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Sydney GPCE

The 12th annual Sydney General Practice Conference and Exhibition (GPCE) held in May ran very successfully with over 1800 delegates attending. The Black Dog Institute's General Practice Education team made the most of the opportunity to meet GPs.

Our stand offered delegates the chance to view the Institute's website via a laptop and to gather general information about our training programs. We gave out examples of the GP program materials and resources and delegates also

had the opportunity to speak to the Institute's facilitators and staff.

The Director of the Black Dog Institute, Professor Gordon Parker, gave a 1-hour lecture about depression focusing on depression subtyping and management, which received very positive feedback.

As well, the team delivered the 3-hour workshop 'Ups and Downs: An Introduction to Bipolar Disorder for General Practitioners', on each of the three mornings,

training a total of 77 GPs.

The Institute plans to attend next year's event and will hopefully offer a similar range of services for the delegates, in particular the chance to attend a training program.

Photo below, from left to right: Dr Penny Browne, Dr Julian Short, Dr Sarah Weaver, Dr Jan Orman & Julie Bell.



Level 2 On-going BOiMHC Training

The Black Dog Institute has two 3-hour interactive lectures which together have been accredited by the GPMHSC as on-going Level 2 BOiMHC training.

'Psychological Treatments of Depression in Primary Care' and 'A Psychological Toolkit for Managing Depression in General Practice', will be run soon at the Institute in Randwick and at various locations

across NSW in conjunction with Divisions, to allow GPs to complete training requirements for this triennium.

These workshops will introduce GPs to resources known as the Psychological Toolkit and provide an overview of psychological approaches that are effective in the treatment of depression. They will provide skills which will assist in treatment planning and risk assessment,

as well as useful primary care short-term interventions, such as CBT & IPT. Participants will be given a CD-ROM of the Psychological Toolkit to download and use in their clinical practice.

For specific details of program dates and venues, visit the Institute's website www.blackdoginstitute.org.au or talk to your Division.

FOCUS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLKIT: STRUCTURED PROBLEM SOLVING

“The aim of the process is NOT for the clinician to solve patient’s problems for them but to teach them a skill they can use themselves day to day.”



One of the core CBT skills is Structured Problem Solving (SPS) which is really useful across a wide range of diagnoses (and in life in general!).

Structured problem solving can be used with people who feel overwhelmed by their problems and unable to find ways to deal with them, and as such has a particular application in anxiety and depression.

It is good for patients (and all of us!) to realise that there are rarely perfect or ideal solutions to problems, but the SPS process helps to identify the most effective plan of action available at the time. The aim of the process is **NOT** for the clinician to solve patient’s problems for them but to teach a skill they can use themselves day to day.

SPS involves 6 steps:

- defining the problem,
- brainstorming all possible solutions,

- considering the pros and cons of each,
- choosing the ‘best’ or most practical solution,
- planning implementation,
- reviewing progress.

It is suggested you work through an example with your patient (using a problem they are currently facing).

When the structured problem solving method is first taught, try to avoid problems that are either very difficult, significantly emotional or long-standing. Instead, deal with easier issues until the individual is used to the method. Regular practice is important until the steps are well-learned.

The PTK includes background notes for doctors as well as a template of the SPS process. There is also a ‘Problem Analysis’ template which may be helpful to use first in some situations where it is difficult to actu-



(Above) A Structured Problem Solving sheet and (left) a Problem Analysis Sheet. Both of these sheets can be found in the Psychological Toolkit which is available on our website.

ally define the problem. Gaining a clear definition of the problem helps focus thinking on the issue at hand and minimises the possibility of getting side tracked.

Useful reading for patients:
Cusick, Anne. ‘Choices - What am I doing with my life?’ (Simon & Schuster) and, **Smith, Shirley.** ‘The Game of Life Playbook - How to get what you really want in life.’ (Bantam Books)

Mood Assessment Program - MAP

A World First!



The Black Dog Institute is proud to announce the piloting of the MAP - a computerised assessment & diagnostic program with the potential to provide GPs with the know how of highly skilled mood disorders specialists.

Rollout of the MAP is set to revolutionise the way in which people suffering mood disorders can obtain treatment. The MAP has been developed at the Institute where hun-

dreds of patients have been assessed using the tool. A grant has now been received from NSW Health to pilot the MAP across NSW.

The prevalence of mood disorders is high and their detection, particularly Bipolar II, is poor. The unique ability of the MAP to determine which sub-type of these disorders will assist GPs in the timely detection, diagnosis & treatment of the mood disorder. The MAP

works by a patient entering information into a computer. A report is then prepared which is sent to the managing GP. In that report, important diagnostic probability decisions are made and treatment guidelines are provided to assist further management.

An update on rollout of the MAP will be provided in the next newsletter. For additional information please contact the MAP Project Team on (02) 9382 3707.

Working with a Psychologist!

Black Dog Institute is pleased to announce new programs focusing on the GP role as a member of a team treating patients with psychological issues.

