



15th Annual THEMHS Conference

Dancing to the Beat of a Different Drum - Mental Health, Social Inclusion, Citizenship

31 August - 2 September 2005 Adelaide Convention Centre

The theme of the conference was framed to reflect the “drum” being the heartbeat of an inclusive society, where citizenship for people with mental illness are valued. “In this society our relationships are built on the recognition of the worth of each individual. We value the diversity of beliefs, values and attitudes that we each take on our journey. Our ability to grow and to appreciate those who we meet along the way comes from inclusion and is strengthened through shared experiences. Understanding the uniqueness of the people we encounter en route enables us to appreciate the complex, diverse and elegantly simple nature of the society we all share. Each person’s journey becomes a trail growing into a well worn pathway which can be shaped and expanded by the footsteps of others, moving in the same direction, leaving a collective impression in the sands of our social landscape.”

Manager Claudia Manu-Preston attended the conference. The following is an overview of some of the sessions which she found to be the most interesting and relevant to MHACA.

Wednesday 31 August:

where are we going? government policies and strategies for the future

Nathan Smyth: Assistant Secretary, Health Priorities & Suicide Prevention Branch & Arawhetu Peretini, Manager, Moari Mental Health Team, Mental Health Directorate

This session was a talk about future directions and policy initiatives for each country. Mr Smyth spoke broadly about the investment that the government had already made through additional funding to the mental health sector. He spoke about the national projects of Mind-frame, Mindmatters, Ausinet, Beyond Blue and Mental Health Consumers Network, and the government’s role and outcomes achieved to date.

Mr Smyth displayed limited knowledge about mental health issues and spoke directly to his Powerpoint presentation made up of output measures and project information. The dismantle-

ment of the Mental Health Unit and renaming of Health Priorities and Suicide Prevention Branch demonstrated to me the government’s lack of commitment to mental health.

Mr Smyth was asked why Australia does not have a Mental Health Commission, and why the government continued to concentrate on projects when the coordination and delivery of services were in crisis. In response Mr Smyth spoke about the government’s frustration at the lack and quality of services the States and Territory were providing. He said mental health was no different to the range of issues other health areas were facing, and therefore a commission was a bandaid approach to challenges related to Australia’s constitution.

Lastly, Mr Smyth spoke about the reports due to be released by HEROC, MHCA and the Senate Inquiry and how these reports would assist the government in the upcoming reforms.

Thursday 1 September:

recovery ! from rhetoric to reality

Ron Coleman is a mental health trainer, author and consultant specialising in psychosis

prevention and resolution. He has designed training packages to enable voice hearers to gain ascendancy over the negative aspects of the voice hearing experience. His own route to recovery after spending 13 years in and out of the psychiatric system has given him many insights into the many difficult issues facing today’s mental health services. Ron has published several books including “Politics of the Madhouse” and “Recovery: An Alien Concept?” and co-authored “Working with Voices” and “Working to Recovery”.

Ron’s presentation was challenging and moving, as well as humorous and informative. He spoke about the importance to work from a strengths-based approach, and explained that many people with a mental illness succeed and live purposeful lives without the use of services – personal responsibility is part and parcel of recovery and is only the consumer’s role and responsibility. He also spoke about how services rarely build in an “exit pathway” for consumers, therefore reinforcing dependency.

Ron’s main message was to instil hope and to walk beside the consumer. I encourage all staff and consumers to listen to his presentation on CD.

consumer participation

This presentation explored the BBQ as a credible social inclusion activity. Consumers talked about the lack

consumers talked about the lack of support and funding because there is a perceived attitude that people only come for the food and not the companionship.

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Congratulations to CAMHS

... on their successful accreditation through the ACHS. The Service was assessed against the National Mental Health Standards and six key areas of:

- Continuum of Care
- Leadership and Management
- Human Resource Management
- Information Management
- Safe Practice and Environment; and
- Improving Performance

Thank you to everyone who gave feedback.



CAMHS staff (L to R): Cecil Johnson, Daniel Mullholland, Phyllis Gorey, Jean Gregory, Bronwyn De Aldi, Sherrilee Portlock, John Gregory, Lance Sutcliffe, Jean Roberts, Jude Pringle, Tony Fitzpatrick, Chris Castle

of support and funding because there is a perceived attitude that people only come for the food and not the companionship. The presenters talked about the government's requirement to show an outcome for any activity, and that this was not always possible within the given timeframe because there may not be visible improvements within the first six months. Consumers felt that funding requirements focused on a one-dimensional outcome as opposed to building outcomes.

The presenters talked about how they had worked hard in Mental Health Week through art shows and writing competitions to show-case the sort of activities that worked in their region.

other sessions

The other sessions I attended were:

- Critical Analysis and review of Referrals of Fairfield Comm. Mental Health
- Measuring Consumer Needs in a Community Rehabilitation and Support Service, CANC
- Routine Outcome Measurement in Mental Health
- Men's and Women's Health: Walk, Talk and Gawk: Aboriginal Mental Health
- Larrikia Nationa Male Focus Group: What do you do when your mate is telling you about committing suicide ?
- Inailau-A-Tina Pacific Women Tell Their Stories

If you would like to know more please give me a call. ✕

Claudia

Listening ...

You are not listening to me when ...

You say you understand.

You have an answer to my problem before I've finished telling you my problem.

You cut me off before I've finished speaking.

You finish my sentences for me.

You are dying to tell me something.

You tell me about your experiences, making mine seem unimportant.

You refuse my thanks by saying you really haven't done anything.

You are listening to me when ...

You really try to understand me, even when I am not making much sense.

You grasp my point of view, even when it's against your own sincere convictions.

You allow me to make my own decisions, even though you think they might be wrong.

You don't take my problem from me, but allow me to deal with it in my own way.

You hold back the desire to give me good advice.

You do not offer me religious solace when you sense I am not ready for it.

You give me enough room to discover for myself what is really going on.

You accept my gratitude by telling me how good it makes you feel to know that you have been helpful.

Anon