



22 March 2013

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice

Mental Health Carers Voice recent news and announcements

This issue of E-Bulletin includes summaries of two presentations given at the Medicines for Mental Health Carers Forum held on 27 February 2013.

Simon Carroll is Senior Professional Practice Pharmacist with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. He noted that, in addition to any medicines prescribed by the doctor, medicines also include over-the-counter (eg Mylanta) as well as complementary (eg fish oil) products.

Pharmacists are the most accessible yet under-utilised resource for health information and advice; and carers attending the Medicines Forum were encouraged to make the most use of their local pharmacist. He acknowledged the importance of talking to your doctor or your pharmacist about all the medicines you or (if appropriate) your care recipient are currently taking, and to feel comfortable about asking questions.

Simon acknowledged that the carer's role is vital in supporting the appropriate use of medicines. He mentioned that pharmacists can (and do) provide practical supports for carers, and suggested that it is helpful to introduce yourself as a carer, and allow the pharmacist to get to know you in your caring role

(with the acknowledgement/permission of the care recipient). The pharmacist will then be in a position to talk to carers and answer questions about medications and treatment plans, etc.

Simon recommended that forum participants consider asking their pharmacist about:

- any concerns regarding generic medicines, as they can be confusing, especially when the look and feel of one's medication changes
- polypharmacy (the use of five or more medicines at the same time), which can cause certain interactions and produce unintended side-effects
- Webster packs, a useful way of managing medications
- Home Medication Reviews (HMR). The HMR is triggered by the GP. It involves an accredited pharmacist coming into the person's home (or another suitable venue)
- Meds Check. This is not as in-depth as an HMR, it involves 20-30 minutes with the pharmacist (which takes place in the pharmacy), going through all the medicines, and developing an Action Plan
- Consumer Medicines Information leaflets
- translator services.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has developed a mental health framework which highlights and promotes the expertise of pharmacists and the roles they undertake as partners in mental health care. For more information about the framework, visit: <http://www.psa.org.au/archives/21014>.

Carlo Malaco, Project and Communication Officer, Consumers Health Forum (CHF), acknowledged that in most situations, an individual medicine user will make decisions on their own behalf and will be responsible for their Quality Use of Medicines (QUM);* however, in the case of care recipients, the carer may be closely involved in this process, or may be responsible for it altogether on behalf of the care recipient.

Carers have the potential to play a crucial role in QUM and should be considered as active partners in care. This will equip carers to make wise medicine choices (which may include choosing not to use medicines); to manage and administer medicines wisely so that the medicines are being used optimally; and to ensure that the medication does not cause undue harm to the care recipient, as well as knowing what to do if it does. It's important that carers are aware of and able to access medicines-related information when and where they need it, so as to help them in the medication management role.

CHF hosted a nationwide consumer consultation in Canberra on 5 December 2012; the report from will be available on the CHF website shortly. Some of the QUM issues faced by carers which were raised during the consultation include:

- Carers as Partners in Care
- Polypharmacy
- Information Needs
- Health Literacy, and
- Labelling and Packaging

Resources which may assist carers in their medication management role are available from [NPS MedicineWise](#), for example, [the Medicines List](#), which helps people keep track of their medicines. The

* For more information about Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) see: <http://www.nps.org.au/about-us/who-we-are>.

NPS website also contains a lot of useful information about medicines and other health issues, including information about specific medicines.

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Mental Health First Aid Training for Carers

Subsequent to the Medicines forum, Len Kanowski has generously offered to provide Mental Health First Aid training at no cost to mental health carers:

Dates: Thursdays 23 and 30 May, 6 and 13 June
Time: 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt
Cost: Free to current mental health carers living in the ACT.

This is a wonderful training opportunity for mental health carers. Participants will be awarded a certificate of completion. It is therefore vital that you are able to commit to attending on each of the four, three hour sessions. Places are limited to 16 participants, so if you wish to undertake the training please reserve your place as soon as possible by phoning Rosie on 6299 9900 or email

mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

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Mental Health Carers Networking and Consulting Forums

*** NOTE CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE**

THE 2ND EXPOSURE DRAFT AMENDMENT BILL OF THE MENTAL HEALTH (TREATMENT & CARE) Act WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 15 APRIL. OUR FORUM WILL NOW BE HELD on 29 APRIL at PILGRIM HOUSE, CIVIC.

