



ENIGMA

News and Views on mental health

SPRING EDITION September –October– November 2013 Inside this issue

This newsletter was put together by the staff of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust.

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OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST

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

Staff available

Monday –Friday.

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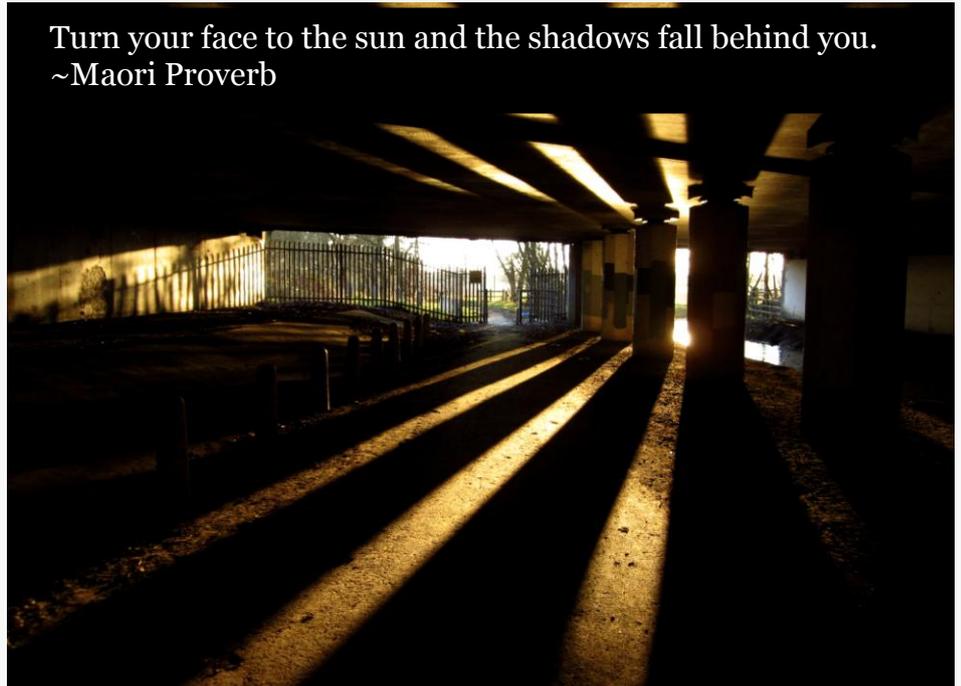
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DISCLAIMER

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

Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.
~Maori Proverb



As some of you will have noticed **OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST** has had a change of business card and promotional materials that let you, our customers, know where we are and what we do.

The card moves away from the coolness of grays, whites and blues and towards some warmer yellows and oranges. We hope that the warmth of the longer days of spring bring us all renewed hope that life can get better, no matter how dark and cold it feels at times. When in the grip of mental health distress it is often so hard to believe that there will be light at the end of the tunnel

Our new picture is a metaphor for hope and inspiration. As Leonard Cohen puts it:

“There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.”
Our mission statement reflects our philosophy.
“Promoting full lives for people experiencing mental distress.”

Flexible advocacy and support with whatever is complicating people’s lives is our specialty. We can offer support for people who find themselves in hospital and for those that need assistance with WINZ, Doctors, or appointments in legal settings where it may be useful to have someone walk alongside.

We now have a new free phone number in case you have no credit on your phone.

Ring Otago Mental Health Support Trust free from your cell phone or landline on:

0800 364 462
(Or 0800 Enigma)



Scientists believe Botox could help treat mental illness

It has long been recognized for its wrinkle-busting properties. Now, scientists believe Botox could also help to treat mental illness. New research shows that the cosmetic treatment can dramatically improve the symptoms of severe depression in more than a quarter of patients. Dr Eric Finzi, medical director at the Chevy Chase Cosmetic Centre, in Maryland, has carried out research which suggests that physical expressions of emotion influence our feelings. For this reason, he believes that smoothing out frown lines using Botox can actually improve the mood of people with clinical depression. For example, he claims his latest research shows that forcing a frown can cause a depressed mood, while deliberately smiling can temporarily increase happiness.

