

Bipolar Aberdeen news

We ran a Self Management Training course in May through Bipolar Scotland. It was a great success and enjoyed by all. Everyone learnt new effective strategies and techniques on how to self manage their disorder.

The next self-help group meeting will take place on **Thursday 30th of August 2012** from **7pm-9pm** at the **Midstocket Church Community Centre, 35 Midstocket Road, Aberdeen, AB15 5JL**.

Following dates for meetings are:

September 27th, October 25th, November 29th

Same time and place.

First Saturday Group

The First Saturday Club will be on Saturday, 15th September.

The first meeting will be in the Winter Gardens in Duthie Park. The gardens are one of the largest Winter Gardens in Europe. All the facilities are accessible to everyone.

Details will be advertised on the Bipolar Aberdeen Website soon.

www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk



Bipolar Scotland Conference 2012

Bipolar Scotland will be holding their AGM and 20th Anniversary conference on

Saturday 15th September 2012, Menzies Hotel, 27 Washington Street, Glasgow, G3 8AZ.

The AGM (members only) will start at 10am and the conference will start at 10.50 and finish by 3.30pm.

The morning speakers will be Dr Margaret Thomas, one of the founding members of the organisation and Prof Andrew McIntosh who will speak about current research into bipolar disorder.

The afternoon workshops will cover Perinatal Mental Health, Mindfulness, Storytelling and a firm of solicitors covering legal aspects of mental health and social care legislation in Scotland.

Please see attached a booking form for the conference.



Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film festival in Aberdeen

The festival is all about using Arts and Films as a way to promote and enhance good mental health and wellbeing. It is an expression of mental health through the media of Arts and Film. It is a celebrating of the Arts raising awareness and helping tackle stigma associated with mental health. It is also a way of helping challenge attitudes towards mental health.

For more information about the festival please see the website

www.mhfestival.com

Please note the website hasn't been updated with this year's events because they are still in the planning stages.

The theme for the festival this year is "Take a walk in my shoes"

The proposed events to be held in Aberdeen in October so far are

1. "Writing as Therapy" workshop to take place in the RGU Health & Social Care Building on Tuesday 9th October from 7pm – 9pm.
2. Film "K-Pax" (mental health themed film) to be shown at the Belmont cinema on Wednesday 10th October followed by a few short films.

3. "Unplugged" poetry and song evening, 7pm at Oil and Glass venue on Thursday 11th October. (poets and acoustic musicians can perform)
4. Open Mic session on Friday 12th October from 7:30 pm (Holburn)
5. Exhibition of service users Artwork to run from Saturday 6th October – Saturday 13th October in the refectory of the Royal Cornhill Hospital (location to be finalised). There may also be other locations around the city (to be confirmed)

Perhaps you or someone you know is a musician, poet, comedian, singer, or even actor, who would like to take part in the "Unplugged" poetry and song evening on Thursday 11th or Open mic night on Friday 12th. An idea might be that you could ask some of your friends/family to get together to sing a song, or for example do a dance act.

Are you a budding film maker? We could show your film on Wednesday 10th October at the Belmont cinema.

Are you a budding artist? We could show your work at our art exhibition.

This festival is a great opportunity to give people a voice. To say who you are. To show that you can still do things even though you have or had a mental health issue.

If you would like more information or like to get involved please email

JOHN SAWKINS

john.sawkins246@btinternet.com

Box of Frogs – Circus Group

People often ask what it is like to have bipolar. Look no further than Box of Frogs – a fantastic and scarily accurate representation by innovative circus company Stumbledance. First premiered in 2011 and included in this year's month long circus festival at London's Roundhouse Theatre, Box of Frogs is now touring the UK.

Dates for Scotland are as follows:

Thursday 11th October 2012, Eastwood Theatre, Giffnock. Tickets available at <http://www.eastwoodparktheatre.co.uk>

Friday 12th October 2012, Lochgelly Centre, Lochgelly. Tickets available at <http://www.onfife.com>

Wednesday 17th October 2012, The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen, Tickets available at <http://www.boxofficeaberdeen.com>

Building Self-Directed Support Capacity in Local Mental Health Organisations



**Launch Event
27th August
2012: Grand Central Hotel,
Glasgow**

Mental Health Foundation, Scottish Mental Health Cooperative and Scottish Service User Research Network have been jointly funded by the Scottish Government to develop a new project about Self-Directed Support (SDS) in mental health.

