and follow up over 6 months
- Integrated treatment for co-existing issues

PTSD Self-Assessment

If you have experienced a traumatic event, consider the questions below and tick those that apply to you.

Questions	Tick
1 Do you avoid being reminded of the experience by staying away from certain places, people or activities?	
2 Have you lost interest in activities that were once important or enjoyable?	
3 Have you begun to feel more distant or isolated from other people?	
4 Do you find it hard to feel love or affection for other people?	
5 Have you begun to feel that there is no point in planning for the future?	
6 Have you had more trouble than usual falling or staying asleep?	
7 Do you become jumpy or easily startled by ordinary noise or movements?	

If you ticked four or more of the above symptoms, it is possible that you could be suffering from PTSD. We recommend that you contact us for a free confidential assessment.

SPP Programs

SPP offers a range of programs for your continuing care.

You may like to consider the following programs as a part of your ongoing Recovery.

Changes 2

Reinforcing your road to recovery

"Changes 2" follows on from "Changes 1". The road to recovery is reinforced by increasing self awareness by exploring the underlying causes and healing pathways for current problems you are experiencing in your life.

Create positive change through self-awareness, education, emotional work and relationship skill development.

When: Monday, 8 October - Friday, 12 October
Monday, 10 December - Friday, 14 December

**Limited places available. Call now to book these dates.*

Family Education & Support Group

At SPP we believe that the more informed you are, the easier it is to make decisions that will be of practical support to your friend, family member, or even yourself, in dealing with the issues associated with addiction, depression and anxiety.

Our Family Education & Support Group runs for 2 hours every Wednesday evening. Over the course of 4 weeks you will have the opportunity to:

- Learn to effectively support someone struggling with addictions or mood disorders.
- Find support and discussion with other people struggling with the same problems.
- Learn more about addictions and mood disorders, and the underlying issues.

When: Wednesdays evenings, 5.00pm - 7.00pm

Lifeskills Program

Learn the skills of mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness to help manage issues associated with emotional stability, interpersonal chaos, self disorganisation, impulsive behaviours or cognitive difficulties.

When: Thursdays, 9.00am - 3.00pm
13 September - 1 November (8 sessions)
15 November - 3 January (8 sessions)

Mastering Moods Day Program

Developed by psychiatrists, clinical psychologist and experienced therapists, this program will help you to understand and accept the nature of depression, anxiety and other mood disorders, while giving you practical skills and strategies to be used in your everyday life.

When: Wednesdays, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Transitions

This program supports you to continue learning skills and attitudes, while beginning the process of creating sustainable positive changes in your life.

During your stay at SPP, you will have started a journey - developing a new understanding of your life and your issues, your defense and coping mechanisms, and what it means to live life in recovery.

When: Tuesdays, 6.00pm - 9.30pm

Relapse Prevention

This program, consisting of 10 sessions, aims to instill a developmental understanding of recovery in which increased health benefits and flexibility is achieved. The relative success of each individual who moves through this is contingent on how well they can utilise a range of recovery tools that are personally developed to bring support during times of distress, relapse urges and daily living.

When: Wednesdays, 6.00pm - 9.30pm

Taking the SPP Model into the Real World

Healing from the impact of addictions, depression and anxiety, and all the issues that bring people to the doors of SPP takes time, commitment, resilience, and as much support as you can muster! It is vital that when the going gets tough in early Recovery that you take advantage of as many resources and supports as you can to help you stay on track, always remembering: **Recovery is a journey not a destination.**

Early Recovery can be a very challenging as you learn to manage family, social and work environments with a new set of life skills which may still be a bit shaky!

This workshop will review what you have learnt during treatment at SPP, and explore how you can apply the principles of the program to your current life challenges. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions in this interactive experiential workshop, led by Steve with his usual humorous approach to dealing with the realities of life in Recovery!

Steve Stokes is leading this workshop designed to support you in keeping on track on this amazing journey of healing you first stepped foot on at SPP.

- Revisit the SPP Model
- Explore the pillars of the program
- Explore your current Recovery issues
- Take SPP concepts out into the real world

In this 4 hour workshop Steve will take you on a guided tour of exploring the essential principles in depth, helping you to gain clarity and a deeper understanding of how to best support yourself on the road to Recovery.

The workshop will cover:

- Recovery principles
- Review of primary and secondary symptoms

When: Saturday, 1 December. 9am-1pm at South Pacific Private.

Cost \$50 per person and includes morning tea

For more information, or to register email registrations@southpacificprivate.com.au



New Volunteer Program to Launch

South Pacific Private has been reviewing and revamping our Volunteer Program over the last few months. Tracey Hammett (Program Director) and Irene Daniels (Executive Assistant) have taken on the role of coordinating and managing the new volunteer program, and are full of enthusiasm and good ideas.

It is our goal to have between 20 and 30 current volunteers by the end of the year, using a roster and an email communication network to run a flexible program that will allow people to help out at SPP in a way that is safe, significant, fulfilling and appreciated.

Volunteers are all the people who help out at SPP without expectation of financial payment, and who choose to donate their time and efforts for many and varied reasons which provide benefits for themselves, for South Pacific Private and for all the individuals and families that we seek to support through our expertise in treating addictions and mental illness.

There are many roles and ways that people can support SPP and the work that we do here in a volunteer capacity – from driving the bus to 12 step meetings to helping out at events, organizing alumni social events or assisting the administration team with projects.

One of the main roles we would like to recruit for is a Senior Volunteer who will assist Irene in managing the rosters and checking in with the team.

Please contact Irene directly to find out more about the program

Irene Daniels: idaniels@southpacificprivate.com.au

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facebook

Like us on Facebook and keep up to date with SPP news, updates and information on upcoming programs.



Find us at:
[www.facebook.com/
SouthPacificPrivate](http://www.facebook.com/SouthPacificPrivate)

Program Enquiries

With all of these programs, it will be necessary for our Assessment Team to determine whether they are appropriate for you.

To enquire please call
1 800 063 332.

Some of these programs may be covered by your private health insurance.



SOUTH PACIFIC PRIVATE EDITORIAL

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