

# Mental Health Support



Mental Health Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Issue 2 Winter 2006



Dr Hilary Jones Launches  
[www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk)

Welcome to the second edition of the 'Mental Health Support' quarterly newsletter for 2006; providing information on the support and services available throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider area. This newsletter includes articles of interest to service users, carers, health care professionals and others with an interest in mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

The Mental Health Support Partnership Team has edited the newsletter and they would welcome your views and comments. If you would like to contribute information, articles or photographs for future editions of the newsletter, please contact the editorial team via [www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk) or email [admin@mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](mailto:admin@mentalhealthsupport.co.uk)

## A Web of Assistance

Over 100 people joined Dr Hilary Jones, GMTV Medical Expert, at Llantrisant Leisure Centre on World Mental Health Day to launch the website [www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk). "The website is a fabulous idea and as far as I know a unique one. Designed and created with such strong partnership and managed by service users is something to be proud of. It's clear there is still ignorance and stigma surrounding mental health issues and we need to continue to raise awareness and tackle this; which is exactly what the website does" commented Dr Hilary Jones.



Rachael Williams, photographed above, is a member of New Horizons and has been a service user since 1988. She said "The website launch is extremely exciting and I feel the member forum and chat room are particularly important. You can log on any time, day or night, and talk to other people with mental health issues in the same position as yourself".

If you would like more information on the website, are interested in volunteering as a photographer, journalist, trainer or administrator or if you would like to contribute artwork, photos, poetry or short stories, please contact:

**Angela Evans** on **(01685) 881113**  
or e-mail [mh-support@btconnect.com](mailto:mh-support@btconnect.com).

## How are we doing so far?

**11,000 newsletters** distributed by the mental health support partnership.

**420,107 Hits** on the Mental Health Support Website. in October and November 2006

**759 documents** including the RCT Emotional and Well-being guide and carers pack were downloaded off the site

**63 people** became registered members and joined in discussions on the website forum

Members' comments

"I have found that the reception when posting a topic is great especially when you need advice. Great site great idea"

"It's easy to use and great to see something like this being developed locally"



Dr Hilary Jones sharing a joke with the audience.

This newsletter is edited by Mental Health Support Partnership Team





**Ategi Host with Lisa**

### **Ategi-Adult Placement Service is making a difference**

The Ategi Adult Placement Service was set up for Rhondda Cynon Taf with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's Carers Grant. The aim was to find suitable people to give short breaks to carers and the people they support. Lisa lives with her parents in the Rhondda. For the last few years she has found it difficult to do household tasks. Her confidence became so low that she was unable to leave the house even to go to the local shop. She became reliant on her family.

The Ategi Adult Placement Service (APS) find assess and train individuals, couples, families who want to offer overnight stays, weekend or longer breaks to people with wide ranging

support needs. Through Ategi (APS), Lisa was introduced to a host carer who lives near Caerphilly with her dogs and cats. Lisa stays with her host carer for a weekend each month. Lisa says, "When I first met my host I lacked confidence in myself, now I look forward to having a break from my family and getting away from my normal surroundings". "I used to get panicky at the thought of going into a supermarket but my stays with my host have given me the encouragement to push myself more."

If you would like to know more about APS Telephone 02920813434 and speak to Tim Southern or email [tims@ategi.co.uk](mailto:tims@ategi.co.uk)

### **Carers Telephone Counselling Service**

Whether you are new to caring or have been caring for many years telephone counselling may be for you. The counselling service has been in place for four years and has provided support to over 200 local carers and feedback about the service has been very positive. Counselling is provided by Sue Yeo, an experienced counselor who has been with the scheme since it began.

The aim of the service is to offer carers help to find their own solutions to their problems and concerns. To use the service carers can ring the Freephone CarersLine on 08081001801 to arrange an appointment. The service is FREE and feedback has shown that individuals can feel a great sense of relief by having the opportunity to speak confidentially to a trained listener.