The project is going to work with third sector mental health service providers and people who use or might use SDS to meet their social care needs. There are lots of

challenges with self-directed support and mental health, and in this project we hope to identify and then address some of these. In particular the project will help third sector mental health service providers to meet the needs of people who want to use self-directed support. In some cases this will mean using direct payments to purchase services, but it will also include using the other self-directed support options.

The project starts with a launch event in Glasgow on Monday 27th August. There are at least 40 places available for people with lived experience of mental health problems. We would particularly like to hear from:

- People who use self-directed support in relation to their mental health
- People who could use self-directed support but don't at the moment
- People who services provided by local third sector mental health service providers
- People who would like to work together with other service users and providers to develop new ways of making Self-Directed Support possible for people with mental health problems.

The event on the 27th of August will bring together staff from local mental health service organisations and people who use or could use self-directed support. There will be some information on progress in Self-Directed Support in Scotland, particularly on the new legislation which is in Parliament.

There will be some joint sessions, and some sessions where service users and providers will have a chance to work separately.

It will be completely free to attend the event, and travel and subsistence costs will be covered.

If you can't come to the launch event but would like to keep in touch with the project, they would like to hear from you as well. They will also be organising regional

meetings across Scotland in October and November, and you might prefer to attend one of those.

If you are interested in coming to the event on the 27th August, please contact Janine Bowie on

jbowie@mhf.org.uk or 0131 243 3800.

Or please see attached Booking Form

What is self-directed support?

Self-directed support (SDS) allows people to choose how their support is provided to them by giving them as much ongoing control as they want over the **individual budget** spent on their support.

In other words, SDS is the support a person purchases or arranges to meet agreed health and social care outcomes.

SDS includes a number of options for getting support. The person's individual (or personal) budget can be:

- taken as a **Direct Payment** (a cash payment)
- allocated to a provider the individual chooses (sometimes called an **individual service fund**, where the council or funder, holds the budget, but the person is in charge of how it is spent)
- or the council can arrange a service chosen by the individual
- or the individual can choose a mix of these options for different types of support.

Currently councils are only *required* to offer the first option (a Direct Payment) but many councils in Scotland offer all the options.

What can you use SDS for?

Self-Directed Support can be used in many ways. You can get support to live in your own home, such as help with having a bath or getting washed and dressed.

Out of the home it could support you to college, to continue in employment or take a job, or to enjoy leisure pursuits more. Instead of relying on the activities run at a day centre, you might arrange for a personal assistant (PA) to help you attend local classes, go swimming, or be a volunteer helping others. It could also be used to provide a short break (respite) or for equipment and temporary adaptations.

You can choose whether you would prefer to get support from a service provider such as a voluntary organisation or care agency, or by employing PAs, or a combination of both.

www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk

Carers

Caring for someone with a mental health problem can be challenging and emotionally draining. With the right support however it needn't be so difficult and can be very rewarding.

Sometimes, it can also be hard to understand why someone needs caring for if they don't have a physical illness or disorder. It may be harder to understand what they are experiencing. Being a carer can be both challenging and rewarding. It can be emotionally draining and can place significant demands on your time and energy. It can also give you a sense of satisfaction from helping someone else.

There are a number of areas where you are likely to want support:

- emotional support
- practical support e.g. with day-to-day chores
- time off (respite) from caring
- financial support
- involvement in planning someone's care, including recognition of your role and information about their treatment.

Carers Scotland

Carers Scotland is the Scottish national office of Carers UK and campaigns for a better understanding of the issues affecting and services needed for carers. Their website includes information for carers on many issues including financial and practical advice, and guidance on where to find support and various services.

www.carersscotland.org

VSA Carers' Services in Aberdeen

VSA Carers' Services provide information, advice and support to carers within the Aberdeen City area.

Services they provide:

- **Confidential Advice, Support and Information**
 - Information and advice on a wide range of topics e.g. breaks from caring, practical help, housing options and carers' rights
 - Carers' News – a local newsletter for Carers
- **Benefits Advice**
 - Help with filling in forms
 - Advice about grants
 - Benefits checks
- **Complementary Therapies**
e.g. reflexology, reiki and art therapy

- **Counselling and Life Coaching**
- **Support Groups for Carers**
- **Access to Training and Education**

If you would like more information on any of **VSA Carers' Services**

Contact

Tel: 01224 212021

Email: carers.info@vsa.org.uk

Website: www.vsa.org.uk/carers

Join the Carers RED Network - Respond Engage Deliver

Calling on all carers to join RED.
The email community of carers facilitated by
The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

How Carers RED Works

The RED Network will provide regular updates to carers, keeping them informed of developments that are likely to affect them. It will also provide a quick, easy and flexible mechanism to gather carers views from across Scotland, allowing us to ensure local and national government take account of their needs and opinions.

