



ENIGMA

NEWS AND VIEWS ON MENTAL HEALTH

www.bipolarotago.balance.org.nz

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This newsletter was put together by the staff of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust with contributions from lots of other people. Editor Mike McAlevey.

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OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST

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- Information
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Recovery or Cure?

Since 1998 *recovery* has become a familiar word in New Zealand psychiatric circles. All publicly funded mental health services since that time have been, in theory at least, “*recovery orientated*”. We are required to think about the whole person and not just an illness that he or she may have. The services we provide have to be “consistent with” concepts such as hope, basic needs like income and housing, social connectedness, and citizenship. It is wonderful that New Zealand has been a world leader in insisting that our mental health services are not based solely on a narrow biological view of mental distress. Yet has anything really changed? Are the staff on today’s acute wards as concerned with their patients’ social connectedness as with their lithium levels? Let us know your experience.

“Recovery” from mental illness is a difficult concept for many people to accept. For some it might mean the remission of symptoms. How can there be *recovery* from schizophrenia or bipolar disorder when we have always been told there is no cure, that the symptoms might never fully go away? Do we have to begin to “recover” all over again each time we have a mania or a depression?

Mary O’Hagan, a previous mental health commissioner, was instrumental in introducing the concept of recovery to New Zealand. In a 2004 guest editorial Mary quoted several users of mental health services who had reservations about the use of the word recovery:

‘Recovery takes you back to where you were, but my experience transformed me.’ ‘I’ll always have mental health problems so I’ll never recover.’ ‘I don’t believe I had an illness but recovery implies I did have one.’ ‘I don’t see my madness as undesirable, so what is it I need to recover from?’ ‘To recover means to cover up again, but I don’t want to cover up my distress.’

Mary O’Hagan also suggested that some “professionals” regarded recovery as “*esoteric nonsense*” without an “*evidence base*”.

Enigma would argue that, despite its ontological shortcomings, simply using the word *recovery* is an invaluable catalyst for change in psychiatry and in mental health services. Psychiatry has a history of enthusiastically adopting esoteric concepts with little evidence. Lobotomies and insulin shock therapy spring to mind. SSRI’s continue to be prescribed despite the best scientific advice. Changing minds takes time. It also requires that there be words in the vocabulary that make discussion of the issues possible and likely. The very fact that “recovery” is now firmly in the language of our hospital services means that discussion will happen and change can eventually occur.

Recovery. Look past the word. It means that there is hope. It means that the answer to mental distress lies not just with the individual but also with their family and community. *Recovery means getting a life and sharing it.*

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

5TH to 11TH OCTOBER 2009

This year's theme is

'WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING'

Be Active • Connect • Give • Learn • Take Notice

This year's theme for Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) is based on the 5 concepts recently identified by The Foresight Project, and promotes strategies for wellbeing that are achievable and inclusive and that everyone can do.

The MHAW09 committee is currently working on the designs for the awareness week posters and toolkit, which will be available to order on our website closer to the launch date. The toolkit will highlight practical things that people can do in their everyday lives to enhance their own wellbeing and that of others.

Heke tipu oranga, he taonga tuku iho, ka pakanga ake, aue te aiotanga, te manawanui

Persist in the battle and journey for wellbeing, it is a treasure handed down from the heavens, then comes confidence and peace.

CONNECT Develop your relationships with friends, family, colleagues, and neighbours as these connections support you and enrich your life.

BE ACTIVE Physical activity helps you to feel good so find something that you enjoy and suits your ability.

TAKE NOTICE Be aware of the world around you and see the beauty in everyday and unusual things - reflecting on them helps you appreciate what matters to you.

LEARN Try something new or rediscover an old interest, or take on a new responsibility or challenge - learning makes you more confident and can be fun.

GIVE Do something for a friend or stranger and see yourself and your happiness as linked to the wider community.

Fleur Kelsey - "Bilateral- Two Sides, One Story"

Clinicians have always had the power in mental health treatment. Traditionally they are the gatekeepers to madness, being able to label and treat without regard for the wider social context that people find themselves in. Clinicians' power to label and describe shapes the outcomes, attitudes and qualitative experience of those seeking services.

Fleur Kelsey is busy working on a series of artworks called "Bilateral- Two Sides, One Story". This is for an art exhibition exploring themes around mental health treatment from an experiential perspective that Fleur plans to exhibit in full early next year.

This work uses the artist's own history to explore mental health treatments from a lived position, making sense of the experience and offering it up as an exploration of contemporary issues. The work draws on a tradition of feminist investigation into women's experience and the meanings of experience. Authorship and the authority to reveal what goes on behind closed doors is an important consideration with this body of work, as the artist claims her right to display and modify her history.

The work has been supported by Frozen Funds and The Otago Mental Health Support Trust.

Fleur is planning to have a preview of the work on display for Mental Health Awareness Week (5th - 11th October). Keep your eye out in the community newspapers for more information.

Winning Ways to Wellbeing Workshop

Thursday 8th October, 9am-12pm

Otago Mental Health Support Trust

3rd Floor Queens Building, 109 Princes Street Dunedin
Learn how to challenge and change your thoughts so they support your success.

