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When an appropriate theme for this issue was first discussed, it was decided that we should have an issue which looked specifically at families undergoing crises. As discussion developed, it became clear that those working in a professional capacity with families viewed crises in families from many different perspectives.

We often tend to use the word "crises" to apply to only negative situations, and it is important to remember that crises can arise from a happy event. The crisis is the turning point, from whence a family or individual can grow stronger or weaker. There are many events in a family's life cycle which are potential crises. The birth of a first child, the commencement of schooling, adolescence, children leaving their parents' home, marriage, work, unemployment, retirement, death of person significant to the family, the development of continuing relationships, the breakdown of relationships.

Anyone working with families (or indeed living in a family!) is well aware of these and other crisis situations. The pressure of events in the community outside the family are also seen to have an effect on the family and themselves create crises within the family. The changes in, for example, technology, communications, economic structures, affect families just as families' life styles impinge on development of society.

It is also apparent that if families are economically well situated they have more supports to call upon to help to cope with a natural life crisis event than do those who are in a poor economic situation.

Family in crisis, then, is not only about changing family life styles, changing attitudes to education, relationships, work, leisure, but must include recognition of the effect the current economic situation is having on a large number of families in Australia.

It is perhaps no longer a surprise to us that 1.7 million "income units" are living on less than \$100 per week. It is no longer a surprise that the unemployment entitlement for some groups of people is below the poverty line. For example, the entitlement for a family of four is \$24.60 below the poverty line.

Yet outside those who are directly experiencing living below the poverty line, and those working in a professional capacity for family welfare, there appears to be little appreciation in the community of the effect of the current economic situation in Australia on family life. Anyone who wants to see a more equitable economic policy and programs recognises that it is a very complex task to devise such a policy. Yet there appears to be general apathy in the community towards families who are suffering economic hardships.

David Scott, in his article in this issue, provides valuable information with respect to the sufferings of economically poor families. Peter Boss in his article suggests ways of influencing public policy.

Taking a different perspective, the remaining three articles in this issue describe programs which are actively helping people in crises. The first two articles describe programs which provide support for families at an early stage of the family life cycle.

The program described by Rae Lindsay provides assistance at varying stages of the life cycle. It is interesting that this Family Service Centre, like most general agencies, finds its financial counselling service in particular demand.

This issue provides us with information of families in the current economic situation, a framework for influencing public policy and descriptions of structures designed to meet special needs of families in crises.

Book Review Editor

I would like to introduce our new Book Review Editor, Ruth Stewart. Ruth holds a B.A., Dip.Soc.Stud. from Melbourne University, and is currently studying for her Masters Degree in Social Work at La Trobe University, specialising in the area of Child Welfare.

I would also like to thank Marie Campbell, who is retiring as Book Review Editor. Marie, who is Lecturer in Social Work at Monash University, has been Book Review Editor for the journal for 3 years. I am well aware of the extra demands this has placed on her, and on behalf of the editorial committee would like to thank her for her work.

Margarita Frederico