



# ENIGMA

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

### Spring 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.***

### It's all about relationship...

Peer Support is all about relationship. In this edition we will be looking at what peer support is with an emphasis on the Intentional Peer Support (IPS) model we use. Also we celebrate and introduce Carron and Toni who are our two new peer support workers in the Waitaki region. Finally, we can reveal that we will be moving premises. From 1 January next year we will have our office space on the first floor of Community House which is on the corner of Moray Place and Great King Street.

So what do all of these things have in common? My answer is "relationship." Peer support is based on developing intentional relationships between 2 people who have had their own experiences of mental distress that enables people to share their experiences in ways that benefit each other. This is the approach that Carron and Toni, our new peer support workers, will be taking as do all our staff. So how does this all relate to moving to new offices? The new premises will be smaller allowing mostly for work space but also a smaller meeting space. Some people enjoyed being able to pop in and have a coffee, read the newspaper and just have a catchup with whoever was in the office. I agree that these are nice things to do but it isn't the main work we do – which is to have regular one on one relationships where we really get to know each other. So happy for people to pop in and see us but we want our staff to be out in the community at people's places, at the beach, in the wards or just about anywhere that helps the peer relationship flourish. So if you do pop in we would be happy to see you but the person you have the peer relationship with may not be there. We are of course happy to pass on any message.

Of course we also do peer advocacy which is about supporting you to have your say. For example, with your psychiatrist, Work and Income or Oranga Tamariki worker. We support people to have their say to make changes to services. An example is supporting people to talk with the mental health inquiry team. The other part of our work is supporting people who facilitate peer support groups for example a Post-natal depression support group in Dunedin and Peer support groups in Oamaru and Wanaka.

Grant Cooper

## Peer Support – so what is it?

“Peer support is about connecting with someone in a way that contributes to both people learning and growing. It’s about giving and receiving.” (Source: [www.walsh.org.nz](http://www.walsh.org.nz))

There are a variety of definitions of peer support related to mental health and addiction. I like the above definition because it includes for me some key points.

1. It’s about relationship or “connecting” with someone. In peer support each person will have their own experiences of mental distress and sharing these experiences can produce the “aha” moments where someone gets you because of a similar experience.
2. The relationship is a 2-way street. We learn off each other. So the relationship is not about one person helping the other but rather learning from each other.

This type of relationship can be very different from the traditional clinician – consumer approach.

At Otago Mental Health Support Trust, the model of Peer Support we use is called Intentional Peer Support. The approach is based on 4 tasks and 3 principles. They are:

### **Tasks:**

**Connection** - the “aha” moment in a relationship when someone gets you. An example for me is when I describe some of my thoughts and feelings and the other person’s eyes light up because they have experienced similar thoughts or feelings. I then feel a sense of relief because I now know I am not the only one that feels this way.

**Worldview** – Everyone has their own way of seeing the world based on their experiences, values and beliefs. It is important for me not to impose my own worldview onto others.

**Mutuality** - I had never heard of this term before I worked in peer support. For me it is about learning off each other instead of one person being the helper and the other the helpee. It is so great being in a peer relationship where we learn off each other. It takes the pressure off me as the peer support worker to have to try and solve the other person’s problems.

**Moving towards where I want to go** - my hopes and dreams. It moves away from focussing on what I don’t want to what I do.

### **Principles:**

**Relationship versus the Individual** - we learn from each other through the relationship so I’m not here to solve your problems and you are not here to solve my problems. By sharing our experiences, we can explore our journeys. I am not responsible for your journey and neither are you responsible for mine. We are both responsible for the relationship.

**Hope versus fear** - What do each of us want from our lives – what are our dreams and visions. Sometimes I can be so problem focussed that I forget about my Wairua or bigger picture stuff. Fear of relapsing can hinder me reaching for or even exploring my hopes.

