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www.mifsa.org

Awards, a book, and an AGM

MEMBERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS OF MIFSA ARE WARMLY INVITED TO ATTEND THE 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER, COMMENCING 6PM.

And 2009 is a year to celebrate!

MIFSA's 25th year – a book launch to commemorate it – presentation of the 2009 Sunflower Awards – and MIFSA's Board of Management acknowledged and applauded for this year's amazing achievements.

Fittingly, MIFSA's 25th year has coincided with MIFSA's long needed move to our new address; and not just one new address but three, growing into a total of five that very soon will be six. Over the years, and with the greatest growth in recent years, MIFSA's range of programs and services – for so long only dreamed about – have also increased, enabling MIFSA to better support people with lived experience of mental illness, their carers and families.

Not only will you hear more about these exciting events, but you will also attend the Launch of *From Little Seeds, A Big Tree Grows*, written to commemorate MIFSA's 25th year and acknowledge the journey shared by so many. The book honours the 'hard-yard' years of 'pain without much plenty' that foundation members put in to grow MIFSA from its early beginnings as two distinct and important organisations – Schizophrenia Fellowship of South Australia (SFSA) and Mood Disorders (SA) Association (MDA) – into the dynamic organisation it is today, and which is highly respected in the mental health sector.

Come – join us all – and celebrate!

Congratulate the Sunflower Award winners, show your appreciation to the Board members and be at the launch of *From Little Seeds, A Big Tree Grows*.

Acknowledge the past and welcome the future at the Fullarton Park Community Centre, Cnr Fullarton Road and Fisher Street, Fullarton (parking available).



Vision & Mission

Our vision is that every person with mental illness is able to make a valued contribution to society, without stigma or discrimination, due to an increased understanding and awareness of mental illness in the community and the availability of appropriate services as required.

Our mission is to provide education, support, rehabilitation and recovery based programs in a safe, quality environment to assist people with mental illness and their natural support network living in South Australia to enjoy the best possible quality of life.



From left: Amanda Porter, Natasha Miliotis, Karen Copping, Mayor of Mount Gambier Steve Perryman, Emmaline McKiernan, Ingrid Coombe and Heather Nowak

Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) Program: South East Country SA

THE MENTAL ILLNESS FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS EXCITED TO HAVE OPENED OUR NEW MIFSA SITE IN MOUNT GAMBIER.

We would like to thank all the individuals and services (over 80 people!) who attended our opening Morning Tea on 29 July 2009 and extended such a warm welcome to MIFSA and our South East Country SA Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) Program. MIFSA joins a range of local services in delivering much needed mental health programs and now have an office base for our Programs in the South East Country SA region.

The South East Country SA PHaMs team has been busy training, networking, and promoting the PHaMs Program and have received referrals from a variety of service providers, family members and people who have self referred. We would like to introduce the team to you:

Team Leader:

Ingrid has a background in mental health nursing and also has a family member with a mental illness.

Coordinator:

Maureen has had experience with a job network agency providing personal support for people who have been long term unemployed.

Program Workers:

Karen is studying Social Work and is currently in her 3rd year.

Emmaline has previously worked for community services in Whyalla and is studying Drug and Alcohol Counselling.

Heather is a Beyond Blue Ambassador for anxiety and depression.

Peter has a background in a caring role and has also worked with men exhibiting difficult behaviours.

Brad has previously worked with youth and is in his 3rd year of Social Work studies.

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program in the South East Country SA area will share journeys of recovery with people living with mental illness. This work will occur in coffee shops, workplaces, schools, TAFEs, community centres, parks and homes across the region. PHaMs Program Workers will walk alongside PHaMs participants as they take a key role in managing their own mental health. We are pleased to have such a diverse work force to be able to assist participants to reach their goals.



Above and below: the MIFSA Mount Gambier community share the opening of the new Mount Gambier premises



From left: Maureen Scanlon, Heather Nowak, Karen Copping, Emmaline McKiernan and Ingrid Coombe

Just a reminder:

Annual General Meeting of the Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia will be held on Tuesday, 3 November 2009, 6pm at the Fullarton Park Community Centre, Cnr Fisher Street and Fullarton Road, Fullarton. For catering purposes, please RSVP to MIFSA Wayville Reception, 8378 4100 by Friday, 23 October 2009.





From the President

IN OUR TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR, I AM GETTING EXCITED BY THE EMERGING HISTORY BEING WRITTEN BY OLGA GOSTIN.

I'm lucky to be one of the people able to comment on various drafts, and the pictures of people and events are becoming more vivid for me by the day. It's going to be a great read.

That has caused me to reflect on the consumers and carers that began all this in 1983/4, and how our current membership compares with them. While MIFSA reaches thousands of individuals through its programs, a number also choose to become financial members. Our membership is made up of a fascinating mixture of people. About 250 individuals and families are registered as carers, and another 200 as consumers. Family memberships are usually about three people, so our best guess is that consumers and carers represent about

800-900 individuals. We also have dozens of health professionals, perhaps twenty five health and community organizations and a handful of commercial companies as paid members. Members come from all strata of society, and from just about every post-code in South Australia.

My guess is that this is still much the type of membership the founders had in mind. It's also a good basis for us to use the term 'consumer/carer based organisation' as we often do, particularly when talking to potential funders who want to know if we speak with an authentic voice. Our membership base is what makes us a unique organisation, and it is growing all the time. No matter how big MIFSA gets, and no matter how many staff we can employ, that membership remains the bedrock of why we are here.

David Meldrum



From the Chief Executive Officer

THERE IS CAUSE FOR BOTH CELEBRATION AND REFLECTION IN OUR 25TH YEAR OF DELIVERING SERVICES FOR AND WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, THEIR CARERS AND FAMILIES.

In response we have been preparing a book which "engages lightly and somewhat randomly with the events, people and milestones that inspired the founders, consumer members and staff" of the organisations which make up the MIFSA we know in 2009.

Our 25th Anniversary book: "From little seeds, a big tree grows" will be revealed at our Annual General Meeting next month. I hope that many of you will join us for our AGM which includes the Sunflower Awards as well as a fitting celebration of our first 25 years!

The AGM is also an important opportunity to reflect on the year that was as well as confirm a new Board who will guide us into our future. This year we have many more candidates than positions, so please have a read of nominee profiles on pages 8 and 9, and then join us on

Tuesday, 3 November to cast your vote. Proxy voting is available for members, please call Michael Becker at MIFSA for details.

The Sunflower Awards 2009 are also held with the AGM with a Consumer committee and Carer committee forming this month to work their way through a fantastic pile of nominations of individuals, programs and organisations delivering best practice in mental health in South Australia. I do not envy them their task in choosing a Consumers Choice and Carers Choice Sunflower Award for 2009.

It seems there is plenty to celebrate as we will be marking the historic relocation of our central office to Wayville with an official opening on Monday, 2 November. Please come to 5 Cooke Tce Wayville at 10am for a morning tea and opportunity to celebrate in our new space. If the car parking undercroft is already full please park in the Show Ground car park 2 on Rose Terrace.

...and finally, happy Mental Health week!

