

Pastoral Care for Mental Health

Newsletter

No 2: August 2007



Supporting Mental Health within the Catholic Community of England and Wales

Families, Mental Health and Pastoral Care: Making Everybody Welcome



Around one in six of us will develop a mental health problem at some point in our lives. Many people in this situation and their families turn to the Catholic Church for help and support. On October 20th a special opportunity for pastoral leaders and people with a special interest in mental health, to share and learn more about the challenges involved in responding to the needs will take place at the Britannia Hotel in Wolverhampton.

The day conference will provide time to reflect on personal experience, to hear from service users, carers and professionals and to explore a range of practical responses. The day opens at 10.00am with a welcome from Bishop John Hine, Chair of the Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life. Paul Farmer, Director of MIND will set the scene for the day's activities and Julia Head, Bishop John Robinson Research Fellow at the Maudsley Hospital, will facilitate an orientation session in which there will be an opportunity to reflect on experiences of mental ill-health.

After coffee there will be a series of short presentations by service users, carers and mental health professionals. After lunch there will be a choice of workshops describing a variety of practical pastoral responses. The day will conclude at 4.30pm after an Open Forum to identify priorities and some next steps. Please register now to be sure of your place and especially your first choice of workshop. The fee for the day is £10 and includes lunch and all refreshments. Download a booking form at www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/mentalhealthday.html

Mental Health Feature in The Universe

Last December Roberta Canning wrote an article for the Universe newspaper, describing a mother whose son suffered acute psychosis saying how helpful it was to talk to others who had experienced a similar situation. Many of us are afraid to talk about mental health problems – our own or in our families - because we are afraid of the stigma still attached to them. Stigma and taboo can mean that some do not ask for help when they need it and others suffer in isolation because they are afraid to open up. "I am grateful to those who have shared their stories since mental-health@everybodyswelcome.org.uk was set up," writes Roberta. "I hope and pray that our awareness day will help to change attitudes and make it easier to ask for and to offer support. It is clear that many people who have mental health difficulties and their families **are** helped by their faith and that Catholic parish priests and parish communities offer friendship and support. Sadly this is not true for everyone, so we need to share the good experiences and the ways that help these to happen."

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Letter from the Editor



Dear friends,

Thank you to those of you who got back to me after our first newsletter in January. It was good to get your messages of support and to be confirmed in our conviction that it is really important to offer information about ways to support people with mental health problems and their families more effectively. It has also been very encouraging to hear about existing organisations and initiatives and this newsletter includes information about some of them.

Our main news this summer is that we have organised an awareness day for pastoral leaders and others with a particular interest in support for mental health. We have called it Making Everybody Welcome: Families, Pastoral Care and Mental Health in the Catholic Community. Please do tell others about the day.

*Roberta Canning
(Volunteer Mental Health Support Development Worker)*

Mental Health & Ethnicity

We have been contacted by Jorun Rugkasa of the University of Westminster and Krysia Canvin of Dipex.org who are conducting two related studies exploring experiences of mental health issues of people from different cultural /ethnic backgrounds living in the UK. They are trying to do two things:

- Learn about the experiences of people who care for others with a mental health problem
- Learn about the experience of people with mental health problems

If you would like to be involved please contact Jorun at J.Rugkasa@westminster.ac.uk You can read more about the research at www.voicesforum.org.uk/krysia.htm

Men as Carers

The Men's Health Forum and Haynes Mini Manuals have just published a self help booklet on Men as Carers. The need was identified from an audit that showed that there was an imbalance in numbers of men and women known to be carers (on allowances and having had assessments) accessing services, as well as disproportionate numbers of men later turning up in vulnerable adults or mental health systems. So the booklet has been produced, along with a series of events aimed at men who are carers. It includes welfare rights advice (aimed at readers in England) and a short self-assessment tool for carers to ascertain what help they get and how they are coping. The aim is to raise awareness among men who are carers that there are services they can access which will help them. Download the text at www.menshealthforum.org.uk/uploaded_files/Barking%20carers%20text.pdf

Resources And Contacts

The Bishop John Robinson Fellowship, South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

The fellowship was established originally in 1994 at the Bethlem and Maudsley NHS Trust, the Institute of Psychiatry and Heythrop College, University of London in memory of Bishop John Robinson. It is an educational and research Fellowship. Its work focuses on the relationship between religion/spirituality and mental health, with the intention of promoting religious and theological principles across the spectrum of mental health care. It produces a twice-yearly newsletter.

The Fellowship is established within the Spiritual and Pastoral Care Service of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. However, it has a national profile and services a national network of people interested in religion/spirituality and mental health. This network includes service users and their carers, faith communities, chaplaincy networks, voluntary initiatives and practitioners/interest groups from a diverse range of disciplines. Contact: Julia.head@slam.nhs.uk. Julia Head, C/o Spiritual and Pastoral Care Service, Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AZ.

The Aylesford Centre

is a Christian Counselling service located at the Friary at Aylesford. It was founded to encourage the deepening of relationships with God, self and other people. The service uses methods that include faith and the spiritual dimension as part of the process. Contact: 01692 715751 acspd@hotmail.co.uk Aylesford Centre for Spiritual and Personal Development, The Friary, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7B



The Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

is a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage “being alongside” people experiencing mental or emotional distress. They hope to encourage local initiatives in faith communities to support and empower service users.

There are several local groups running befriending schemes and drop in centres and APCMH are very ready to share their experience and help others to get started. Their newsletter *Being Alongside* has news of one day events and local groups. In the February – March edition there are contributions which emphasise the value of volunteers who can be “a friend, who provides mutual respect, a listening ear, honesty and a giving of time and concern” alongside the support and care of professionals. Contact the APCMH via their website www.pastoral.org.uk and c/o St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LT

Richard Allen of APCMH will be leading a workshop on setting up a befriending scheme at our *Families, Mental Health and Pastoral Care* day conference on October 20th.



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Everybody's Welcome 2006

The Mental Health Support Project is part of the Everybody's Welcome initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It aims to create a network of people within the Catholic Church with an interest in mental health; to raise awareness at different levels, nationally and locally; to explore the feasibility of using existing materials, especially *Promoting Mental Health. A Resource for Pastoral and Spiritual Care.*

Aims for 2007 are:

- To hold a one day national event in October, combining awareness raising, introduction to the use of helpful resources and with input from key speakers including people with direct personal and professional experience.
- To start up and run 3 or more pilot projects at parish/deanery level using existing material
- To continue to raise awareness of mental health.
- To develop our network of people and groups concerned about mental health within the Catholic Church.

[www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk
/mentalhealth.html](http://www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/mentalhealth.html)

Everybody's Welcome

Everybody's Welcome is the first stage in a three phase campaign within the Catholic community of England and Wales to support marriage and family life, established in response to families' expressed needs during Listening 2004.

Everyone's Welcome is supporting parish communities to become more friendly, more family-sensitive, and more welcoming of all, including those at their heart as well as on the margins.

Family-sensitive, welcoming and friendly parishes are the foundation of the Church's care for marriage and family life as well as for the next two stages of the Celebrating Family initiative: Home is a Holy Place (2007) and Passing on the Faith (2008)

Pastors, parish groups, organisations, families and individuals are invited to use any of the resources on the Everybody's Welcome website, to adapt them to local situations and to share their experiences.



www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk