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# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

ORYGEN Research Centre

## FRIENDS OF THE MHFA PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2008

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### GREETINGS

Welcome to old and new readers of our Friends-Newsletters. Previous issues can be downloaded from the MHFA website at this URL: <http://www.mhfa.com.au/newsletters.shtml>

This electronic newsletter is published by the **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training and Research Program** at the ORYGEN Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, the University of Melbourne.

The MHFA Program continues to grow. There are now over 1,000 MHFA instructors delivering courses across Australia, with over 30 of these having reached master instructor status. Also, there are organisations in 10 countries that have now adapted, or are adapting the MHFA Australia Program. For 12 months up to 1 August 2008, the MHFA website: [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au) received 136,000 unique visits.



### ANNUAL MHFA INSTRUCTOR CONFERENCE

Each year a conference is conducted just for

accredited MHFA instructors to network and hear invited speakers talk on current mental illness topics, relevant to the MHFA curriculum. This year the conference was conducted over 3 days in May in Melbourne. The first day was a special networking day for our Aboriginal MHFA Instructors.

### MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CONTACT DETAILS

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### Mental Health First Aid ACTION PLAN



- A**ssess risk of suicide or harm
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive reassurance and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage self-help strategies

VISIT [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au) FOR INFORMATION ON COURSES

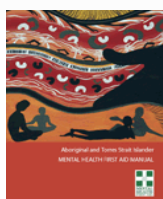
We wish to thank all the MHFA instructors for the wonderful work they are doing to increase the level of mental health literacy and to reduce the level of stigma surrounding mental illness.

## MHFA SHOP

MHFA materials can be purchased online from: [http://www.mhfa.com.au/course\\_manual.shtml](http://www.mhfa.com.au/course_manual.shtml)

These include the Adult, Youth, Aboriginal and Vietnamese MHFA manuals and a DVD showing the application of the MHFA Action Plan to help someone disturbed with psychosis. Our new e-learning CD ROM can also be purchased via the website.

An e-learning version of the 12-hr Adult MHFA course on CD-ROM. was launched in May this year. More information : [http://www.mhfa.com.au/elearning\\_mhfa.shtml](http://www.mhfa.com.au/elearning_mhfa.shtml)



### There are now five MHFA programs being conducted across Australia;

- The Adult MHFA program – a 12-hr course that teaches adults skills to help other adults.
- The Youth MHFA program – a 14-hr course that teaches adults skills to help adolescents.
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA program – a 14-hr course that teaches skills to help aboriginal people.
- The e-learning MHFA program – a version of the 12-hr Adult MHFA course on CD-ROM.
- The CALD MHFA Program – a 12-hr adaptation of the Adult MHFA program for CALD communities – Vietnamese, Croatian & Italian.

## MHFA GUIDELINES

Since 2005, we have been doing a series of research projects to develop guidelines for how a member of the public should provide first aid to a person developing a mental disorder or in a mental health crisis situation. These guidelines will be used to revise the contents of the MHFA course early next year. The guidelines are being developed using the consensus of international panels of mental health professionals, consumers and carers from developed English-speaking countries. So far, we have completed the following guidelines:

- Depression
- Psychosis
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours
- Non-suicidal self-injury
- Panic attacks
- Traumatic experience

We are still working on the guidelines for:

- Eating disorders
- Problem alcohol use
- Problem drug use

### Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

With funding from *beyondblue*, we have also been working on developing guidelines which are suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, using the consensus of a panel of Aboriginal mental health professionals. The following guidelines have been completed:

- Cultural considerations and communication techniques
- Depression
- Psychosis
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours and deliberate self-injury

Trauma, grief and loss

Work is underway to produce guidelines on problem alcohol use. These guidelines will be used to improve the contents of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA course.

### Guidelines for Asian countries

In collaboration with staff of the Centre for International Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, we are working on guidelines for Asian countries. We have already produced guidelines on first aid for psychosis. Work is underway to produce guidelines on first aid for suicidal thoughts and behaviours in a number of specific Asian countries (India, Japan, Philippines). These guidelines are based on the consensus views of mental health professionals from each of these countries.

Copies of all the available guidelines can be downloaded from: <http://www.mhfa.com.au/Guidelines.shtml>

## ADULT MHFA PROGRAM



### ADULT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Vladimir Prpich became an accredited MHFA Instructor in August 2006.