This workshop is fun and interactive.

For more information phone 4772598

or Karyn Chalk, 425 0036

www.changingways.co.nz



Changing Ways is a fledgling business set up by Karyn Chalk. Karyn, an experienced business improvement coach, personal development consultant and group facilitator, draws on her unique talent for empowering individuals, groups and organisations to be the best they can be, from a combination of real life experience and training.

Karyn has qualifications in nutrition, teaching, neuro-linguistic programming and business development. She offers a range of affordable workshops and her motto is "change your mind and keep the change". "How we think about ourselves and our life influences how we are feeling. How we are feeling then determines what we actually do each day, each month, each year."

Did you know that we have over 50,000 thoughts a day with most of them being the same ones occurring over and over again? To feel happy you need to think happy thoughts.

If you are interested in learning some easy ways to implement strategies to challenge and change your internal dialogue then you are welcome to attend the **FREE** workshop that Karyn will run. It's going to be fun, interactive and full of hot tips to recharge your mind, your soul and your spirit.

THE KOWHAI CENTRE

The Kowhai Centre offers a supportive counselling approach to clients at a minimal charge of \$10. Our trainee counsellors come with a wide range of life experience and educational background. Many of the students have graduated with University degrees ranging from BSc/BA in Psychology to Physical Education. Other trainee counsellors have come from a mental health or support work background.

All our trainee counsellors are well into the second year of their training and work closely with supervisors. Access to the Kowhai Centre is through contributing agencies or self referral. The Kowhai Centre is located within Otago Polytechnic and parking is available. Please contact 479 6198 to make a confidential appointment.



In Loving Memory of David Stephen

It is with regret that we announce the passing of our friend David. He was a big part of the bipolar network for a very long time and we will miss him. He loved to be involved in

any social activities that were going on and he was able to continue this right to the end. His appetite for food was legendary as was his love of his old pipe.



Go well David

Some memories of and suggestions for psychiatric wards. By Insider.

“Some of us have been in lock-up wards such as 9B and have some unpleasant memories and some good memories. At times seclusion was used for punishment to uncooperative individuals...but not now, thank goodness. The doors are not locked unless the person is, or is likely to be violent. One area of treatment needs some re-addressing and that is, if you get angry even once or twice you are then classed as unwell by nursing staff...and if you laugh too much...staff take that as unwellness also. I would say that anger is within the normal range of behaviours, especially if you have been locked up and not allowed to see a psychiatrist for several days...”(abridged)by Insider

Thanks Insider for your comments. You raise some very valid points. *Enigma* often hears from people who say they are afraid to laugh on the wards because the staff might consider them to be “elevated”. People also report that there are often frustrating delays in being seen by psychiatrists on the wards. On a positive note, we have had wonderful comments about the changes at ward 1A since the new psychologist Kumari has started work there.

Phobic phone line

This is a 24 hour a day, seven day a week free phone line staffed by volunteers. It is to help people who are experiencing panic attacks or OCD thoughts and need to talk to someone.

0800 142694389

DISCLAIMER

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

Need a good laugh? Here is a very funny, tongue in cheek look at bipolar disorder and President Obama:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9k_nAbsNfI



Cheers! A group enjoying a sociable pot or two of green tea at the Dunedin Chinese Garden recently. The garden is open every day from 10am to 5pm and on Wednesday evenings from 7pm to 9pm. *Picture by Helen Sue.*

Green gold

Green tea is well known for the health benefits of its anti-oxidant content. A Japanese study shows that people who drink three or four cups of green tea each day reduce their risk of death from heart disease dramatically. There is also evidence that another constituent of green tea, L-theanine, may be a safe and effective alternative to anti-anxiety drugs, which often have undesirable effects and can be addictive. Some people with bipolar disorder use green tea or L-theanine tablets in conjunction with lithium to relieve depressed mood. One satisfied sipper said "...green tea calms me and reduces my blood pressure as well... It helped me sleep and didn't make me hypomanic even after 6 weeks." The writer had previously used antidepressants and 5-HTP but found they made her hypomanic. Read more about green tea at:

<http://www.revolutionhealth.com/drugs-treatments/rating/l-theanine-theanine-for-bipolar-ii-disorder>



Smile

Sadness is like a puddle compared to the sea of Happiness. If only each soul, was as happy and Cheerful, as the hearts of others.

*Some are full of grief and terror,
A simple smile could flood one big sea,
That has been filled with grief.*

Jack Davis, age 9, Broad Bay School

Many thanks for your words of wisdom Jack. You will have brought a smile to the hearts of many Enigma readers.

If you would like to write or make a contribution to Enigma send to Enigma PO BOX 5021 Dunedin or email otagomd@ihug.co.nz



Mental Health Awareness Week
5th - 11th October



Many thanks to these people for their support:



Te Tari Toiuhenua

AAW Jones Charitable Trust, ACE Shacklock Charitable Trust, Balance, Dempsey Trust, The HealthCare Otago Charitable Trust, John Illott Trust, Colortronics, University of Otago Marine Science and Nutrition departments. DCC