Second Exposure Draft, Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act – 29 April

The Second Exposure Draft Amendment Bill of the Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act will be available for comment from April 2013. Carers ACT will be hosting a consultation with mental health carers.

Date: 29 April
Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Location: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic
Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided
RSVP: Phone Rosie on 6296 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you would like to attend.

Navigating the Mental Health System – Thursday 16 May

Knowledge about how to navigate the mental health system is a huge issue for people who have just entered the 'system', but also for those people who may be unaware of the range of services and supports that are available for people living in Canberra. A panel of key organisations, and consumer and carer representatives will share information and provide resources.

Date: Thursday 16 May
Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Location: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic
Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided
RSVP: By 10am, 14 May. Phone Rosie on 6296 9900; or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au

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VACANCIES - Mental Health Carer Representative Positions

Mental health carers are invited to consider nominating for a carer representative position, through the Mental Health Carers Voice program, on the following committee and user groups of the **Canberra**

Public Hospital project:

- Executive Reference Group Committee
- Adult Sub-Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit User Group (three meetings, first Monday 25 March, then one in April & May)
- Adult Sub-Acute Mental Health Day Services User Group (three meetings, first Monday 25 March, then one in April & May)
- Older Persons' Sub-Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit User Group (three meetings, first Monday 25 March, then one in April & May)
- Older Persons' Sub-Acute Mental Health Day Services User Group (three meetings, first Monday 25 March, then one in April & May)

ACT Health are very keen to fill these vacancies. If you would like to nominate please contact Rosie Fisk on 6299 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

Mental health carers are invited to consider nominating for a carer representative position, through the Mental Health Carers Voice program, on the following committees and working groups:

Calvary Hospital Mental Health Management Committee

For more information about this Committee, click [here](#) for a copy of the Terms of Reference. Further questions about the role may also be directed to Chrissy English, Volunteer Services Manager, on 6201 6646 or 0467 790 863.

Health: Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS)

- Risk Management
- Smoke-Free Evaluation Working group *and* Smoke-Free Working Group (Community)
- MHAGIC (Mental Health Assessment Generation Information Collection) Advisory Committee
- Reducing Aggression Steering Committee

MHJHADS Redesign Projects

- Alexander Maconochie Centre Medication Management
- Steering Committee for the redesign projects

Adult Mental Health Unit

- Clinical Effectiveness Committee

Community Sector

- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT: Peer Workforce Advisory Group

If you wish to find out more information about the above committees/working groups, contact Rosie Fisk on 6299 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au. A Carer Representative Nomination Form, Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for the Mental Health Carers Voice Program may be downloaded from the Mental Health Carers Voice website at www.carersvoice.com.au, or give Rosie a call.

If you are interested in participating, but would prefer to be a little less engaged, there are vacancies for alternate representatives for various committees. The alternate representative attends meetings when the carer representative cannot attend. If you would like to access the current list of committees please click [here](#).

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Carers Corner – update on HOME in Canberra by John Tucker

"Following the December 2012 supported accommodation workshops in Tuggeranong, our community group has developed a draft Vision Statement for a HOME in Canberra. Click here [for a copy of the Vision Statement](#), this is for information and comment.

Our vision for HOME in Canberra is to provide a supportive, loving home in Canberra for people with chronic mental illness. Our goal is provide quality, cost-effective and affordable supported accommodation in a safe, caring and friendly environment for people in Canberra with chronic mental illness who cannot live independently or are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is proposed that HOME in Canberra will provide 24 hour care for people with chronic mental illness who are without appropriate shelter, care, love and support. We are striving to have a HOME in Canberra up and running by 2016-17.

Preliminary research indicates that there may be up to 350 people in Canberra with severe mental illness who are unable to live independently, without adequate support. In view of the success of HOME in Queanbeyan, we believe that a similar facility in Canberra will result in significant improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of residents, provide residents with hope and confidence for the future and create more opportunities for meaningful employment. We hope that similar HOMES will be established in Canberra in the future to address the supported accommodation needs of people suffering from chronic mental illness who are who are extremely vulnerable, isolated, and often homeless.