*Monash University in Melbourne has established a campus in Ruimsig, South Africa. The campus has approximately 2,400 students with a large residential component, 285 beds in 2007 and 800 beds in 2008.*

*As Director of the Monash University Residential Services, MHFA Instructor Vladimir Prpich has made it mandatory that all residential support staff, in both its Australian and South African campuses, receive MHFA training. Vladimir conducted the first MHFA course in South Africa in mid 2007 and is scheduled to go to South Africa again to run another MHFA course for the Residential Support Team in early 2008. The course was very well received by the participants - some of whom came from Kenya and Botswana.*

Skye Keller is a Master Instructor in Western Australia. She trained as an Adult MHFA Instructor in December 2006 and as a Youth MHFA Instructor in April 2007. After delivering a MHFA course, she received the following email from one of the participants:

### STORIES FROM ADULT MHFA INSTRUCTORS

[Printed with permission from the authors]

*Hi Skye*

*Thank you so much for the informative and helpful Mental Health First Aid Workshop you have been holding for our organisation. I was able to put new found skills to use only this week when a client came to the office obviously very anxious and threatening suicide. I remembered all you said about keeping the person calm and getting help.*

*During his stay in the office I was able to instruct a colleague to get the tenant a cup of tea while I stayed with him. I talked to him quietly and in a calming manner (never raising my voice). The tenant became less anxious and calmed down; at this point I asked his permission to telephone his support worker at the Inner City Mental Health clinic.*

*Again he was not left on his own, but I got my colleague to stay with him while I phoned for help.*

*The support worker eventually came after almost an hour (he was reluctant to come) but I persisted and said we had a duty of care to both our staff in the office and the tenant.*

*We were able to negotiate with the support worker some extra skills training for the tenant to help with his aggression. We asked the tenant to keep in touch with us during this training and let us know how he was getting on and help us to help others in a similar situation.*

*On leaving the office the tenant appeared much happier and was even smiling. He turned to my colleague and myself and thanked us for being so caring and helpful.*

This is the longest running and most common of our MHFA programs. It was developed by Betty Kitchener and Professor Tony Jorm in Canberra in 2001.

Towards the end of last year a National Adult MHFA Training Team was formed, consisting of 5 Trainers of Instructors: Betty Kitchener, Gloria Claessen, Tony Hoare, Susan Goldie and Narelle Heywood. These trainers have all reached Master instructor status.

In 2008, there will have been 10 X 5-day Instructor Training Courses conducted to train suitable people to be accredited as Instructors of the 12-hr Adult MHFA course. More information on the MHFA website at this URL: <http://www.mhfa.com.au/training.shtml>



YOUTH  
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

The Youth Mental Health First Aid Program has had a very busy six months! In December, we reported that there were 66 instructors trained, and now we are able to report that there are 121 YMHFA instructors.

NSW is in the lead, with 43 instructors, followed closely by Victoria with 36. Western Australia has 14 instructors, Queensland has 10, Tasmania has 6, South Australia has 5 and there are 4 instructors in the ACT. There are no YMHFA instructors in the Northern Territory yet – so if you know someone in NT who would be a good YMHFA instructor, send them to the website!

Chris Scanlan, the first co-ordinator of the program, has finished his secondment with the program and has returned to his position at Barwon Health in Geelong. Chris has been instrumental in the early development of the program, and will be sorely missed by the whole team. We wish him the very best and thank him for all his hard work.

Replacing Chris as the YMHFA co-ordinator is Dr Claire Kelly. Claire has been a member of the mental health literacy team for several years, and started as a Mental Health First Aid instructor in 2002. Since the program relocated to ORYGEN Research Centre in 2005, she has been working on developing first aid guidelines for crisis situations and developing disorders. Claire completed a PhD in adolescent mental health literacy in Canberra, and is passionate about improving the mental health and wellbeing of adolescents.

**There are two ways to become an instructor of the Youth MHFA course.**

Someone who is already an accredited instructor of the Adult MHFA course, and has conducted at least 3 adult MHFA courses, can apply to attend a 3-day YMHFA Instructor Training Course. In order to qualify to attend the course, the applicant has to demonstrate that they have additional skills and knowledge in the youth mental health field. There are scholarships available to



**Welcome!  
Dr Claire Kelly**

pay the training fees to attend.

