

Newsletter 15 (Spring 2008)

Welcome to issue 15 of the OSMHN Newsletter. This issue is packed with information about training opportunities, useful resources and planned events. The next OSMHN event is flagged up so, although it is too early to book, you may wish to make a note in your diary of the date - 30 May. Thanks to all those who have contributed articles and short items. If you have any event or issue you wish to bring to the attention of the network, contact osmhn@brookes.ac.uk.

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1. OSMHN SHARED PRACTICE DAY - 30TH MAY

The next OSMHN event is planned for 30 May. It is too early to book but it promises to be an extremely interesting, enjoyable and full day, so you may wish to make a note of the date. The event, "Shared Practice", will consist of a variety of short, inter-active presentations by colleagues supporting students in interesting ways. Participants will have the opportunity to attend 4 or 5 presentations of their choosing and receive information about many more.

The presentations will explore issues such as:

- How can we collaborate with colleagues in other departments and institutions to improve support for students?
- How can we increase the chances of students reading the "helpful" literature we provide and how do we know it will be helpful?
- How can students be supported to support one another?
- How can a student- run support group be sustained from year to year?
- How does NHS in Oxford provide an intensive service for students in acute distress?
- What can we learn from the NHS – can self-help be "prescribed"?
- How can we engage students in activities which have a mental health focus?
- How can staff find the information they need when they need it in order to support students in distress?

No bookings are being taken now but everyone on the mailing list will receive information about how to book in March

2. OTHER TRAINING/WORKSHOPS AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Information about courses is provided as a service – OSMHN is not involved in the running or the quality assessment of the courses included in the newsletter.

From Colleagues at Relate

News of a Basic Counselling Skills Course running in Oxford starting on the 5th March 08. The course is designed for professionals whose work requires the use of counselling skills in their day to

day job. Feedback from previous courses has been very positive. For example:

"This was an extremely helpful course and one which fed directly into my working practice."

"This was a very well put-together, learning, informative and inspirational course. An excellent course leader. All information presented is relevant and extremely useful."

"Wow! What a fantastic course, the training was excellent and I know the new skills we have learnt will be invaluable to us all."

This is just one example of the courses that Relate offer. We have a bespoke training service as well as courses in Listening Skills, Dealing with Difficult Situations, Bereavement and Loss and Managing Stress.

If you like to apply for a place on the Basic Counselling Skills Course then please send the form back to us ASAP as numbers are limited. If you would like any further information then please call Mandy Blair or Maureen Buy on (01865) 242960.

Relate Oxfordshire
01865 242960
Charity No 1071567
Company No 3623316



From colleagues at the OXFORD CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING SCHEME

USE IT OR LOSE IT!			
Spring 2008			
The following courses are at risk and could be cancelled		A few places are still available on the following courses	
Date	Course Title	Date	Course Title
Thursday 24 April 2008	Challenging Homophobia in the Workplace	Tuesday 01 April 2008	Working with Problem Drinkers
Wednesday 30 April 2008	Personality Disorder: people and pathology from rejection to recovery	Monday 21 April 2008	Working with Anger
Monday 02 June 2008	Exploring Prejudice and Discrimination	Wednesday 14 May 2008	Basic Counselling and Listening Skills
Wednesday 11 June 2008	The Self Harming Client	Thursday 15 May 2008 Thursday 22 May 2008	Adult Mental Health Awareness (2 day course)
Thursday 12 June 2008	Probation and the Criminal Justice System	Wednesday 21 May 2008	Mental Health Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse
Monday 16 June 2008	Working with Drug Users	Thursday 05 June 2008	Working with People with Multiple Needs
Tuesday 17 June 2008	Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers		
Monday 30 June 2008	Coping with Depression using CBT and Mindfulness		
Wednesday 02 July 2008	The Legal Aspects of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Stranded Migrants		
Thursday 03 July 2008	Group Work as a Helping Tool		

To avoid the cancellation of courses applications must be received as soon as possible.

If the minimum number of places has not been achieved two weeks before courses are due to run they are cancelled.

Therefore courses scheduled to run soonest are particularly vulnerable!

PLEASE BOOK NOW!

All these courses start at 9:30 and finish at 16:30 and will be hosted at The Cherwell Centre, 16 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6QB . Course details and an application form are available on the OCTS web site.

Continuing Professional Development

A special one off on **MINDFULNESS** which is becoming enormously popular and well-regarded as stress reduction techniques, with Jody Mardula PTSTA-P who teaches on the Mindfulness Masters programme in Bangor on 16th March 9.30-5 £80 plus VAT.