Natasha Miliotis



Key Dates:

Mental Health Week
4 – 10 October

MHW Launch
Tuesday, 6 October

MIFSA Wayville Launch
Monday, 2 November, 10am

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, 3 November

MIFSA 25 year Celebration and Sunflower Awards
Tuesday, 3 November

Volunteers Acknowledgement Function
Friday, 20 November

Therapeutic Groups Program

SUPPORTS THE PRINCIPLES OF REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY AND UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS HOPE AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

The groups focus on building strengths and achieving the best possible quality of life. Sharing ideas and methods for managing well-being in a group with others who have similar experiences can be particularly helpful.

If you are interested in any of these programs or for more information please contact Belinda, phone 8378 4100 or by email: belinda@mifsa.org

The focus is about thriving, not just surviving

Belinda is back!

NO, YOU ARE NOT IMAGINING IT – I AM THE SAME BELINDA BROWN WHO PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH THE PEER WORKER PROJECT AND YES, I DID LEAVE MY ROLE AT MIFSA BACK IN MAY.

However, I was fortunate enough to apply for and win another position here. Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me home! I'm on a learning curve as I get to know my new programs – Education and Therapeutic Groups, which (as an Adult Educator) is my area of passion.

Ironically, as I write this article, 'Adult Learners' Week' is being launched across the nation. What a perfect time to remind ourselves of the part education and awareness play in mental health recovery.

There is a great deal of evidence to support the benefit of education and awareness in the recovery process. According to *'Pathways of Recovery: 4As Framework for Preventing Further Episodes of Mental Illness'* (D. Rickwood, 2006), 'Awareness' is one of the key elements in the recovery process. The framework cites awareness as the process of "developing an understanding of one's mental health needs and the potential to be vulnerable to further episodes". It also states that "A general understanding of one's mental health... learning to understand personal wellness needs in terms of risk and protective factors is essential to supporting future mental health". In other words, having an understanding of our diagnosis and an awareness of our warning signs and symptoms forms a crucial part of our recovery process and self-management.

I think about the significance of this in my life recently. Over the past few years, I made a conscious effort to explore my triggers, warning signs and symptoms. I have developed strategies to prevent or reduce the impact the illness has on my daily life. The importance of this came to light when, back in May, I left my position at MIFSA to pursue a role with another organisation.

Coming Sessions:

Psychosis

Level 1, Education Centre, Modbury Hospital	Week beginning 2 November to week ending 11 December
Clarence Park Community Centre, 72 East Avenue, Black Forest	Week beginning 2 November to week ending 11 December

Communicating Effectively

Community Campus, Gunther St Elizabeth Grove	Week beginning 2 November to week ending 11 December
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Voice Hearers' Group

MIFSA Conference Room 5 Cooke Terrace, Wayville	Thursdays, held weekly 1pm – 2:30pm
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There are always factors that produce stress when starting in a different role – new people, new workplace, getting to know the duties of the position. Added to this were some extraordinarily extreme and unexpected circumstances which were so overwhelming that the pressure became too much. Remembering the tools for managing my health I immediately took time out, put my strategies into action and sought help. This process has prevented my symptoms from worsening and allowed me to return to a place where I am managing my mental health – not the other way round.

Without education and awareness, I would not have been equipped with the tools I needed to get back on track and would undoubtedly still be battling. And my education is ongoing – I am always learning new things about myself from fellow educators, staff and other consumers. It is a lifelong journey!

MIFSA's Education Program and Therapeutic Groups aim to destigmatise mental illness and educate people, both consumers and non, in order that they will become better equipped in managing their own health and wellbeing or in supporting others. If you want to learn more about your mental health, develop your own strategies for management and be involved in a supportive learning environment, I encourage you to look at how these programs can share your journey.

John F. Kennedy once said, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation". Remember, what you learn about your mental health could also benefit others.

Belinda Brown
Coordinator, Therapeutic Groups and Education Program

So you want to employ a Peer worker within your Organisation?

THE PEER WORK PROJECT NOT ONLY WORKS WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO WISH TO BECOME PEER WORKERS BUT ALSO WORKS WITH ORGANISATIONS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN EMPLOYING PEER WORKERS.

We can provide insight, knowledge and support to organisations wishing to/or currently employing Peer Workers. This knowledge is based on our years of project development and interaction with existing employers.

“A good culture already existed (i.e. inclusive practice) but it has allowed us to ‘practice what we preach’. Having Peer Workers strengthens our convictions also.” (Manager)

There are many benefits for organisations to employ Peer Workers:

- One of the major benefits to mental health services is the potential cost-saving resulting from decreased hospitalization rates and shortened lengths of stay in hospital
- Peer work can also offer a mechanism for serving individuals who are in need of services but who are alienated from the traditional mental health system
- Evidence indicates that, when peer work is added to traditional services, the outcomes for consumers are enhanced and the services are more effective. Peer Workers offer a special skill that traditional services may not be able to: HOPE for recovery
- Peer work enhances the ability of organisations to meet the needs of the community
- There is also evidence that peer workers have an impact on altering the negative attitudes of mental health providers. Peer workers give other staff the opportunity to see peers successfully functioning in productive social roles.

There are four key areas to consider when employing a Peer Worker, they include:

- Preparation – organisational commitment and leadership, clear job roles and introducing staff to peer work concept
- Training – for existing staff, peer workers and potential ongoing professional development
- Support – during implementation of concept and after for all staff including the peer workers
- Recruitment – finding the best person for the job.

The Peer Worker Project can assist organisations with every step of the process.

MIFSA and Baptist Care (SA) *Employers toolkit 2009*, which is available to download from our Peer Work website: www.peerwork.org.au and is a useful tool for reflection when going through the process of employing a peer worker.

Information sessions are run on a needs basis for organisations who would like more information about how to employ peer workers or how to further utilise the lived experience of mental illness within an organisation. One to one and tailored support can then be provided to assist with the smooth implementation of peer workers into the organisation.

If you would like any further information or wish to attend an information session about employing Peer Workers please visit www.peerwork.org.au or contact Dei Griffith at MIFSA, phone 8378 4100 or Carmen Franke at Baptist Care (SA), phone 8338 6799.

Dei Griffith
Coordinator, Peer Worker Project
dei@mifsa.org



MIFSA Respite Program: Q&A

QUESTION: What is RESPITE?

ANSWER: It is defined as “an interval of rest or relief” in the Oxford Dictionary. We define it along the same lines: as a short term break from caring responsibilities.

QUESTION: How do we support Carers if services are not provided directly to Carers?

ANSWER: We do deliver RESPITE directly to Carers! We provide Carers with a short term break from their caring responsibilities by offering appropriate, effective and flexible respite services delivered to the person they care for (Care Recipient).

QUESTION: How do I know if I am a Carer?

ANSWER: If you are a family member, friend or neighbour who provides regular or sustained care and assistance to a person living with mental illness, you may be able to access the Program as a Carer. You do not have to be receiving a Carer Allowance.

QUESTION: What Respite options are available?

ANSWER: HEAPS!

