



# ENIGMA

## Otago Mental Health Support Trust News and views on mental health

### Autumn 2019 EDITION

This newsletter was put together by the staff of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust. Editor: Grant Cooper

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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*

***We welcome your feedback on our newsletter. See above for contact details. Like Enigma by email? Let us know.***

## Addiction

In this edition we are exploring and sharing information on addiction. Inside this edition there is an insert explaining some recent changes we have made to the way we work.

So what is an addiction? Odyssey – a New Zealand Addiction service states that “Addiction is when a person does not have control over what they are using or doing. There are many different names that have been given to this pattern, and you may have heard people using terms like alcoholism, dependence, or abuse. The key part is that it is a challenging situation and getting the right kind of support is important.”

Navigating the addiction services available in our community can be challenging for people and their whānau. The process of finding the support you need for your whānau or yourself can be distressing.

There are many myths and still a lot of stigma in our society about people suffering from the effects of addiction. It’s important to remember it is not the person’s fault, as there are many factors involved in why someone develops an addiction.

For more reading on stigma in relation to drug addiction see the NZ Drug Foundation submission to the Mental Health and Addiction Inquiry at <https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/assets/uploads/2018-uploads/NZ-Drug-Foundation-submission-to-MHA-inquiry-2018-FINAL.pdf>

I find it interesting that most people talk about the “Mental Health Inquiry” in conversation. I have even done this myself. However, it is important to remember that it is a Mental Health AND Addiction Inquiry. We all need to be reminded of this as addiction can so easily be left out of the picture.

There are many types of addiction. The addiction to alcohol causes the most harm. Having empathy and compassion by walking alongside people to get the support they need will make all the difference.

I like what Johann Hari says about addiction in his TED talk “Everything you Think You Know about Addiction is Wrong” at [https://www.ted.com/talks/johann\\_hari\\_everything\\_you\\_think\\_you\\_know\\_about\\_addiction\\_is\\_wrong#t-202527](https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong#t-202527)

He said that “the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it’s connection.” We all need people who ‘get us’ and we ‘get them.’

Grant Cooper

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## ***New Addiction Act Available but Ideally Not Required***

This brief story relates to a family seeking support for their loved one in relation to significant alcohol use and the application of the Substance Addiction; Compulsory Assessment and Treatment Act 2018. (SA(CAT))

An approach was made to the Emergency Psychiatric Service from a young and concerned family member, Freddy's daily consumption of alcohol was causing concerns in the family home, it had impacted markedly on all of the relationships in the home, he is a father, husband, and brother to those affected and they were all experiencing his decline both physically and mentally. The family member had made enquires and learned about the new Substance Addiction (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act referred to as SA(CAT) Act which came into being in the February of 2018 – replacing the A&DA Act (Alcohol and Drug Addiction 1966).

The concerned family member was put in touch with CADS (Community Alcohol and Drug Services) now known as SAS (Specialist Addiction Services).

The process for a SA(CAT) Act is that the person is seen initially by an Authorised Officer (AO) if, in that initial contact it is felt the substance user may be lacking capacity to make decisions around treatment for substance addiction and has a serious substance use disorder, then the family member or whoever has made the initial contact with the AO's help fills out an application for the substance user to be seen by an Authorised Specialist (AS) for assessment. If the outcome of that assessment confirms a lack of capacity to make decisions around treatment they will/can be committed to the national treatment unit called Nova Star (Nova Support Treatment and Recovery, it has nine beds). Nova Star is provided by the Nova Trust treatment service in Templeton Christchurch. If necessary, a detox at the Kennedy Unit (the South Island detox unit) at Hillmorton Hospital in Christchurch can be arranged.

Unlike the Mental Health Act, SA(CAT) is not an urgent assessment process. The process can take several weeks (or longer). Once deemed suitable for the Act the committal is for eight weeks (52days) (depending on bed availability). If it is found there has been some brain damage the committal can be extended a further eight weeks. Assessment of a person's capacity to make decisions around treatment is a priority at all points of contact. If capacity is regained the person is discharged from the Act, with voluntary follow-up planned by the referring addiction service.

In this case Freddy was seen by two Authorised Officers. He met the criteria for dependency but was found to display capacity to make decisions around treatment, - the SA(CAT) Act did not apply. Freddy engaged with a CADS/SAS clinician a referral to Home Based Detox was made. Freddy has remained abstinent from alcohol since completing the detox.

The family remain together, Freddy is seen on a now monthly basis and the contacts alternate one month on his own the next with which ever family members wish to attend. He has shown improvement in cognitive functioning and is engaging in community events. His family have gradually increased their trust in him and as a consequence have a reduced level of stress in their day to day lives.

Freddy would have met the criteria for committal under the previous legislation.

