



Mental health hui bring carers together to share ideas



New psychogeriatric unit brings care teams together



Sports day reduces isolation in the community

# Primary Importance

Issue 9, Late-2006

A newsletter from Capital & Coast DHB for providers and community organisations involved in primary care.

## Trust targets physical and mental health with exercise

An innovative programme developed by a Wellington Trust has been so successful in helping people improve their overall health and wellbeing, that there are now plans to expand the service.

Nga Whakatauki Trust runs its fitness programme away from busy and expensive gyms, instead creating a truly individual plan that fits clients' abilities.

Jamie Karehana, one of three personal trainers at the Trust, says many people struggle with exercise and “would come up with lots of reasons not to do it.”

“It seemed there was a lack of access to exercise programmes. There was a need to educate people on the idea of body composition, exercise, fitness and mobility within general health,” he says.

The Fitness and Mobility Clinic was started in April this year.

One of the key components of the programme is that each client receives one-on-one training on their own in a gym. Clients take part in training sessions twice weekly for six months, then progress to a session



each fortnight that maintains motivation and allows updating of the client's programme.

Clients also learn the core ingredients to lead them to better fitness – exercise, good nutrition, keeping up motivation, taking account of psychological factors and improving general health.

Jamie says the benefit of exercise for mental health is clear.

“It has been found to reduce the impact of disorders such as schizophrenia, drug and alcohol misuse, depression and can lead to moderate anxiety reduction,” he says.

“Not only that, but the sense of achievement leads to a positive view of themselves, improves their self esteem and confidence, improves sleep, elevates their mood and gives them increased energy levels.”

Jamie says the feedback from clients has been incredibly positive.

“We see people really change. They often come to us quite withdrawn, but they start to open up, get to feel comfortable with us.

“They have improved mood, their fitness is better and their overall attitude is more positive. They say they feel like their trainers care, that they are friendly and that it is a family-like support network.”

There is now a waiting list to join.

The Trust are also looking to expand the service to areas outside central Wellington and are hoping to work with other community groups.

Clients need to be referred by their GP and have a Community Services Card to be eligible.

## Work and study to improve mental health outcomes

A Wellington initiative to integrate those with mental illness into the workplace or study, has led to pilots being run throughout the country.

Occupational therapist and employment consultant, Nikki Porteous, who works with the Early Intervention Service in C&C DHB's Mental Health Services, developed the programme after spending much time working with young people who had experienced their first episode of major psychotic illness.

The focus is on creatively engaging young people in their treatment,

minimising the impact of illness and treatment, and preventing dislocation of social relationships and developmental goals.

Nikki says outcomes for this group of people can be improved if they engage in study or the workforce.

The programme uses a model of service delivery called Individual Placement and Support (IPS), emphasising the role vocation/ occupation has in a person's recovery and that the best preparation for the work/study environment is real experience.

In 2001, Nikki led a proposal to the Ministry of Social Development to participate in a pilot aimed at reducing the number of people accessing sickness and invalids benefits. This led to six pilots around the country.

Her success is shown in the 42% of young people offered this service achieving full time employment and another 14% in full time study.

Nikki's team, working under the brand 'Workfirst', has now expanded to include four more employment consultants.

# PHO leads the way with mental health hui

South East and City Primary Health Organisation (Secpho) has established a new opportunity for mental health carers to get together and learn from each other for the benefit of their clients.

Secpho hosts monthly hui for providers, community groups and anyone else interested in mental healthcare.

Kathryn Johnston, a Social Worker for Secpho, says the hui provides a platform for mental health initiatives to be integrated into an holistic approach to primary healthcare. Groups and service providers are encouraged to give presentations about what they do and any new initiatives they have on the go.

Attendees are also encouraged to meet and learn from each other and share information that may be of benefit to their clients.

Items covered in the hui have so far included problem gambling, cultural sensitivities in mental health services, child mental health, and the role of fitness and exercise in mental health.

“We aim to educate health and community organisations, and all practicing counsellors, providing useful and practical information,” Kathryn says.

“It’s an opportunity to meet other people, who they might have only spoken to on the phone – it’s a networking opportunity.”

Secpho hopes to help people understand a different model of care – building a sustainable and integrated model of primary mental health care, focusing on working as a team, including the person and their family and other supporters. It focuses on their strengths and uses a multi-disciplinary approach to their care.

“The outcome is much better if people are not working



in isolation. They need to get together and we provide an opportunity for that,” Kathryn says.

As part of their care plan, the client is invited to simultaneously meet all those taking part in their care.

“We get the person there so it is centred around them, it also give them the opportunity to give feedback on how they are feeling and the issues they have. Getting everyone together for just a short time can make a huge difference.”

Feedback from both clients and professionals has so far been very positive.

Working with other agencies, Secpho is also helping to educate people about all the services available to help them – which can be anything from clinical support to complementary therapies or spiritual support.

“We’re aware that there is a stigma attached to mental health and it will take time to break that down. We have to work on culturally appropriate ideas to do this,” Kathryn says.

“It’s about understanding the way people present with their issues and the need to allow people to choose a solution that suits. This concept complements a lot of other strengths and ideas that are already in the community.”

## Planning for the future – the Journey Forward



Significant progress has now been made in planning for the future direction of mental health services in this district.

The Journey Forward, Mental Health and Addiction Service Development Plan; 2005 – 2010, provides guidance and direction for Capital & Coast DHB as it develops and funds services, ensuring it appropriately responds to the needs of our communities over the next five years.

The change programme is being led by a leadership group, receiving input from all key stakeholders including Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), consumer groups, Primary Health Organisations (PHOs), Maori, and C&C DHB clinicians and management.

A number of workstreams have now been set up, which are made up of a

wide range of stakeholders.

One of these workstreams is currently looking at the development of options for an integrated framework for primary care services and community mental health services. As part of this work, the team is looking at what is already working in the mental health system and where the barriers to access are. Next year, the plan is to introduce pilot schemes aimed at improving access for people and reducing disparities.

Another workstream is developing a special model of care for people who need the acute and crisis service. The model will ensure good practice is maintained, that there is the right service mix in place and that people are supported in the setting most appropriate to their needs.

Other work includes developing strategies to reduce the number of people using the acute inpatient

service, and instead giving them access to programmes in the community. One of the key initiatives has been to establish a community recovery house programme based in Whitby, with further programmes in Titahi Bay, and Kapiti to begin providing services soon. The next step is to develop a Short Term Assessment and Recovery facility. When these services are all up and running, a new acute assessment facility will be built at Kenepuru Community Hospital in Porirua.

Throughout the change programme, the leadership group will be making sure mental health services focus on wellness and recovery, and that support packages can be developed specifically to suit each client. A focus on quality and assessment of outcomes will also make sure people are consistently getting appropriate care.