**Co-learning versus helping** - It is wonderful to learn from someone else’s experiences. I have a tendency to want to help others. Hey it feels good. But this approach assumes that we most often have the answers ourselves and that we just need the space and confidence to explore. This is my hope through peer support relationships.

***In the next few years we should see the growth of peer support for example in GP practices, hospital wards, EPS and other non-Government mental health organisations. It is imperative that these peer support workers are well trained, supported and that the values of peer support are honoured if they are part of a clinical organisation.***

## New Peer Support for the Waitaki

Carron and Toni have started as Peer Support Workers for Otago Mental Health Support Trust in the Oamaru and surrounding region. Both Carron and Toni are involved in the Waitaki peer Support Group. We thought we would ask them some questions:

*What do you like about doing peer support?*

Carron: The opportunity to connect and learn and share with my peers.

Toni: I really enjoy it. It is different from other services I have been involved with. In the peer relationship we are both equal and we can learn from each other.

*Do you think peer support works differently in rural settings compared to in cities?*

Carron: Rural communities are often quite tight knit so everyone often knows everyone else. So when we meet our peers we need to be sensitive to their privacy.

Toni: Yes, I do because rural lifestyle is often so different from city life with different social norms or expectations.

*How would you like peer support to be developed in the Otago/Southland region?*

Carron: I would like the model of Intentional Peer Support to be more universally known and used as a framework.

Toni: It would be great to see peer support as one of the first options for support for people and not an add on and before it gets to crisis e.g. at primary care level.

For more information about the peer support work in the Waitaki contact Grant at [grant@omhst.org.nz](mailto:grant@omhst.org.nz) or phone our offices.



*Toni and Carron*

### **Women's Group**

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 until end of December then at Community House next year.

### **Men's Group**

Held every Monday from 2pm to 3pm. Contact Grant if you would like to find out more.

### **Mental Health Awareness Week - Dunedin**

This year's theme is 'Explore your Wellbeing'. An event is planned for Friday 27th September in Dunedin - The Fiveways Showcase - which includes an Expo to encourage engagement and awareness of the ways to wellbeing, short film screenings, music and performances some local luminaries, and Pecha kucha-style presentations from motivational speakers. For more information, go to Mental Health Awareness Week Dunedin Facebook page.

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

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

## Otago Mental Health Support Trust NEW Offices

### *We are on the move!*

From January next year we will be at Community House on the corner of Moray Place and Great King Street. We will be on the first floor. Just ask reception downstairs for directions.

There are 17 other community services in Community House. For a complete list go to <https://dch.org.nz/>



### *So why are we moving?*

We want our service to be about the peer support relationships. It is about people meeting up with people and getting to know each other and learning from each other. Most often this happens at someone's home, at a café, walking the dog or even out at the beach. We want to use our office space mostly for office type work and leave relationship building to the more comfortable places described above! So we are moving into smaller offices which will certainly save us some money. We want to use these savings to put more resources into the support we provide. For example, we are exploring the possibility of getting a mental health and addiction peer support worker.

### *When are you going to move?*

We are planning to have the new offices up and running by the start of next year.

### *How do people keep in contact?*

Our 0800 phone number (0800 364 462) will remain the same so you can still phone us at no cost. If you come in to see us go to Reception downstairs (as you come into Community house it is on your left) and they will let you know if we are in or if we are out. If we are out, you are welcome to leave a message with the receptionist who will get your message to us. The reception is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. If you have arranged a time to see us just pop up the stairs (straight ahead of you from the entranceway) then turn a sharp right and walk on until you see our sign.

### *Will there still be opportunity to have group meetings at the new offices?*

Community House has large rooms (including kitchen facilities) that we can use as meeting spaces for the Women's and Men's groups and other group meeting we decide to have.

### *Is there going to be any farewell from the old offices?*

Yes, we are having a farewell day on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> October** where you can drop in to our old offices anytime between **10am and 3pm**.

If you have any queries about our move please contact Grant at [grant@omhst.org.nz](mailto:grant@omhst.org.nz) or phone the office.