Consider the psychological impact of **INCLUSION & DIVERSITY** by attending any of our themed workshops (places are limited to 12) provided by specialist facilitators:

- 10 February **ON BEING WHITE** with Marie Naughton, who is!
- 5 April **AGING** with Jean Illsely Clarke from the US (who is 86 and runs workshops all over the world on all sorts of things!)
- 6 April **THIRD CULTURE** which is about living in one culture and having one or more parents from another
- 8th June **SEXUAL ORIENTATION** with Carole Shadbolt
- 27th September **STARPOWER** - an incredible exploration of how rapidly and deeply power dynamics impact any team, group, meeting, organisation with Trudi Newton and Rosemary Napper

All are £80 plus VAT

- And another specialist workshop at a reasonably near outdoor centre in Hampshire with Rob Crates, a management consultant, to explore the possibilities of this environment: 11th May. Contact us for more details.
- **GROUP SUPERVISION FOR COACHES AND MENTORS** provides a space for you to reflect on your coaching work and to receive structured, non-collusive support from the supervisor and other group members as they offer questions, challenge, confidentiality, observation, input. Monthly Monday sessions: 9.30 to 12.30 on 18 February; 31 March; 28 April; 19 May; 23 June; 21 July 2008. Fee: £80 per session plus VAT.

To attend any of the above email Rosemary.Napper@TAmatters.com or phone 01865 250 528.

Oxford Diploma / MSc in Advanced Cognitive Therapy Studies

This is an announcement for the next Diploma/MSc in Advanced Cognitive Therapy Studies which will open in September 2008.

This unique two-year part-time course was developed in response to the recognised and increasing need to increase patient access to evidence based psychological treatments, of which cognitive behaviour therapy is a prime example. In order to meet this need, we also need to increase the number of competent CBT supervisors and trainers. This is what the course, which leads to an award by the University of Oxford, is designed to do. Its objective is to provide trained and experienced cognitive behaviour therapists with the knowledge and skills they need in order to disseminate the approach effectively and confidently in their own places of work. With this objective in mind, it addresses five main areas: updates on cutting edge developments in clinical theory and practice; supervision principles and practice; training skills; research in the real world; and service development.

We hope that you will find this information of interest. Please do feel free to pass it to colleagues who you feel might wish to know more.

Melanie Fennell Course Director, Oxford Diploma/MSc in Advanced Cognitive Therapy Studies

3. STUDENT-FOCUSED GROUPS/PROJECTS

Oxford Brookes Workshop: Learning to be Assertive

A workshop for Oxford Brookes Students is run by Sue Wilkinson and Annette Honeywell. The workshop is a mixture of teaching, small group work, and large group participation.



To book a place contact Student Services receptionist, Anne Grisbrooke:



- in person at reception at the Helena Kennedy Centre, Headington Hill site
- by telephone (01865) 484650 (external); 4650 (internal)
- by email: ssrecpt@brookes.ac.uk

'Assertiveness is behaviour which helps us to communicate clearly and confidently our needs, wants and feelings to other people without abusing in any way their rights. It is an alternative to passive or aggressive behaviour.'

Gael Lindenfield (1992), Assert Yourself (Thorsons), p.3.

Venue: Rm SG51, Gypsy Lane Site – 30 places for each workshop

- Week 5. Wednesday, 27th February. 2.00-4.30 pm.
- Week 6. Monday, 3rd March. 2.00-4.30 pm.

Student Support Group at Oxford University for Students with Disordered Eating Patterns

Enough! was set up in 2007 at Oxford University, in response to demand from students at Oxford. A 1998 [survey](#) found that as many as 36% of female students at Oxford have suffered from disordered eating at some point with 10% reporting an existing eating disorder, however it remains a taboo subject for most. Issues surrounding food often have a perceived stigma attached to them, and can lead to feelings of secrecy and shame. Enough! believes that students at Oxford should have an arena for discussing their eating problems in a confidential and supportive atmosphere.

We aim:

- To provide support for students - male and female - suffering from disordered eating of any kind
- To provide up-to-date information on services available in the university, in Oxford, and nationally
- To raise awareness of disordered eating within the university
- To promote positive body image and a healthy relationship with food

We aim to provide informal and confidential support for students affected by disordered eating. We value the trust built up within the group and aim to provide the best support possible. However, we are not a counselling service or primary care provider, and can not deal with all situations. There may be cases where we will need to break confidentiality, such as when disordered eating is directly and immediately life threatening. We will endeavor to inform only qualified professionals who can then recommend and assist with a suitable course of action.

