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# Newsflash

MAY 2008

## Specialist Youth Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health problems frequently first arise in adolescence and young adulthood. Young people have poorer knowledge about mental health and how to get professional help. They are particularly likely to initially need support from adults, including youth workers, to get appropriate help.

To address this need, a specialist Youth Mental Health First Aid program has been developed. This program commenced in 2007 and is designed to train adults to assist young people in mental health crisis situations and/or in the early stages of mental health problems. Mental Health Problems covered are: depression; anxiety attacks; psychosis; substance use disorders; eating disorders.

Crisis situations covered are: suicidal behaviours; self-harm; acute stress reaction; panic attacks; acute psychotic behaviour.

First Aid is the help given to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained. Mental Health First Aid is the help given to someone developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.

This is a 14 hour program developed especially for those working with, or wanting to assist, young people, delivered over two days. Participants receive a copy of the Youth MHFA Manual to take away.

**The Bendigo Loddon PCP will facilitate the Youth Mental Health First Aid Course in July 2008 at no cost to participants, provided that there is enough interest. There are only 15 places available.**

**If you would like to be placed on the list, please ring the PCP Office on 54481624 between 9.30 and 2.30 Tuesday to Friday or email [blpcp@bchs.com.au](mailto:blpcp@bchs.com.au) to register your interest.**

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## Gender Analysis in Health and Human Services

As part of the release of the Gender and Diversity Lens as a major initiative of the Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, a practical workshop aiming to understand the gendered patterns of behaviour which impact the health and wellbeing of women and men is being provided by the Department of Human Services and Women's Health Victoria. The Workshop will assist participants to consider gender implications through an organisations planning cycle, and will provide practical resources, a local snapshot of gendered health and human services issues, good practice and case studies to assess current initiatives and plan sustainable responses.

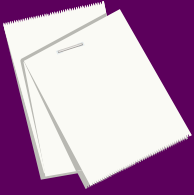
The trainer, Petra Begnell, is the Health Promotion and Education Officer at Women's Health Victoria, and has a background in nursing, public health and teaching. A major focus of her work is around building professional capacity to incorporate gender into health policy and planning.

We know that gender interacts with other factors to influence health and wellbeing and patterns of illness as do health seeking behaviours specific to different groups of women and men. Gender analysis assesses the real or potential impact that a policy, program or service may have on diverse groups of women and men, in order to inform more effective policy, program or service development and delivery.

The workshop is limited to 40 places and will be held on Thursday 26 June 2008 from 9.30am to 4pm at The Foundry Hotel – Platinum room, 366 High Street, Bendigo. There is no cost.

Book with [Amanda.dezoysa@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.dezoysa@dhs.vic.gov.au).

## Health Issues Journal



The Health Issues Centre is an independent, not-for-profit organisation whose objective is to improve health outcomes for Australians, especially the disadvantaged.

The Centre publishes a quarterly journal called Health Issues which looks at health policy and the health system from the perspective of people who use the health system. More information about the Health Issues journal can be found at [www.healthissuescentre.org.au/journal/index.asp](http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au/journal/index.asp)

The Journal is currently seeking authors for the Spring 2008 edition. This edition will focus on Primary Health Care-the key challenges and achievements in the 30 years since Alma Ata and the opportunities for the future. Authors can be health professionals, researchers, consumers, academics, policy makers, organisations or individuals. Feature articles are 2000-2500 words long but we also accept opinion pieces (500-1500 words), news articles (500-1000 words) and book reviews (500-1000 words). The deadline for submitting articles is 30 June 2008.

**For more information:**

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## The Bendigo Carers and Community Project

The Bendigo Carers and Community Project is proposed by Bendigo Community Health Services to enhance the wellbeing of people caring for a family member with a mental illness.

This project will employ a variety of strategies to achieve the overall aim. Personal connections will be made with carers through an existing BCHS program the 'Phoenix Group' as well as connections that can be made through the medical practice, counseling programs or neighbourhood activity. Other agencies will be invited to refer people to the carer sessions.

Information sessions will be conducted in community settings, newsletters will be produced as well as using existing community newspapers and newsletters. Programs will be designed and delivered to the target group addressing their needs and existing programs such as the Family Wellness parenting programs adapted to be relevant and appropriate to families managing a mental illness.

The project will aim at creating self sustaining structures of carer networks that aim to reduce isolation and provide opportunities for people with similar circumstances to share their experiences. The intention is to build support systems both formal and informal that reduces the risks for carers of developing their own mental illness.

This project will aim to complement and extend existing services in the community and will work in informal partnership arrangements to ensure maximum benefit to the community. This arrangement will also provide the opportunity for the needs and experiences of carers to be disseminated to a number of different agencies to influence program design and build community knowledge.

For more information contact Glenys Wilkinson at Bendigo Community Health Services on Ph 5430 0529.

## Loddon Diabetes Group

In 2007, the Loddon Shire Council asked the PCP to attend one of the Council Meetings to address the issue of diabetes in the Loddon Shire. The Council and its officers were concerned about the number of people with diabetes in the area and wanted to ensure that there was a coordinated approach being taken to address the issue. The PCP arranged for the health services located in the Shire, Bendigo Community Health Services Early Intervention in Chronic Disease Program and DHS to attend the meeting to present information on the activities they were undertaking to respond to diabetes in the Shire.