There are SA(CAT) Act resources available on the Health department web site - <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/preparing-commencement-substance-addiction-compulsory-assessment-and-treatment-act-2017/substance-addiction-compulsory-assessment-and-treatment-act-2017-resources>

Tony Braam SDHB Special Addiction Services

## ***Hope leading to trust***

Coming from a perspective of over 2 decades of lived experience in recovery from addiction sitting down to write this article I felt overwhelmed with where to start. I realise addiction can be very misunderstood by people who may not have experienced it first-hand. I'm pretty sure most people know someone who may be or has struggled with addiction.

Understanding what addiction is and how it affects not only the person with the addiction, yet also the whānau and wider community is where I will start. Something I learned when I first went to a treatment centre was the drugs I was addicted to were a symptom, not the cause of my distress and unmanageability. Addiction affects a person holistically. I had to deal with my mind, body, emotional and spiritual wellbeing to recover. Stopping the drugs was the easy part for me. Life became more unmanageable after I stopped using drugs. I had to face the aftermath my addiction had created. My overthinking brain, distorted perspective, tendencies to obsess over people, places and things were all aspects of my addiction I had not been aware of while I was using drugs.

My trauma from past experiences of active addiction and childhood surfaced gradually over time. Facing the fear of feeling these painful experiences on an emotional level was the beginning of my recovery. There is a saying in recovery FEAR -Face Everything And Recover or F... Everything And Run. I chose the first option.

The effects of my addiction on my family took a long time to heal. Dishonesty and lack of taking responsibility had caused major havoc on many of my relationships creating major distrust. It took time to build trust again. The most important person I needed to forgive was myself. Not an easy thing to do as I was full of guilt and shame. Early recovery set me on an emotional rollercoaster where at times I wanted to give up. I discovered I had underlying severe anxiety, masked by my drug taking and an unwillingness to take responsibility or deal with reality.

Many times, in my active addiction and recovery I lost hope. Yet recovery is a journey not a destination. There were many people who supported me and held hope for me when I had none. Someone or something would happen to remind me I was not alone and to trust. My trust built through experiences of synchronicity where things worked out better than I could have planned myself. I learned to let go of outcomes, guided by something bigger than myself, letting go of my need to control everything. A teacher would appear when I had gained the willingness to change. I began to develop a spiritual practice where I started to trust I would be taken care of. I felt a sense of freedom and gratitude.

The actual beginning of my recovery journey started a few years before I ended up in a treatment centre. Where I experienced for the first time a strong desire to change my lifestyle, where there was a glimmer of hope to find another way to deal with reality, my life and my past trauma. The moment my daughter was born. The connection I felt when she first came into the world was monumental. I experienced unconditional love for another person on such a deep level I knew my life would never be the same again. I wanted to live and be there for my beautiful child who needed a mother. It was time to grow up and face my responsibilities.

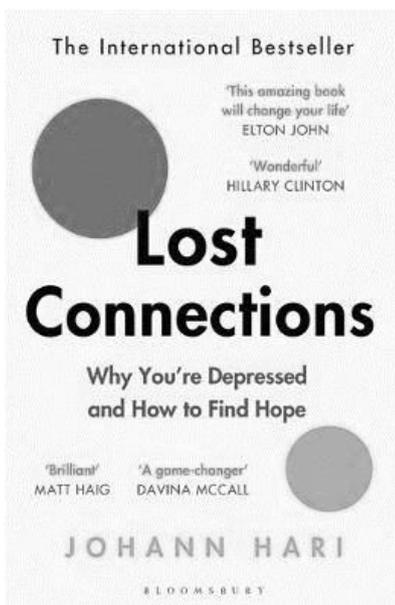
She saved my life and continues to shine her hope in my life. Reminding me of what is truly important in the world. Love.

**Whakamanatia ngā moemoea ngā wawata me ngā tumanako ngā tipuna o nehe rā.**  
*To restore the dreams, aspirations and hopes of our ancestors past and present.*

## **A New Book with Perspectives on Addiction and Mental Health Solutions**

Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression- and The Unexpected Solutions – By Johann Hari  
There is a fun quiz Johann Hari set up to see how much you know about depression after reading his book....a bit of fun in amongst the subject matter of addiction:

<https://thelostconnections.com/the-quiz/>



Johann Hari goes on a personal quest in his latest book *Lost Connections*, driven by his own personal experience of being medicated for depression when he was 18 years old. He questions the “endogenous” depression (a chemical imbalance in the brain) versus “reactive” depression (related to our life experiences, our environment and trauma) challenging the medical paradigms feeding the ever growing pharmaceutical companies. His research is presented as a narrative, stories of real people having transformation through the power of connecting. Johann Hari is quite the story teller bringing his intelligent wit and flowing metaphors to allow the reader quite an adventure through otherwise quite dry research information. It moves towards our present day with ideas not new yet refreshing. ‘Social prescribing’ as a way to reconnect people with themselves, people and their communities. Bringing people together for a common purpose, a community project, where they are not talking about their mental health issues. Instead people are working together to create something for their community.