'The Psychological Treatment Team: GPs, Psychologists and Others...' is a 3-hour program accredited as an ALM in conjunction with our of our other interactive lectures. The 2-hour version, **'Working with a Psychologist'**, focuses specifically on the GP relationship with psychologists.

The introduction of new GP Mental Health item numbers rewards GPs for

completing comprehensive Mental Health Care Plans (MHCP) for patients with a wide range of mental health diagnoses. It is also the gateway to referring patients to psychologists and other Allied Mental Health professionals for psychological services rebatable through Medicare.

Our new programs provide an overview of the new item numbers, outline which patients will benefit from seeing a psychologist, clarify the difference between clinical psychologists and psychologists and offer a chance to discuss how to choose a psychologist. The

workshops also discuss what information to send and what information to expect back, what to expect from a psychologist to do and finally explicate the GPs ongoing role. The 3-hour workshop also discuss the role of other professionals and some of the other resources available.

For specific details of dates and venues visit the Institute's website or talk to your division.

Divisions interested in running either of these programs should contact Julie Bell, tel: 02 9382 4518 or email: j.bell@unsw.edu.au

"The new medicare item numbers have made psychological services more accessible to patients. GPs will increasingly want to refer patients but may have questions...these workshops will address these questions in the context of a clinical example."

Book Reviews

The Black Dog Institute and a number of its clinicians have written and published (or otherwise assisted) some really useful and interesting books about mood disorders.

We plan to introduce you to these in this and future editions of our newsletter.

Very recently published is **'Journeys with the Black Dog: Inspirational stories of bringing depression to heel'**

Edited by T. Wigney, K. Eyers & G. Parker, Allen & Unwin.

This book compiles excerpts from the hundreds of stories received in response to the Institute's 2006 writing competition. It charts

the journey through depression from the confusion of on-set, through to diagnosis, relapse and eventual management, and highlights a diverse and inspiring range of coping strategies.

Depression can be a dark and lonely experience; sharing with a friend can make all the difference. In this book many people share their stories of living with depression, and demonstrate with honesty and, at times, humour that it is possible to gain control over depression.

Reading this book can help clinicians to understand from a 'patient's eye view'

what it feels like to suffer from depression which is both enlightening and useful.

It is also good to have something to recommend to patients to read that is 'non-technical' but helps them understand they are not alone, and offers hope. Families and those close to people with depression will also gain helpful insights.

Prof Geoff Gallop, former Premier of WA said *"It cuts deep and speaks to the soul as well as the intellect"*.

This book is available at local book stores.

"Truth be known, my sofa deserves an Oscar. An Oscar for the best supporting furniture in a clinically depressed episode."

From 'Journeys with the Black Dog'



Course Dates

	Date:	Program:	Location:
There are no costs to attend these programs.	Wednesday 12th September	Working with a Psychologist	Black Dog Institute, Randwick
	Saturday 15th September	Level 2 On-going training	Rouse Hill, NSW
	Saturday 27th October	Ups and Downs: Bipolar	Black Dog Institute, Randwick
	Saturday 3rd November	Mental Health Care Plans	Narrabri, NSW
	Saturday 3rd November	Level 2 On-going training	Ballina, NSW
	Saturday 17th November	Working with a Psychologist	Coffs Harbour, NSW

Details for Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Port Macquarie programs to be confirmed shortly.

To register for a program running at the Institute please visit our website: blackdoginstitute.org.au or email Julie Bell at j.bell@unsw.edu.au

To register for a program running regionally please contact the local Division (relevant contact details are on our website).



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 attached to the Prince of Wales Hospital and affiliated with the University of New South Wales. The Institute is supported by NSW Health.

Black Dog Institute, Hospital Road, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick NSW 2031

Research Reminders

Newly-diagnosed Bipolar Disorder?

Do you have patients with newly-diagnosed Bipolar Disorder?

The University of New South Wales is conducting a research study into the efficacy of web-

based education for patients diagnosed with bipolar disorder within the last 6 months.

The program is designed to complement existing treatment and help people take control of

their illness through education and self-management.

For further information, phone Dr Judy Proudfoot on 02 9382 3767 or email

bipolareducation@unsw.edu.au

CBT & Mindfulness for Depression

Do you see patients who currently have (non-bipolar) depression?

Are these patients either not taking antidepressant medication or seeing you for repeat antidepressant prescriptions? Would

you like these patients to try (free) adjunctive psychological intervention?

If yes, then why not refer them to the Black Dog Institute for a free assessment to see if they are eligible for our clinical trial?

If you are interested in who would benefit most from this clinical trial or would like to obtain further information about the study, please contact Aimée Gayed.

Tel: (02) 9382 2993 or email: groupprogram@unsw.edu.au

Future Editions

All future editions of our GP newsletters will be delivered electronically. If you would like to regularly receive our newsletter please sign on via our website.

We will also keep you up to date with breaking clinical news that may be relevant to GPs!

Missed a newsletter? Our previous newsletters are available online at our website.