

Otago Mental Health Support Trust



Bipolar Network & Signpost

NEWSLETTER

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February/March 2006

Newsletter Date:
1 February 2006

LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE

SKILLS BANK

The Ministry of Health has ceased to fund District Advisory Groups (DAGs) in Southland, Otago, South Canterbury, Canterbury and the West Coast. The Mental Health Foundation Southern Region will be establishing a Skills Bank where people can register their skills and experience in planning, delivering, evaluating or supporting workshops that reduce stigma and discrimination towards people with experience of mental illness.

It is hoped there will be 1 to 5 paid presentations per year for each person in the Skills Bank.

Queries ph Grant Cooper or Steve Carter
toll free on 0800 *Like Minds*. (0800 545 364)

Inside this issue:

Report from the office	2
Signpost	3
Kym Harvey's Exhibition	4
North & South community mental health teams move to Wakari?	5
Bipolar disorder parents have more creative children	6

Social recreation group outings	7
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Social Diary	8
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Office Hours: Monday to Friday 10 am – 2pm.

Don: Monday - Friday
Mike: Tuesday - Friday
Denise: Monday - Thursday
Hazel : Tuesday
Greg : Tues/Thurs
Kate : Tues/Wed
Jan: Tuesday & Friday
Helen : Monday– Friday

OFFICE CLOSED

STAFF PLANNING DAY

TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2006

Telephone calls will still be answered from 10am - 2pm

SOCIAL RECREATION GROUP
CHANGE OF DAY AND TIME
THURSDAY 2PM—5PM

REPORT FROM THE OFFICE

KIA ORA, HELLO FROM DENISE.

2006 has begun with the January programme of outings being well attended. We have visited Karitane, Ross Creek, Mt. Cargill, Speights Brewery, Otakau Marae and Pilot's Beach. There was a lot of interest in the visit to the Butterfly Haven in Palmerston. We even had a waiting list but it didn't take much persuading to get Don to come along with us so we didn't turn as many away as before. Thanks also to Murray Lindsay for opening up the museum at the Otakou Marae and showing us around. The weather was also kind to us. The sun shone everyday not like last year when it rained for most of January.

W.R.A.P.

The Trust has copies of Mary Ellen Copeland's WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN (W.R.A.P.) booklet for sale. \$10 to members and \$25 to organizations. HELEN.

FUNDERS.

The Trust would like to acknowledge and thank the following funders that help make our work possible: ODHB, Bendigo Valley, D.C.C. community grants and Community Trust Otago. HELEN.

ANGLICAN FAMILY CARE.

Thank you to the team in Bath Street who have often assisted with some amazing food parcels at times when they have been needed most. This has been especially true since the Xmas period and in the first 2 weeks of January. Thanks also to THE SALVATION ARMY and PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT food banks. Much appreciated! HELEN.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FROM HAZEL.

I am back after my annual break, now working on Tuesdays only. The Trust has really been humming in my absence with lots of new clients and enquiries. I encourage everyone to have a look on Pg.5 about the possible relocation of services and give us your feedback.

EDUCATION EVENINGS.

We are planning 2 sessions both in April 2006 however the dates are not confirmed yet as key people will be unavailable until then.

One night will deal only with psychiatric and general medications.

The second night will deal with recreational drugs and the long term effects for people with a psychiatric diagnosis

If you are interested in either of these please phone the office. DON.

NEW FACES.

It's nice to see a number of new visitors and enquiries coming into the Bipolar Rooms for the first time. This includes people with Bipolar, occupational therapy students, social workers from Wakari and referrals from Work and Income (WINZ). HELEN.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions and research articles expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust or anyone associated with the organization.



FINDING SOMEWHERE TO LIVE

People often come to Signpost for assistance finding somewhere to live. We feel it is important to treat each person as an individual with unique accommodation needs. Our objective is to ensure that people are aware of all the housing options available to them. Our experience is that people do not recover well when living somewhere they do not want to be, among people they do not like.

