Acknowledgements

What follows reflects the concerns and efforts of many, not just one person. I wish to record and acknowledge the contribution to this work of those who have suffered loss, injury and trauma over the course of nearly thirty years and whom I have met along the way. On nearly every page, a child, a parent, an adult or a family came to mind as I wrote. Their loss, suffering, realities, insights and hopes, their sometimes arresting view of things, pervade the thoughts and purposes behind this book. Likewise, I wish to record and acknowledge the contributions of the hundreds of individuals whose lives touched mine and whose efforts brought consolation, support and healing to those who have suffered – from the passing act of neighbourly kindness that made all the difference, to the life given over to this work. I remember especially the humanitarian efforts of manager, practitioner and administrator colleagues whose compassion, skill and professionalism I was privileged to witness at first hand on many occasions. Similarly, across Northern Ireland, throughout the Troubles, many individuals, services and communities provided what support they could – often in the most difficult of circumstances. My experience has been that in the deepest adversity the best of humanity can be found. The collective generosity of those who suffered and the efforts of those who sought to help them stand over and against the worst that we can do to each other. Beauty, instead of ashes.

Services such as those developed in Omagh following the bombing and later in the work of the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT) could not have been established or sustained without the support of funders. Many funders and donors – public, charitable, private and personal – have contributed to the body of work described in the following pages. I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of: the Sperrin Lakeland Trust; the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), the Omagh Fund, the European Union's PEACE II and Interreg funds and Cooperating and Working Together (CAWT), the UK's Big Lottery Fund, Northern Ireland's Executive Office (formerly the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister), the Lupina Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Northern Ireland's Department of Health (formerly the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety), the Community

Relations Council and other funders. Appreciation also to the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB), which managed the European Union's Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, for its interest in the research and work of the NICTT. The support interest and encouragement of those individuals in funding bodies, who were motivated by their concern for those in need and their desire to see good things happen, is not forgotten.

When so many have played a part, thanking and acknowledging are fraught with the problem of adequately reflecting whose contribution should be acknowledged. So, mindful of the support and friendship of many, there are some I would like to thank in particular for their companionship and collegiality along the way. First, from the earlier days, I think of my boss at the time, Freda Carson, who along with two local teachers Kate Doherty and Toni Johnston with courage, concern, intuitive caring and commitment, did so much to bring support to children, adults and families affected by the Enniskillen bombing (Doherty, 1991). In 1989, following the Kegworth air crash, Marion Gibson and I worked together representing Northern Ireland's Health and Social Services in the East Midlands, England. Marion has contributed much to the development of practice in the wake of disasters, in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. Then, from our work in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing, I remember in particular, Hugh Mills, chief executive, and Richard Scott, chairman, of the local public health and social care services agency, the Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust, whose intuitive and enabling leadership at a time of great crisis for our organisation, made good things happen – including the establishment of the Omagh Community Trauma and Recovery Team. I recall the tireless work of fellow directors, senior managers, practitioners and administration colleagues as we sought to bring order out of the chaos of the immediate aftermath and in the long term ensure services were available to the community. I remember vividly those I worked alongside in the hours and days following the bombing, colleagues from my own organisation – the Sperrin Lakeland Trust – and those from other organisations and places who volunteered to work alongside us. I recall too the wider community of those who worked to bring help and support, including members of the public, neighbours and friends, colleagues from local not-for-profit agencies, the clergy and leaders from local churches and faith communities, the family liaison officers from the local police service, and the staff at Omagh Leisure Centre, who made a significant contribution to the practical care of those who needed it. And there was the important work of colleagues who kept services going for those who had not been affected by the bombing, yet still required medical, nursing, social care and other services.