We welcome your feedback on the draft Vision Statement and the need for a HOME, or a number of HOMES in Canberra. People interested in providing comments or supporting the HOME in Canberra community initiative should contact John Tucker by emailing ejohntucker@hotmail.com or phoning John on 6291 7869, or on mobile 0411 350 547."

Click here to read [the article Canberra looks to follow HOME example](#) in the latest edition of the Catholic Voice.

Mental health carers are invited to respond to or submit articles for Carers Corner. Please contact Rosie Fisk by phone, on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

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Carers ACT News

Carers ACT's submission to the 2013-14 ACT Budget

Carers ACT 2013-14 ACT Budget response focuses on four strategic priorities for carers and the people they support. These include:

- Supported accommodation for people with disability and people with mental illness
- Enhanced flexible respite services
- Transition of young people with disability to adulthood
- Training for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), aged care and mental health reform.

[Click here to download the Carers ACT's submission to the 2013-14 ACT Budget.](#)

Carers require ACT Government support. Click here to read what [Labour, Liberal and Greens said they would do in support of carers and the people they support](#), during the pre election campaign 2012.

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On Course for Carers

Care Inc Financial Counselling Service

"Who we are and what we do". Financial entitlements, budgeting and debt management for carers and families.

Date: Thursday 4 April 2013

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Location: Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

Morning tea is provided at 11.00am. To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

For suggestions on future topics please email Marie at marie.falconer@carersact.org.au

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Autumn Seasonal Lunch

Come along and enjoy an appetising lunch with other carers.

Date: Wednesday 27 March

Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm

Location: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Private viewing at the National Gallery of Australia – Kaston: Art of Vanuatu

A private guided tour of the unique collection of arts from Vanuatu will be held by the National Gallery

of Australia.

Date: Wednesday 3 April

Time: 10.30am (meet at the main entrance at 10.15am)

Location: The National Gallery of Australia, Parkes

To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Mental Health Carer – Southside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on one Wednesday evening most months.

Date: 27 March, 24 April, 22 May, 26 June, 24 July, 28 August, 25 September, 23 October, 27 November

Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Location: Woden Smith Family, Corner of Launceston & Easty Streets, Woden

For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Mental Health Carer – Northside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

Date: 9 April, 14 May, 11 June (dates for second half of 2013 coming soon)

Time: 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Location: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Carers Craft Group

Members work on their own craft items, group projects and learn new craft skills in a friendly environment. Join us for a chat and morning tea. The group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month.

Time: 9.30am – 12.30pm

Location: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

For further information please call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Carers Art Appreciation Group in conjunction with the National Gallery of Australia

The group meets at the NGA to view and learn about various exhibitions. The carers can also enjoy a coffee afterwards at the gallery cafe.

Date: 16 April, 21 May, 18 June, 16 July, 20 August, 17 September, 15 October, 19 November

Time: 10.00am

Location: The main entrance of the National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place, Parkes

For further information please call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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Branch Out Café

The Branch Out Café is open at Carers ACT Holt every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am – 12.00pm. Why not drop by for a coffee and some delicious lunches and sweets. The Branch Out Café is an opportunity for up to six young adult school leavers with disability to gain confidence and learn new skills with a view to gaining job ready certificates and hospitality competencies to transition to open and supported employment in the hospitality industry. As well as our wonderful café with coffee and cakes we also provide catering for meetings, functions and events. [Click here for the Branch Out Café.](#)

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Mental Health Carers Respite — 1800 052 222

The Mental Health Respite Program provides flexible respite and other supports to meet the individual needs of carers of people with severe mental illness, autism or intellectual disabilities and their families. Services include respite options based on needs assessments, information and referral, links to education programs, counselling, peer support, advocacy services and social and recreational activities. Please call 1800 052 222 or email mentalhealth.respite@carersact.org.au. The Mental Health Respite program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. For more information about supports available under this Program visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

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Counselling at Carers ACT — Supporting Family Carers — 1800 242 636

Did you know that Carers ACT can provide short-term counselling for family carers? Our counselling service can help you manage difficult situations and balance caring in your life. Qualified counsellors are located on site in Holt and Woden to provide carers with confidential and professional face-to-face and telephone counselling. Call the Carer Advisory Service to make an appointment 1800 242 636.