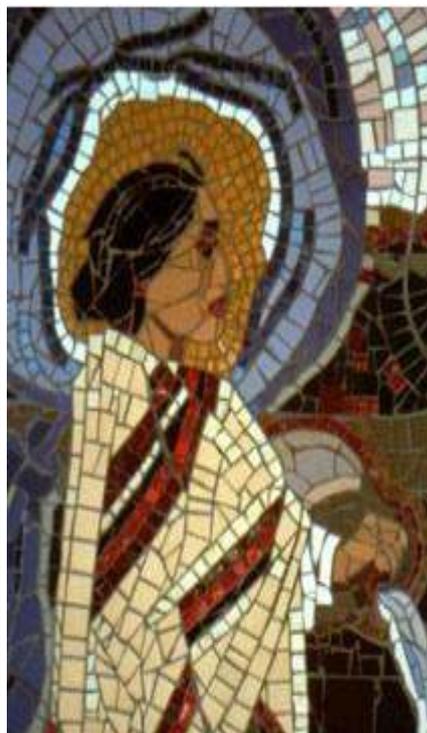
For those people looking for a flat or room a new pamphlet is available from Signpost. It lists the names and phone numbers of the landlords and agencies that people have found most useful over the last few years.

GETTING SOME EXERCISE

Much has been written about the benefits of physical exercise on people's mental health. In Dunedin we have a huge range of options for simple, free exercise close to the city. During January one of our outings was a stroll around the Ross Creek reservoir and this was a good reminder of the many tracks which exist in this tranquil area so close to town. At the DCC office (where we go to pay our parking tickets!) you can pick up a free map of all these tracks called *Strolls Near Streams*.

If you like to absorb a bit of history as you walk you may like to borrow one of our books on "Intriguing Dunedin Street Walks". We have four booklets of this series by Paul Hayward. All of them contain fascinating stories of Dunedin's history which are arranged in walks of 1 to 2 hours around our streets. "A juicy bite of Roslyn and Kaikorai", "Fires and floods, Bishops and buildings", "Underground Dunedin", "Just a wee slice of Caversham" are some of the intriguing titles.

Mike McAlevey



COMMUNITY

Community is like a large mosaic. Each piece seems so insignificant on its own. One piece is bright red, another cold blue or dull green, warm purple, sharp yellow or shining gold. Some look precious, others ordinary. As individual pieces we can do little with them except compare them and judge their beauty and value. When, however, all these are brought together in one big mosaic, who would ever question the importance of any one of them? If one of them, even the least spectacular one, is missing, the picture is incomplete.

Together in one mosaic, each piece is indispensable and makes a unique contribution. That's community.

(Adapted from an article written by Henri Nouwen and found by Graham Johnstone)

ART EXHIBITION

KYM HARVEY

Pastels \$40–\$50

*Bipolar/Signpost rooms
115 Lower Stuart St
Dunedin
10am–2pm*

REUSING WATER BOTTLES - IS A NO NO?

Many are unaware of poisoning caused by re-using plastic bottles. Some of you may be in the habit of using and re-using your disposable mineral water bottles (eg. Evian, Aqua, Vita etc.) keeping them in your car or at work. Not a good idea. In a nutshell, the plastic (called polyethylene terephthalate or PET) used in these bottles contains a potentially carcinogenic element (something called diethylhydroxylamine or DEHA). The bottles are safe for one-time use only; if you must keep them longer, it should be for no more than a few days, a week max, and keep them away from heat as well. Repeated washing and rinsing can cause the plastic to break down and the carcinogens (cancer-causing chemical agents) can leach into the water that YOU are drinking. Better to invest in water bottles that are really meant for multiple uses. This is not something we should be scrimping on. Those of you with family - do please advise them, especially children.

Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Brisbane)

N.B Please take what you want from this article and form your own opinion.

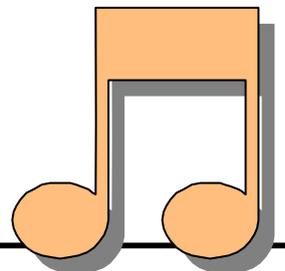
WANT TO BE A PERFORMER!!!

Female Vocalist Singer seeks other Vocalists to form a singing group for Performance and also Musicians who have a Computerised Studio System to create a Music Recording CD.