From the early days of our work in Omagh following the bombing in 1998, Kate Gillespie, consultant psychiatrist and accomplished cognitive therapist, contributed greatly to the development of the trauma therapy service, and through her skill and commitment helped so many along the way. Michael

Duffy, experienced social worker and skilled cognitive therapist who, with a detailed knowledge of Omagh and the wider community, energetically coordinated the work of the Omagh Team for over three years and who likewise did much to help people through his therapeutic work. Kate and Michael later contributed centrally to the development of the NICTT and in particular the provision of its therapy, research and education services. Key to progress was the commitment of many practitioners, including Sean Collins and colleagues from various disciplines who, following the bombing in 1998, formed the early team and in some cases contributed over many years, including with the NICTT. James Baxter and Michael Skuce, Omagh's senior police officers, Eddie Morton, Eddie Giboney and their colleagues worked closely with us to coordinate the support for individuals and families affected directly by the bombing. Maura McDermott, child and adolescent consultant psychiatrist, led the development of services for children and young people caught up in the explosion and was central to the study which assessed their needs in the aftermath. Clive Burges, occupational health consultant, played a key role in the development of services to support the staff of the local hospitals and community services who had responded to the bombing and was instrumental in the important study of staff needs in the years following the bombing. I remember too administration colleagues, especially the late James Johnston, Daphne Armstrong, Anne Donaghy and Esther Stewart and their colleagues, without whom we would have been lost and who brought much to the services of which they were an essential part. Colleagues in the local mental health services played a key role in supporting the local community and in volunteering for the trauma Team over the course of its lifetime. I recall the tireless contributions of the Reverend Robert Herron and Father Kevin Mullan who with other faith leaders contributed so much to the stability of the Omagh community, and whose liturgical and pastoral responses, along with their insights and support, helped us in the development of services. Joe Martin, chief executive of the local education authority, Jack Walls who was assigned to liaise between the schools and the Team, their colleagues, and local school principals and teachers, were key to establishing a relationship between the pivotal work of schools in support of children and the work of the Omagh Community Trauma and Recovery Team. The officers and politicians at Omagh District Council contributed much to the response and recovery of the local community, and I recall in particular the leadership of John McKinney, chief executive, the staff at the Leisure Centre under the leadership of Phillip Faithful, and the creative and enabling contribution of Frank Sweeney. The editors and staff of the two local newspapers, the *Tyrone Constitution* and the *Ulster Herald*, played such an important role in telling the wider world about the impact of the bombing and provided valuable information and support for local people.

Several academics contributed to the development of the strategic direction

of services and to the understanding of the impact of the bombing on the community. David Clark, professor of psychiatry, Ann Hackmann, Freda McManus, Anke Ehlers and their colleagues at Oxford University were instrumental in the therapeutic approach at the heart of the therapy programme. With local services, they undertook the needs-assessment of adults within a year of the bombing, upon which later developments were founded. Similarly, Jenny Firth-Cozens of the University of Northumbria, and her colleagues Anna Luce and Simon Midgley helped us understand the impact of the bombing on health and social care staff and thereafter greatly influenced the development of staff care services. Andy Percy and the late Patrick McCrystal from Queens University Belfast, along with Michael Fitzgerald from Trinity College Dublin, collaborated with local practitioners to undertake the important needs-assessments of children and adolescents, which again influenced the development of services.

When the decision was taken some years after the Omagh bombing to establish the NICTT, it required the formation of a governing trust. The steadfast contribution of the trustees was central to the work of the Centre. I am profoundly grateful to the tireless leadership, wisdom and support of the chairman, Fabian Monds, who was originally from Omagh, with a background as an entrepreneur and leading academic. I also pay tribute to the other trustees, Brian Patterson (business leader), David McKittrick (journalist and writer, and co-author of an iconic chronicle of the deaths in the Troubles, *Lost Lives*), Paul Seawright (professor of photography and esteemed photographer of the Troubles), Roy McClelland (professor of mental health and co-chair and author of a major review of mental health needs and services in Northern Ireland – the Bamford Report – DHSSPS, 2007), Sacha, Duchess of Abercorn (from the Omagh area, practitioner in transformation and founder of The Pushkin Trust focusing on the developmental and educational potential of children), and Sinead McLaughlin (a primary school principal from Buncrana, Co. Donegal). They brought presence, along with highly relevant skills and experiences to their task. Together they have made a remarkable contribution of public service in the interests of those who have been adversely affected by the Troubles. They have provided the platform upon which services could be developed, in which pivotal research was undertaken, training developed and from which other communities in far away places that were affected by conflict, could be helped.

