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Asian Mental Health Newsletter

Northern DHB Support Agency

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This newsletter is the property of Northern DHB Support Agency (NDSA), a shared services agency jointly owned by Auckland, Counties Manukau, and Waitemata DHBs. NDSA also provides services to Northland DHB as a client.

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The new Regional Director, Mental Health & Addiction Services, Northern Region



Ian McKenzie

Northern DHB Support Agency finally has a full-time Regional Director, Mental Health & Addiction Services on board after a year-long local and international recruitment search. The new Director, Ian McKenzie is no stranger for many people, especially those working in the mental health sector. He has worked at Counties Manukau DHB as the General Manager, Mental Health Services since 2002, and in a number of community-based health organisations before that.

During his time with CMDHB, Ian has been dedicated to developing the quantity and quality of mental health services provided to the communities of Counties Manukau. A core strategy for the development has been the building of staff capacity in the sector to provide effective recovery-based services in community settings. The mental health services in Counties Manukau are now noted for the success of integrated inpatient and community services, strong provider arm/ NGO relationships, and

development of culturally specific services across the age bands, peer support specialist development, alternatives to acute inpatient treatment and significant strength in clinical and managerial partnerships.

Ian has been active in regional and national collaborative initiatives and his engagement to date included leadership roles

in various regional and national projects such as the ARMHIT (electronic mental health clinical record project), PRIMHD (programme for the integration of mental health data) and KPI (performance indicators) projects.

Ian has a BA in Political Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Service Management. He was also in the first intake of the TOP Management Programme (LAMP) sponsored by DHB NZ in 2003, and participated actively in the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) exchange sponsored by the Ministry of Health.

During his career, Ian has shown a strong commitment to the promotion of community partnerships that improve health outcomes and reduce inequality. The Regional Asian and Refugee Advisory Groups look forward to working under his leadership and guidance in the time ahead.

Mind and Body and its Peer Support Service

By Peter Qiu

Hi, I am Peter. I came from China and I am the Asian representative for Mind and Body Consultants Ltd. which is the biggest mental health peer support service provider in New Zealand. What makes us unique is that our service is run by consumers. As the Managing Director Jim Burdett says, "The Organisation is composed entirely of mad people – and it works."

The essential element of peer support service is the nature of the relationship between the person accessing the service, and the Peer Support Worker (PSW). This relationship is based upon the common experience of mental illness between the two parties and it forms the foundation of the PSW's support role.



Peter living a life that is worth living

Actually, almost all of the Mind and Body staff had experienced mental health problems to some extent in certain periods of their lives, and most of us have recovered well, or are well on the way to full recovery. Take myself, for example, I had severe depression in 2006. The needs to work part-time to make a living and fight the demon of loneliness conspired to make me distressed.

Mental health problems are not uncommon among Asians, especially among recent migrants. But they often underutilise mental health services, as research shows. This could be a result of cultural difference. In many Asian cultures, stigma and shame are associated with mental health problems. Consequently, many Asians are reluctant to use mental health care, such as that in hospitals and community mental health centres.

Mind and Body's Peer Support Service provides a way of overcoming this underutilisation. The service is person-centred, which means that we provide a service that regards you as an individual

with your own hopes, dreams and potentials. The PSW is a companion on your journey of recovery, and celebrates your talents and achievements. We define recovery as a life worth living. We believe a life worth living is one that is lived in the world, rather than within special places set aside for services users. Therefore, PSWs will endeavour to support

you to connect, or reconnect, with your community. As some of my peers say:

"The peer support service has helped engage in my social confidence. To say the least, the service is an important necessity to any life balance."

"Peer support service is very helpful to me as it encourages me to move on."

"I am very lucky to have a peer support worker to support me. With his assistance I have achieved many things that I could not think about before. I have participated in more social activities than before."



To access our services you must be a user of either the Auckland DHB or Waitemata DHB's Adult or Older Adult Mental Health Services, or you have used these services within the past year.

For more information please contact us via phone 09-630 5909.

If you like to talk in Chinese, your call will be forwarded to me, or you can contact me via mobile 027-655 2785. I am pleased to answer any of your questions about Mind and Body, and the Peer support Service.