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The Cottage Closing Dates Easter and ANZAC Day

The Cottage will be closed Thursday 28 March at 5.30pm and will reopen Tuesday 2 April at 9.00am. The Cottage will be closed Wednesday 24 April at 5.30pm and will reopen Friday 26 April at 9.00am.

Fraser House Closing Dates Easter and ANZAC Day

Fraser House will be closed Thursday 28 March at 4.00pm and will reopen Tuesday 2 April at 9.00am. Fraser House will be closed Wednesday 24 April at 4.00pm and will reopen Friday 26 April at 9.00am.

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Two research positions in the new ACT Consumer and Carer Mental Health Research Unit

The ACT Consumer and Carer Mental Health Research Unit has been established at the Centre for Mental Health Research (CMHR), Australian National University, to undertake research in partnership with and for the benefit of mental health consumers and carers in the ACT. The positions are for a Research Fellow/Fellow who is a consumer with lived experience of mental illness, and a Research Assistant who is a carer with lived experience caring for a person with a mental illness. The new centre will strengthen and grow consumer and carer mental health research in the ACT and within the CMHR.

The closing date for applications has been extended to COB 25 March 2013. Read about the [Research Fellow/Fellow vacancy here](#), or the [Research Assistant here](#). For more information about these positions contact Professor Kathy Griffiths: phone 6125 9723 or email Kathy.Griffiths@anu.edu.au

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Free drama workshops for people who have experienced mental illness

This workshop is for people experiencing mental illness who are 16 years and older. No auditions, no previous acting experience necessary. Drama games, improvisation and acting skills. Led by Ben Drysdale. Ben Drysdale studied theatre at both the Australian National University and Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, and has spent the last nine years practising Theatre and Music around Canberra.

Date: Tuesdays 2 April to 2 July

Time: 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Location: The Rainbow, Canberra Technology Park, Philip Avenue, Watson

Limited Places, bookings essential. Contact Robin Davidson on 6173 3322 or 0450 960 903 or by email robin.davidson@belconnenartscentre.com.

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Well Ways MI Recovery Canberra 2013

MI Fellowship will be running a 10 week peer education-recovery group starting on Tuesday 2 April. The group is called MI Recovery and we are currently seeking interested people to participate in the program. If you experience issues with your mental health and want to work on your recovery, this group may be for you. Please take the time to have a look at the brochure or pass on to someone who may benefit from the program. Click on each link to access the required documents:

[Well Ways MI Recovery brochure](#)

[Well Ways MI Recovery participant information](#)

[Well Ways MI Recovery participant enrolment form Canberra](#)

Date: Tuesdays starting 2 April for 10 weeks

Time: 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Location: Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, David Street Office, 41B David Street, O'Connor

If you have any questions please call Michelle Russell on 6246 7104 and if you are interested in participating in the program please complete the participant enrolment form and send to:

MI Recovery Course April 2nd 2013
C/O David Jenkins and Linda Bochenek
Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria
PO Box 6216
O'Conner ACT 2602

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Work Ready Program

An initiative of MI Fellowship and Capital Careers, the Work Ready Program is aimed at jobseekers experiencing disadvantage including people with a mental illness. The training covers skills such as using computers, safe manual handling, customer service and business that will help prepare jobseekers to gain employment. Click here [for a flyer](#), click here for the [registration form](#) and click here for [the eligibility declaration form](#).

Date: Tuesdays and Fridays 23 April – 21 June

Time: 9.30am – 3.30pm

Cost: Free for eligible jobseekers

For more information contact Michelle Russell on (02) 6246 7104 or Ros Williams at Capital Careers on 6253 0682.

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Karabar Distance Education

Distance education for high school students with significant support needs which impact on their engagement and prevent them from attending school on a regular basis, including a special school or special class within a regular school, may be eligible for enrolment at a distance education centre. This may include students who have a diagnosis, confirmed disability or history of a mental health condition, Autism, severe disruptive behaviours and school phobia. [Click here to access Karabar Distance Education](#).

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Quarterly Community Forum – The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) & MHCC Consumer and Carer participation

The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT, the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Carers ACT, and Mental Health, JH&ADS invite you to a forum to discuss: The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) & MHCC Consumer and Carer participation.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Wendy Kipling – ACT NDIS Taskforce

Wendy will give an update on the progress towards preparing for implementation of the enhanced service offer from July 2013 and the NDIS in the ACT from July 2014.