We do not in any way support groups or individuals who promote disordered eating, and such comments will not be tolerated either in our meetings or on the web site. For more information go to <http://www.ousu.org/welfare/eating-disorders> or <http://www.enough-oxford.org.uk/>

Information from the LGBTQ Council at OUSU

Anecdotal evidence from Oxford students and information gathered by the mental health charity MIND suggests that specific issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are not always appropriately addressed by counselling services. Counsellors need to strike a balance with regard to how much emphasis is placed on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity; and assumptions must not be made based on appearances.

[undefined], the OUSU LGBTQ Council, would like to raise awareness of these issues, both within the student body and within the University Counselling Service and associated healthcare professionals, by circulating pamphlets summarising both the guidelines issued by MIND and the particular mental health issues faced by LGBT individuals; for example, coming out, homophobia, and self-identity issues.

Self Help for Anxiety Study

The counselling services at Oxford and Brookes are working with researchers from the Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Intervention to improve self-help booklets for students with anxiety. The project team, led by Alan Percy at Oxford and Marion Casey at Brookes, is currently recruiting participants for focus groups, which are designed to refine the content and delivery of booklets that have been tested in other settings.

In the second phase, students at both universities will be given free self-help booklets and asked to provide online feedback about their take-up and effectiveness. Throughout the coming year, the project will expand to include nurses, peer supporters, junior deans, and other providers who deal with student mental health issues.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Evan Mayo-Wilson (Evan.Mayo-Wilson@socres.ox.ac.uk) or Dr Paul Montgomery (paul.montgomery@psych.ox.ac.uk) at the Centre for Evidence-Based Intervention, Department of Social Policy and Social Work.

Bibliotherapy at Brookes

For information about the Bibliotherapy project at Brookes click on <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/counselling/concerns/bibliotherapy.html>

How does it work?

Oxford Brookes University Bibliotherapy Scheme is based on a list of recommended self-help books, which are stocked in the University libraries. (These books are also readily available to buy on the internet or in local book stores.) The titles are listed in the Bibliotherapy pack and on <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/counselling>.



A student or staff member can borrow these books in the normal way, by checking the Library catalogue or clicking on <http://readinglists.brookes.ac.uk>.

Alternatively, a staff member, (e.g. tutor, counsellor or hall warden), can recommend a book to a student who comes to them with a personal or emotional problem. The staff member writes out the book title on a recommendation pad and the student then takes this to the library, as with any academic recommendation.

What is Bibliotherapy?

Bibliotherapy is a term used to cover the use of self-help books to address mental and emotional concerns. It can be very effective, especially for people who are highly motivated. Self-help materials can be used independently, or alongside support from a doctor or counsellor. The Brookes Bibliotherapy Scheme is based on an initiative developed in Cardiff, which linked the city's libraries and medical practices. It has now been established as Book Prescription Wales and is used throughout the health service in Wales.

There is good evidence that books can help people with many emotional difficulties. Like other self-help methods, books are most effective when you are motivated to spend the time and effort to read the book and follow any advice or instructions it contains. Many of the books contain useful exercises or questionnaires. (It is essential to make your own copy of the material. Do not mark or write in the books themselves.) The books in the scheme have been specially recommended for their quality. They have been recommended by people who have used them and found them helpful. But different books suit different people. If you don't find the recommended book useful, look at some others until you find one that is right for you.

For information about the Bibliotherapy project at Brookes click on <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/counselling/concerns/bibliotherapy.html>



4. MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION - Julia Hill

As everyone knows, being a student can be a demanding experience at the best of times, however when an individual has experienced health problems, whether physical or emotional, (anxiety, stress or other mental health issues), some extra support can go a long way in helping them to survive the ups and downs of the learning and studying experience.

In response to a request from the Oxford University Disability Office, a few years ago, I decided to offer a freelance mentoring service for students in further and higher education. I offer one-to-one mentoring for new or existing students aged 16 upwards who would benefit from some additional support.

Mentoring support includes: meeting up with a student once a week (less or more as appropriate), in a location generally of their choice. I am able to listen in a non-judgemental, impartial way, enable the student to identify potential solutions to any problems encountered, support the student to find ways of studying that meet their health needs, support the student in any negotiations with tutors and other staff, help the student get through the initial entry and settling-in stages of starting a new course.

Although well trained and experienced in counselling, learning disability, acquired brain injury and mental health, as a mentor I do NOT offer therapeutic counselling, make health assessments, do the academic work for the student or take responsibility for disruptive students. My role is to complement other services (e.g., the University Counselling service) and the student's general medical practitioner.