If you are confident in performing and have the ambition to succeed in singing and music to perform live in clubs and cafes then don't hesitate to leave your name and phone number with the staff at the Bipolar Network.

Ph: 477-2598

Velly



Should the North and South Community Mental Health Teams move up to Wakari?

We want to collect your views. Please ph. us with your opinion. If we get a large response we may call a meeting to share these.

This was one of the recommendations of the review of Otago mental health services which concerns many people. In December the Trust Board wrote to the Otago District Health board expressing their misgivings about such a move. It was felt that people would then have much more difficulty accessing their doctors or PDN's. Carol Gray (ODHB Mental Health Integration Manager) wrote back to assure us that any re-location "...will not disadvantage the users of the mental health services". She said that the "...essence of community teams is to take the service they offer out into the consumers locality" and that principle would not change if the community mental health teams moved to Wakari.

It may be that in the future people might not need to visit the Wakari site to see their doctor or nurse. There are some further recommendations of the review which would change the way you might get clinical support. One is for NGO's like PACT or Corstorphine Baptist Trust to employ more clinical staff, allowing them to continue to care for people who might otherwise have to go to hospital. Another suggestion is for the Community Mental Health teams to hold clinics in primary care settings. In other words you would see your psychiatrist or PDN at your GP's office.

There do not seem to be any final decisions yet on any of these changes. What is sure is that EPS will remain at the main hospital site rather than move to Wakari, and that ward 1A will get a major overhaul. Let us know what you think about the changes. They have been a long time coming.

MY NEW WORKOUT ROUTINE

The doctor told me "Physical exercise is good for you." I know that I should do it, but my body is out of shape, so I have worked out this easy daily program I can do right at work:

MONDAY

Beat around the bush.
Jump to conclusions.
Climb the walls.
Wade through paper.

TUESDAY

Drag my heels.
Push my luck.
Make mountains out of mole hills.
Hit the nail on the head.

WEDNESDAY

Bend over backwards.
Jump on the band wagon.
Balance the books.
Run around in circles.

THURSDAY

Toot my own horn.
Climb the ladder of success.
Pull out all the stops.
Add fuel to the fire.

FRIDAY

Open a can of worms.
Put my foot in my mouth.
Start the ball rolling.
Go over the edge.

SATURDAY

Pick up the pieces and get out of town.

Whew!

What a workout!

You are invited to use my programme without charge!

RESEARCH NEWS FROM THE WEB.....

Children of bipolar parents score higher on creativity test

Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine have shown for the first time that a sample of children who either have or are at high risk for bipolar disorder score higher on a creativity index than healthy children. The small study, published in the November issue of the Journal of Psychiatric Research, compared creativity test scores of children of healthy parents with the scores of children of bipolar parents. Children with the bipolar parents - even those who were not bipolar themselves - scored higher than the healthy children.

Terence Ketter, MD, a study co-author, said he became interested in the link between mental illness and creativity after noticing that patients who came through the bipolar clinic, despite having problems, were extraordinarily bright, motivated people who "tended to lead interesting lives." In 2002 he published a study that showed healthy artists were more similar in personality to individuals with bipolar disorder.

Some researchers believe that bipolar disorder or mania, a defining symptom of the disease, causes creative activity. Ketter said he believes that bipolar patients' creativity stems from their mobilizing energy that results from negative emotion to initiate some sort of solution to their problems.

"In this case, discontent is the mother of invention," he said.

During the study, the researchers looked at creative characteristics in 40 bipolar patients and 40 offspring, comparing them with 18 healthy adults and 18 healthy offspring. The children in the study ranged in age from 10 to 18.

Half of the children of bipolar patients also had bipolar disorder; the other half had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD, which appears to be an early sign of bipolar disorder in offspring of parents with the condition. The majority of participants with bipolar or ADHD were on medication.

