



Consumer Get-Togethers

Consumers meet twice a month: at an evening Consumer Forum and a day-time Consumer Action Group (CAG). We have our evening Consumer Forum on the fourth Tuesday of the month and have shared fish and chips and pizza for the last two meetings.

We have been consistently getting new members and the crowd has been between 9 to 12 people in attendance. It's great to see! The last two CAGs—held on the second Tuesday of every month at lunch time—have been held at the Todd Tavern and Watertank Café, and were attended by 16 and 8 people respectively.

Consumer Code of Conduct

At the Consumer Forum we have reviewed the 'Consumer Code of Conduct' so that it can be made into a poster-board to be hung up at the Drop-In Centre. The Code of Conduct—see next page—outlines the general expectations of behaviour held by the Consumer Forum of all consumers when attending MHACA, the Drop-In Centre and D2DL activities. This document will be given to new consumers at MHACA when they meet with staff so that they know what will be expected of them. The Code of Conduct has been reviewed and endorsed by the MHACA Committee.



Above: Glenise speaking at the MHACA Information Sharing Session on 12 November about the presentation she gave with Claudia and Gwvynyth at the 2008 TheMHS Conference in New Zealand

Actions that have been taken as a result of the Consumer Forum ...

Consumer Representatives

Consumer representatives have been nominated: 1) to represent D2DL to allied services and reference groups 2) to work on a Policy for 'Supervision and Safety of Children Attending MHACA' 3) to give a presentation at the 2008 TheMHS conference in New Zealand, and 4) to do a speech and song at the Mental Health Week Dinner with Jonathon Welch and MHACA AGM.

Long Camp

A sub-committee is working on the idea of a camp to Darwin in March next year, for a week to a fortnight long. All consumers are most welcome to join the group—please ask Gwvynyth for details.



Left: Kate and Gwvynyth (right), accompanied by David and Lily Roennfeldt, were invited to sing at the opening of the MHACA AGM on 5 November

Christmas Dinner

On Wednesday, 17 December
6.00-9.00pm at The Golden Inn,
9 Undoolya Rd, Alice Springs.
Staff, carers, consumers and
family are all invited - cost \$20
Please RSVP to Em on 8950 4600
to RSVP by 10 December

Drop In & Drop Offs

The Consumer Forum has requested approval for MHACA to provide a drop-off service for clients who attend the Drop-In and D2DL program, especially in times of extreme weather. It is envisaged MHACA will be able to provide a daily drop-off time at 3.30pm from the premises directly home for those who require a lift.

This will be trialed in December as the weather becomes hotter. It will just require people to register their names at the front desk prior to 3.00pm so we know the size of vehicle we require.

Code of Conduct for Consumers

Integrity - Consumers and staff *working together* to further MHACA's aims. To not strive for personal gain or private outcomes. To try to reach consensus on issues that are being discussed.

Honesty - To *disclose interest* where consumers may have financial or personal gains, and withdraw from meetings if there is potential conflict between their own interest, colleagues and MHACA's interest.

Confidentiality - To *respect the privacy of others*. To not talk about consumer business with other members of the community and to not disclose any information which is private to consumers.

Impartiality - To provide *unbiased input* within a designated task. To represent the broader consumer views and not just their own.

Respectful Behaviour - To *treat others with courtesy and respect*. Incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, and aggressive or verbal abuse towards other consumers and staff will not be condoned or tolerated.

Tolerance - To *accept others* regardless of gender, culture or religious background. Discrimination of any form is in direct opposition to the Code of Conduct.

Complaints/Feedback - Is *appreciated and acted upon* to upgrade the performance of MHACA services. An advocate is available upon request.

This Code of Conduct will be incorporated in the MHACA Policy and Guidelines Manual and is endorsed by the MHACA Committee.

Consumer Agenda

Aside from the regular D2DL & Grow calendar, consumers have taken part in an interesting agenda with attendances at the Mental Health Week Dinner, Trephina Gorge Choir afternoon (with lunch), Yoga-Relaxation Sessions on Wednesday evenings, and the 2008 TheMHS Conference in Auckland, NZ.

In addition to all the above, the Consumer Forum aims to provide a place to contribute dynamic ideas to add to our D2DL calendar. Due to the holiday season the December Consumer Forum will be not be on. ☒

To find out more on the Consumer Forum we are on the web at www.mhaca.org.au and click on the Consumer Action page link

Gwynyth Cassiopeia~Roennfeldt, MHACA Consumer Representative



I Am Me

I am who I am,
but not who I want to be
I am what I am, and what I am is me
I am not you, nor who you think I am
There is a lot more to me,
but I am still who I am

You see me as a patient,
client or consumer
But I am not any of these,
I am simply just me
I wish I could show you,
all that is inside me
But some is secret,
and some is yet to be

I wish you could see me,
beyond all the labels
Beyond all the illness,
the toils & troubles
One day you just might, you never know
If I stop trying to hide it,
but instead let it all show

Maybe then you will see
all I that I can be
All that is in there, all that is me
I don't need your sympathy,
I don't need to be fixed
I just need you to see me,
and allow me to be me

So my request to you then,
is for you to see me
as a real person, and simply just me
My question is then,
will you see me as such
will you see I'm not fragile,
and won't break if you touch

Sandi 2008

Consumer action (cont.)



Yoga-Relaxation with Kalika ...

A reminder that the second season of Relaxation with Kalika has begun and continues on Wednesday nights from 6.00-7.30pm. It is open to all and the feedback from participants is that it really makes a difference to their wellbeing, particularly some of the troubling emotional and muscular symptoms resulting from medication. Kalika's CD is also available for purchase at a very cheap price of only \$8.00 for consumers. Please ring Carmel, Sean or Lynne to secure your copy. *Don't forget that we can give assistance with transport if you have difficulty at that time of the evening.*

Something different ...

- ◆ Beadwork for Xmas Gifts or for sale at the Open day in December. This activity can be set up whenever it is convenient for consumers.
- ◆ Creative Canvas or Watercolour painting can be set up whenever a consumer has the urge to express themselves ... Just ask Carmel, Sean or Lynne.

Healthy Eating with Pip

Pip is doing marvelously in the Thursday morning Cooking Sessions, making cheap, nutritious and simple meals. Support from consumers has been good but we always welcome extra helping hands ... so come along on a Thursday to see what's cookin'! We are hoping to have a small booklet of these recipes plus simple Xmas cooking ideas available for sale in December at a small cost. Join in—it's delicious!! ☒



Pip doing a fantastic job with preparing food for special occasions—including tasty nibbles for our AGM





Above: Asanta Sana choir performing at Trepnina Gorge as part of the 'Strings on the Rock's concert on Sunday, 21 September

Right: A hearty BBQ lunch was enjoyed prior to the Trepnina Gorge concert, a memorable afternoon for all who came



My lagoons amidst with
your golden ponds
My shores awashed with
your rainbow skies
My flowers abloom with
your heavenly breeze
Encasing me with your scent
Your shadow holds my hand
Walking me through
my garden of Eden

John Moffat

"Great acts are made up of small deeds."
Lao Tzu



Left: Consumers and staff being treated to a chicken and salad lunch on Melbourne Cup day



Above: The D2DL computer room is available for use throughout the day—Steph and Rudi doing some serious 'surfing in the desert'



GROW Information Sessions

If you have a group, club or association that would like to host a GROW presentation to find out more about the Program, please feel free to ring Carmel on 8950 4612 to discuss a suitable date.