### **Book Prescription Wales**

Residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf are able to access self-help books from their local library under the 'Book Prescription Wales' scheme. The Welsh Assembly Government in conjunction with NHS Wales initially funded the project. The scheme enables health care professionals to prescribe books that are specifically chosen for people to give guidance and a deeper understanding of their mental health condition. The books will be available to borrow from all libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is open to all regardless of whether they are members of the library or not. Each library stocks a selection of books that offer practical help in overcoming issues such as panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, low self-esteem and stress.

### **Learning is Good for Your Mental Health**

The WEA is a voluntary organisation that runs learning opportunities in the community providing good quality education throughout South Wales from non-accredited art & craft to accredited classes in Community Development and Teacher Training.

As an organisation, we recognise the value of community education, not just from the point of attaining new skills and qualifications but also how important these classes are for people wishing to increase their confidence, make new friends and build self-esteem. We pride ourselves in making the learning opportunities we provide, accessible, friendly and supportive of individual needs.

For further information regarding classes and opportunities with the WEA, please contact Kim Madden on 01685 382710.

No fees will be issued if they are overdue. For more information about the Book prescription Wales scheme' please contact your local GP's surgery or your nearest library branch. To see a list of mental health books available through the scheme go to [www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk)



**Book Prescription Wales at Pontypridd Library**

## Christian Spirituality & Mental Health



Father Bernard Jones  
Parish of Hirwaun

**'God will never  
exclude'**

Thank God these days so many people are involved in the care of those in our community who experience mental health problems. We hear the phrase so often about mind, body and spirit and to achieve perfect harmony within ourselves we need to achieve a balance of all three.

'Spirit' is about that relationship between God and each of us. It is easy to say that 'God loves us' but much harder to actually believe it and be sure of it in our hearts. Sometimes we can exclude ourselves from the love that Jesus wants to give us as sometimes we feel ourselves excluded. Exclusion is about being shunned, snubbed, misunderstood, feared even, and kept at a distance.

Often people keep me at a distance because they may not have been to church for a while, they may feel guilty about something, perhaps they don't know what to say to a vicar or they may feel that they might say the wrong thing.

I make light about this but sometimes it is hurtful when people shy away. It is good when people just accept me for being Bernard and ignore everything else about me, including me being a vicar.

There is a story in the bible about 'Ten Lepers'. Lepers were excluded and had to live away from their families as people didn't understand the disease and feared them, so much so that every leper had to carry a bell to warn people that they had leprosy. One day Jesus was walking by and stopped to talk with ten lepers, he healed all of them.

What Jesus did was to show that he could and would approach anyone and everyone. His love for us isn't restricted to those who go to church or whom we regard as good, Jesus goes out to each and every one of us. In his eyes we are the people who are included, yes you and me.

**Fr. Bernard Jones Parish of Hirwaun**

## Carers as Partners

Health and social care staff have recently had the opportunity to attend training, where they were able to discuss how to improve partnership working with carers. The sessions were facilitated by an experienced trainer from the Bridgend Carers project and designed to develop a multidisciplinary approach to this important area of work. It was a thought-provoking day for all who attended, asking questions such as who are carers and what is their role? The groups were also able to discuss at length the significant contribution carers make to the lives of those people whom they support.

The training gave a carer's perspective on caring for people who experiences of mental ill health. Time was also spent exploring how carers would like to be treated and how they could be involved in the assessment and care planning process. It raised issues about how health and social care workers interact with carers and the type of information that can and should be shared with them. More sessions are planned for next year and it is hoped that this will be the beginning of regular joint training sessions, including training held with service users and carers.

One positive outcome from the day is that Kath Richards from the RCT Carer's Support Project will be meeting representatives of the Psychiatry Service at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, to raise their awareness of the work undertaken by the project.