Since that time, Boort District Hospital, Northern District Community Health Service, Dingee Bush Nursing Centre, Inglewood and Districts Health Services, Murray Plains Division of GP and the Loddon Shire Council have been represented on a Working Group, which aims to coordinate services, undertake preventative actions, and provide a range of diabetes self management interventions across the Shire. The Group is supported by the PCP Office and a DHS representative also attends the meetings.

At the last meeting of the Group, held on 14 April 2008, Kate Gilbert, the DHS Industry Advisor came up from Melbourne to discuss a range of issues with the group and to share the leading practice work that has been occurring across the State. Kate gave lots of ideas and examples to the group and as a result, a new work plan has been developed by this group for the next 12 months.

The key issues that will form the basis of the Workplan are:

- Mapping Services
- Workforce Development
- Service Access
- Engagement with GPs
- Coordinated Care
- Protective Behaviors.

This group is an example of excellent service coordination, when organisations decide to work together to enhance the care being provided to a specific community, and when little or no funding is available. The member agencies of the Loddon Diabetes Group are commended for their efforts to address the issue of diabetes in the Loddon Shire. For further information contact the Chairperson of the Group, Judy Keath at Boort District Hospital.

## Happy at Home: Live Longer, Live Stronger Expo

This upcoming expo may be of interest to some of your clients.

The Expo is designed to help people access home and community care (HACC) services and gain greater understanding of the importance of physical activity. It will take place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May between 10 and 3 at the Bendigo Town Hall and Civic Gardens.

The Happy at Home, Live Longer, Live Stronger Expo will provide an opportunity for residents to find out more about the services that are available in their own community and give people a chance to experience and learn about some of the physical activities that support more healthy living.

Particular attention will be paid to meeting the needs of members of our multicultural community by providing interpreters and written information in a number of languages (interpreter bookings are essential).

City Of Greater Bendigo Ethnic Services Coordinator, Di Parker said it is hoped that visitors to the Expo will gain a greater understanding of the services available to them, as well as increased confidence and interest in participating in physical activity. Di said "As little as 30 minutes a day of physical activity is associated with reduced risks of diseases including type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, stroke, depression and heart disease".

The Expo will have a multicultural theme with music, singing, dance and food, all at no cost to participants. There will be opportunities to try Tai Chi, Strength Training and other activities as well as soaking up the "café" type atmosphere with food and entertainment. It is hoped that the Event will be opened by Ulumbarra singing group from Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative. They will be performing with local recording artist and Koori educator Anne Conway.

Anyone can come along and have a free cuppa and food, soak up the entertainment and socialise, while finding out about HACC services and activities. This is an event with something for the whole family.

## Do you work with volunteers?

National Volunteer Week is 12 – 18 May 2008. To celebrate this week, the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre has invited Managers and Coordinators who work with volunteers to attend a professional development day at Quill's Restaurant on Tuesday 13 May from 9.45am to 4pm. The topics for the day include: Recruiting and retaining volunteers, marketing your organisation, tips on grant writing and volunteers and community groups. Lunch is being provided and there is no cost. For further information on this day contact Sandra at the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre 54411404.

Another activity during Volunteer Week will be the Bendigo Volunteer Network information sessions at Bcentral in Mundy Street. Displays and presentations will be held on Wednesday 14 May and some of the services presenting will be Aged Care, Whitelion, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Australian Red Cross.

## Sexual Health Task Group—Planning Workshop

The PCP Sexual Health Task Group will be holding a Planning Workshop in early June 2008. The purpose of this Workshop is to identify the actions / projects to be contained in their Plan of Work for 2008/2009.

If you or your organisation would like to contribute to or discuss this Workshop, please contact Adam Wright at CAN ph 5443 8355 or email [adamwright@can.org.au](mailto:adamwright@can.org.au)

## Child Health Invest

### Child Focus Seminar Series:

A seminar on 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders' will be presented by Dr Ken Armstrong, Senior Community Paediatrician at the Multi Purpose Room, Bendigo Community Health Services, 5 Seymoure Street, Eaglehawk. Two sessions are being offered, Session 1, 21 May 2008 or Session 2, 4 June 2008, 12noon to 1.30pm. As numbers are limited please RSVP, indicating which session you would like to attend, by 9 May 2008 to Trish Kilpatrick Ph 5430 0521, Fax 5430 0544 or email [trishkilpatrick@bchs.com.au](mailto:trishkilpatrick@bchs.com.au)

## The 2008 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards are now open!

The Victorian Public Healthcare Awards celebrate innovation and excellence in Victorian public healthcare and honour the initiatives that are improving the health and well being of the Victorian community. The scope of the competition has broadened in 2008, there are new Awards that align with directions of the Department of Human Services with a strong focus on celebrating excellence and innovation in primary health.

Across the following 13 Awards, there are multiple opportunities to be honoured for providing innovative, visionary healthcare.

**Category Awards:** the six awards represent strategic areas of practice across the healthcare system and will honour innovation and excellence irrespective of organisational size, setting, or service.

**Minister's Awards:** four awards for outstanding staff achievement. The Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health will both present awards.

**Secretary's Awards:** a new Department of Human Services Secretary's Award to honour a new initiative or service that is keeping people well in the community.

In addition to the Health Service of the Year Awards, the Premier will present two Premier's Excellence Awards to honour initiatives that are at the forefront of health improvement tackling chronic disease and improving cancer care.

**Entries for Awards close at 6 pm, 10 June 2008.**

Find out more by visiting [www.health.vic.gov.au/healthcareawards](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthcareawards)



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