As American actress Phyllis Diller once said: **“A smile is a curve that sets everything straight”**. This is the second of Dr Finzi’s studies which comes to this conclusion. He first proposed the theory that by preventing frowning, the toxin is interrupting signals to the brain that indicate the body is under stress or cannot cope. For the newest study, Dr Finzi worked with 84 people with severe depression that lasted for an average of two years and which had not fully responded to treatment with antidepressants. The patients all received either Botox treatment to smooth out frown lines, or a placebo injection into the same facial region. They were then assessed three and six weeks later. By the end of the study, 27 per cent of those receiving Botox reported nearly complete remission of their depression compared to just 7 per cent of those who received the placebo. Dr Finzi said: “This trial shows that inhibition of frowning can lead to remission in depression”. The researchers suggest that physical expressions of emotion influence our feelings. Botox is a well-known cosmetic treatment for age-related wrinkles around the eyes and forehead. However, the powerful toxin also has a wide range of medical applications, and is used to treat stroke victims' muscle spasms, can ease migraine and even helps people with Parkinson's disease control their movements. It works by 'paralyzing' small groups of muscles to prevent them going into spasm or contracting regularly. This stops the surrounding skin from wrinkling. Scientists have also recently discovered that Botox could help fight cancer by boosting the effects of chemotherapy, speeding up the destruction of tumour cells.

In another experiment, Australian scientists have been trying to establish whether applying Botox gel to the nose could give hay fever sufferers relief from sneezing, itchy eyes and runny noses for up to three months. It is hoped that the botulinum toxin will affect the nerves in the nose and potentially block some of the chemicals released by the nerve endings which play a large role in causing hay fever symptoms. To try and treat the allergy, the Botox molecule has been re-engineered to be able to penetrate through the skin but also through the lining of the nose. **'My life did a 360-degree turnaround': A patient's verdict of Dr Finzi's earlier experiment** In his first study, in 2006, Dr Finzi and his colleague Dr Erika Wasserman recruited ten women aged between 36 and 63 with a medical history of depression. The average period of depression was 3.5 years, although one patient had been ill for 17 years and had not responded well to conventional treatments. 'Patients who have had their frown lines treated with Botox are perceived by others to be happier'. Seven out of the ten had been on antidepressants but continued to be dogged by severe depression before taking part in the study. Each volunteer - none of whom had had Botox before - underwent a thorough assessment by a clinical psychologist before the experiment began. They were then injected with the toxin and told to report back in two months, when another psychological assessment was carried out. Using a questionnaire designed to measure the scale of depression, the researchers discovered nine were no longer clinically depressed and the one who still was reported a significant improvement in symptoms. 'Patients who have had their frown lines treated with Botox are perceived by others to be happier,' says Dr Finzi. One woman with an 11-year history of depression said her life 'did a 360-degree turnaround' after the experiment. She got a new job and rekindled an old romance. Some of the volunteers were seen again eight months later and their symptoms had returned as the toxin's effects had worn off. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2254244/Botox-jabs-latest-weapon-treating-severe-depression.html#ixzz2afOsHtgG>

4th October is WORLD SMILE DAY.

The idea of World Smile Day was coined and initiated by Harvey Ball, a commercial artist from Worcester, Massachusetts. He is known to have created the yellow Smiley Face in 1963. The World's first World Smile Day was held in the year 1999 and has been held annually since. While there doesn't seem to be definitive research as to the number of muscles required to smile there is evidence smiles can elicit more help, result in positive perceptions by others, and activate a positive mood. Recently Matt Logan commented on the importance of a smile as a therapeutic tool. A smile is a powerful tool in life.