Someone who is not an accredited instructor of the Adult MHFA course, and wishes only to teach the youth course, can apply to attend the 5.5-day Instructor Course. This course is for suitably qualified workers in the youth sector and will accredit instructors to teach only the 14-hour Youth Mental Health First Aid course

All courses for 2008 are listed on the MHFA website, which is updated regularly, and further information can be obtained by contacting the YM-HFA Program coordinator, Claire Kelly, on

T: 03 9342 3761 or

E: [ckel@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ckel@unimelb.edu.au)



ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

**Plans for roll-out of AMHFA  
in Western NSW**

Len Kanowski (Deputy Director MHFA and Area Coordinator Aboriginal Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Services, Greater Western Area Health Service in the state of NSW) is working in close consultation with Aboriginal MHFA instructors, Aboriginal organisations and communities in the greater western area of NSW to implement an intensive roll-out of the Aboriginal MHFA course in the region. Talks have been conducted with the Bila Muuji collective of Aboriginal

Medical Service CEOs, representatives of Murdi Paaki, a collective of Aboriginal women from the Aboriginal Safe House program and the Bourke Aboriginal Working Group regarding the roll-out. Plans are underway to employ a local Aboriginal MHFA instructor to coordinate the program. Areas covered will include Goodooga, Lightning Ridge, Bourke, Brewarrina, Dareton, Cobar, Cowra, Broken Hill as well as a range of other rural and remote towns with large populations of Aboriginal people. The coordinating instructor will work with other accredited Aboriginal MHFA instructors in the region to disseminate the 14 hour course.



ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

Since the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Program (AMHFA) commenced in March 2007 it has grown in leaps and bounds. We now have run training courses in every state of Australia and two in the Northern Territory, a total of 14 with 156 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Instructors trained. Additionally, two 3-day AMHFA courses (with 8 participants) have been conducted this year for non-Indigenous people who were already accredited instructors of the Adult MHFA course and who have experience in working with Aboriginal people. Additionally Len Kanowski is planning to run three more courses next year.

AMHFA PROGRAM

These Instructors have run 70 14hour courses in

Aboriginal Communities across Australia including remote communities in the Kimberley Region of NW Western Australia, the Gulf Country in far north QLD, the desert country of Central Australia and Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. There have been numerous obstacles to overcome such as high workplace demands, time and organisational issues, community and family issues and we understand for some these have been difficult to overcome. Congratulations to all those instructors who have managed to run courses. Hopefully those who are having difficulties will be able to run courses soon.

The AMHFA manual, workbook and teaching materials have been developed in close consultation with

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and was launched at The MHS Summer Forum in Sydney in February 2008. Two culturally appropriate DVDs have been developed and are available on suicide and MHFA for psychosis.

An evaluation of the AMHFA program has been carried out with Laura Hart, Kara Eddington and Tony Jorm travelling to Orange, Katoomba, Cairns, Alice Springs, Port Augusta and Perth to collect feedback from Instructors and Community participants on the effectiveness of the training and this will be available towards the end of the year.

As I will be finishing my contract with MHFA at the end of October I wish to thank you all for your support during the last 19 months and wish you all health, happiness and success in the future.

- Kara Eddington

New training for health workers



Life skills: New Aboriginal mental health first aid instructors on the North Coast - Grant Creighton (Lismore), Richard Clarke (Lismore), Paul Davis (Kempsey), Michael Foxworth (Kempsey), Paul Asper (Kempsey), Natalie Foxburgh ( Tweed Heads), program coordinator Kara Eddington (Kempsey) and Ivor Ferguson (Coffs Harbour)

A NSW Mental Health First Aid program targeted specifically at indigenous communities is making an impact across the nation.

Since the program came into being just over 12 months ago, 160 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been trained in mental health first aid.

Kara Eddington is the program's coordinator and she says mental health first aid is relevant not just in indigenous communities, but for populations as a whole.

"These are issues that are prevalent in all communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal and they're on the rise," she said.

"The Aboriginal program has been specially developed to provide culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive health care.

"If Aboriginal people do have mental health issues they don't always access mainstream services."

Ms Eddington has held 14 training courses around the country since the program was first developed, the latest in Kempsey just last week.

She said it had been well received by all members of the indigenous community.

"It's a five-day course. First they do the course themselves and then learn how to train others," she said.

"A lot of the time mental health issues like abuse, depression and anxiety go unrecognised and untreated."

She said such issues were particularly prevalent in places such as Kempsey.

"It's hard to assess whether they're mental health issues actually more prevalent, but I would say from what I've been told this week that there is a high rate in this area," she said.

"Things like high unemployment, isolation - there are a whole lot of issues that impact here.

