

BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

GP NEWSLETTER

Support Groups

Living with depression can be a very lonely and isolating experience. Sufferers often believe that they are the only ones who feel the way they do and that others cannot understand or relate to what they are going through.

For many, attending a client support group is the first time they have been able to share their experience of depression with others who have felt the same. The opportunity to discuss the challenges of living with depression openly and honestly, in the safety of a support group setting is often very healing. Support groups also allow participants to trade useful skills and strategies they have developed in dealing with the depression, often discovering unexpected strengths and resources within themselves and one another.



Clients may initially be reluctant to enter a group situation, particularly if they are feeling low or anxious. Spending time addressing these concerns together with highlighting the benefits of a support group program can help encourage their participation, making a significant difference to their well being into the future.

How do I find a support group for my patient ?

The Black Dog Institute, in partnership with MLC Community Foundation, is establishing Support Groups in communities across NSW. The R.E.A.C.H Program is a free 9-week psycho-educational support group (based on the principles of responsibility, education, acceptance, connection and hope) to help participants with depression or Bipolar Disorder manage their illness and stay well. The first groups will be run in the following areas: Lismore, Bondi, Castle Cove, Griffith, Randwick and Strathfield.

Eligibility Criteria for Participants:

- Over 18 years old
- Diagnosis of depression or bipolar disorder, for a minimum of one year
- Capacity to participate in a group setting
- Capacity to commit to attending the 9 weekly sessions
- Acceptance of illness
- Motivation to implement personal change strategies



Please **refer clients seeking support groups** to our website for details of programs running in their area, and throughout Australia: <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/communityprograms/supportgroups.cfm>

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Facilitator of the R.E.A.C.H program in your area, please visit our website for details.

CONTENTS

Support Groups	1
Psychological Toolkit	2
MAP	2
Course Dates	3
Program News	3
FPS	3
Book Review	4

“ *Being part of the support group was so helpful. It was great to be able to share common issues with other people who felt like me and to know I was not the only one feeling that way. Having to get to the meeting each week meant I had made a commitment to dealing with the depression and working my way through it.* ”



THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

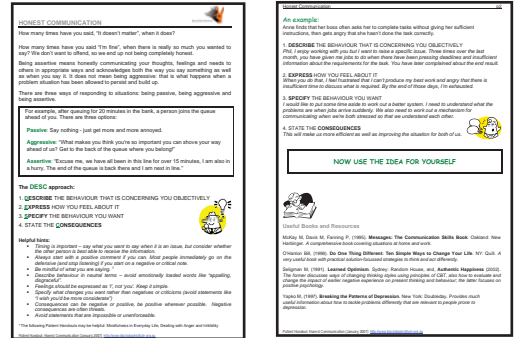
HONEST COMMUNICATION

Once we have identified the problem areas in our life and decided on the changes we would like to bring to those areas, we often need to communicate well with others in order to effect this change. Learning to communicate assertively is a skill that increases the likelihood of others listening to our thoughts and feelings and responding in a helpful way.

The Honest Communication handout in the PTK highlights the differences between passive, aggressive and assertive communication styles.

The DESC approach to assertive communication uses 4 simple steps:

1. Describe the behaviour that is concerning you objectively
2. Express how you feel about it
3. Specify the behaviour you want
4. State the consequences



HREC approval number 10019

Mental Health via Mobile Phone

Help for people with mild-to-moderate depression, anxiety or stress

The Black Dog Institute has developed a program to help patients understand, monitor and manage depression, anxiety or stress via the web on their mobile phones and computers.

The University of New South Wales is conducting a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Who is eligible?

- Patients who:
- Have mild-moderate depression, anxiety or stress
 - Are aged 18 -75 years and live in Australia
 - Possess a mobile phone with internet access
 - Have a valid email address



What is involved?

Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two programs and must agree to use the program for 6 weeks. Participants will complete questionnaires before, during and after the program.