Because of your smile, you make life more beautiful.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

PAMHI-Parents Affected by Mental Health Issues -Playgroup/support group

***First Tuesday of every month**, 1.15 at the Hub (on the old Forbury School site, 158 Oxford Street, look for the signs and the green door)*Gold coin donation-Ph: 021 050 1497(Joce)-pamihigroup@yahoo.co.nz or the Hub (466 3407)

Women's Group held on the last Friday of every month. A friendly informal meeting giving opportunity to make new friends, and share experience. **1-3pm meet at our rooms, Queens Building**

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- for more information

Ketamine use "borderline"- HDC

Almost exactly three years since this trust asked the Southern District Health Board for more information about the prescribing of ketamine in its Dunedin hospital, the Health and Disability Commissioner released his report on the issue. He said that it was "borderline" but on the balance of probabilities this use of ketamine was not research or experimental.

However, the Commissioner made adverse comments about both the doctor involved and about the Southern District Health Board's processes. He said that while it was "more likely than not" that the doctor was not doing research; it remained a concern that the doctor had presented his findings at a scientific conference in a way that risked his work being seen as research rather than clinical practice. The doctor's presentation also contained major errors which he blamed on the pressure of writing his presentation late at night. The doctor is now required to ensure that consultations with his peers about matters such as off label prescribing are recorded, including any dissenting views. He is also to develop a process to ensure that he meets the College of Psychiatrists' guidelines when prescribing off-label.

The SDHB is required to review its policy on off-label prescribing, making it much more precise and unambiguous. They must also ensure they have policies to clearly identify when prescribing is in the "grey area" between off-label and experimental. The boundaries between research and clinical activities for doctors jointly employed by the hospital and the university are also to be clarified.

All District Health Boards in New Zealand are now required to ensure that they have clear workable policies in the areas of research and off-label prescribing.

The ketamine enquiry demonstrates the role of vigilant and persistent consumer advocates in ensuring that DHB's have clear processes for protecting their customers.

Mental Health Awareness Week

The theme for this year is **CONNECT**. Contact us for details of activities for the week 7 to 13 October.

Ray of Sunshine passes

Ray Brown, long time supporter of the trust, passed away on the 7th of August at the age of 83.

'Let time be still who takes all things
Face, feature and memory
Under his blinding wings' *J.K.Baxter*

Trevor Shaw

Trevor passed away on 6th June .Over the years he made a lot of contributions to the Otago Mental Health Support. He was a Board member for a number of years, and was also an employee for a short time for the Trust as a patient advocate. Condolences to his family.

LET'S STOP STIGMA - AND CHANGE MENTAL HEALTH

About Black Dog Tribe - Founded in 2011 as a social networking platform for people affected by depression and other mental health conditions, the Black Dog Tribe (BDT) website is intended to be a place in which like-minded people can find their own 'tribe' and share experiences in a supportive online community through forums, blogs, daily news and mental health information.

A round of applause for Ruby Wax

Many of you will have heard of Ruby Wax, a well known comedian. Born in America she became very popular on the BBC in 1991 in a variety of television documentaries and interview programs. Ruby Wax meets, in which she interviewed public figures such as Imelda Marcos and Pamela Anderson. Wax was nominated in 1996 for a BAFTA award for her interview with Sarah, Duchess of York, an interview which attracted an audience of over 14 million viewers.

In 2006 she had what she called a tsunami of all depressions and was hospitalized. Like many people with celebrity status she has used her experience to raise awareness and unite people with similar experience. She instigated with the help of SANE the setting up of a website called Black Dog Tribe. It is easy to spend more than a few minutes navigating, digesting the wealth of information that exist here.

She is the author of several books, *How Do You Want Me?* "critically acclaimed as brutally honest, vivid and gripping. Ruby Wax's unflinching revelation of a childhood poisoned, and a youth spoiled, culminates in a moving account of her breakdown and recovery. But *How Do You Want Me?* is also funny, rude and irreverent. It's unusually honest about fame and celebrity and happy to burst ego-balloons and golden myths." "Sane New World" is another of Wax's inspirational books and you can borrow it from our library.