"They're issues that affect everybody, but they're probably more prevalent in this area."

The eight new instructors, three in Kempsey, three in Lismore and one each in Coffs and Tweed Heads would be crucial in combating mental health along the North Coast.

"The AMHFA manual, workbook and teaching materials have been developed in close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people"

Extra! Extra!  
AMHFA Makes Headlines

Above: Kara Eddington in centre front with Aboriginal MHFA instructors she trained in Kempsey in July this year.

## CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) MHFA

### African

Len Kanowski & Betty Kitchener conducted the 12-hour MHFA Course for members of the African community in Melbourne in February this year. The course was positively received. Discussions were held about the possibility of adapting the course to better meet the needs of African communities. Once funding is located we plan to work with members of the African community to adapt and translate an African version of the course. We already have one African MHFA Instructor here in Melbourne.

### Vietnamese MHFA (VMHFA)

Len Kanowski has been working in close consultation with Master MHFA Instructors Thuy Dinh and Jean-Louis Nguyen to further translate and update the Vietnamese MHFA



Cẩm Nang Cấp Cứu Tâm Thần  
Vietnamese Mental Health First Aid Manual



course materials and manual. A new-look translated manual has been published.

A second VMHFA instructor course will be conducted in Melbourne between 10-14 November this year. Discussions have been held with the Centre for International Mental Health at the University of Melbourne about taking the VMHFA course to Vietnam.

### Italian MHFA

Italian-born MHFA Instructor Cristina Mitola has returned to live in Italy after four years in Australia. Cristina became an accredited MHFA instructor when she moved to Australia from Italy in 2004. Cristina, a psychologist from Padua, intends to talk with mental health authorities about the possibility of adapting the course for Italy. The course has already been translated into Italian.

## INTERNATIONAL MHFA PROGRAMS

The MHFA Australia Training and Research Program has spread, not only across Australia in the last seven years, but also internationally. This has been mainly due to hard work and rigorous evaluation with good outcomes and also, perhaps, because it just seems to be the right thing at the right time for many communities. Here are some updates from the MHFA International Programs.

<http://www.mhfa.com.au/international.shtm>

### CANADA

[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca)



MHFA Canada is gaining momentum across the country. More than 170 instructors have been trained and several thousand participants have taken the 12-hour course.

Funded by Alberta Health Services/Alberta Mental Health Board, MHFA Canada course offerings now include **Mental Health First Aid Canada: For Adults Who Interact with Youth**. More than 20 instructors have been trained and registration is up to 600 in less than five months.

A French translation of the participant manuals has been completed and work has begun on translating the instructor manuals, enabling MHFA to be accessible to Canadians in their two official languages. An Aboriginal version is in the planning stages and MHFA instructors of Aboriginal descent will be providing valuable insights into the development of the educational approach. Our inaugural newsletter, ALGEE Tracks...Across Canada with MHFA as well as an Instructor's

Bulletin are expected to be ready in the fall. You'll be able to check it out at:

[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca)

### MHFA ENGLAND

[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.csip.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.csip.org.uk)



Dave Belshaw is the National Programme Lead for MHFA England.

MHFA in England is going from strength to strength. We are planning our first National Conference and have agreed with our Royal Society for Public Health that they will support us in developing a new national qualification in MHFA, exciting times indeed. We are also looking at our future business model options for next year. With NIMHE as an organisation in a state of flux, we have several options available to us. We have around 100 Instructors already trained and they in turn have about 3000 first aiders trained or planned. We intend to develop YMHFA as part of our national infrastructure in the not too distant future.

## INTERNATIONAL MHFA PROGRAMS CONT..

### MHFA FINLAND

<http://www.mielenterveydenensiapu.fi>



Suomen  
Mielenterveysseura

Mikko Häikiö is the Development Manager at the Lapland Hospital

District in Rovaniemi, Northern Finland. He writes that MHFA courses are now running in Ostrobothnia, Lapland and Helsinki area all the time. Our evaluation is almost ready and from the beginning of September people will be able to take MHFA courses in other parts of Finland too.

### MHFA HONG KONG

<http://www.mhahk.org.hk/>



Prudence Wong, from the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong reports:

Our association now has 12 instructors and plan to organise 50 classes for public, school staff and business organisations in this year.

We plan to organise another instructor training course in coming October to increase the number of instructors. This course also welcomes other interested professionals to join other than our association's social workers.