Others played pivotal roles in the development and work of the Centre. I recall the passionate concern of Sean O'Dwyer, chairman of the the Omagh Fund, whose encouragement, along with the support of the Fund's trustees and officer, Brian Oliphant, enabled the Centre to take hold in the imagination of those who sought to support adults, children and families affected by the bombing. The Fund's long view of and concern for the needs of those affected psychologically by the bombing was highly influential in shaping the work undertaken in response to the bombing, and later by the NICTT. My thanks to Hugh Mills,

chief executive of the Sperrin Lakeland Trust, John McKinney, chief executive of Omagh District Council, Tom Frawley, chief executive of the Western Health and Social Services Board (the Sperrin Lakeland Trust's service commissioner) and John O'Neill and colleagues at Venture International, who were instrumental in early progress on the development of the Centre. And thanks also for the considerable support in the early days following the bombing in Omagh and in the years that followed, of John McFaul and Des Browne, Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State (both of whom were subsequently appointed life peers in the UK House of Lords) and their colleagues at the NIO, with William Stevenson and Mary Lemon, civil servants at the NIO's Victims Liaison Unit in Belfast, for their interest, advice and support and for making funding available at a critical time. My thanks also to John Clarke at the Victims Unit (OFMDFM) for his interest and support especially in relation to the training and education work of NICTT.

My thanks to all our other colleagues at the NICTT, including Eileen MacMackin, Ruth Liggett, Tracey McCrossan, Gemma Rankin and other administration colleagues, whose contribution was at the heart of its work. Besides those already mentioned, the Centre's therapy team included Geraldine Kerr, who was the first point of contact for many who sought our help, and therapists Susan McGandy, John McLaren and Paul Quinn. In the later years, Brendan Armstrong, cognitive therapist and clinical director at the Centre brought much to the further development of its therapy and education services. Maria Kee, psychiatrist and cognitive therapist, brought innovative approaches to the delivery of training thereby helping many in non-clinical settings, and individuals and families affected by traumatic experiences. Our partnership with Brendan Bunting, principal investigator and professor of research psychology at the Ulster University, with Finola Ferry the lead researcher, Siobhan O'Neill and Sam Murphy, led to an extensive body of research over ten years, which examined the population impact of the Troubles and which came to form the definitive epidemiological assessment of the impact of the Troubles. The partnership was enabled by the Research and Development Division of Northern Ireland's Public Health Agency, with the interest and support of its former Director, Bernie Hannigan. Key research was funded by Peter Warrian and Margret Hovenec's Lupina Foundation which established an early interest in the work of the Centre and who, through a sustained relationship of interest and financial support, were also able to contribute to the Centre's work in support of other conflict-affected communities. Barney Devine who, as business manager of the Centre, not only believed passionately in the mission of the Centre but from his years in education, and in peace and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, saw how addressing the mental health impact of the Troubles was a critical concern for peace-makers. For his enduring support and friendship, I am most grateful.

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Finally, my wife Helen, our daughters – and in adulthood their growing families – have been an enduring source of strength, support and encouragement over the years. They have shared closely in some of the events described herein. This book is in many ways an account of their journey also. To Helen, Julie, Leah and Alison – my utmost respect and deepest appreciation.

Through this book I hope that something of the efforts of this *cast of many* will reach people we will never meet and places we will never visit, but with whom we share and express our concern, support and hope.

David Bolton, Enniskillen
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