Wendy and MHCC also want to hear from consumers and carers in particular about what you know and want to know about the NDIS, what you want and need from the NDIS, and how we can help you prepare for the NDIS.

MHCC ACT consumer and carer participation

MHCC is about to embark on a project to explore how to make genuine and meaningful consumer and carer participation in MHCC governance and activities possible. MHCC would like to share initial thoughts before starting this journey.

We also want your thoughts on the interim actions MHCC wants to put in place in the coming months to provide more meaningful opportunities for consumers and carers to be involved in the work of MHCC and for MHCC to be able to draw on the lived experience of consumers and carers to shape and inform our work. Your active participation in discussion is welcome and appreciated. [Click here to see the flyer](#)

Date: Monday 25 March

Time: 5.00pm – 7.30pm

Location: Room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre, Genge Street, Civic

For questions or to RSVP, please contact MHCC ACT on 6249 7756 or mhccact@mhccact.org.au.

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Managing Change – Two evening workshop

Going through change is never easy and there is a psychological reason for this: our conscious mind (ego) perceives all departure from the familiar as a threat to our existence. That is why change automatically creates resistance, which leads to procrastination, anxiety and fear. The good news is that change does not have to be difficult, fearful or traumatic. It is a natural and inevitable part of life, and it can be your friend, rather than your enemy.

Anna Anderson is a Certified Life and Executive Coach and a Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner and trainer. She is the Founder and Executive Director of the Institute of Quantum Mind TM – a professional coaching and training practice based in Canberra.

Date: Tuesday 9 and Wednesday 10 April

Time: 5.30pm – 8.30pm

Location: Women's Information and Referral Centre, Ground Floor, London Court, 13 London Circuit, Canberra City

Cost: \$100 (Concession available, proof required)

Bookings are essential. For more information or to register your interest, please contact Women's Information and Referral Centre by phone on 6205 0303 or 6205 1075.

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Survey on Transport for Older Canberrans

COTA ACT would like to hear about your experiences of using transport in the ACT. Some older Canberrans (especially those who don't drive) find it hard to get around in the ACT. Difficulties with transport can prevent people from getting to health facilities, participating in social life, and accessing entertainment, among other things. If you'd like to provide your views on Canberra's transport system, you are invited to fill in a short survey [click here to access the survey](#).

The survey will close on Friday 19 April, but your views are always welcome – please feel free to write to policy@cotaact.org.au if you miss the survey deadline but still want to provide feedback. COTA will also

be organising focus groups on transport issues (particularly public and community transport and taxi services) towards the end of April. If you would like to participate, please contact COTA by email policy@cotaact.org.au or by phone on 6282 3777.

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Alzheimers Australia ACT – Dr Peter Spitzer AKA Dr Fruit-Loop

Dr Spitzer is the co-founder of the Humour Foundation's Clown Doctor and developed the Laughter Boss concept in aged care. In addition to Dr Spitzer, other speakers will discuss the topic of how to create a dementia friendly environment and garden.

Date: Wednesday 8 May
Time: 1.00pm – 4.30pm Tea/coffee provided
Cost: \$44.00 or \$40.00(Members)
Location: Southern Cross Club, Woden
RSVP: By 1 May

Bookings essential, email act.admin@alzheimers.org.au or phone 6255 0722.

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Understanding Bipolar Disorder

The Mental Health Foundation ACT Peers for Recovery Program presents “Understanding Bipolar Disorder”. Did you know that Bipolar Disorder often goes unrecognised and it can take many years and experienced professional help to get an accurate diagnosis? If you want to learn more about this complex mental health condition and know what to do next, join this one day workshop

Date: Wednesday 3 April
Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm
Location: Room 9, Level 2, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Civic
Cost: Free. Morning tea will be provided.
RSVP: By 28 March

For more information and/or registration please contact: Peers for Recovery Program, Mental Health Foundation (ACT) on 6282 6658 or 0406 377 512 or e-mail info@mhf.org.au. Click here to [download the flyer](#).

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Mental Health Foundation Directory of Services in the ACT

Click here to download the [Mental Health Foundation Directory of Services](#) in the ACT. Click here for [more information about the Mental Health Foundation ACT](#).

