

**MDF Newcastle
Self Help Group
November 2011
Newsletter**



Around 30 were present at our November meeting including 4 new people. We had no speaker but the exchange of ideas and knowledge were as usual very enlightening and forthcoming. One new member said that she had never had the opportunity to meet anyone with bipolar and found the experience very helpful. She had clarified by members the practise surrounding the withdrawal of a driving licence when one is ill and how to have it reinstated.

Another newcomer talked at length about his perceptions and paranoia when manic and he was very surprised and somewhat relieved in that many of us shared the same ideas and fears which is quite significant. Many appear to be part of the human psyche and we may hold deep seated fears about our potential danger to others no doubt stemming from portal and misconceptions of people with psychiatric disorders we have absorbed through society's attitudes, myths and media coverage.

We talked at length about anxiety and panic attacks when at its worst people cannot face going out and about, going on public transport and communicating with others. Many experience an anxiety state which is common with bipolar but many have overcome it and with increased availability of counselling it can be treated. Kylie offered much information she has gained about anxiety and said it is important to keep on doing the things which cause the anxiety, pushing ourselves a little further gently and not merely avoiding them. It is extremely difficult to ignore the panic feelings and the physical symptoms are real and frightening but one needs to resist "flight" and getting out of the situation as quickly as possible. Many have said they would always sit next to an exit and plan their escape should they feel they need to but Jean said she had also been given the good advice of a psychiatrist to do those things which cause the anxiety and eventually the anxiety will subside. She did this and the condition eventually ceased and has never returned however the dread and physical discomfort became too debilitating and punishing and prevented clear thinking when she tried to take up full time employment again when her children went to school. Although she was doing the work well the effect on her was taking its toll and at the fourth attempt in a job accepted her limitation, resigned, and has never worked again but is capable and enjoys family responsibilities and in her voluntary work is able to participate fully in meetings and conferences (without any anxiety). Some of us do keep on working but many have also had to accept it is impossible and may often trigger an episode. Of course this means for most a limited lifestyle dependant on benefits when so many therapeutic aspects of our lives are limited by our money. Going out socially to restaurants, theatres, cinemas sports venues and holidays are dependant on having the money also the independence and benefit of a car is virtually ruled out.

A few weeks ago the BBC 2 Tonight programme highlighted bipolar in their Scientific item about new research in treating mental illness by using the innovation of brain scanning. In the future, it was predicted there would be innovative treatment when it could be established how effective a certain treatment was on the brain thus eliminating the trail and error of weeks or months of success and failure with psychotropic medication, and the total reliance on diagnosis being achieved though just taking about symptoms with the patient and family. (A new scientific approach said to be a "tipping point" in mental illness but its long way off.)

The new venue for our meetings is at the Quaker Meeting House,
West Avenue, Gosforth. NE3 4ES first Saturday of the month
10.30 am till 1.00pm

The Meeting House is in West Avenue off Gosforth High Street next door to the
magistrate's court near to the Gosforth Shopping Centre



CONTACT INFORMATION Our Helpline (Lynn) @ 0191 2670272

Or

Email mdfnewcastle@aol.com (Phil)

Messages will be passed on if possible

Mental Health Matters has a Help line Tel.08456012458 if it's busy try latter.

*MDF the Bipolar Organisation website at www.mdf.org.uk has a lot of information and
Publications and a online community and much more its well worth a visit.*

*The Royal Collage of Psychiatrists has good articles on bipolar and medication
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinforall/treatment.aspx*

*The Disability Alliance website has a great deal of information regarding benefits and
the forthcoming benefit changes www.disabilityalliance.org*

Future Meeting

December 3rd is our Christmas meeting and buffet everyone is welcome please note
the meeting starts at 11am

January 7th First meeting of the new year and AGM a representative from Rethink will
give a talk on their work especially advocacy.

*I hope everyone is keeping well and if you have not been to the group for some time
you are always very welcome we would be pleased to see you at our new venue.*

*The cost of printing our newsletter keeps rising due to the increased postal costs if you
wish to stop receiving the newsletter please let us now either by telephoning Lynn on
our contact number Tel. 01912670272 or email mdfnewcastle@aol.com thank you.*

There will be no December Newsletter

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year

SUPPORTING

people who live with manic depression

EDUCATING

public and professionals
Patron Neil "Twink" Tinning

CAMPAIGNING

for greater research into methods of treatment

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