



Mental Health Carers February Newsletter

22 Stewart Ave, Hamilton East NSW 2303
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Web: www.arafmihunter.org

Regional Managers Report

Dear Members

Happy New Year to you all! I hope this year brings new beginnings, new aspirations and new ways at looking at problems, with support and new knowledge amazing inroads can occur. The team at ARAFMI are here to support individuals and families offering knowledge and a greater awareness to create these new inroads.

January is usually a quieter month which has given us a chance to organise the service, clean our offices and to prepare for the next busy twelve months. As we move into February the service is gaining momentum! Counselling, education programs and support calls are our most needed areas of service. As you can see later in this newsletter, a list of all of our upcoming workshops for the next twelve months. Also a list of support groups in the Newcastle and Maitland regions. Please give us a call if you are interested and we can offer you further information.

If you are a member of ARAFMI Hunter you will automatically receive an annual report from Sydney ARAFMI they will be holding their Annual General Meeting in Sydney on the 24th March if anyone is interested in coming along, you will be more than welcome.

I have also added in this newsletter a history of ARAFMI in the Hunter, it is an interesting read; I may need to dig out some old photos and put onto our website (a little nostalgia for those that have been involved in the service since its inception in 1979).

We have a couple of extra fact sheets for the Navigator guide just about ready for the completion stage; they are Discharge Planning and Non Government services. The Navigator guide really is a working document that will always need updating and reviewing but we are happy to keep at it as we see it as a very important information pack.

For now it's back to the core business of ARAFMI as the phone is ringing bye for now....

Kind regards Joanne

*A person cannot be comfortable
without their own approval.
Mark Twain*

Library Book Reminder

Thank you to all those people who have returned overdue library books. For those who still have not returned books on time please do so as soon as possible, or contact us if you need to borrow for longer period of time. Often other carers are placed on a waiting list till books are returned. Thank you for your assistance.

1. **Regional Manager's Report**
2. **Counsellor's Corner**
3. **History of ARAFMI Hunter**
4. **Cindy Grahame's Story O& a poem by Di Lymbury**
5. **Young Carers Support Group**
6. **Drug & Alcohol Forum**
7. **Upcoming Workshops**
8. **B.P.D. Workshop**
9. **Boundaries Workshop**
10. **Support Groups**
11. **ARAFMI NSW Carers Consultation**
12. **Membership**

Counsellors' Corner (depression, motivation & exercise)

In just a few minutes exercise burns off stress hormones and raises endorphin levels (the happiness hormone). This makes the depressed person feel better, more uplifted and therefore able to re-interpret the sources of stress in a more positive light. However, people who are depressed experience fatigue, low energy levels, irritability, poor sleep and the lack of interest in day to day activities. Ironically, the depressed person who needs to exercise most is not likely to exercise. The situation becomes self-perpetuating.

Depression is associated with negative self talk such as "Life's not fair", "I'm not good enough," "What's the use of trying," "I'm boring," "I just have no luck," "I'm not good looking enough." A depressed person repeats this negative self-talk so many times until it becomes automatic, constantly replaying the same words in their mind and believing every word.

So how do you break this cycle and get a depressed person to exercise? Here are some suggestions to begin exercising when you are depressed and feel that you don't have the energy to do it:

