

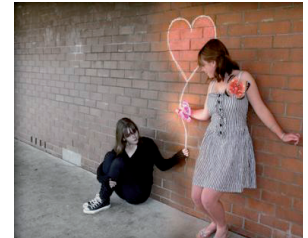
# Black Dog Institute Newsletter for Youth Professionals

Edition 1 - April 2011

## Welcome

This newsletter from the Black Dog Institute is aimed at introducing clinicians working with young people to some of our new programs available later this year. It is quite an alarming statistic that one in five adolescents in Australia is affected by a mood disorder. Research also shows that of the 20% of young people who experience a mood disorder, only 29% seek professional help. Many do not seek help for many years after their symptoms first appear. It is therefore important that all youth professionals are equipped with the information to detect the early warning signs of a mood disorder and the tools to facilitate their management.

*A/Prof Vijaya Manicavasagar, Director of Psychological Services*



*Photo by Kelly McMartin,  
2010 Photo Competition*

## Anxiety Disorder in Young People

*by A/Prof Vijaya Manicavasagar*

Experiences of anxiety are a normal part of growing up and are often associated with particular developmental stages, for example fears of the dark in early childhood and exam anxiety in older school-aged children. However, anxiety disorders represent the more pathological forms of distress and are associated with a range of psychosocial difficulties which impact on future development including academic performance at school and relationships with friends and family members.

Anxiety disorders are the most frequently occurring psychological problems in children and adolescents with estimates ranging from 10% to 12% (McGee et al, 1990; Kashani and Orvaschel, 1988) and with

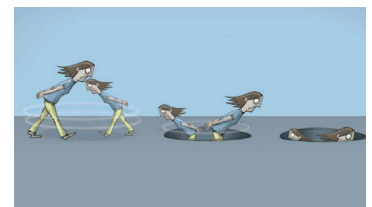
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girls generally reporting higher prevalences than boys of similar ages. In general, the most frequently occurring anxiety disorders in young people are separation anxiety disorder,

specific phobias, generalised anxiety disorder and social phobia. However prevalences of the specific anxiety disorders in children and young people are largely related to age and gender. For example, separation anxiety disorder is more frequent amongst young children whilst panic disorder tends to manifest in adolescence and in the teenage years.

Unfortunately, depression is often comorbid with anxiety disorders and significantly increases the level of distress and disability in young people (Cole et al., 1998).

If untreated, this constellation of psychopathology can undermine confidence and self-worth leading to other long-term



*Illustration by Matthew Johnstone*

problems in adulthood (Mattison, 1992). Furthermore, these disorders in individuals can also affect family members and school mates who may feel powerless to intervene and help the person they care for.

The early detection and treatment of anxiety disorders is crucial to breaking this vicious cycle. To this end the Black Dog Institute has programs for schools and mental health professionals working with young people. Our programs are aimed at raising awareness of anxiety disorders, understanding some of the early warning signs as well as possible strategies to deal with such disorders.

A 3-hr workshop on 'Anxiety Disorders in Young People' will be held Thursday 18 August 2011, at the Black Dog Institute, Randwick. For further information about our programs, visit our website [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) (click on the Health Professionals tab).

Black Dog Institute  
Hospital Road, Prince of Wales Hospital,  
Randwick NSW 2031  
✉ [education@blackdog.org.au](mailto:education@blackdog.org.au)  
☎ (02) 9382 4530  
[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)



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# Youth Bipolar Disorder: What Clinicians Need to Know

by Dr Tanya Hanstock

Clinicians who work with young people will eventually come across bipolar disorder even if they do not initially recognise it. Bipolar disorder has been found to have an onset around 17 years (Bellvier et al., 2003) and there can be a delay of up to 10 years in receiving the correct diagnosis.



Illustration by Matthew Johnstone

One of the reasons that bipolar disorder is difficult to identify in young people is that it can be hard to distinguish from other mental health and substance related disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder.

The consequence of not diagnosing and treating bipolar disorder can be quite devastating for the young person and their family. Bipolar disorder is associated with the highest risk of completed suicide of all psychiatric conditions and is also associated with disruptions to education and disrupted family relationships. Indicators of possible bipolar disorder in young people include extreme changes in mood, behaviour and functioning, engaging in self-harm and a positive family history for the disorder.

There has been increasing attention to psychological interventions for bipolar disorder in young people. Whilst medication management by a general

practitioner or psychiatrist is the mainstay of treatment, psychologists can provide a range of other important interventions such as education about the disorder, increasing coping skills and teaching young people to develop Wellbeing Plans – all of which have been shown to have positive impact on the course of the illness. Clinicians need to emphasise to young people that although there is no cure for bipolar disorder they can learn how to effectively manage it using a combination of strategies. It is also important to help young people develop an identity which is separate to that of the illness.

Most importantly, it is crucial for young people to feel like they are an active member of their treatment team. In addition to their medical practitioners and psychologist, the treatment team needs to include the client and their family. A school counsellor, dietitian and social worker may also be involved in the overall treatment plan.

*There is a 10 year delay in people receiving a diagnosis of BD and many effected adults report their illness commencing in childhood or adolescence.*

If you are interested in learning more about bipolar disorder in young people, the Black Dog Institute will be running 3-hr workshops on 'Managing Bipolar Disorder in Young People', refer to the Education & Training calendar for dates, or visit our website [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) (click on the Health Professionals tab) for more information.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING CALENDAR

### Pathways to Building Resilience in Young People - 1hr

▶ Wed 4 May 2011 (4:00pm - 5:00pm)

### Practical Resilience Building Strategies for Young People - 3hr

▶ Thurs 26 May 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

▶ Thurs 01 Sept 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

▶ Thurs 10 Nov 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

### Managing Bipolar Disorder in Young People - 3hr

▶ Tues 21 Jun 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

▶ Tues 18 Oct 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

### Tackling Teenage Depression - 3hr

▶ Wed 27 Jul 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

### Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents - 3hr

▶ Thurs 18 Aug 2011 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

### Bumps in the Road - 6hr

▶ Thurs 15 Sept 2011 (9:00am - 4:30pm)

**Location:** Black Dog Institute, Randwick

**Costs:** 1-hr workshop: \$45.00 pp

3-hr workshop: \$135.00 pp

6-hr workshop: \$295.00 pp

**For further information, including accreditation details, or to register:**

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)  
(click on the Health Professionals tab)

## FACILITATOR PROFILE: Dr Tanya Hanstock



Dr Tanya Hanstock is a Senior Clinical Psychologist and a Senior Lecturer. She is the Director of the Clinical Psychology Program at the University of New England. She is also a presenter in the Black Dog Institute's Education Program and is involved with the Institute's research on Youth Bipolar Disorder. Tanya has worked in a number of mental health services in NSW, including inpatient and community settings. She specialises in child and adolescent psychology and has a particular passion for working with young people with bipolar disorder. She helped establish the first clinic for young people with bipolar disorder in Newcastle, Australia. She regularly presents at conferences and publishes journal articles about her research and clinical work with young people with bipolar disorder. Tanya's main goal is for mental health clinicians to become more confident and competent in identifying and treating YBD.

Black Dog Institute  
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