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Smoke Free Environment Newsletter 29

Click here to download the [MHJHADS Smoke free environment newsletter 29](#).

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ACT women's body image and satisfaction

Women's Centre for Health Matters is currently helping to promote a survey being conducted by the Centre for Applied Psychology at the University of Canberra on ACT women's body image and satisfaction. The survey will assist in identifying to what extent poor body image is an issue for women in the ACT and whether or not there is adequate access to information, support and services.

Please help by promoting the survey in your workplace or among friends and relatives in the ACT, and please take 10 minutes to complete the survey yourself. The more women that complete the survey the more diverse and representative the sample will be!

For more information click here to see the flyer [Body Image of Women Living in the ACT - Online Survey](#) Otherwise please complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACTbodyimage>.

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March Forum - Responses to rough sleeping in the ACT

Speakers:

- Rollo Brett, Coordinator Samaritan House
- Briony Griffiths, representing Safe Shelter
- Chris Stokman, Manager Early Morning Centre

Speakers will talk about what rough sleeping is, the causes of rough sleeping and how their program works with rough sleepers for better outcomes. The ACT Shelter member consultation will take place at 1.45pm following the speakers – there will be no specific topic this month but members might want to reflect or provide feedback on the rough sleeping forum.

Date: Monday 25 March

Time: 12.15pm – 2.00pm

Location: Havelock House Meeting Room, Northbourne Avenue, Turner

No RSVPs necessary – light lunch, tea and coffee provided.

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LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

ASIST is presented by Lifeline Canberra. ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop which aims to improve participants suicide awareness and prevention skills. The course is presented by LivingWorks-accredited facilitators, who use internationally standardised resources and materials. Participants are trained to recognise when a person may be at risk and how to respond to improve the immediate and long-term safety of the person at risk. After completing the course, participants will be able to:

- recognise the warning signs
- discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner
- develop a 'safeplan' for people at risk
- help the person to keep themselves safe!

Date: 18 and 19 April
Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

For further information on this course or to download the registration form, please visit our website www.act.lifeline.org.au or contact us by phone on 6204 6402 or email training@act.lifeline.org.au.

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Accidental Counsellor Training

The Accidental Counsellor course is presented by Lifeline Canberra. Accidental Counsellor is a two-day workshop that provides participants with fundamental skills in crisis support counselling and dealing with difficult clients and situations. The course also covers topics such as dealing with people who are angry, highly distressed, or experiencing effects of a mental illness.

Participants learn the value of self-care, and strategies they can employ both at work and in their personal life to ensure their mental and physical wellbeing remains at an optimum level. Participants receive a workbook which they can refer to later to refresh the skills and knowledge gained from the course. The training runs over two days. After completing the course, participants will:

- have an understanding of and be able to demonstrate active listening skills
- understand the foundations of developing and maintaining effective and productive relationships with their clients
- be able to deal appropriately with difficult clients.

Date: 11 and 12 April or
24 and 26 April or
30 and 31 May

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Cost: The standard rate for the Accidental Counsellor course is \$400 per participant, or \$360 pp for not-for-profit organisations and pension card holders.

For further information on this course or to download the registration form, please visit our website www.act.lifeline.org.au or contact us by phone on 6204 6402 or email training@act.lifeline.org.au.

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National & International News and Research

The Australian Defence Force

Mental Health Crisis

Defence's newly released mental health plan for the military is a welcome step towards dealing with the hidden wounds of war — especially the distress of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

The Australian Defence Force is still moving slowly and fails to recognise fully the extent of a problem one former general describes as "rampant", but, taken with previous studies and strategy proposals dating to 2009, the [Health and Wellbeing Plan 2012-2015](#) amounts to a serious attempt to make progress on mental health issues. [Click here to read more.](#)

Click here to download the [Carers Australia \(with contributions from Carers ACT and Carers VIC\) Submission to Dept of Vet Affairs Mental Health Strategy 2013](#).