- You have to become aware of your feelings, specifically what is making you sad and why you are sad?
- Being sad has to feel so uncomfortable to you, that you want to change it and will make every effort to pull yourself out of it. If you are not motivated to release your sadness, you won't. You have to want to let go.
- Making small changes helps you to keep them. Break the bigger goal down into small steps this will make it easier to accomplish.
- Exercise with a friend. Working out with a buddy becomes a social and positive experience. Often we are depressed because we feel lonely. Exercising with a friend helps us to stay motivated. If you don't have a friend to exercise with, go to the gym or join a walking group, tai chi or yoga. There are many activities out there that are free or have a minimal cost. You will meet people and make friends.
- Sign up for exercise classes in a gym or community centre. For example, aerobics, interval training, body-sculpting, yoga, Pilates and belly dancing. Signing up for a class is like scheduling an appointment with a doctor, makes you feel better! Also, a class is more effective than a treadmill or stationary bicycle, as you need to tap into group energy. The pulsating music works to excite and keep you moving.
- Lift all the blinds in the house and let the light shine in to help brighten you up. Because we are all different and require different triggers, if the exercise class suggestions do not work for you, then put on your joggers and walk out the door. The sunlight will energize you. A brisk walk will de-stress and cheer you up. Aim for a twenty minute walk. To make it more interesting alternate between walking briskly for five minutes, then slow down and walk at a relaxed pace for two minutes. Varying the intervals kicks up the body and your mood, keeps you interested, alert and involved.
- Stick up motivating quotes all over your home, especially on the refrigerator. Play motivating music, and watch inspirational movies.

There are five basic instincts for happiness. 1. The instinct for **survival**. 2. **Choice** - what I choose or choose not to do. 3. **Empowerment** - to feel that we have something to contribute. 4. **Social** as we need to connect with friends. 5. **Fun** - release our inner child and cut loose. Exercise strengthens our body and mind so that we are healthier, able to express ourselves, feel more powerful, able to support others, have healthier relationships, and relaxed enough to enjoy life as much as possible under whatever circumstances life throws up at us.

Coralie Reeve (B.Couns.,Dip.Prof.Couns.,CAPA,PACFA)

History of ARAFMI Hunter

ARAFMI was founded in Sydney about 1974/1975. By 1979 the Sydney membership had grown and the decision to “spread its wings” and open a branch in Newcastle was made. Invitations to attend this meeting were sent to a number of families who had relatives affected by mental illness. This meeting was held in October 1979 in a house in Denison Street Hamilton and was attended by two representatives from Sydney; Margaret Lukes and Kenny Dare. About fifteen people attended and the Hunter Branch of ARAFMI was officially formed having the following office bearers – President Alan Drayton, Secretary Eve Drayton and Treasurer Keith Brownlea. This was the beginning of the first Hunter Support Service for the families, carers and friends of people with a mental illness.

Meetings were held monthly with the focus on caring and sharing. On occasions guest speakers were invited to speak and update members on new developments being made within the field of Mental Health.

After a few months we moved temporarily to a meeting room in the Community Health Centre at the corner of Stewart Avenue and Parry Street. In 1980 the State Building Society “offered ARAFMI an upstairs room, rent free, in their building at the corner of Hunter Street and Wolfe Street Newcastle. In the early 1980’s the unemployment figure became a serious concern for the government who then initiated a Commonwealth Employment Scheme whereby government grants would be given to Non Government Organisations that could employ workers either part-time or full – time and hence reduce the number of unemployed. Consequently ARAFMI Hunter decided to apply for a grant which was successful. Initially we employed a Part-time Co-ordinator and a part-time Clerical Assistant and, as well, we were able to afford to pay the rental for office space in the CHL Building in Hunter Street (next door to Dymock’s book shop). So we bought some office furniture with the necessary equipment and moved in. Thus we were able to open during the day giving people access to our service almost continuously.

Eventually the CES Funding was abandoned so ARAFMI had to seek funding elsewhere or close up “shop”. Fortunately Hunter Area Health came to our rescue and agreed to fund us. Submissions were to be done tri-annually. Further to this they offered us rent free premises in the grounds of the James Fletcher Hospital – the former Credit Union building, now it is the Short Stay Hospital on the corner of Church & Newcommen Street.