- ☀ One-to-one Respite continues to be delivered in the community by trained Respite Workers.
- ☀ Telephone Support has been accessed by a number of Program Participants.
- ☀ Emergency Respite services have been delivered to former Program Participants.
- ☀ Short Break Day Outings have been held at Monarto Zoological Park and Port Adelaide.
- ☀ Retreats have been offered at two country locations in South Australia.

Stay tuned for Respite House Options.

QUESTION: How much does it cost?

ANSWER: Absolutely nothing! The Respite Program receives funding to deliver all of these services to the community without any cost to its Participants.

QUESTION: How do I access the Respite Program?

ANSWER: EASY – call us or email us using the details below. We can post or email information, talk to you on the phone or arrange a visit (your place or ours) to discuss the Program further and how it may suit you.

MIFSA Respite Program
respite@mifsa.org
T (08) 8378 4100 F (08) 8378 4199
PO Box 310, Marlestone SA 5033

The MIFSA Respite Program is funded by the Australian Government under the Mental Health Respite Program

‘Mi RECOVERY’ and the Well Ways suite of programs

‘MI RECOVERY’ IS A NEW EIGHT-WEEK EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTED BY CONSUMERS TO CONSUMERS AND HAS JOINED THE CURRENT WELL WAYS ‘SUITE’ OF FOUR PROGRAMS.

The first of this new peer program will be conducted at Wayville starting in October. Two new ‘Mi Recovery’ Facilitators have been trained in Victoria by Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria. Both Facilitators are excited at this opportunity to assist people with a mental illness to gain skills for their recovery through facts and education.

‘Well Ways Snapshots’ is another new program to be conducted by consumer and carer Facilitators. This short version of ‘Well Ways Building a Future’ program delivers education to those who support people with a mental illness, and is ideal for country areas.

Eyre Peninsula will benefit from a further two people having been trained in Victoria in September to conduct the new ‘Well Ways Snapshots’ program when it is delivered in the Peninsula. Other areas in the country are a future goal for Well Ways.

Well Ways DUO about mental illness and existing substance use and the Well Ways Building a Future (WW BAF) program are both being conducted at various venues. A new WW BAF Program is about to commence on Thursday, 15 October at the Clovercrest Baptist Church, starting at 12:30pm.

For carers and consumers who need details about upcoming programs please contact the MIFSA Well Ways Program for more details.

All programs are evidence-based, evaluated and are based on the ‘bio-psycho-social’ model and ‘stress vulnerability coping’ models of mental illness.

Maureen Lewis
Coordinator, Well Ways Programs
mlewis@mifsa.org

The Spring 2009 Newsletter of the Office for Carers

can be accessed at: www.sa.gov.au/subject/Community+Support/Carers/Corporate+and+business+information/Office+for+Carers and follow the links.

Emotional responsibility

SHATTERED CONFIDENCE, RANGING FROM LOW BELIEF IN SELF TO LITTLE OR NO BELIEF IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE, ACCOMPANY MENTAL ILLNESS AND UNDERMINE RECOVERY.

Lowering confidence feeds a sense of being out of control and an increasing downward spiral. How then to arrest this downturn and move toward recovery?

It helps to pay attention to our feelings and where they are coming from. We need to look at things differently.

"You really make me mad."

"That really makes me happy."

Statements such as these (and we all use them) are based on the unhelpful understanding that our emotions are automatic, caused by people and events around and outside us. This effectively means we are open to being manipulated, controlled by others in some way, as if someone was operating us by remote control.

This may be fine because it gives us a built-in excuse for why we are like we are and provides us with people and circumstances that we can readily blame. But nothing changes.

Neither excusing nor blaming gives us control or self-determination or confidence in ourselves... and these are the very things that are essential for recovery, growth and change.

A different way to look at things is to "own our feelings", so that we say to ourselves, or out loud:

"I feel really mad when _____"

"I am really happy, because _____"

The important part of this approach is that I own these feelings, and I'm not attributing their cause to someone or something else. This difference is what is known as "emotional responsibility."

Feelings are ours and we are responsible for them. No one can "make us" feel anything. The notion that others "make me feel" is totally inaccurate and traps us into blaming where things easily become someone else's fault.

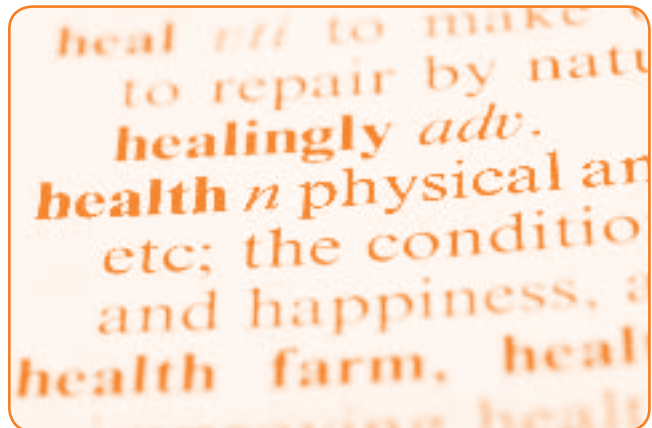
Journeying with mental illness and recovery is enhanced by emotional responsibility as a helpful approach. To think otherwise makes it too easy to blame, excuse, falsify and avoid the reality that we are responsible for ourselves.

When we own our feelings, we have more control over our responses to life, and can develop more options around how we can behave and choose to respond. We "choose" our emotions, and what we will do.

We are more confident and in control .

I am happy to talk with people about this approach to ourselves.

Peter, Counsellor at MIFSA



Education Program

A BIG THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS TO FIONA JOHNSON AND EMILIE GAGNON-MILOT WHO WERE THE MIFSA RADIO HOSTS ON 92.7 FRESH FM THE CHATROOM ON WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST.

The program focused on the impact schizophrenia has on our youth, and our own Sean Hayes shared his inspirational journey and offered hope to those living with the illness.

During the show we received numerous sms messages from listeners and *Fresh FM* host Kiki became quite emotional on hearing Sean's moving story. It is so inspiring to see the work we do having such a profound impact on members of the community. Time and time again we hear how the lived experience is so valued when we educate others on the impact mental illness can have on a person's life.

A big thank you to the team at Fresh for giving us such a wonderful opportunity to reach a potential youth audience of 200,000 listeners. Our next show is scheduled for Wednesday 30 September from 7pm-8pm so don't forget to tune in!

Robyn Miller
Education Officer,
Education, Awareness and Training (EAT) Program
robyn@mifsa.org

Housing SA Accommodation Advice

Fortnightly at MIFSA Wayville on Thursdays, 1-4pm

Housing SA provides an Outreach Service for people with mental illness. To make an appointment with the Outreach Service Officer, phone MIFSA Reception on 8378 4100.

Nominations to MIFSA Board of Management

MARION ANGEL

I have a long term interest in mental health, both professionally and from lived experience. I have trained in psychiatric nursing and been a carer and mentor to individuals living with mental illness. I have also trained in psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery. I have extensive experience in service and program delivery within the Mental Health Sector, including MIFSA's services.

I have an extensive network of contacts within the mental health sector, both at government and NGO levels. I am in the privileged position of having had extensive experience of the Day to Day Living programs at MIFSA. Initially I was a participant, subsequently a sessional worker and eventually a member of the core team staffing the Activity Centre. Now I am a sessional worker with a very good rapport with the participants. In order to fulfil the responsibilities of these roles, it was also necessary to familiarise myself with the roles and functions of all other sections of MIFSA's operations.