Adapted from www.blackdogtribe.com



0800 number for Southern DHB Mental Health

The Southern DHB Mental Health Leadership Team have instituted an 0800 number to give free access to Mental Health services irrespective of where the person is in the District, or what type of phone they have.

For access to MH Emergency Services 0800 46 78 46

For General Mental Health enquiries 0800 44 33 66

Callers to either 0800 number will be given a "select Number" option of Southland or Otago with the Southland call going to their existing structure and the Otago call going to the Dunedin Hospital Switchboard as is common practice now.



Smoking to be extinguished?

The Southern District Health Board had intended to ban all smoking on its premises, including locked psychiatric wards, on the 1st of September. However, this has been delayed until the ban is approved by the SDHB board members. The board's Hospital Advisory Committee meets to discuss the issue in Oamaru on the 4th of September. Board member Richard Thomson, a member of the committee, has been a vocal opponent of the ban, likening it to forced treatment for those people who are detained on the wards under the Mental Health Act. Consumer group Incite has asked for the opportunity to address the meeting on behalf of people who use mental health services.

Yet another side of Gordon Evans

Enjoy a selection of Gordon's delightful paintings at the Dunedin Community Gallery, 1st to 8th of September.

Incite

Incite is a group of interested people who use or have used mental health services. We discuss and take action on issues of interest to consumers.

At present we are considering the very high rate of shock treatment (ECT) being used in Otago and Southland compared with the rest of the country.

We meet monthly in Dunedin. *For more information phone 4772598 and ask about Incite.*



This year's theme for October's Mental Health Awareness week (MHAW) is **connect**, which is itself connected to the World Mental Health Day theme: Mental Health and Older Adults, but adapted to a New Zealand audience.

Don't be sad, have a little light in your life

Wouldn't it be great if we could bask in the warmth and light of the summer rays all year long?

Winter brings its chill and a blanket of gloom for people such as myself who suffer from the Seasonal Affective Disorder, ('sad' for short)

The brain needs light to produce the 'feel good' chemical, serotonin, therefore over winter when there is a lack of sunlight there seems to be a lack of general enthusiasm within myself.

What's a girl to do?

On good advice from my G.P. I went on a mission to discover a lightbox.

The lightbox is two fluorescent 'day time' tubes encased in a plastic frame which can be mounted or placed in a corner of the room.

I have had this lightbox for a year now and I am thoroughly convinced it works.

For the first time since I can remember I have not had depression this year, what a feat!

The box can be purchased from lighting suppliers, or if you have a handy person around, they could mount the tubing in a frame for you.

The cost of the box is no more than two hundred dollars. For the cash strapped such as myself, there may be a way that WINZ could help financially.

Give yourself the gift of feeling well over the winter months, you won't regret it.

Lisette Spall

a bit MENTAL

One man's mission to Lilo the Waikato and Live More Awesome

BY JIMI HUNT

Jimi Hunt is a man who has spent most of his life doing ridiculous things for his own amusement. Things like building the country's biggest waterslide, playing golf through the streets of downtown Auckland, and holding an alternative summer Olympics including events such as sandcastle building and rhythmic gymnastics.

But what none of his friends knew was that Jimi had been silently battling with depression. It was eating him alive from the inside, affecting his business, losing him friends and slowly, painfully destroying his marriage.

Disillusioned with the help and advice he received, he read that having a goal could help with depression. Five minutes later Jimi set his goal and announced it to the world - he would travel the entire length of the Waikato River on an inflatable mattress. Loneliness, 21,000 people following the journey on Facebook, chancing upon a dead body in the river, unbridled kindness from strangers, physical pain and crazy psychic predictions are just some of the strange tales from the river.



DCC Community grants Scheme-

Many thanks to these people for their support: