

The Wales Mental Health in Primary Care (WaMH in PC)

Bursaries 2004

Name of Applicants: The Manic Depression Fellowship (MDF) Wales

Subject: Flintshire Young Persons Mental Health Promotion Project

The Project Group

The Manic Depression Fellowship (MDF) Wales, in collaboration with the First Access Team, Flintshire and Unllais have developed a young persons (16-25) mental health awareness programme for the Flintshire area.

The Problem – the Case for Support

- 26.3% (39,080) of the population in Flintshire are aged between 16 and 29 years. Of which 1,805 are in year 11 and 1,428 are attending sixth forms. There are 12 secondary schools in the area.
- 26% of children (or parents on behalf of their children) have contacted the GP services in the past 12 months regarding mental health issues. (mental health of children and adolescents in Great Britain; 1999 Social Survey Division of the Office of National Statistics).
- 33% of children would have experienced of at least 2 or more stressful life events (mental health of children and adolescents in Great Britain; 1999 Social Survey Division of the Office of National Statistics).
- Current health of the nation statistics tell us that 2 in 100 young persons will develop a serious mental health problem during their lifetime and 1 in 4 people will be directly affected by mental ill health. 6% of boys and 16% of girls aged 16-19 are thought to have some form of mental health problem. 20% of all deaths by young people are by suicide.
(<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/page.cfm?pagecode=PRST>)
- School based education programmes such as this have been demonstrated to be an effective way to challenge the stigma of serious mental health problems (Health Promotion Wales and MDF Wales; 1997)
- The stigma, misinformation surrounding mental health problems means that young people are badly informed about the nature of mental ill health and the course that it takes. Often those most in need will not seek the much needed help because of the stigma associated with serious mental health problems and conversely, others seek medical help too readily for stress related problems rather than seeking guidance on aspects of stress management.
- The possession of accurate information empowers people to manage major mental health problems effectively

The aims of this project are to inform, help and support young people about mental health problems

The project team aims to

1. Provide information about mental health problems in an open and factual way
2. Ensure that every student or young person involved in the project will understand the relationship between prolonged stress and mental ill health
3. Teach young people good stress coping strategies
4. Sign post young people to appropriate sources of help and support.
5. Provide speakers and a 20 minute video for sixth form and youth centre seminars
6. Distribute a booklet 'Mental Illness: does it blow your mind?' free of charge to each young person involved in the project
7. Work collaboratively with GP services to relieve the burden of mental health referrals to both primary and secondary care mental health services

Target Group

3,233 students in the 12 local Secondary Schools
Youth clubs attendees in the Flintshire area
Other young persons groups identified by the project manager

The project will make a difference

By targeting the stigma that surrounds mental ill health thereby making help and support more accessible

By lessening the fear and isolation experienced when suffering from the onset of mental illness this project will be able to target the suicide rate among young people

By providing an information resource in the form of a booklet that clearly sets out information about depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia and signposting to other sources of help.

By providing a reference point for relatives, friends and young carers in understanding the sometimes bizarre behaviour manifested by those who have direct experience of mental health problems, thus preventing their rejection and isolation by those to whom they would normally turn for support

By enabling mental health professionals to identify young people at risk and provide support at a critical time

By encouraging those in need to seek help at the stage of onset – thus preventing prolonged severe attacks and also reducing the need for costly hospital admission

By giving helpful and timely information about mental health to students who may be at risk, thus reducing their likelihood to leave full time education and increasing their ability to achieve their full potential

By encouraging early diagnosis and treatment the quality of life of the person with the direct experience will improve and also the stress placed on the family unit will be greatly reduced.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Manager of the Flintshire First Access Team will be the Project Manager.

The Manager of the Flintshire First Access Team will work in close collaboration with GP services to evaluate the effectiveness of this project in enabling young people with the onset of serious mental health problems to access appropriate help and support

The Manager of the Flintshire First Access Team will work with the Flintshire psychology services in assessing the viability of this project being part of a research proposal.

The Manager of the First Access Team will be responsible for ensuring that the programme is delivered in a timely and effective way to each of the secondary schools in Flintshire that advocate for mental health to be part of their PSE curriculum.

The Manager of the First Access Team will monitor the progress of the project in youth clubs and youth agencies in the Flintshire area.