Why Carers Should Join RED

Over the next few years the government plans to undertake an ambitious programme of change in the way health and social care services are designed and delivered. RED will be informing carers and gathering their views on issues such as:

* Are carers being recognised as equal partners in the emerging integrated health and social care partnerships?

* How will new policy and legislation, such as the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) Bill affect carers?

If you are interested simply follow the link to sign up.

<http://ctt-news.org/t/HQL-TGQP-212GY2XFA8/cr.aspx>

TIPS for Bipolar

Combine exercise and rest

- Gentle, regular exercise is a great antidote to feeling low both physically and emotionally.
- Try walking, swimming, gardening even for just a few minutes a day.
- Good rest is as important as exercise, and sleep can be disrupted by depression. To get good night's sleep, try unwinding for an hour or so before bedtime. Having a warm drink or bath can help, as well as ensuring that your bedroom is neither too hot nor cold.

Don't beat yourself up

- Taking steps to help yourself cope with and overcome your depression is excellent, empowering and very worthwhile.
- But it is the nature of the depression itself that your progress will inevitably be both slow and erratic.
- Be gentle with yourself. Remember that you are not striving for perfection.
- You are not fighting against yourself; you are trying to work with yourself and for yourself.
- Every positive thing you do, however small, is, in fact, a huge step in the right direction.
- Be encouraged, not discouraged!
- With time you will get over this

Mood Diary and Mood Scale

Understanding how aspects of daily life, such as sleep patterns and stressful situations can affect your mood will enable you to manage your condition.

The mood diary can help you and your doctor monitor your illness. By gathering information about your mood, events in your

Mania	10	Total loss of judgement, exorbitant spending, religious delusions and hallucinations.
	9	Lost touch with reality, incoherent, no sleep, paranoid and vindictive, reckless behaviour.
Hypomania	8	Inflated self-esteem, rapid thoughts and speech, counter-productive simultaneous tasks.
	7	Very productive, everything to excess (phone calls, writing, smoking, tea), charming and talkative.
Balanced Mood	6	Self-esteem good, optimistic, sociable and articulate, good decisions and get work done.
	5	Mood in balance, no symptoms of depression or mania. Life is going well and the outlook is good.
	4	Slight withdrawal from social situations, concentration less than usual, slight agitation.
Mild to Moderate Depression	3	Feelings of panic and anxiety, concentration difficult and memory poor, some comfort in routine.
	2	Slow thinking, no appetite, need to be alone, sleep excessive or difficult, everything a struggle.
Severe Depression	1	Feelings of hopelessness and guilt, thoughts of suicide, little movement, impossible to do anything.
	0	Endless suicidal thoughts, no way out, no movement, everything is bleak and it will always be like this.

life, sleep patterns and medications you are taking, you may notice patterns that would otherwise remain undetected.

Taking your mood diary to your doctor will help him or her monitor your illness and treatment. If you find it difficult to complete the diary, a relative, partner or close friend may be able to help.

www.bipolaraberdeen.org.uk/support-and-self-help/mood-diary

Body Clocks May Hold Key for Treatment of Bipolar Disorder

Scientists have gained insight into why lithium salts are effective at treating bipolar disorder in what could lead to more targeted therapies with fewer side-effects.

Bipolar disorder is characterised by alternating states of elevated mood, or mania, and depression. It affects between 1% and 3% of the general population.

The extreme 'mood swings' in bipolar disorder have been strongly associated with disruptions in circadian rhythms -- the 24-hourly rhythms controlled by our body clocks that govern our day and night activity.

For the last 60 years, lithium salt (lithium chloride) has been the mainstay treatment for bipolar disorder but little research has been carried out to find out whether and how lithium impacts on the brain and peripheral body clockwork.

Lead researcher, Dr Qing-Jun Meng, from Manchester University, stated "Our study has shown a new and potent effect of lithium in increasing the amplitude, or strength, of the clock rhythms, revealing a novel link between the classic mood-stabiliser, bipolar disorder and body clocks,"

"By tracking the dynamics of a key clock protein, we discovered that lithium increased the strength of the clockwork in cells up to three-fold by blocking the actions of an enzyme called glycogen synthase kinase or GSK3".