The researchers included children with

ADHD so they could study creativity before the onset of full bipolar disorder. "We wanted to see whether having a manic episode is necessary for this sort of creativity," said Chang. Study participants were given psychiatric evaluations and then completed the Barron-Welsh Art Scale, or BWAS, a test that seeks to provide an objective measure of creativity. The scoring is based on "like" and "dislike" responses to figures of varying complexity and symmetry; past studies suggest that creative people tend to dislike the simple and symmetric symbols. The researchers found that the bipolar parents had 120 percent higher BWAS "dislike" scores than the healthy parents. The children with bipolar and the children with ADHD had, respectively, 107 and 91 percent higher BWAS dislike scores than the healthy children.

"The results of this study support an association between bipolar disease and creativity and contribute to a better understanding of possible mechanisms of transmission of creativity in families with genetic susceptibility for bipolar disease," the researchers wrote in their paper.

The researchers had hypothesized that the scores of children with ADHD would differ significantly from the scores of bipolar children so they were surprised when the scores did not. Chang said this indicates that mania is not what is fuelling the creativity. "The kids with ADHD who hadn't been manic yet still had very high levels of creativity," he said.

BWAS dislike scores tend to decrease with age even in healthy individuals, so more research is needed, Ketter said. Further studies are also needed to assess the role of genetic and environmental factors in creativity and bipolar, he added. The team plans to next examine whether the degree of creativity in parents correlates with the degree of creativity in their children.

This study was funded by the Heinz C. Prechter Fund for Manic Depression, a NAR-SAD Young Investigators Award, a Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation Fellowship and the National Institutes of Health. NB: This is a condensed version of this article, edited for this newsletter. There are some interesting points left out, to view the whole article visit www.medicalnewstoday.com/printerfriendlynews.php?newsid=33379 or visit or call us and we can give you the article.

SOCIAL RECREATION GROUP CALENDAR

With Greg McLeod

FEBRUARY 2006

* *Thursday 2nd, 2pm - 5pm*
Botanic Garden/Chingford Park

* *Thursday 9th, 2pm-5pm*
Taieri Mouth

* *Thursday 16th, 2pm-5pm*
Smaill's Beach

* *Thursday 23rd, 2pm-5pm*
Albatross Colony

MARCH 2006

* *Thursday 2nd, 2pm-5pm*
Social Barbecue at Bethune's Gully
and walk up Mt. Cargill track

* *Thursday 9th, 2pm-5pm*
Tunnel Beach and Scenic drive

* *Thursday 16th, 2pm-5pm*
Leith Valley Track to waterfall.
Look from transmitter

* *Thursday 23rd, 2pm-5pm*
Aramoana

* *Thursday 30th, 2pm-5pm*
Shag Point historic cottages

These outings are subject to change depending on who turns up, what the group would like to do together and of course the weather!

Some WET WEATHER options include: table tennis at the bipolar rooms, tennis at the Edgar centre, badminton, swimming, basketball and UNIPOL .

Please meet at 2pm at the Bipolar rooms, 2nd floor, 115 Lower Stuart Street, Dunedin. Ph: 477-2598.

SOCIAL DIARY

February 2006

Women's Group (Day Group)
Wednesday 15th February
meet at the rooms at 1.45pm

Women's Group (evening)
Wednesday 1st February
Meet at the rooms
7 pm

Takeaway Lunch

Tuesday 14th February
. KFC \$4
12 noon

Followed by a new release
Video. Phone in please.

March 2006

Women's Group (Day Group)
Wednesday 15th March
meet at the rooms at 1.45pm

Women's group (evening)
Wednesday 1st March
Meet at the rooms
7pm

Takeaway Lunch

Tuesday 8th March
Pizza \$3
12 noon

Followed by a new release
Video. Phone in please.

Social Recreation Group

Run by Greg Mcleod

As from 2nd February 2006 this group will be held on a

THURSDAY from 2pm to 5pm

and every THURSDAY after that. Come and have some fun in the sun. Meeting Place is still Bipolar/Signpost rooms, 115 Lower Stuart St. If you are interested in joining in please ph. me at 477-2598.

Types of activities: Wet or fine days catered for

Table tennis, pool, art gallery, scenic walks at beach, bush, town etc; indoor cricket, cards, board games, Badminton, Unipol, local attractions, swimming, meals, frisbee- many more ideas.