For further information, contact Dr Virginia Harrison on:
(02) 9382 3719 or mycompass@blackdog.org.au

MOOD ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Mood Assessment Program, or MAP, is a world-first computerised assessment and diagnostic tool for mood disorders, providing GPs and psychologists with an information base for diagnostic decisions for patients with a mood disorder. Many of you may already be registered to refer patients for MAP assessments. The MAP is based on the Black Dog Institute sub-typing model of depression and is able to identify the severity of depression, subtype the mood disorder (including bipolar disorder), define personality style and identify co-morbid anxiety diagnoses.

Several MAP sites are currently available across NSW. Assessments will be available through a secure online format from mid-2010. These assessments will continue to require referral from a patient's treating clinician and will remain free of charge for both patients and referring clinicians. Full information on MAP referrals is available on the Institute website.



The Psychological Toolkit is available to download free of charge from our website. A bound version of these useful resources will be available to purchase in the next few weeks. An email will be sent to our mailing list with details as soon as we have further information. **WATCH THIS SPACE**

PROGRAM NEWS

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION TEAM UPDATE

We have made some changes to our team. In April we sadly farewelled Dr Sarah Weaver as our in-house GP Program Developer. Sarah has been instrumental in driving the development and delivery of GP Education, and after 5 years, she has decided to step down from the role. Fortunately, we won't be losing Sarah entirely as she will continue to be a part of the facilitator team.

We are very pleased to welcome to the team Dr Vered Gordon as the new GP Education Program Developer and Dr Jan Orman as our GP Services Consultant. Vered will take ongoing responsibility for the Institute's GP education programs, including the maintenance of existing programs, the development of new programs and the confirmation of education outcomes. Jan has been appointed to a new role, liaising between the Institute and clinicians as well as promoting the roll out of the MAP to general practice.

I will continue to work as the GP Project Officer, managing the delivery of workshops for GPs, supporting Vered in program development and remaining the primary point of contact for GP programs.

Thank you and hope to see you soon at a Black Dog Institute GP Workshop *Katie Denton - GP Project Officer*

GP WORKSHOP DATES - MAY TO SEP 2010

MAY

- 21/22 Demystifying Depression: Sydney GPCE
22/23 Demystifying Depression: Sydney GPCE
29 Troubled Teens: Gosford

JUNE

- 5 Demystifying Depression: Port Macquarie
19 Demystifying Depression: Dee Why:
26 Psychological Treatments: Black Dog Institute
26 Psychological Toolkit: Black Dog Institute

JULY

- 3 The ABC of CBT (Part 1): Black Dog Institute
17 Demystifying Depression: Tweed Heads:
17 The ABC of CBT (Part 2): Black Dog Institute
22 Exercise the Mood: Black Dog Institute
31 The ABC of CBT (Part 23): Black Dog Institute

AUGUST

- 14 Key CBT Skills: Black Dog Institute
26 Troubled Teens: Black Dog Institute

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Demystifying Depression: Broken Hill:
11 Troubled Teens: Campbelltown

To register for a program please visit our website: blackdoginstitute.org.au. For further information please email Katie at k.denton@blackdog.org.au or call 02 9382 8518

Please note that the programs listed above are subject to confirmation. Please check our website for further dates and updates.

For off-site programs please contact the relevant Division (contact details are on our website).



From left to right: Kat Dabich, Jan Orman, Katie Denton, Vered Gordon

FPS CPD

The 2008-2010 triennium is coming to an end. Those GPs who became registered as a provider of FPS (Level 2) in the last triennium (2005-2007) need to complete an FPS CPD course this triennium to fulfil their training requirements. These workshops are free for GPs to attend.

We currently have 3 suitable workshops scheduled at the Black Dog Institute:

Attendance at both 3-hour programs on 26 June provides FPS CPD, as does our 6-hour Key CBT Skills (application pending) which is scheduled twice. This is a new program that will cover CBT skills for addressing the negative thinking of many depressed patients, and for anxiety.

