



Spring Edition  
September 2012

## Inside this issue

- Peer Support
- Warmline
- Office closing for training
- Key We Way
- Kotuku
- PeerZone
- Spring outing

### OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST

- Bipolar Network
- Information
- Education
- Peer Support
- Advocacy
- Resource centre for Tangata Whaiora
- Consumer Networking

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
Queen's Building,  
109 Princes Street,  
DUNEDIN.  
Open 10am-3pm  
Monday to Friday  
Ph: (03) 477-2598  
Fax: (03) 477-6749

# Peer Support

“Peer Support is not like clinical support, nor is it just like being friends. Unlike clinical help, peer support helps people to understand each other because they've ‘been there’, shared similar experiences and can model for each other a willingness to learn and grow. In peer support people come together with the intention of changing unhelpful patterns, getting out of ‘stuck’ places, and building relationships that are respectful, mutually responsible, and potentially mutually transforming. In other words people use peer support because it feels safe and accepting.”

*(MacNeil & Mead 2003)*

## Does Peer Support work? What does Peer Support look like?

“We all experience peer support every day, from telling our best friend our deepest worries to laughing with the shopkeeper on the way home.” (Te Pou website). Informal peer support happens every day in our psychiatric wards too, as people share their distressing experiences, empathise with each other, and guide each other towards recovery. Less common is formal peer support, where people with experience of recovery from mental distress are specifically employed to support other people, their “peers”, to recover.

It is readily accepted that people with a personal traumatic experience, such as cancer, loss of sight, or childbirth, are in a unique position to empathise with other people having similar experiences. However, the mention of people with experience of mental illness offering support to their peers, or God forbid actually running services, brings out all sorts of fears in people, including the people who might benefit.

*“When I first heard of Key We Way I was told that it was a consumer run environment and I discounted the idea immediately. I thought:*

*‘How am I going to get better with staff that are just as or maybe more mad than I am?’*

*But here for the first time I got the help I had been searching for”*

Research shows that peer support services in the acute mental health setting have at least as good outcomes as the hospital services we are used to. Studies both here and overseas show that peer support reduces symptoms of distress and increases quality of life at least as well traditional services. Peer support contributes to fewer and shorter hospital stays, and longer times out of hospital. Peer support is also cheaper.

There are many examples in New Zealand of what formal peer support could look like. There are telephone support lines, crisis respite services, individual and group peer support services, combined support and advocacy services, and peer support workers inside traditional acute wards. The next few pages give a little information on a few of those services. For more information on any of these services or to let us know what kind of peer support service you would like to see in Otago call us on 4772598.

### Kotuku



*Kotuku* is a place (near Nelson) where people who are experiencing an emotional or mental crisis have an alternative to hospitalization or respite in a private home based using the peer support model. Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful.

Peer Support offers a fundamentally different model of supporting people to make sense of their experiences. It can provide people with opportunities to find new ways and strategies to respond. Peer support relationships validate the reality of a person’s experience outside the context of illness or diagnosis.

A telephone peer support service  
for people experiencing mental illness  
living in Canterbury and the West Coast

Phone (03)379-8415

Warmline  
Canterbury/West Coast



# key we way

## Crisis Support With Heart

*Key We Way* is a seaside house near Wellington. Up to four people can stay for up to three weeks as an alternative to being admitted to hospital. The staff are available 24 hours a day and are all trained peer support workers. People write their own notes and direct their own care.

### *A Safe Place To Help You Recover, With People Who Really Do Understand*

Key We Way is a peer-run service that provides home-away-from-home care and support, helping people recover from the distress of mental illness.

### *Crisis Support With Heart*

The Key We Way service is a genuine alternative to a hospital stay for those who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

### *Our Team Really Does Understand*

We provide residential recovery support for a maximum of four people, staying for up to three weeks at a time. Care is provided in partnership with clinical services, and guests can take advantage of companions who listen.

## Office Closing for Training

***Closed Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September  
until Re-Opening Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September  
Phones will be checked daily during this time***

Great training for peer support workers is essential. The Otago Mental Health Support Trust is taking the opportunity to have all our staff trained together in intentional peer support. The trainer is Magdel Hammond from the well respected Auckland organisation *Connect*.

Unfortunately this means our office will be closed all day from 9am on Thursday the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, re-opening one week later on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of September. We apologise for this closure but feel it is really important to take this opportunity for quality training.

During the closure we will still be clearing phone messages and responding to these the same day they are received. If you receive regular support from us your usual worker will be in touch with you to ensure you are well supported while we are closed. Thanks for your understanding.

**Spring Outing!!**

**Spring Outing!!**

**Spring Outing!!**

*10am on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October at the Botanic Garden. RSVP to 4772598*

### **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.

### **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



PeerZone is a series of three hour face-to-face workshops led by and for people with experience of mental distress. There are seventeen workshops within five themes: Understanding ourselves; Empowering ourselves; Working on our wellbeing; Connecting to the world; and Exploring our unique identities. *PeerZone is available in Dunedin. Contact Grant at 4772598 for information.*



*'PeerZone is awesome'.  
 'I'm in charge of my life now'.  
 'The group acceptance worked well'.  
 'It gives us a safe environment'.  
 'The pain has gone'.  
 'I discovered so much about myself.'*



## Understanding our distress

Purpose of workshop:

- Different ways of naming and understanding distress.
- Different ways of responding to distress.
- What responses help us.
- What responses don't help us.



## Leading our recovery

Purpose of workshop:

- What recovery means.
- The process of recovery.
- Other people's experiences of recovery.
- Our own experience of recovery.



## Exploring our stories

Purpose of workshop:

- The importance of stories
- The hero's journey.
- Others' stories of distress and recovery.
- Our own stories of distress and recovery.

**Peer Support websites**  
<http://www.healthaction.org.nz/kotuku/kotuku-service-description/>  
<http://www.peerzone.co.nz/>  
<http://www.warmline.org.nz/>  
 This site gives good arguments for the cost effectiveness of peer support:  
[http://www.wellink.org.nz/pdf/Peer Support and Value-for Money.pdf](http://www.wellink.org.nz/pdf/Peer%20Support%20and%20Value-for%20Money.pdf)

Many thanks to these people for their support:



ACE Shacklock Charitable Trust, Balance, Dempsey Trust, , Colortronics. DCC, Pat Sivertsen –Dehaan Travel, Lone Hill Vineyard, 17 Frames, DCC Community grants Scheme