In the early 1990’s ARAFMI was fast becoming well known in the community and looked at ways of expanding their services. Around this time Hunter ARAFMI assisted in the setting up of other branches at Maitland, the Upper Hunter, Taree and Port Stephens. The extra space at our new location enabled us to establish respite care for relatives and friends of patients requiring treatment in the James Fletcher Hospital. Over this period many people from the Upper Hunter, New England and Central Coast areas used our accommodation facilities. Unfortunately, after some years, the accommodation on the first floor was deemed to be a great risk in the event of fire and hence had to be closed.

Besides Hunter Health funding ARAFMI has received special funding and grants that has enabled ARAFMI to undertake a number of special projects such as education, advocacy and counselling and to employ further staff to oversee these projects.

In the year 2009 has seen the demolition of our former premises at James Fletcher Hospital and the move to our exciting building at 22 Stewart Avenue, Hamilton; almost back to where we started however much bigger. The success of ARAFMI is mainly due to the dedication of the paid staff – past and present, the committee and its office bearers, and of course the volunteers who give so much of their time to man the office. A big thank you is deserving to all those who have contributed and made ARAFMI what it is now, over 30 years later.

Victim Support - Cindy Grahame

It has taken Cindy Grahame more than three decades to achieve her goal but today she works as a lawyer at a community legal centre on the western fringes of Sydney dealing with victim support, domestic violence, debt and family law issues.

"The best thing about the job is talking with people who are dispossessed and can't initially help themselves," says Grahame, who graduated with honours from the University of Newcastle law school in 2009.

"I met a client in the street the other day who said 'Cindy, you changed my life.' He felt he had been heard. He felt really empowered. It doesn't get any better than that."

Grahame started a double arts and law degree at the University of Newcastle in 1976 but was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and had to put university on hold.

She finally finished her arts degree in 1985 and had a varied career as a teacher, retail manager and consultant but never lost sight of her aspiration to practice law.

"At one point, when I was teaching adult literacy and numeracy, I kept finding that my clients had extra problems and I had to refer them on," she says. "They were getting the gift of reading and writing but I wanted to give them more."

So she returned to study law in 2006 as a mature-aged student.

"I found it very intellectually rewarding," Grahame says. "I might have had more altruistic reasons than some other students who saw the high incomes lawyers make and were seduced by that lifestyle."

After completing her practical training at the College of Law in Sydney and working at the Aboriginal Legal Centre and a commercial law firm, Grahame became a fully qualified lawyer.

"I guess the really important message from my experience is that, while it took a long time and a lot of hard work, it's important for students to realise you can have a second chance. Look at me, I'm 53 but I'm here now."

MH



Calling... a desire to help led Cindy Grahame to further studies.

My Shame

Stigma is a barrier
'Cos it slams the door
On many opportunities
You can no more explore
Born of fear it tethers us
Can't stand it anymore
Let us all conjoin today
Ban stigma I implore

Look behind the shrouded veil
Sometimes used to cover
A distinct and unique person is
What you may discover
If we're open, more accepting
The joys we may uncover
Don't be scared to have a go
And change your life forever

So when you next see anything
That presents a challenge
Nose piercings and those tattoos
That cause an auto-cringe
Close your eyes and open minds
And take a mighty plunge
Let's work together starting now
Our bias's to expunge

We all know wondrous people
Who've battled and who've won
Our lives would be much poorer
If they're the ones we'd shun
We ALL have mental challenges
And sometimes don't catch on
But that's no reason to banish us
No reason to poke fun

Who says you're more important
Than the other ones you meet
Who has the right to judge them
Their differences mistreat
Let us all unlock our hearts
And not act with conceit
And work towards a future
Where Stigma's obsolete.

Di Lymbury
A Carer

Are you aged between 8 – 12 years?

Do you help look after your brother or sister, parent, grandparent, other relative or friend who has a disability, mental illness, chronic medical condition, drug and/or alcohol related condition or who is frail aged?

Yes! Then...Come along to EDuCARE's

i-care 6 Week

Young Carer Peer Support Group!!

What will I be doing in the Group?