I would therefore bring to the Board current knowledge, experience and insight into the needs of MIFSA's participants. I am also personally committed to the 'Sharing the Journey' philosophy and am keen to promote this at MIFSA.

MARION CROSER

I have been an active member of MIFSA since I was a TAFE Student during my 1995 placement. I was fortunate that during this time the new SAMHS was being introduced and I learnt a great deal during this interesting time in the history of mental health services in South Australia.

Following on from TAFE and during my years at University I continued to be involved in this very important NGO for people with a diagnosed mental illness and their family members and carers: MIFSA. I continue to be involved because I feel I can be a voice and an advocate, to continue my quest to de-stigmatise mental illness and educate that this illness is treatable and manageable as part of the person's recovery.

I am Vice President of the Australian Association of Social Workers – in this role and my membership with the International Federation of Social Workers I have been in a position to promote and advocate in the area of mental health and mental illness. I am encouraging fellow social workers to present a paper in Hong Kong next year (2010) and Stockholm in 2012 because mental health/illness is on top of the agenda for both of these World Conferences. This is an opportunity for both local and international research and studies to be explored and shared.

I have been a MIFSA Board Member for around seven years and am currently in my second term as Vice President. I wish to continue my involvement with MIFSA in this way and contribute through my membership to represent our members and be a voice for you at Board Meetings.

EDDY LYNCH

Mental Health is my passion to which I have given my whole working life (psychiatric nurse for more than 40 years) and I also volunteer time to the needs of others. I have served on the MIFSA Board for the past four years and would like to continue contributing in MIFSA's governance, aiming always for best practice. I also continue working with the State Government regarding the Master Plan for SA Specialist Health Services (the re-development of Glenside).

I previously served as President of the Mood Disorders (SA) Association Board for fourteen years and three years as Vice President. I was a foundation member of Family Therapy (SA) Association and the Mental Health Alliance.

I am keen to continue my commitment to support the Board of Management in their work in guiding MIFSA as a leading NGO.

DAVID MELDRUM

I have experience on a number of Boards, both at a state and national level, which I hope gives me the skills and understanding of good governance that can assist MIFSA. I also have good networks in the health and community services sectors, which have opened some doors for MIFSA in the past.

My work history includes extensive experience in both the government and non-government sector in the management of health and community services. Previous roles have included the Chief Executive Officer of South Australian Mental Health Services, with my current focus involving consultation with government and private health organisations in Australia and New Zealand in the development of community services as an alternative to hospitalisation.

I serve on the Boards of Foodbank (SA), the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (Treasurer) and the Adelaide North Eastern Division of General Practice. I am also a keen cyclist and choir singer. I have been on the MIFSA Board for five years, and have a good understanding of its programs, finances and human resources.

I hope my experience and my profound admiration for MIFSA and its people will help me to contribute useful advice on matters of policy, governance and the overall development of MIFSA.

Volunteer work at MIFSA

Looking for voluntary work? Enjoy meeting people?
Committed to supporting MIFSA?

MIFSA provides its range of services through the generous and enthusiastic support of volunteers.

**If you would like to learn more, please contact
Susan Wilkes on 8378 4100 or email susanw@mifsa.org**

Board Nominations *continued*

RICHARD SIMEK

I am a consumer member of both MIFSA and ROOFS Housing (SA) Association, and care about how both are being operated. I would like to contribute positively to MIFSA's direction and the decisions that bring people and income to the Centre.

My skills are in graphic design, advertising and clerical; and other organisations I am connected with are Inprint Design / SA Group Enterprises, a disability employer trainer through Flinders University. As an occasional volunteer, driving coffee groups, "Out There" Program and being involved in the music group, I would also be interested in helping with the preparation of *MIFSA News* and in office administration.

I wish to be a consumer voice and assist Board members in the governance of MIFSA.

MEGAN SKELTON

I am trained in the disability field through training at Flinders University that I commenced just over 10 years ago.

Most of my work experience has included war veterans, aged care, mainly through Domiciliary Care. A personal interest is supporting people with lived experience of Autism.

At this present time, mainly as a member of MIFSA, and also attached to Carramar Clinic as a consumer, I hope to offer better quality of life to all MIFSA members through more and greater extension of grants and funding in future years; and to extend this further, through greater supports for consumers so that family members get all their needs met and understanding, love and compassion, and above all else, respite when and as they need it.

Calling all Volunteers! to attend the Volunteers Acknowledgement Dinner

This is your night! Please come and allow us to thank you for your assistance to MIFSA throughout 2009. Come, enjoy the food, and the company of your volunteer friends.

Invites will be posted to all those who have worked as volunteers for MIFSA throughout 2009. We endeavour to include everyone who have volunteered during 2009, but you have and do not receive an invitation, please phone Cecile at MIFSA Wayville, 8378 4100.

Please phone MIFSA Reception on 8378 4100 to register your place at the table.



SUSAN WILKES

'Sharing the MIFSA Journey' has a deeper significance for me three years down the track, and what an incredible experience it continues to be. My MIFSA journey as a Volunteer, Administration Officer (Reception), Communications Officer and serving Board Member has been during a time of unparalleled organisational growth with MIFSA flourishing as a relevant professional service with heart. It has been a privilege to work with amazing people; and to see multiple examples of lives positively changing in an environment of hope and practical recovery-based programs and services.

I would value the opportunity to continue service with the MIFSA Board for a further term. I have a legal background and was previously employed as a criminal lawyer in SA and Victoria. I have a family history of mental illness, have personally experienced mental illness and in my previous legal capacity have represented people who live with mental illness. I have experienced first hand the helplessness and despair that family members experience when their loved ones are unwell, behaving irrationally, or brought before the Courts. I have also experienced and witnessed recovery and the promise and reality of life lived well with mental illness.

I support MIFSA's vision and strategic purposes and am very excited about the reform of mental health services in our state. MIFSA is a vital, dynamic and relevant presence in our community and I welcome the opportunity to continue to contribute my lived experience and skills as a member of the MIFSA Board of Management.

Thank you to all individuals who have contributed to MIFSA's Board of Management over the last few years, and especially to those continuing on.



Marion Support Group

MEETINGS ARE HELD BIMONTHLY (FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, AUGUST, OCTOBER, DECEMBER) ON THE SECOND MONDAY (EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS) AS SOCIAL GET-TOGETHERS OVER A MEAL AT THE WARRADALE HOTEL, 234 DIAGONAL ROAD; 6:15PM.

BUT for our next meeting DON'T go to the Warradale.

Our next meeting will be a special 'Time Out for Carers' on Saturday, 17 October 2009. A 'Mystery Bus Tour', leaving at 9:30am from Marion Community House and returning at 5:30pm.

Cost to Carers: \$20. Numbers are limited so 'first in best dressed'. Tea Tree Gully members are welcome. Join us for a fun day.

For further details please ring Narelle as soon as you receive your MIFSA News, on 8278 5796.

Regards to you all, hope you can join us on October 17.