"Our findings are important for two reasons: firstly, they offer a novel explanation as to how lithium may be able to stabilise mood swings in bipolar patients; secondly, they open up opportunities to develop new drugs

for bipolar disorder that mimic and even enhance the effect lithium has on GSK3 without the side-effects lithium salts can cause."

These side-effects include nausea, acne, thirstiness, muscle weakness, tremor, sedation and/or confusion. Promisingly, GSK3 inhibiting drugs are already in development, as they have been shown to be important in other diseases, including diabetes and Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Meng added: "Lithium salt has a wide spectrum of targets within cells, in addition to GSK3; drugs which only block the actions of GSK3 would therefore have the major advantage of reduced 'off-target' effects of lithium.

"Our study has identified the robust rhythm-enhancing effect of GSK3 inhibition, which has potential to be developed as a new pharmacological approach to regulate body clocks. The implications of our study are that there may also be beneficial effects leading to new treatments for bipolar disorder, and this now needs to be tested."



Referenced from Science Daily
(Mar. 13, 2012)

Research Explores the Positives of Bipolar Disorder

The problems of living with bipolar have been well documented, but a new study by Lancaster University has captured the views of those who also report highly-valued, positive experiences of living with the condition.

Researchers at Lancaster's Spectrum Centre, which is dedicated to the study of bipolar disorder, interviewed and recorded their views of ten people with a bipolar diagnosis, aged between 24 and 57. Participants in the study reported a number of perceived benefits to the condition ranging from sharper senses to increased productivity.

The research was designed to explore growing evidence that some people with bipolar value their experiences and in some cases would prefer not to be without the condition.

Participants described a wide range of experiences and internal states that they believed they felt to a far greater intensity than those without the condition. These included increased perceptual sensitivity, creativity, focus and clarity of thought.

Some held (or had previously held) high functioning professional jobs or had been studying for higher level qualifications. They described in detail how they experienced times when tasks that are usually quite difficult or time consuming, would feel incredibly easy and the ability to achieve at a high level during these times was clearly immensely rewarding.

Others expressed the view that they felt 'lucky' or even 'blessed' to have the condition.

Alan, (not his real name) one of the interviewees, said: "It's almost as if it opens up something in the brain that isn't otherwise there, and I see colour much

more vividly than I used to.....So I think that my access to music and art are something for which I'm grateful to bipolar for enhancing. It's almost as if it's a magnifying glass that sits between that and myself."

Researchers even found some people with bipolar reaped positive experiences from their lows such as greater empathy with the suffering of others.

Dr Fiona Lobban, who led the study, said: "Bipolar Disorder is generally seen as a severe and enduring mental illness with serious negative consequences for the people with this diagnosis and their friends and family. For some people this is very much the case.

Research shows that long term unemployment rates are high, relationships are marred by high levels of burden on family and friends and quality of life is often poor. High rates of drug and alcohol misuse are reported for people with this diagnosis and suicide rates are twenty times that of the general population.

"However, despite all these factors researchers and clinicians are aware that some aspects of bipolar experiences are also highly valued by some people. We wanted to find out what these positive experiences were".

"People were very keen to take part in this study and express views which some felt had to be hidden from the medical profession.

"It is really important that we learn more about the positives of bipolar as focusing only on negative aspects paints a very biased picture that perpetuates the view of bipolar as a wholly negative experience. If we fail to explore the positives of bipolar we also fail to understand the ambivalence of some people towards treatment."

Rita Long from Stockport was not part of the study but can identify with its findings. She was 40 when she was diagnosed with the condition but from her school days she was aware that she experienced the world differently to her twin sister.

"We were making Christmas cakes at school and I was so interested and excited by it and my sister says she remembers watching me and thinking, 'I really wish I could get that excited about making a Christmas cake'. I noticed things, experienced them with a different level of intensity, we'd be on a walk and I'd be saying look at the colour of this, and my sister would be saying, 'It's just a berry'. Socially too, people with bipolar can be quite quick witted, humorous. Until much later in life I just presumed those things were part of my personality.

"I don't want to underestimate how difficult the bad times can be that some people go through with bipolar but at the same time I feel very passionate about the positives. If we are going to move on as a society -- in academia, in business, in entertainment -- we need people who will push boundaries. People with bipolar can do that."

Referenced Science Daily (May 3, 2012)

Hallucinations In Bipolar

About a fifth of bipolar patients experience hallucinations. Hallucinations include hearing, seeing or smelling things that aren't there.