**Women’s Group** is held on the last Friday of every month.

This is a friendly informal meeting giving an opportunity for women to make new friends, and share experiences.  
**1-3pm meet at our rooms, Queens Building, 109 Princes Street Dunedin.**

**We wish to thank the following for their financial support:**

Bendigo Valley Trust      HealthCare Otago Charitable Trust      Southern District Health Board.

## Some examples of addictions...

As a whanau member or friend, it can sometimes be hard to navigate the services and supports available. There is sometimes a misconception about what an addiction is.

Here is a list of some of the identified addictions which is not an exhaustive list:

- Drugs/substance misuse disorder
- Gambling
- Food – under eating/ anorexia nervosa/over eating/bulimia
- Process addiction (gaming, digital technology)
- Gambling
- Sex
- Pornography

## Some Resources

**Matua Raki – ‘We are Family: Stories of family and whanau affected by someone else’s use of alcohol or other drugs’ – booklet of peoples lived experience**

<https://www.matuaraki.org.nz/resources/we-are-family-stories-of-family-and-whanau-affected-by-someone-elses-use-of-alcohol-or-other-drugs/727>

### Addiction Standard | DAPAANZ

Article on “Gaming Addiction and the Impact of Technology by Nathan Frost  
<http://www.dapaanz.org.nz/vdb/document/151>



**Mums Needed** 

Study testing smell ability in women who are **pregnant or gave birth less than one year ago**.

You will be reimbursed with a **\$40 supermarket voucher** at the end of the study.

**Childcare** and home visits can be provided during testing.

Contact us:  
[smellandppd@gmail.com](mailto:smellandppd@gmail.com)

## Some Addiction Services in our local community:

### **Adventure Development Limited**

03 470 1691

599 Princes St, Dunedin 9016

### **Mirror HQ Youth service**

03 4792 970 Ext 3

[hq@mirrorservices.org.nz](mailto:hq@mirrorservices.org.nz)

4th Floor, Evan Parry House, 43 Princes Street, PO Box 276, Dunedin 9054

### **Moana House**

(03) 477-0842 Fax: (03) 474 5088

[info@moanahouse.org.nz](mailto:info@moanahouse.org.nz)

Hours: Monday – Sunday Business Hours

Continuing Care Hours: Monday – Thursday

### **PGF (Problem Gambling Foundation) Services**

03 742 1022 or 0800 664 262

[fiona.cambridge@pgf.nz](mailto:fiona.cambridge@pgf.nz)

[www.pgf.nz](http://www.pgf.nz)

### **Salvation Army**

03 477 9852

160 Crawford St, Dunedin, 9016

### **Specialist Addiction Services**

03 4769760 or 0800 44 33 66

[Cads.intake@southerdhb.govt.nz](mailto:Cads.intake@southerdhb.govt.nz)

Wakari Hospital

### **Southern Stop Smoking Service**

03 214 5260 or 0800 925 242

[admin@stopsmoking.nz](mailto:admin@stopsmoking.nz)

### **Southern Support Eating Disorder Service**

03 476 2092 or 0800 328 744 (or 0800 EAT RIGHT)

0272 097 928

[southernsupport@ashburn.co.nz](mailto:southernsupport@ashburn.co.nz)

Opening Hours: 9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

### **Te Oranga Tonu Tanga**

03 474 0999 ext. 5510 or 03 476 9510

Te Taiahoaho on the Wakari hospital site.

Open: 8.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Youth Speciality Services**

03 474 5601

Savoy Building Level 3/8 Moray Pl, Dunedin

## Some Addiction support groups in our local community:

### **Narcotics Anonymous**

0800 628 632 or go to [www.nzna.org](http://www.nzna.org) for local meetings

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

0800 2296757 or go to [www.aa.org.nz](http://www.aa.org.nz) for local meetings

**Gamblers Anonymous** [www.12steps.nz/12-step-programs/gamblers-anonymous/ga-meetings/](http://www.12steps.nz/12-step-programs/gamblers-anonymous/ga-meetings/) for meetings

**Overeaters Anonymous** <http://www.12steps.nz/12-step-programs/overeaters-anonymous/>

## Helplines:

**1737 Need to Talk?**

**Alcohol Drug Helpline**

**Gambling Helpline**

**Quitline smoking cessation**

**1737 Phone or text**

**0800 787 797**

**0800 654 655**

**0800 778 778**