Cheers,
Narelle Gordon

Mood Disorders Carers Group

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FOURTH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, AT MARJORIE BLACK HOUSE, 47 KING WILLIAM ROAD, UNLEY; 7:30PM.

Offering help and support to those in the role of caring for people with bipolar affective disorder and depression.

Coming meetings: Tuesdays, 27 October and 24 November 2009.

Newcomers welcome; to join this group please phone MIFSA on 8378 4100.

Group Convenor: Marcia Johnson Timm

Rewire Recovery Group Program 2009

A GROUP FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND/OR MANIA. GROUPS HELD ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 1PM – 2:30PM.

MIFSA Rewire Recovery Group follows the rehabilitation and recovery model, which focuses on supporting people experiencing depression, anxiety and/or mania, to develop and maintain a key role in managing their own recovery.

To attend this group, participants must be willing to practice skills and strategies between sessions.

No referral is required. Please direct all enquiries to Anna Byas, Group Coordinator/Facilitator: annab@mifsa.org or 8378 4100.

All sessions held in MIFSA's Conference Room
5 Cooke Terrace, Wayville (carpark under building or street parking available – observe time restrictions).

October 14	Constructive Communication Explore ways to communicate more positively and comfortably.
November 11	Building Resilience Review values and brainstorm ways to develop a 'can-do' approach to creating the life you want.
December 9	Evaluation and Celebration Where we've been and where to from here.

Voice Hearers' Group

MEETS WEEKLY ON THURSDAYS, 1PM – 2:30PM
AT THE MIFSA CONFERENCE ROOM,
5 COOKE TERRACE, WAYVILLE.

We will work together to:

- Develop effective life management skills as well as voice management skills
- Identify stressful situations and helpful coping strategies
- Increase self-awareness about patterns of voices and how they relate to life events, thoughts and emotions
- Explore personal values and identity related to and apart from voice hearing
- Acknowledge and feel good about strengths and achievements
- Develop goals towards improving health and well-being.

No referral is required. Please direct all enquiries to Anna Byas, Group Coordinator/Facilitator: annab@mifsa.org or 8378 4100.



Bread tags fundraiser

THE TALLY OF BREAD TAGS COLLECTED BY OUR MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, BOTH IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND INTERSTATE, CONTINUES TO GROW.

Thank you all for a fantastic effort!

Our thanks also to the assistance of our volunteers from James Nash House in weighing and bagging the bread tags. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Since the last *MIFSA News*, bread tags collections large and small, from near and far, have been received from:

Bureau of Meteorology, 8th Floor Social Club, Victoria
TAFE SA, Port Augusta Campus
TAFE SA Staff, Elizabeth Campus
CWA, Casterton Victoria
Gawler Uniting Church
Roseworthy Primary School
John & Thea Burrows
Swan Reach and Area Kindergarten
Y Smith, Ascot Park
Andy Kelly, Beverley
Rosie Elmes
Bev Cook and friends, Nandaly Victoria

Thank you all, and the many anonymous donors who leave bread tags at our Sunflower Shops, the Collection Bins, Panangga and the RAH Hospital Kiosk. Your support is appreciated.

Delivery Points for Bread Tags:

Sunflower Shops at Christie Downs, Goodwood or Seacombe Gardens – see addresses below.

Sunflower Shops Collection Bins located at:

- Sixth Ave Shopping Centre, Cnr Sixth Avenue & Stephens Terrace, St Peters
- Woolworth's Plus, 272 Shepherds Hill Rd, Eden Hills

MIFSA Wayville: 5 Cooke Terrace, Wayville 5034

MIFSA Panangga, 64 Elgin Avenue, Christies Beach 5165

MIFSA Mount Gambier, 12 Crouch Street South, Mt Gambier 5290

MIFSA Sunflower Shops are located at:

CHRISTIES DOWNS Shop 4, Flaxmill Shopping Centre, 303 Flaxmill Road; phone 8236 2456

GOODWOOD 145 Goodwood Road (south of the Capri Theatre); phone 8272 7162

SEACOMBE GARDENS 577 Morphett Road; phone 8298 3051

SHOPS COORDINATOR Esha, 0409 697 432



New address, new MIFSA fundraiser

IT IS ALWAYS INTERESTING WHEN SETTLING INTO A NEW SPACE AND COMMUNITY LOCATION, AND HERE AT WAYVILLE HAS BEEN NO EXCEPTION.

Due to our proximity to the Show Grounds, workers and volunteers only needed to stroll over to staff our stall at the annual *disAbility and Ageing Expo* in August (another great day out with lots of chats with the general public about our programs and services, and lots of networking with other service providers). We sincerely thank our volunteers who supported us with this event.

However, we have discovered that in the first week of September our proximity to the Show Ground is quite a hectic experience; but also a potentially lucrative one! Over 500,000 people attended this year's Royal Adelaide Show and with the sounds of screams and laughter in the background, MIFSA was able to use our undercroft car park to raise some much needed funds by charging for prime parking spaces.

Our volunteers were amazing in their commitment, managing the car park to protect our spaces from rogue parkers during the day and ensuring that MIFSA business continued without too much disruption. They opened up the car park after hours and both weekends resulting in fantastic fundraising!

Many thanks to Volunteers Steve, Lynton, Andrew, Paul and Kevin, with the help of staff members for the long hours you put in, we couldn't have achieved this without you.

In Memoriam

Thank you to those who have supported MIFSA in this way with donations in lieu of flowers. It is through your generosity and financial support we can continue to help both people with mental illness and their carers. MIFSA gratefully accepts memorial gifts to help its work. Donations are promptly acknowledged to the bereaved and the donor.

Report on the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING HAVE PUBLISHED A REPORT WHICH PRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 NATIONAL SURVEY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

It provides information on the prevalence of mental disorders, their severity, associated suicidality, and comorbidity with other mental disorders and physical conditions, as well as what services people use for their mental health problems.

The 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing is the second major epidemiological survey of its kind undertaken in Australia, with the first conducted in 1997. The survey is a general household survey of the adult population aged 16-85 years and focuses on the more common or high prevalence mental disorders, namely affective disorders (including depression), anxiety disorders and substance use disorders.

Initial results of the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing were released on 23 October 2008 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The report is available via the ABS website: www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4326.0Explanatory%20Notes12007?OpenDocument

Alternatively, you can view The Mental Health Of Australians 2 at the Department of Health and Ageing website: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs-m-mhaust2

Hard copies of The Mental Health of Australians 2 can be ordered from National Mailing and Marketing by calling (02) 6260 2770 or sending an email to nmm@nationalmailing.com.au



Healthy Living Group workshops

Staying motivated for recovery *and* wellness. 'Personal Development Plan to stay well'.

This is a peer led project: placing the consumer in the 'Drivers Seat'.

Healthy Motivation Strategies	Part 1: Wednesday, 7 October Part 2: Wednesday, 4 November
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- Utilising creative strengths
- Goal setting activities
- Engaging forward planning.

Reducing Christmas and Holiday Stress	Wednesday, 2 December
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- Planning ahead and staying in control
- Coping strategies
- Staying healthy.