FPS Skills Training

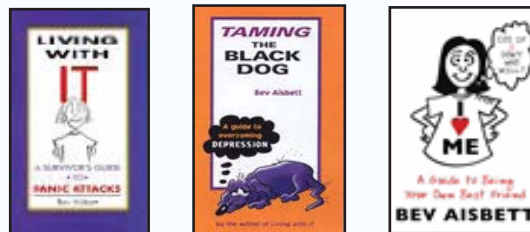
If you are interested in becoming accredited as a provider of FPS our 20-hour ABC of CBT is being revised following feedback from courses held in 2009. It is scheduled to be taught again at BDI in July and attracts GPMHSC FPS Skills Training accreditation.

COME AND VISIT OUR STAND AT THE SYDNEY GPCE ON 21ST, 22ND AND 23RD MAY. WE ARE ALSO PRESENTING OUT MHST ACCREDITED 6-HOUR WORKSHOP 'DEMYSIFYING DEPRESSION' TWICE OVER THE THREE DAYS.

BOOK REVIEW

Various by Bev Aisbett

Living With 'It' – A survivor's guide to Panic Attacks
Taming the Black Dog – A guide to overcoming Depression
And in 2010....
I Love Me – A Guide to Being Your Own Best Friend



Published by Harper Collins

Most GPs will probably have met one or more of the books by Bev Aisbett.

Bev is an author, cartoonist and illustrator who suffered severe anxiety, panic disorder and depression.

After successful treatment for these she decided to put her skills to work to help other sufferers. The result was a series of delightful illustrated books which humourously but compassionately describe the symptoms of panic (in Living with It) then depression (in Taming the Black Dog), and then outline skills and strategies to manage these conditions.

These books are ideal to give/lend/recommend to patients – especially those who are not 'readers' – they are simple, humorous and very pertinent. Patients readily identify with the descriptions of their problem and are encouraged to try some of the very practical ways of implementing useful treatment strategies. Discussion of their efforts can provide useful material for follow up appointments

Since writing these early books Bev has gone on to train as a counselor and has developed a series of workshops (www.adavic.org) and home study materials – 'The IT Kit, (www.bevaisbett.com) to reach and help others suffering with anxiety and depression.

Recently she has published a new book – 'I Love Me', subtitled 'A Guide to Being Your Own Best Friend'. So many of our patients with depression feel that they are worthless, all on their own, that there is no-one there for them – and have an incredibly low self-esteem. Here is a book, written in Bev's accessible style that can encourage them to develop strategies and ways of thinking that can help them care for themselves and find joy and meaning – and often new and more successful ways of relating to others. A valuable new resource!

All these books can be found in major bookstores – and through a number of the on-line suppliers.

MELANCHOLIC CLINICAL TRIAL – PLEASE REFER

The Black Dog Institute is currently recruiting people with a melancholic depression to participate in a 12-week treatment trial. All participants will receive an active treatment. The Black Dog Institute will assume patient management once enrolled in the study. Screening criteria applies. For more information please phone 02 9382 9268 or email melancholicstudy@unsw.edu.au



Research into early warning signs of bipolar disorder in young people

Most people with bipolar disorder experience their first signs of the condition in adolescence. The information collected in this study will eventually be used to help develop an early assessment and treatment program for young people.

We are looking for participants that are between 18 and 35 years, have a confirmed diagnosis of bipolar or depression and have experienced their first symptoms before the age of 24 years.

If you have any patients you think would like to participate please refer them to Liliane at the Black Institute Dog Institute on 02 9382 4522 or bpresearch@unsw.edu.au.

About us:

The Black Dog Institute is an educational, research, clinical and community-oriented facility offering specialist expertise in mood disorders - a range of disorders that include depression and bipolar disorder. The Institute is located at the Prince of Wales Hospital and affiliated with the University of New South Wales. The Institute is supported by the NSW Department of Health.



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