- Meet New Friends
- Share Your Experiences with Others
- Talk about your Feelings
- Learning to Deal with Problems
- Talk about your Worries
- Explore your Strengths
- Most of all have Fun!!!

When: Each Wednesday from 29th February til Wednesday 4th April, 2012

Time: 3.30pm - 5.30pm

Where: "The Place", Charlestown Community Centre,

Cnr Frederick & Pearson Streets, Charlestown

(Entrance via Frederick Street

Limited Places, so Don't Miss Out on this Opportunity!

To Register Contact

EDuCARE on: 4921 4895 – Map Attached)

Cost: FREE! - Includes all Activities and Afternoon Tea

FREE Mental Health First Aid Course

INVITATION TO CARERS

The 'Mental Health First Aid Course' is a multi-award winning course developed in 2001 by Betty Kitchener and Professor Tony Jorm with the aim to improve the mental health literacy of members of the Australian community. For information about the course see attached flyer or view website www.mhfa.com.au.

The Hunter Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre is supporting eligible, volunteer carers of people with a mental illness by providing a FREE Mental Health First Aid Course.

Presenter:

Nadine Farrell is the Community Development Officer for Schizophrenia Fellowship in the Hunter region. Nadine has personal and professional interest and expertise in mental health, which will enhance the delivery of this valuable course.

Dates & Times:

Day 1 - 9.30am to 3.30pm, Thursday 15th March 2012

Day 2 - 9.30am to 3.30pm, Thursday 22nd March 2012

Day 3 - 9.30am to 3.30pm, Thursday 29th March 2012

(Morning/Afternoon Tea and Lunch provided each day)

Venue:

Monet's Cafe, Commandants Cottage, James Fletcher Hospital, 72 Watt St, Newcastle NSW 2300 (Car parking is available on the site - \$4).

Cost: FREE

Please call Natalie Murray or Jill Searle at the Hunter Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre,

1800 052 222, to register for the course and arrange respite if required.

We hope you enjoy the course!

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2012 10AM—3PM

NEWCASTLE CDAT DRUG & ALCOHOL FORUM



CDAT
community drug
action team
We're Stronger Together

RSVP 2 March 2012

CDAT Member \$25.00 *Active

Non CDAT Members \$35.00 includes lunch

The Newcastle Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) invites you to attend our forum to address Newcastle's alcohol and drug (AOD) issues. AOD impacts on anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, education, policing, suicide prevention, mental well-being, mainstream and disadvantages groups etc. Our CDAT forum provides an invaluable opportunity where diverse local stakeholders involved in AOD harm prevention, minimization, treatment and response can collaborate to gain and share:

- 1 A snapshot of the latest evidence impacting upon AOD management
 - 2 A unique perspective of AOD trends in our local area
 - 3 Input into CDAT's 2012—2015 Newcastle plan and priorities
 - 4 Invites you to join, strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of our team
- Forum attendees are encouraged to set up a small booth displaying the diverse range of services they offer the community. If you would like to participated please contact Kelly on 4940 2367 for further information.

Anyone with an interest in drug and alcohol issues is welcome to attend.

Newcastle City Hall King Street, Newcastle

**Opening Speaker TBA
Guest Speakers**

**Dr Adrian Dunlop—Director Drug
and Alcohol Services**

**Dr John Wiggers—Director
Population Health
Hunter New England Local Health
District**

Please return registrations to

Kelly Hodge, Mercy Community Services, 32 Union Street, Tighes Hill 2297

Phone: Kelly—4940 2367 Fax: 4961 6912 or Helena on 0407 934 718 for information

Email: disi@mercyservices.org.au

Registrations will not be accepted without payment. No payments to be made on day of forum!

FOR TAX PURPOSES - This completed form is a tax invoice after payment is received.

