

Professional background

Lisa began her psychology career whilst studying at university and working in the hospitality field. In order to gain experience she worked unpaid as a recreation officer with physically and intellectually disabled people, as a teacher's aide at the NSW Institute for Deaf and Blind, and at The Ted Noffs Foundation where she gained a paid role as Residential Support Worker in The Program for Adolescent Life Management (PALM), a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation program.

Whilst completing a Masters degree in Child and Adolescent Developmental Psychopathology in 1995, Lisa worked in Health Education for South Western Sydney area Health Service's drug and alcohol unit. Committed to developing her skills in adolescent health, she continued working at PALM and as a youth worker for NUA for homeless youth in the Kings Cross Area.

Following her university training, Lisa worked as an Adolescent Alcohol and other Drugs Counsellor in the Western Area Adolescent Team (WAAT), until the end of 1998. During this time she completed her Psychologist Internship, and sought additional training in a range of modalities. In particular she sought training in clinical skills in art therapy through Sydney University to develop a long term interest in working with adolescents through creative alternatives. Art therapy provides non verbal opportunities, particularly for children and adolescents to explore their thoughts and emotions.

Working in a multidisciplinary team in a diverse range of roles including clinical work, provided a unique opportunity to develop a broad skill base specifically in family therapy with complex problems, with clients often experiencing family breakdown, family drug and alcohol problems, and minimal support.

Lisa later worked as a Drug & Alcohol Counsellor and Psychologist for a Juvenile remand and detention centre. She believes that the challenges of this work enhance an ability and desire to work with multilayered problems and to think outside the square when working with clients.

During this period Lisa became interested in developing her clinical skills in couple therapy and began sessional work as a Couples Therapist for Unifam Counselling and Mediation Service. In 1999 Lisa moved to Unifam's Campbelltown office to work in the new Men and Family Relationships program a new initiative in offering clinical services to men and their families. In this position she worked as child and family therapist and as consultant to other services around men and family relationship issues. As a new role, there was scope for creativity in clinical service delivery, program development and training, providing her with valuable experience.

Lisa currently works in private practice as a psychologist and therapist. Since leaving Unifam to start a family in late 2002, Lisa has committed herself to her private practice work. Lisa now has two young children and believes it is important to find a balance between her work and family commitments. As a result, she has established a busy practice that is able to offer flexible hours to clients, including evenings and Saturday appointments.

Lisa's therapeutic approach

Due to the diversity of clients she has worked with her practice remains **client focussed** in that Lisa is able to employ a range of therapeutic strategies and skills to match the presenting concerns of her clients. She values the role and influence of family in our lives and having academic training in developmental psychopathology as well as having always worked with families, children and adolescents, she has been able to experience the usefulness of family **systems theory** in therapy and counselling with individuals, couple and families.

Systemic family therapies such as Milan Systemic Therapy, strategic and structural therapy, and Bowen family systems therapy all influence her work in their applicability to offering effective interventions to families with a range of problems.

Lisa is currently completing a Masters Degree in **Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy**, and has a particular interest in healthy attachment in early care giving relationships. Her early training in working with troubled adolescents planted a seed of commitment to wanting to discover effective ways of helping

families with children and adolescents to develop healthy relationships. As result she is interested in models such as Object Relations theory, particularly in its application to working with children and its relation to **attachment theory**.

Lisa's interest in psychoanalytic psychotherapies have stemmed from a desire to offer evidence based longer term treatment to those with more complex problems not amenable to briefer therapies. She is particularly interested in the **Conversational Model**, developed by Russell Meares, due to its consideration of early care giving relationships and its

transparency as a treatment method. As an extension from this Lisa is interested in the clinical applicability of analytic theory and practice to therapy today, and its viability as evidence based treatment option.

As a psychologist Lisa is also trained and experienced in the use of **cognitive behaviour therapy** which is particularly effective in providing new positive alternatives for thinking about problems. It is effective in helping clients to help tackle maladaptive negative thought patterns.

Ones skills and practice evolve and grow over time. What has remained fundamental to Lisa's approach is a desire to help others in a creative, client focussed and professional manner, working with the client to develop new ideas and approaches to problem solving. She believes the importance of what Kottler (1993) reminds therapists to assume "that every client deserves to be treated as a unique individual challenge that deserves a creative solution." He also says that an that an environment that is promoting of such things as permissiveness, absence of external criticism, and openness to new experience is one that is encouraging of creativeness and commitment therefore to striving for originality in ones work with each new client.

Kottler, J. A . (1993) On Being a Therapist. Revised Edition. Josey – Bass Publications. San Francisco.