All sessions held in the MIFSA Conference Room, 5 Cooke Terrace, Wayville.

Parking available in street (observe time limit signs) or under building, entrance off Rose Terrace.

The workshops are facilitated by Dave Tapley (Consumer Consultant) from 1pm to 2:15pm, followed by positive outlook sharing 2:30pm to 3pm, on the first Wednesday of each month; for anyone interested in the promotion of better health.

The workshops are friendly interactive groups where we share and brainstorm answers and solutions, and our knowledge is enhanced by peers in the group.

Recognised fact sheets are referred to and handouts supplied in easy to understand language.

Group norms apply and must be respected.

Enquires to Dave Tapley by email: dave.tapley@bigpond.com or phone 8378 2723.

Child and family inclusive practice: a pilot program in a community adult mental health service

by Vicki Cowling^a and Matthew Garrett^b

^aA Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Hunter New England Area Health Service, Newcastle, NSW, Australia; ^bRelationships Australia, Newcastle, NSW, Australia (first published: August 2009).

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/10398560902840232

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10398560902840232>

Available from **Australasian Psychiatry**; publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t768481833>



Mental Health Week Activities Sunday 4 – Saturday 10 October

MIFSA Open Days

MIFSA WAYVILLE WILL BE HAVING AN OPEN DAY ON WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER INCLUDING:

- Information about the whole range of MIFSA programs
- The music group playing songs for most of the day
- Woodwork demonstrations on a lathe
- Art group exhibition with possible origami demonstrations
- We will also be providing food throughout the day – platters of sandwiches etc.

More exciting plans for MIFSA Wayville Open Day still are being finalised.

MIFSA PANANGGA IS HAVING AN OPEN DAY ON TUESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 10AM UNTIL 4PM.

People can be given a tour of the premises all the programs will be displayed and some will be inter-active as well, eg. small craft or art activities and cooking etc.

Participants will be wearing badges saying: "Ask me about..." the many programs and courses provided at Panangga.

Free BBQ lunch 12-1pm. For catering purposes, please phone Panangga staff, phone 8382 5588 if you plan to have lunch.

Looking forward to seeing you at either Wayville or Panangga Mental Health Week Open Days.

Carnival in the North 2009

Presented by the City of Playford

Free family event to celebrate Mental Health Week

Open your Mind

Wednesday, 7 October 2009,

11am – 2pm



Art displays

Face painting

Free sausage sizzle

Helpful mental health resources

Wild women and laughter workshops activities, entertainment and information and...

MIFSA will be there!

Playford Civic Centre, 10 Playford Boulevard, Elizabeth

This Place

A PERFORMED READING OF A NEW PLAY BY NINA PEARCE

"The world's gone crazy, we must be mad to want to live in it."

Experience this dynamic, humorous and insightful new work that looks at madness and creativity through the eyes of a psychiatrist, his patient and his frustrated artist wife.

Following the performance the writer invites you to share and discuss your thoughts on the work and the issues relating to mental illness within the piece.



Sunday, 4 October; 3pm and 6:30pm

Friday, 9 October; 7:30pm

To be performed at SA Writers' Centre, 2nd Floor, 187 Rundle Street Adelaide, \$10 general admission, \$5 concession.

Sponsored by the Government of South Australia, Arts SA and the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia.



MIFSA Presents 'Celebration of Life Exhibition'

SUNDAY 4 – WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2009

Come and be part of this Exhibition through Mental Health Week and beyond, being held during mental health week and will be open until Wednesday, 14 October.

This exhibition is to 'showcase' the lives of Carers. Come and share and enjoy this special exhibition. Come and 'Celebrate Life'.

**Exhibition Opening: Sunday, 4 October; 1-4pm
OFFICIAL OPENING at 1:30pm.**

To be held at the West Torrens Auditorium Kurri-Trukko Gallery in the Hamra Centre 1 Brooker Terrace, HILTON.

On Opening Day meet friends and family and enjoy a special afternoon tea. Parking available near venue.

This is a 'Showcase' of your lives – share it with joy and pride.

MIFSA Respite Program

Presents a 5 week SHORT BREAK:

'Healthy Living Series'

The Series offers opportunities for Participants to explore Art & Craft, Multicultural Cooking, Dance, Exercise, and Music through "hands on" activities.

Each week Participants will develop practical skills promoting Healthy Living and Lifestyle options.

Date: Monday 12 October 2009
Monday 19 October 2009
Monday 26 October 2009
Monday 2 November 2009
Monday 9 November 2009

Time: 11am – 2 pm

To be held at MIFSA 5 Cooke Terrace, Wayville.

***Please Note: Transport to and from MIFSA Wayville is available if required.

THE RESPITE PROGRAM IS INVITING PARTICIPANTS:

People living with mental illness who receive support from a family member, friend or neighbour and live in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

If you are interested in registering your attendance please contact the Respite Program on 8378 4100. Numbers are limited.

The MIFSA Respite Program is funded by the Australian Government under the Mental Health Respite Program.



'Body Mind Spirit Retreat'

30 November – 3 December 2009

REGISTRATIONS OF INTEREST ARE INVITED FROM:

People experiencing mental illness who receive support and assistance from a family member, friend or neighbour, and live in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Retreat highlights will include:

- High Ropes and Low Ropes Course
- Giant Swing
- Bushwalking
- and a range of Group Activities.

If you are interested in more information or to register please contact:

MIFSA Respite Program on 8378 4100
MIFSA Activity Programs:
Panangga 8382 5588 or
Wayville 8378 4100

Numbers are limited and conditions apply. Please RSVP asap! Registrations will be accepted until 20 November 2009.



Research: Involuntary Mental Health Treatment.

THE PROJECT CALLED "RESEARCH WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS ABOUT INVOLUNTARY MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT" IS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE (OPA).

The aim is to provide research evidence about consumers' experience of involuntary mental health treatment, that is, treatment without consumer consent, in South Australia. The research is funded by the Rotary Health Research Fund. It is one arm of a larger piece of research about involuntary mental health treatment being run by OPA, and has ethics approval from the Department of Health.

The research is happening when mental health law is changing in South Australia, and will provide important insights into how mental health services are provided under the new Mental Health Bill. Consumers were consulted about the content of the questions to be used about detention and CTO experiences.

Consumers who have been detained, (admitted to a hospital without their consent), or who have been under community treatment orders, (CTOs), are invited to share their experiences with a researcher from the Office of the Public Advocate. They can choose to be part of a small Focus Group of 4-6 people, or have an individual interview, at

times and places mutually agreed on. They will be provided with an Information Sheet and a Consent Form to sign before hand.

The discussion will take about one hour and will be audio-taped. If consumers don't feel comfortable with audio-taping, hand-written notes will be made instead. No names will be attached to any reporting, so all opinions will be held in complete confidence.

Light refreshments will be provided, and participants will be reimbursed \$20, plus any additional travel expenses incurred.

We understand that talking about detention or being under CTOs may be upsetting, so consumers would be welcome to bring along a support person, maybe a case worker, peer worker or family member, to offer support.

For further information please phone Ellie Rosenfeld, any day but Wednesday, Office of the Public Advocate, 8342 8214, or email: Rosenfeld.ellen@agd.sa.gov.au.