Mercy Community Services ABN: 34 095 335 309

Please make cheques out to Mercy Community Services

When making a Direct Deposit please reference CDAT Forum

Direct Deposit details: Westpac Bank, Mercy Community Services, BSB 032 505 Account No 620 498

Please find attached a cheque for \$ _____ Direct Debit Reference Number:

Name/s: _____

CDAT: _____ **Service:** _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

Do you have any dietary requirement?

Your registration information may be shared with the relevant Community Drug Action Teams

***To be classed as an active CDAT member you must have filled in a CDAT membership form and attended CDAT meetings/activities within the last 12 months.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Paid: _____ **Cheque EFT Signature:** _____



Mental Health Carers ARAAFMI Hunter

Upcoming Workshops till June 2012



Borderline Personality Disorder (9.30am – 3.30pm)

Date: Friday 13th April

This one day workshop will help you make sense of Borderline, show you how you can support someone with BPD, identifying triggers, exploring tips for coping, managing challenging behaviours, also the importance of boundaries and self care.

Boundaries (9.30am – 2.30pm)

Date: Monday 2nd April

The aim of this one day workshop is to teach what boundaries are, the importance of setting boundaries, signs of unhealthy boundaries, when to set boundaries, and how to make and maintain useful boundaries.

Assertiveness (9.30am – 3.30pm)

Date: 2 x Days- Mondays 12th March & Monday 19th March

This is a two day workshop. Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. We will look at what is assertiveness, why the need to be assertive, the difference between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour, how being assertive will affect your relationships, communication techniques and how to deal with difficulties.

Self Esteem (9.30am – 3.30pm)

Date: 2 x Days – Monday 7th May & Monday 14th May

This is a two day workshop covering areas on building your self esteem, how to build self-esteem, what is co-dependence and how does it affect your life, negative self talk, ways to nurture yourself, destructive concepts of human behaviour, three stages of relationships, myths about relationships, building sound communication, spiritual growth and developing a deeper meaning and purpose for life.

Stress Management (9.30am – 3.30pm)

Date: Monday 16th April

This one day educational workshop will look at the stress management model covering things such as what is stress, symptoms and sources of stress, balancing and controlling stress, realistic and unrealistic thinking, values and beliefs, and goal setting.

8 Stages of Healing Program (9.30am – 12noon)

Dates: 9 x weeks – Wednesday 2nd May to Wednesday 27th June

This is a ten week (sometimes 9 depending on class size) program which is designed to help carers learn the skills which will help them become caregivers rather than caretakers. Each week a different topic is explored: self awareness, validation of feelings, acceptance of what is not in your control, challenging expectations, releasing guilt, forgiveness of self or others, self-esteem, growth & goals. All potential participants need to have at least one session with the family counsellor to establish if they are ready to embark on such an in-depth self awareness program.

Mindfulness (9.30am – 2.30pm)

Date: Monday 28th May

This one day introduction workshop into mindfulness explains what mindfulness means, how to learn skills around being more in the moment, acceptance of thoughts and emotions, and some practical exercises to take home.

ARAFMI 22 Stewart Avenue Hamilton East Ph: 49612842

Funded by NSW Health

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CARERS

Newcastle ARAFMI Support Group
Every second Friday 10-12noon
Contact Joanne (ARAFMI) 49616717

Maitland ARAFMI Support Group
2nd Tuesday of the month 7pm-9pm
Contact Jack or Brenda 49336153

Maitland Support Group for Careers
3rd Thursday of the month 10am
55 High Street Maitland
Contact Di Lymbury 49325234
Carol (Carer Assist) 49689268

Borderline Personality Group
2nd Tuesday of the month 6.30pm-8.30pm
Contact Joanne (ARAFMI) 49616717

Lingard Private Hospital Group
Last Friday of the month 4pm-5pm
Contact Joanne (ARAFMI) 49616717

Lakeside Clinic (Warners Bay) Group
3rd Thursday of the month 6pm-8.30pm
Contact Joanne (ARAFMI) 49616717