Mentoring focuses on the academic skills and goals and therefore, I offer practical support and help with planning and organising their academic work and exam revision, as well as working on motivational skills, and supporting them in any negotiations with academic departments regarding extension of deadlines or special exam arrangements. Support with organisation and time management to improve their coping skills and strategies helps them to stay well and focused mentally and physically. I also encourage healthy participation in appropriate recreational activities and can sign-post the student to other services that may be beneficial to them.

My experience and training enables me to work with individuals who may have mental health issues from a wide continuum ranging from anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, bi-polar affective disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorders, aspergers, M.E. and drug and alcohol mis-use.

I have worked with a number of students studying at Oxford University , Oxford Brookes and more recently Thames Valley University. I will travel to most destinations and am happy to attend lectures with a student if necessary.

Students with mental health issues, obviously have very differing needs, so for one, it may be enough to meet once a week, to check in, have a chat over a coffee, or go for a walk. Rather than talking about academic studies they may need to talk about relationship issues (e.g, with parents, partners, friends or siblings). Just having a listening ear after maybe a row with their mother, means they are then able to focus on their work! On one occasion I went shopping with a student, as the anxiety about going to the shops was worrying her so much, that she could not concentrate to study. For some people, they need to talk through the work they have done, plan work for the next week and set goals, to be reviewed at the next meeting. I have had students who required me to telephone each morning to wake them up! Another student asked me to go to their accommodation to ensure that they were awake and to help them to start their work. I worked with one student, who found she could not read, as depression meant she could not concentrate if reading alone. She found it beneficial for me to read the chapters out to her while she took notes.

On a darker note, there are times when students I work with are extremely distressed and even contemplating suicide. I take all the necessary steps in that situation to ensure the safety and health of the student, explaining to them that, in this instance, I will break confidentiality, and speak with their tutor, GP, or whoever else is appropriate. Fortunately, so far, I have only experienced this once as a freelance mentor.

My mobile phone number and email address is available to students, and they know that they are able to contact me at any time of the day or night, if they are in serious distress. For many of them, this feels like a safety net which they greatly appreciate. In practice, I have had text messages late at night on 3 or 4 occasions and the situation was dealt with very swiftly.

My role is complementary to other services and as I am independent and impartial, often the student feels relaxed and able to trust me to talk through things that would be difficult or embarrassing to talk about with University staff, friends or family.

If anyone would like to find out more about my service please contact me on Julia_hill@tiscali.co.uk.

5. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Oxfordshire MIND

The Month in Mind Bulletin can be found at <http://www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk/>

Mind Week Campaign

Mind will be holding their annual Mind Week Campaign from 10-17 May 2008. The theme this year is poverty, debt and mental health. Mind will be launching a major campaign during Mind week, which will run until Autumn 2008 and will seek to raise awareness of these issues and the need for more effective support in relation to debt management for people with mental health problems.

Research indicates that one in three people with a mental health problem are in debt. Experiencing debt and poverty can often worsen a person's mental health in terms of anxiety and stress, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, as well as the experience of wider social consequences such as exclusion. For people with mental health problems who are experiencing financial difficulties, the services and support they often receive in relation to their money management can be lacking, substandard and, often, discriminatory.

For students, the recent rise in tuition fees and the high-cost of living away from home can lead to serious money management problems and are an added pressure to the demands of examinations, coursework and university life in general. They can have a serious impact on mental health.

This year we are encouraging universities to contribute to the Mind week celebrations and to hold events to raise awareness of the effects of poverty and debt among students and promote the resources that can offer support and advice. These may include university sabbatical officers, counselling services or specific resources set up to discuss money management and debt.

We will be sending out a pack to universities with suggestions on how to get involved during Mind Week and promote your local mental health and debt support services.

For any suggestions or queries on getting involved, please contact Amy at a.beddows@mind.org.uk.

6. USEFUL RESOURCES

The following links are packed full of information about mental health issues, leaflets available and support services:

- University of Oxford Counselling Service www.admin.ox.ac.uk/shw/counserv.shtml
 - Oxford Brookes University Counselling Service www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/support/counselling
 - OSMHN www.brookes.ac.uk/osmhn <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/student/services/handbook>
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OSMHN CONTACT DETAILS

OSMHN is unable to offer direct support or advice to students, but aims to collaborate with those organisations and services that are involved in supporting students with mental health problems. OSMHN is currently staffed by a part-time administrator one day a week, Barbara Jackson, who can be contacted at:

c/o OSMHN
Oxford Brookes University
The Lodge
Harcourt Hill, OX2 9AT

E-mail: osmhn@brookes.ac.uk