In response to SzeChuen earthquake of China on 12.5.08, I and two other MHFA instructors are invited to go to Guangdong of China on 11.6.08 to organise a workshop about PTSD. We utilized the 5 action plans of MHFA to train the school teachers of Guangdong as they are helpers for the victims of SzeChuen earthquake. As we only have 4 hours, we cannot introduce the full MHFA course but we think this will help us to introduce MHFA to China. The most important is that we can help those in need.



Above: MHFA Hong Kong Instructor Jennifer Yim sent this photo of the MHFA course she conducted in early August for the Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association.

### MHFA NEW ZEALAND



Betty Kitchener, Len Kanowski and Rhonda Woodward (Aboriginal MHFA Instructor) travelled to Auckland New Zealand at the end of July to conduct the 12-hour Adult MHFA course to a group of 12 Māori health workers and whanau (family). Representatives from a range of Māori organisations attended the course which was organised by members of the Māori Health, Counties Manukau District Health Board.

The New Zealand visit was a follow-up to a visit to Australia by a Māori delegation in February this year. Whilst here, the delegation observed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander instructor course as well as the 14-hour course. A Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed between MHFA Australia and the Māori Health, Manukau District Health Board, who plan to adapt the 12-hour MHFA course to meet the needs of Māori people.



### SCOTLAND'S MHFA



Scotland's Mental Health First Aid is managed by NHS Health Scotland and is funded by the Scottish Government. Launched in 2005, we now have 280 highly motivated and dedicated instructors who have delivered to over 20,000 participants throughout Scotland. Our National Training Team have recently worked to support the development of the English, Welsh and Irish MHFA programmes.

The programme was commended in a recent external evaluation. Building on this, we have been working on a programme of continual improvement of the SMHFA materials. Last year we recorded a set of DVD clips with Scottish personal testimonies to complement the Australian set. The course and manual have been translated into British Sign Language and we have trained a number of deaf instructors to deliver in the deaf community. We are currently revising our twelve hour course and participant manual to improve accessibility; align with current national policy/ health improvement programmes; update statistics and better reflect the cultural diversity of the Scottish population. This has been done in consultation with leading experts in the field; key stakeholders; instructors and participants. We plan to launch the revised material in early 2009.

We have targeted SMHFA at professionals working with those at high risk of mental health problems. The course is particularly successful in areas such as the prison service; the nursing service; housing associations; job centres; drug and community workers to name a few. There is a growing demand for the course in the private sector and we work closely with Scotland's Centre for Healthy Working Lives to market the course within this sector.

If you would like more information on SMHFA please contact Kirsty Robertson, SMHFA National Coordinator ( [kirsty.robertson@health.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:kirsty.robertson@health.scot.nhs.uk) ).

## INTERNATIONAL MHFA PROGRAMS CONT..

## MHFA SINGAPORE



<http://www.traumarecovery.com.sg/mhfa.html>

Greetings from Singapore again!

Here's an update on what we've been doing:

**1) MHFA 12-hour course**

To date we have run more than 15 courses (CGH instructors as well as community instructors). The course is being rolled out to all the restructured hospitals in Singapore as part of the peer support program training. In addition, Health Promotion Board, a government-based organization, is also sponsoring MHFA courses for teachers & counsellors from educational institutions.

There has been a few inquiries on when the MHFA Youth course will be available, but for us, the earliest we can manage that will be in 2009!

Thanks to Tony's sharing of the research questionnaires, we've modified them and incorporated a pre & post course quizzes for all participants. The statistics look promising so far. Almost all showed an increase score in mental health knowledge following the course. Most participants feed back that they were more confident of helping someone with mental health problems.

We have also received requests from various organisations to equip Singapore volunteers going into disaster areas with basic mental health skills so that they can provide basic counselling/support to the disaster survivors as well as to their own co-workers. We have proposed that the MHFA course be one of the training components.

**2) MHFA (Older Persons)**

The team working on this module has finished filming the video clips and is in the midst of editing, and incorporating the clips into the power point slides. We will send you a copy of it once it is done. The first run for the course will take place later in 2008.

**3) Train-the-Instructors Courses**

There are two courses being scheduled for November 2008 and January 2009. We anticipate an increase of about 16 instructors in hospitals as well as in community following the TTI courses.

