

Air Notes

AUTUMN EDITION 2012

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**Meet Wayne Borg
Psychologist &
Gold Card Clinic
Clinician**

Welcome to the Autumn (March 2012) edition of Air Notes, the Project Air Strategy quarterly newsletter for NSW Health staff working with people with personality disorders.

Once again we would like to send our thanks to all of the staff who have been involved with the project, whether you were a delegate at our conference, attended training, assisted clients to consent to the research, conducted Gold Card Clinic sessions or helped in any other way – your support has been vital to the success of the project. Your support is allowing us to have an in-depth look at the treatment of people with personality disorders within the service. It is also assisting the development of better ways to provide treatment by staff to the benefit of people with personality disorders, and their family members and carers. Our longer-term vision for people with personality disorders across the state, is that no matter how rural or remote their location, to have access to the most effective and up-to-date treatment, and for all clinicians to be supported and informed in their work. If you would like to know more about the project please visit our website at www.projectairstrategy.org.

We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the year.

Training for 2012

Staff training for the treatment of personality disorders is being conducted at the St George and Prince of Wales Hospitals this year. New staff members and those unable to attend last year from the Sutherland, Illawarra and Shoalhaven Mental Health Service are invited to attend. The first training (Level 1-2) will begin on 19th March 2012.



Families, Partners and Carers

Project Air Strategy is working along-side the Working with Families and Carers team to support carers of people with a personality disorder. In the next few months, we will be offering carer interventions including a series of one-day workshops and a 4 week psycho-educational group.

The interventions have the following aims:

- Increase carer understanding of personality disorders
- Increase carer skills in managing loved one's symptoms.
- Identify the importance of their own self care as a means to providing better support for their loved one.

FAMILIES, PARTNERS AND CARERS ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS

Wollongong	29 March 2012	Registration is essential:
Nowra	26 April 2012	
St George / Sutherland	14 June 2012	(02) 4298 1571 Kelly Hutchison

Treatment Guidelines

We are currently inviting public comment on the Treatment Guidelines for Personality Disorders, which are in their final stages of development. They are available in draft format on the Project Air Strategy website:

<http://ihmri.uow.edu.au/projectairstrategy/index.html>

The guidelines have been developed to support all clinicians who work with people with personality disorders, and we aim to make them as user-friendly, practical and relevant to you as possible. We invite you to provide us with your feedback, thoughts, suggestions and peer review.

You may have received an earlier draft of the guidelines in hard copy if you attended staff training. Please be aware that they have been advanced considerably through consultation with our expert advisory and consultants' panel and that several more guidelines will be added over the coming months. These include working with forensic, intellectually disabled, and culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and older adults and parents with personality disorders who have young children.

We recommend you view the treatment guidelines online and continue to check over the coming months for inclusion of the additional guidelines.

Save the Date

The 6th Annual Conference for the Treatment of Personality Disorders will be held on Friday 9th November 2012 at the University of Wollongong. This year we will be holding a workshop on the Saturday following the conference. More details will be provided in our next Newsletter.

Project Partnerships

The research and training partnerships between NSW Health and the University of Wollongong are an important feature of the Project Air Strategy.



Mark Coleman, Sue Karpik and Brin Grenyer at a City Beach Function Centre event with the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute.

INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE BORG PSYCHOLOGIST, SUTHERLAND CMH

What is the first thing that comes to mind when a client with a personality disorder is on the end of the phone? ... overwhelmed, exhausted, maybe ineffective.

Project Air Strategy is a multifaceted strategy to increase the range of services available to clients with personality disorders or traits.

Part of the strategy is a brief, evidenced-based, treatment for clients presenting in crisis, with deliberate self harm and/or a personality disorder or traits. This intervention is known as the Gold Card Clinic.

Clinicians at the Sutherland Mental Health Service say the clinic has provided an important opportunity to engage with clients in way that may not have been possible in the past. "I think there's been an opportunity for the client to be validated and heard in terms of their crisis presentation. So it's not just like, OK, well let's get you sorted out and off you go. It's really an opportunity to connect with the client", says Wayne Borg, Psychologist.

This engagement provides clients who may not have wanted or needed or been suitable for longer term therapy to have a positive experience with the service which may result in future treatment seeking. In this sense the clinic fits well within the framework of services already available, including Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT).

"Clinicians who may have been nervous or shy or reluctant to work with this particular client group have been given an opportunity to broaden their horizons... There's more of a willingness to be involved. They're getting a bit of a taste of working with this client group that's short and that's time limited and that is relatively easy to take on with an already busy or heavy case load or difficult case load", says Mr Borg.

Mr Borg has had a number of years experience working with borderline personality disorder through the DBT program at Sutherland. Despite this, he was keen to be involved with the clinic to learn new skills and to implement his skills in a different treatment modality.

"It was a real shift in the way that I approached working with this client or this particular client group... the light bulb moment for me was, oh hold on, this is a brief intervention, it's possibly going to be three appointments, if that. The client may not come back for the second or third appointment so it's really like, OK, making sure that they're going to walk away with something that's going to be of use to them", said Mr Borg.

The Gold Card Clinic does not exist in isolation, and clinicians such as Mr Borg see that a combination of training, research and resources work in concert to reduce some of the barriers to working with this client group.

"..absolutely the Gold Card Clinic is a useful option, a useful pathway that may open the doors for other things for that particular client later on down the track", says Mr Borg. ■