7.30ABC on Bullying in the Australian Defence Force

A senior Defence psychologist has broken ranks to blow the whistle on Defence Force culture in an interview with Leigh Sales on 7.30ABC (broadcast 7 March 2013). [View the interview, or read the transcript here](#)

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Carers support resource: A booklet to support carers in their caring role

Many carers talk about the need to be supported in their role. Caring for someone can be rewarding but also demanding and exhausting. Sometimes carers may feel that others don't understand what they need. Some carers may experience feelings of grief and loss. There may be times when they feel the person they are caring for has changed so much that they have lost the person they once knew. Carers can also grieve for the loss of their own identity, independence, privacy and time for themselves. If you are close to someone who is a carer you may find the information in this booklet helpful in knowing how to support them and understand their role. [Click here to download the booklet](#).

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Male farmers with mental health disorders: A scoping review

The issue of male farmers' mental health raises many concerns including high rates of psychological distress and suicide amid the poor uptake of health services among this subgroup. Gender is an important social determinant of health, and this paper provides an overview of connections between farming and masculinities in the context of men's mental health disorders. This scoping review summarises findings drawn from 46 studies to discuss male farmers' mental health disorders, psychosocial interventions and barriers to help-seeking. In providing the review, recommendations are made including the need for an array of study and intervention approaches to advance the mental health and well-being of male farmers and their families. [Click here to download the paper](#).

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New guide on Borderline Personality Disorder

Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler today launched a new guide to assist health professionals to recognise and treat Borderline Personality Disorder. The Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Borderline Personality Disorder was developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) at the Government's request. Mr Butler said Borderline Personality Disorder was the most serious and common of the personality disorders, affecting adolescents and adults. "Borderline Personality Disorder is estimated to affect at least one per cent of the population", Mr Butler said. "It is associated with a high risk of suicide and causes significant loss and grief for individuals, their families and friends". [Read more here](#) and read a [letter to the Minister from Dr Ben Mullings here](#). Click here to [download the guide](#).

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Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry – Special Issue e-Mental Health

Australia leads the world in e-Mental Health. The Internet and related technologies are here to stay and have opened up a 'brave new world', which e-mental health has eagerly embraced – especially in Australia. E-mental health refers to 'mental health services and information delivered or enhanced through the Internet and related technologies'... In acknowledgment of Australia's current leading position and the fast-moving pace of this area, the ANZJP invited four leading researchers to provide their perspectives on how they see this area evolving over the next 10–15 years. The results are presented in this special issue. The articles included cover diverse aspects of e-mental health, but all indicate that e-mental health will grow in importance and have major implications for the whole mental health sector. [Read more here](#). Click here to access the [ANZJP Special Issue e-Mental Health](#).

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Getting the right NDIS for carers and the people they care for

Flexibility, choice and accessibility were the key themes that emerged when policy experts discussed the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), at the Carers NSW 2013 Biennial Conference: Caring, Working, Living last week. Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis said that the NDIS debate raised important issues that are relevant to all carers not just those who will be part of the NDIS. "The NDIS debate looked at whether the NDIS will do everything it needs to do and as part of the discussion the speakers considered the needs of carers as well as the potential opportunities and limitations of the NDIS," Ms Katrakis said. On the affirmative side, Scott Holz, State Manager, National Disability Services and Carolyn Quinn, Carer and Member of the NSW Carers Advisory Council focused on the benefits of individual funding packages which can allow carers and the people they care for to tailor support plans to suit their needs. [Read more here](#).

Inquiry into Access to and Interaction with the Justice System by people with an Intellectual Disability and their Family and Carers

Click here to download the [Report of the Law Reform Committee for the Inquiry into Access to and Interaction with the Justice System by people with an Intellectual Disability and their Family and Carers](#)

In the media

- [NSW Deputy Commissioners bring wealth of mental health experience](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada partners with Australia](#)
- [At risk people to get more information protecting themselves](#)
- [New service tackles shrinking Mental Health Resources in rural Australia](#)
- [Peacetime may bring tidal wave of mental health issues](#)
- [Affordable housing missing from Sydney plan](#)
- [NFPs back National Anti-Bullying Day](#)

- [New mental health court dubbed retrograde step](#)
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If you or someone you know may be at risk of suicide contact Lifeline 131 114, beyondblue 1300 224 636, or Salvo Care Line 1300 363 622.

The opinions expressed in this E Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of Carers ACT.

Mental Health Carers Voice E-Bulletin is funded by the ACT Government.