**4) MHFA going online!**

We are coming closer to instructors registering for the MHFA courses online! At present, we are posting all the MHFA courses on the website. In time to come, we hope to have an instructors' site only, to allow instructors to register for their courses, purchase materials online, and get the collation of evaluation forms/feedback online. For courses run by us, it will eventually be online registration for course participants. See [www.traumarecovery.com.sg/mhfa.html](http://www.traumarecovery.com.sg/mhfa.html)

**5) Addition to MHFA Singapore staff**

We are privileged to have two excellent administrative executive staff joining us since April 2008: Mr Lim Kok Peng & Ms Jass Kee. Both of them have been wonderful in helping us work through the business & logistic aspects of the training!

**6) Conference presentation**

Dr Hui Kheng will be presenting on the development and evaluation of MHFA in Singapore at the 13th Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists Scientific Meeting: Anti-stigma symposium in Japan in November.

## MHFA NORTHERN IRELAND



<http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/>

Michelle McMaster, Mental Health Promotion Coordinator at the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland in Belfast writes:

We have been in the process of purchasing the license from MHFA Australia which will allow us to adapt the materials for our use. We have signed the Memorandum of Understanding for this and are presently modifying the MHFA Australia materials. In the meantime we have gathered the views of the current MHFA Instructors about what they feel needs changed based on their experience of delivering the course both North and South. Due to the separate jurisdictions, we cannot sign an all-island Memorandum at this point, but we are intending to adapt the materials in a way which is consistent with cross-border needs so that if our colleagues in the South also take this forward at any point it can be done with relative ease.

## MHFA USA

The United States Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Partnership, currently consisting of two states – Maryland and Missouri – and the private non-profit organization, The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, is pleased to join our international colleagues in the implementation of this exciting program. We are greatly indebted to Betty and Tony for their leadership and counsel to us as we embark on this journey. As neophytes, we are also eager to learn from other countries and to share our mutual experience as we launch MHFA in a variety of settings throughout the United States. Joining us in this endeavor is the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The Partnership is adapting the Australian version of the Adult and Youth Manuals to reflect the language, principles and treatment practices of our national public mental health system while maintaining fidelity to the original to ensure consistent results. Several pilot trainings have been held whereby participants (consumers, professionals, and the general public) have provided feedback to the Partnership on the contents of the manual, and revisions have been made accordingly. By summer's end, we will have trained more than 50 instructors in a dozen states across the United States. Several communities have begun to implement MHFA with key audiences ranging from law enforcement and primary care providers to the workplace settings. Trainer and Instructor certification standards, a common web site, and marketing materials are under development. In addition we are producing research/evaluation protocols with the University of Maryland, Systems Evaluation Unit which is directed by Howard Goldman, MD, PhD and is located in Baltimore, Maryland.

MHFA will be the foundation of a series of initiatives to enhance our nation's mental health literacy and to engage the citizenry in providing assistance to individuals in need. As stated by Mr. John Colmers, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, "We can help individuals with mental illness by educating the general public on warning signs of mental illness. It is our hope that individuals approaching crisis will be identified then directed to helping resources before a tragedy occurs."



## MHFA AWARDS

*The MHFA Training and Research Program continues to receive awards for its work.*

### ORDER OF

### AUSTRALIA MEDAL (OAM)

On Australia Day 2008, Betty Kitchener received an Order of Australia medal for her work developing and rolling out the MHFA program. To date, Betty has been too busy to attend the investiture to receive her award!



*Left: Linda Rosenberg, National Council President and CEO, Professor Tony Jorm, Betty Kitchener and Lea Ann Browning-McNee, Outreach/Development Officer, National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare in the Kennedy Presidential in Boston.*

### AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

### IN MENTAL HEALTH

### EDUCATION

On 2 May 2008, the MHFA Program received its first international award. It was awarded an Award of Excellence in Mental Health Education from the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, a not for profit organisation in the USA representing 1,300 organizations providing treatment and rehabilitation to help people recover from mental illnesses and addiction disorders: [http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/cs/about\\_us](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/cs/about_us) The Awards dinner was held at the Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.

## MHFA GRANTS

**The MHFA Program would like to gratefully acknowledge the following grants it has received for 2008:**

### **Australian Rotary Health Research Fund**

To employ a research assistant (Julie-Anne Fischer) to conduct a randomised controlled trial of the MHFA e-learning CD-ROM

### **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

A small grant to help develop suicide first aid guidelines for Asian countries

### **Beyond Blue**

To employ a research assistant (Laura Hart) to help develop alcohol misuse first aid guidelines for Indigenous Australians.