Heard hallucinations are more common than seen ones.

You may or may not recognise any voices you hear. There may be one or many of

them talking to, or about, you. They might be present occasionally, or all the time, interfering with ordinary life, making concentration and conversation difficult. The voices may be positive and helpful, or hostile and nasty.

If you hear only positive voices, you may not regard them as a problem, but may even feel them to be a helpful, guiding light. If you hear only negative voices, ridiculing you, or issuing threats and commands which you feel you must obey, you are likely to feel very threatened and fearful. This may make you very distrustful of other people and appear aggressive or threatening. You may harm yourself or behave in ways which put you or other people at risk of harm.

Hallucinations tend to occur at the most severe stages of the illness. They are the first symptoms to disappear during recovery. Hallucinations are short-lived. Colour is usually normal. Hallucinated people are usually of normal size and appearance. Patients believe that the hallucinations are only experienced by themselves. Hallucinations during mania are frequently ecstatic and religious.

For many people, these experiences can be highly distressing and disruptive, interfering with everyday life, conversations, relationships, and finding or keeping a job.

One theory is that when you experience psychosis, your brain is in the same state as it is when you are dreaming. When we are dreaming, all sorts of strange and sometimes frightening things can happen to us, and while we are asleep we believe that they are really happening. Psychotic experiences can be just like 'waking dreams', feeling as real and intense.

www.mind.org.uk

Carrot & sesame burgers (Serves 6) Vegetarian



Preparation and cooking times

Prep 30 mins Cook 20 mins

Uncooked burgers can be frozen

Ingredients:

- 750g carrots , peeled and grated
- 410g can chickpeas , drained and rinsed
- 1 small onion , roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp tahini paste , plus 1 tsp to serve
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 100g wholemeal breadcrumbs
- zest 1 lemon , plus 1 tsp juice
- 150ml pot natural yogurt
- 6 buns, rocket leaves, sliced red onion, sliced avocado and chilli sauce, to serve
- 3 tbsp sesame seeds

Method

1. Put a third of the grated carrot in a food processor with the chickpeas, onion, 2 tbsp tahini, cumin and egg. Whizz to a thick paste, then scrape into a large bowl. Heat 1 tbsp oil in your largest frying pan, tip in the remaining carrot and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring until the carrot is softened - it will become more golden as it is cooked. Add this cooked carrot to the whizzed paste with the breadcrumbs, lemon zest and sesame seeds. Add seasoning, then mix together well with your hands.
2. Divide the mixture into 6, then using wet hands shape into burgers. Cover and chill until serving. Mix the yogurt with the remaining tahini and lemon juice, then chill.
3. Fire up the barbecue, or heat a non-stick frying pan and brush the burgers with the remaining oil. Cook the burgers for 5 mins on each side, until golden and crisp. Meanwhile warm or toast the buns (or sit them on the barbecue alongside the burgers). When the burgers are ready, spread each bun with some of the lemony sesame yogurt, add the avocado, top with the burger, onion and rocket. Finish with a drizzle of chilli sauce.

Nutrition per serving: 284 kcalories, protein 10g, carbohydrate 27g, fat 16 g, saturated fat 3g, fibre 7g, sugar 12g, salt 0.5 g

Thai burgers with salsa & sweet potato wedges (Serves 4)



Ready in 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 sweet potatoes , cut into wedges
- olive oil
- 400.0g extra lean minced pork
- 1 tbsp Thai red curry paste
- 1 red onion , ½ grated, ½ finely diced
- small bunch coriander , chopped
- 1 mango , diced
- 1 red chilli , finely chopped
- ½ lime , juiced
- Little Gem lettuce , to serve

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Toss the potato wedges with 1/2 tbsp olive oil. Put on a baking tray and sprinkle with salt. Bake for 20-25 minutes until tender.
2. Meanwhile, mix together the pork, curry paste, grated onion and half the coriander. Season and form into 4 burgers. Brush the burgers with a little oil then grill or griddle for 5-6 minutes each side until they are cooked through.
3. For the mango salsa, mix the mango, chilli and the rest of the coriander with the lime juice. To serve, put a burger on top of some little gem leaves and spoon over some salsa. Serve with the sweet potato wedges.

Nutrition per serving:

242 kcalories, protein 23.6g, carbohydrate 27.9g, fat 4.8 g, saturated fat 1.6g, fibre 4.0g, salt 0.45 g

Enjoy