## Ty Hafod Assertive Outreach Team

Ty Hafod (AOT) is the development of the existing Community Rehabilitation Team following the recent review of mental health services in North Glamorgan NHS Trust. The AOT will continue to support individuals with severe and enduring mental health problems; however there will be a greater emphasis on supporting those who have previously experienced difficulties in using existing mental health services. The AOT will work with only a small group of individuals at any one time allowing for intensive support which will be creative and flexible in working with the needs of the client, (this is the essence of an assertive approach).

The team's prime aim is to empower and enable people to manage their problems more effectively. Staff seek to enhance the quality of life and mental stability of service users and encourage their participation in short and long term recovery by focusing on their strengths. They will also work to reduce crisis admissions and reduce the negative impact of any necessary hospital admissions. Ty Hafod AOT will operate across both Merthyr and the Cynon valleys, supporting people in their own environment, seven days a week and in conjunction with established support services in the area. During the initial recruitment and development stage the team will not be open to any new referrals, but will continue to support their existing caseloads. The team hopes to be fully operational in early 2007.

For any further information please contact:  
Mark Abraham team leader on 01685 726555

## Up! Up! And Away

During Rhondda Cynon Taf Mental Health Week in October, Ty Heddwch Day Centre organised a balloon release. 500 hundred balloons were released in the grounds of Michael Sobell Sports Centre in Aberdare to raise awareness of mental health and to promote the launch of the new Mental Health Support Website.

Over 60 tags from the balloons were returned. The tags covered a wide range of locations in South Wales and England including Glamorgan, Gwent Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Sussex, Suffolk, Kent and Essex. We even had four tags returned from across the channel in France.

The furthest tag returned by the closing date of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2006 was from Orgemont Cerny in France Some 502 miles away from the release site (postcode to postcode). The finder of this balloon being the winner has received £100 worth of vouchers. The supporter of this balloon (tag no. 367) has also received £100 of vouchers.

Everyone who returned a tag will receive a letter thanking them for participating in the event with details of the winning distance.



**The Balloons being released at the Michael Sobell Centre, Aberdare**

## Seasons Greetings



The Mental Health Support Partnership Team would like to wish all of its readers a Very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year

## New Horizons Poetry Day Highlights Mental Health

Boyd Clack, writer and actor of 'High Hopes' and 'Satellite City' and Patron of New Horizons, recently attended their Open Day and launched 'Catch My Thoughts' a poetry book written by members of New Horizons. The launch was the culmination of a week of events organised by New Horizons, aimed at promoting a positive image of mental health and emotional wellbeing issues.



Boyd, who has experienced depression for 16 years, commented "The judgement of any society – at least any good society – is how they treat their weakest. And our society tries to wash its hands of people with mental health problems. They basically want to ignore them, want them to go away. So even a reclusive person like me is prepared to stir themselves up from time to time – even if it's very difficult – because it is such a good cause". New Horizons volunteers, Kay Jones and Mike Olson, who co-ordinated the project are extremely pleased with its success. Mike commented "It's an amazing achievement – not just for me – but for everyone involved in getting the book published. A massive thank you to everyone who came along to the launch – in particular to Boyd who contributed and to Steve Powell of Valleys Radio who covered the event". Kay, photographed with Mike at the launch stated "Having my poems

published has given my self esteem a real boost – I feel famous and extremely proud of myself".



To buy a copy of 'Catch My Thoughts' – please telephone 01685 881113 - Cost per book is £2.50 plus p&p.

## Routes to recovery a service user's perspective

My name is Julian Evans. I go a group called 'Routes to Recovery' where service users meet up at Interlink in Pontypridd every two weeks. In 'Routes To Recovery' we get people coming in to do talks and learn many skills: communication and presentation skills, listening and much more. We also help other service users with completing 'The Only Way is Up' booklet. When doing this you are called a 'volunteer mentor'. During my involvement I was encouraged to do my poetry, I wrote one about Routes to Recovery. I have promoted Recovery through GTFM and Valleys Radio so I myself want to encourage you service users to join in the project. You will get a boost of confidence like I did.

**For more details contact Kath Jones at Interlink (01443) 485337**



**Julian Evans Poem about the project can be viewed on [www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk)**