Charlestown (Lake Macquarie Care and Share Group)
1st Thursday of the month 12.30 -3pm
At Supported Recovery, 29 Smith Street, Charlestown
Contact Cheree 49049000

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH BIPOLAR AND/OR DEPRESSION

Mondays fortnightly 4pm-6pm at ARAFMI Premises
Contact Joanne (ARAFMI) 49616717



Mental Health Carers ARAFMI NSW Hunter Region Membership Application Form

ARAFMI

ARAFMI Hunter is a branch of ARAFMI NSW, with membership open to families, carers and others interested in promoting mental health and wellbeing in our community. The aims of the organisation are to:

- Provide support to families and carers of people living with mental illness
- Work towards better services for both mental health consumers and their family or carers
- Promote an understanding of the issues surrounding mental health and care in the community

Full name _____

Postal Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Phone number _____ Mobile _____

Email _____ Receipt No _____

Date Received _____

My area of interest as a member is (please tick):

- Attending support groups, workshops and other training
- Volunteer work for ARAFMI Hunter
- Involvement in the management of the organisation
- Participating in mental health service planning, policy development and evaluation
- Other _____

All members of ARAFMI receive the ARAFMI Newsletter. As a member of ARAFMI Hunter branch, you are also a member of the incorporated organisation, ARAFMI.

Membership - New/Renewal \$20.00 per annum, payment due 1 July each year
Concession \$5.00 per annum

Amount enclosed: Membership \$ _____

Donation \$ _____
(Tax deductible over \$2)

Total \$ _____

Please forward completed form & payment to

Mental Health Carers ARAFMI NSW, Hunter Region 22 Stewart Avenue, Hamilton East NSW 2303

**IF UNDELIVERABLE RETURN TO
ARAFMI NSW Inc. Hunter
Branch
22 Stewart Avenue
HAMILTON EAST NSW 2303**

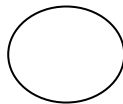
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**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

CFN 11568

PHONE (02) 49616717
FAX (02) 49616052

June 2011



IF THIS DOT IS RED

Your annual membership fees are due within the next three months.
Please use the form inside the newsletter when forwarding your membership

**MENTAL HEALTH Carers
ARAFMI NSW Hunter
Branch**



Boundaries Workshop
For Families Relatives & Friends



Date: Monday
27th March
2012
Time: 9:30am— 2:30pm

Venue: 73 Elgin Street
Maitland

Bookings Contact:
49612842
or
49311000

Our Vision

**Our vision is for a community
that understands and responds
to the impact of mental illness
on families, relatives and
friends.**

The aim of this workshop is to teach:

- What are boundaries
- The importance of setting boundaries
- Signs of unhealthy boundaries
- When to set boundaries
- How to make & maintain useful & healthy boundaries

**Mental Health Carers ARAFMI
Hunter Branch**

Venue : 22 Stewart Avenue, Hamilton East 2300
(Please note parking is available in Stewart Ave)

Phone: (02) 4961 2842 or (02) 4961 6717

Email: arafmihunter@exemail.com.au

Web: www.arafmihunter.org



MENTAL HEALTH Carers
ARAFMI NSW Hunter Branch & Maitland
Headspace PRESENTS...

Date: 30th April Time: 9.30-4pm

Venue : 73 Elgin Street Maitland



Borderline Personality Disorder workshop for Families and Carers



Workshop Aims:

- ◆ Make sense of Borderline Personality Disorder
- ◆ Supporting someone with BPD and identifying triggers
- ◆ Exploring tips for coping and managing challenging Behaviors
- ◆ Self-Care

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Our Vision

Our vision is for a community that understands and responds to the impact of mental illness on families, relatives and the many people who have a diagnosed Mental illness

To Book in for the workshop please contact ARAFMI by 23rd April
Phone: 49612842 or 49616717
Email: arafmihunter@exemail.com.au
Web: www.arafmihunter.org

Funded by NSW Health