You have the right to question

YOUR COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS ARE WELCOMED

The Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia (MIFSA) is a member based organisation with member input at every level. MIFSA would like to make sure that any member, visitor or program participant feels comfortable and able to share any concerns and make a complaint.

Complaints, concerns and issues at MIFSA are treated seriously and with respect. MIFSA is committed to continually improving its services and programs, so your feedback is welcomed.

Making a complaint will not affect the way you receive services in any way, but your complaint will likely improve how MIFSA works. Staff will work towards resolving the complaint with you in a fair way and in the shortest possible time. All complaints are treated confidentially.

Making a complaint at MIFSA

A complaint against another member or participant

- approach the Program Leader who will help resolve the problem
- you will be given a copy of the Participants Complaints policy.

A complaint against a staff member

- approach the staff member by telephone, in writing or in person, to try and sort out the problem in a direct way
- if this does not work, or is not an option for you, then contact the Program Leader or Programs Manager, either by telephone, in writing or in person
- the Program Leader or Programs Manager will discuss the issue with the staff member and let you know the outcome as soon as possible
- if you are not happy with the outcome, the Programs Manager will consult with the Chief Executive Officer to attempt to resolve the problem.

If you are not happy with the outcome:

- if you are still not happy with the outcome you will be encouraged to contact the Disability, Advocacy and Complaints Service or the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner. You also have the right to use civil or criminal legal procedures to settle a complaint.

Support of an advocate

- you have the right to have an advocate with you
- an advocate can be someone you know, for example a family member or friend
- an advocate can be a worker from an advocacy service
- MIFSA staff can support you in finding an advocate.

Resolving the complaint together:

- if you need assistance in putting your complaint in writing, MIFSA staff will be able to assist
- at each stage you will be kept up to date on the progress, outcomes and next steps
- each step will be recorded in a complaint file with a copy available to you.

MIFSA values your input. Staff will support you to make a complaint, have the complaint heard and to work together to resolve the complaint.



Using an Advocate

THE MENTAL ILLNESS FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA (MIFSA) WORKS HARD TO PROVIDE EASY TO ACCESS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE.

MIFSA staff aim to make sure that all members and participants know that they have the right to use an advocate at any time. The advocate can be anyone you choose and they can represent you at any time. MIFSA staff can assist you to connect with an advocacy service if you would like.

You can choose anyone you like to be your advocate:

- a family member
- friend
- worker from an Advocacy Service.

MIFSA Program Leaders will talk with you about:

- what an advocate is
- your right to use an advocate
- any support you may need to find an advocate
- how to connect with an advocate.

When do I use an advocate:

- you can have an advocate with you at any time
- advocates are particularly useful in complaints processes.

Using an advocate during a complaint process:

- MIFSA staff will give you a copy of the Participant Complaints policy
- MIFSA staff will also give you the "Making a Complaint" flyer
- If you are making a complaint and you are not comfortable speaking to MIFSA staff you may feel more comfortable talking to an Advocacy Service
- MIFSA staff can assist you to contact an Advocacy Service.

Commonly used Advocacy Services include:

- Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia: 8234 5699
- Health Consumers Alliance: 8223 1374
- Office of the Public Advocate: 8269 7575.

Using an advocate will not affect your access to programs or the quality of services you receive from MIFSA. MIFSA supports members and participants to use advocates. MIFSA will support you to express your views and share feedback in a way you feel most comfortable.

Mental illness awareness and response training

DELIVERED TO ELECTORAL OFFICERS IN CANBERRA, 18 AUGUST 2009, ON BEHALF OF THE MENTAL ILLNESS FELLOWSHIPS OF AUSTRALIA (MIFA).

Background

Two Mental Illness Awareness and Response training sessions for electoral officers were auspiced by the Parliamentary Friends of Schizophrenia, arranged by the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) and delivered by Ben Swift, Maureen Lewis and Ben Heyward of the Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia (MIFSA)'s Education Training and Awareness Team. The training initiative was sponsored by Janssen-Cilag Australia whose support is greatly appreciated.

Part of the role of Electoral Officers is to provide a front desk service to members of the public who seek information or opportunity to state their point of view, or who ask for help from their Senator or Member of the House of Representatives. As community members, people living with mental illness often seek the assistance of Electoral Officers and on occasion may state their case in ways that can confuse, frustrate or even frighten. Nevertheless, when Electoral Officers are able to build a measure of rapport or relationship with these individuals they may enable or encourage linkage with services that provide immediate or long term help.

Objectives

The objectives of the sessions were firstly, to provide Electoral Officers with a basic understanding of the bio-psycho-social and stress-vulnerability models of mental illness as well as a recovery based approach to mental health management. Secondly, the trainers aimed to facilitate dialogue with participant Electoral Officers who would raise their own experiences with constituent consumers to understand how to move beyond their first reactions to constructive responses.

Approach

Many of the participants had filled out training needs surveys and so the sessions began by briefly covering Electoral Officers own experience of people with mental illness before asking what they hoped to gain from the workshop.

From there Maureen talked about the impact of mental illness on her and her family as she took up a growing role as a carer and then founder of carer groups in her community.

Ben Swift followed by presenting the bio-psycho-social and stress-vulnerability models which MIFSA uses to describe the causes, nature and impact of mental illness under broad headings of anxiety, mood disorders (mania and depression) and psychosis. Participant questions were taken throughout the sessions in order to maintain understanding of new ideas and knowledge.

After a mid-session break Ben continued by looking at the management of mental illness and, quite explicitly, the maintenance of our own mental health as part of our busy lives and stressful work positions. This became a lead in to discussing ways of engaging with people living with mental illness at the counter or within Electoral Offices so as to create a calm environment, to facilitate effective communication and to support connection with appropriate services.

Finally, we broke the participants up into groups of 3 or 4, who worked through responses to hypothetical scenarios of possible incidents involving people with mental illness who present at Electoral Offices. Each group then engaged in a discussion structured around five key questions about their reactions and ideas for constructive engagement and response with consumers.

Participants in both the morning and afternoon sessions gave like answers about their desire to provide help, wanting to know how to empathise appropriately, being aware of only a limited range of mental health agencies to refer to (mainly clinical services including crisis response teams) and becoming frustrated by people with mental illness who did not respond to their questions or explanations.

Participant Feedback

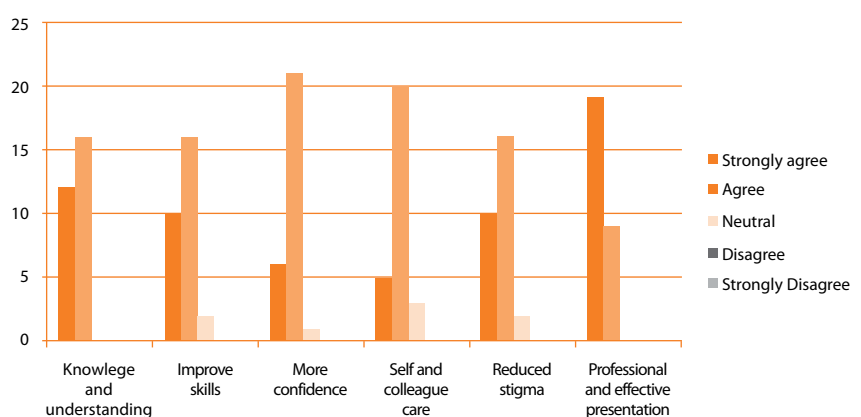
The Electoral Officers overwhelmingly gave positive answers to the evaluation form questions showing that the sessions clearly had begun to meet their expressed need for more understanding of people living with mental illness and a desire to engage constructively. The evaluation addressed six key areas targeted in the training with 95% responses being positive (either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"). The remaining 5% of responses were "Neutral". (See Figure 1 below.)

The evaluation also requested participants indicate the two most useful aspects of the training as well as areas for improvement.

Participants identified two primary areas of strength in the training:

1. Their increased understanding of mental illness through the quality of the information provided.
2. The presentation of specific strategies to effectively respond to constituents presenting with some level of emotional distress.

FIGURE 1



MI awareness and response Training

continued

Within those two themes particular appreciation was expressed for the:

- inclusion of personal accounts of the impact of unwellness on personal and family life
- interactive nature of the training
- opportunity to engage with other Electoral Office staff
- compassion implicit in the training
- focus on learning to become aware of one's own emotional reactions
- opportunity to practice specific strategies of engagement with consumers
- inclusion of approaches to boundary setting with people living with mental illness.

Other positive aspects participants documented included the quality of the presenters, the inclusion of hope of positive outcomes and the enjoyable and engaging nature of the training. With regard to improvements that participants recommended, the majority of participants suggested that a longer training workshop, for example a whole day of training, rather than the three hours session conducted, would be preferable.

Summary

Electoral Officers fill strategic positions managing difficult conversations with consumers. These interactions have the potential to either strengthen negative or positive patterns of behaviour while also adding to staff members' frustration or feelings of satisfaction with their roles.

The frequent connection between people living with mental illness and Electoral Office staff presents a strong case for at least a full day of training, with outcomes including increased wellbeing for both the Electoral Officers as well as community members. This training should focus on preparing staff to engage calmly with and guide consumers to willingly link with mental health support or clinical services.

Ben Heyward and Ben Swift
Programs Manager and Team Leader
ben@mifsa.org



Come and celebrate the official opening of MIFSA Wayville!

MR DEREK WRIGHT, DIRECTOR MENTAL HEALTH OPERATIONS WILL OFFICIALLY OPEN MIFSA WAYVILLE ON MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2009.

Please join us at 5 Cooke Tce Wayville at 10 am to celebrate the new location of our central office and our broad range of programs and services.

Celebrate with us, share a morning tea and have a wander through our:

- welcoming reception
- beautifully fitted out Activity Programs area
- new and spacious accredited food kitchen and dining area
- well appointed Conference room and separate training room
- open plan rooms for programs and services
- sorting room for our Sunflower Shops team
- library.

For catering purposes, please RSVP by phoning MIFSA Wayville Reception, 8378 4100, by Friday 23 October.

We have car parking undercroft or if the car park is full please park in the Royal Adelaide Show car park 2 on Rose Terrace.

ABC Radio Triple J Special Feature: 'Hearing Voices'

A moving personal account on the experience of hearing voices was recently featured on ABC Radio, Triple J.

'When Ron went mad in Mel's mind she went from dux of her school to being a danger to herself and her family. Find out about a new way voice hearers are surviving.'

To see this report go to: <http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/hack/notes/s2675907.htm>

WARNING: This story may contain material which is disturbing to listeners.



FOUNDATION SHINE
INCORPORATED

INVITES YOU TO:

A Night of Fun in the theme of BOND... *James Bond*

The night will start at 7pm with pre-dinner drinks, followed by a 3-course dinner with a selection of beer, soft drink and wines supplied through the generosity of *Kingston Estate Wines*.

Channel 7 Newsreader and personality Graeme Goodings will be there to compere the evening. Entertainment will continue throughout the evening with a Silent Auction, Floor Show, and a Lucky Cash Table draw.

Proceeds from this event will go to the Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia and ACEDA.

What's Bond without fast cars? V8 Supercar Champion John Bowe will be our very special guest on the night:
Wednesday, 2 December 2009, 7pm

Venue: **Starlight Ballroom, The Observatory,
23 Hackney Road, Hackney**

Cost: **\$135 per person or table of ten for \$1300 (includes GST)**

Please Note: No Tickets will be issued, names and tables will be listed at the entry. Tickets are non-refundable.

For enquires please contact Sharon Middleton, 0418 826 272, Robyn May, 0418 848 319, or email: info@foundationshine.org.au

Website: www.foundationshine.org.au

Financial Counselling Services at MIFSA, Wayville

Tuesdays, 11.00am – 1.00pm

Gain control over your finances

Make an appointment with a qualified financial counsellor from UnitingCare Wesley Bowden for assistance in managing a wide range of financial problems: from budgeting to debt problems, legal action and bankruptcy, and advice on concessions available for people to access.

To make an appointment with the Financial Counsellor please phone MIFSA Wayville Reception on 8378 4100.

We love the Vee Dub!

**MIFSA WAYVILLE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM HAS A STYLISH
NEW MODE OF TRANSPORT!**

This has been mutually beneficial for Wayville and Panangga as our beloved white van has made the move down south.

Participants at Wayville now travel to our community based programs like *Out There* and fishing in the black Vee Dub van pictured below. The search was not easy as we needed to be able to move more than 7 people and also fit it under the undercover carpark at our new Wayville building... the vee dub seats 10 people and just fits under.

Everyone agrees the new van is pretty hot! When it first rolled up one of the initial comments was "You can't get much more anti-stigmatising than that..." Other comments from participants have included...

"Now we're travelling in style"

"Looks like the A-team"

"This van has everything"

"All it needs now are some chrome rims"

Purchase of MIFSA's Vee Dub was made possible through a Community Benefit SA grant, provided under the direction of the Board of the Charitable and Social Welfare Fund and administered by the Department for Families and Communities.



What really matters in mental health: fascinating new survey

Some fascinating insights into the mental health sector emerged from a survey of participants at The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference in Perth last week.

The importance of prioritising the needs of youth and children, the unhelpful impact of the dominance of the medical model in mental health, and the potential to expand the role of consumers in service planning and provision – these were some of the issues raised. The results also sound something of a wake-up call for the psychiatry profession.

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2009/09/08/what-really-matters-in-mental-health-fascinating-new-survey/>

MIFSA in Eyre

MIFSA EYRE OFFERS A VARIETY OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES WITHIN PORT LINCOLN AND THE BROADER EYRE PENINSULA.

Staff, volunteers and participants from MIFSA Eyre Activity Program recently took off to a nearby National Park for an overnight camping trip. Participants supplied their own equipment, food and transport and were supported by MIFSA staff to plan for the trip.

There were campfires, some interesting fishing adventures, lots of fun and laughs... all within a gorgeous bush setting. Check out the photos!



For more information about MIFSA Eyre Activity Program please contact Shane Dunkley, phone 0488 794 272, or by post: PO Box 2292, Port Lincoln 5606

