

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

FRIENDS OF THE MHFA PROGRAM NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2011

Happy New Year to our friends of the MHFA Program. 2010 was another big year for us! In this newsletter you can read all about it and about what's coming up in the new year.

MHFA Statistics 2001-2010

Since 2001, when the MHFA Program began, it has spread across Australia with very little intentional marketing by the MHFA Program. It has mainly spread by word-of-mouth. Given this year is the Program's 10 year anniversary, we generated the following statistics to demonstrate the Program's proliferation. Over these 10 years:

- 150,000 people have attended a MHFA course in Australia.
- 1,690 instructors have been trained

to conduct one or more types of MHFA courses (the 12 hour Standard, 14 hour Youth &/or the 14 hour Aboriginal MHFA course).

840 MHFA Instructors across Australia are currently accredited : www.mhfa.com.au/instructor_list.php

See Figure 1 for a break down by course type.

203,000 MHFA Manuals have been distributed. See Figure 2 for a break down by course type.

Figure 1. Currently Accredited MHFA Instructors by Course Accreditation Type, Jan 2011

- Standard MHFA Instructors (Total of 590)**
- Youth MHFA Instructors (Total of 301)**
- Aboriginal MHFA Instructors (Total of 116)**
- Master MHFA Instructors (> 30 courses) (Total of 62)**

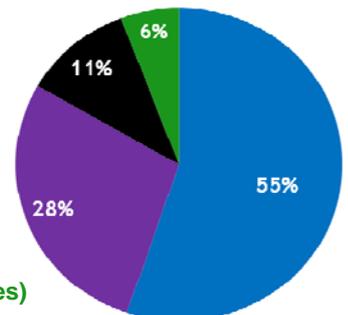
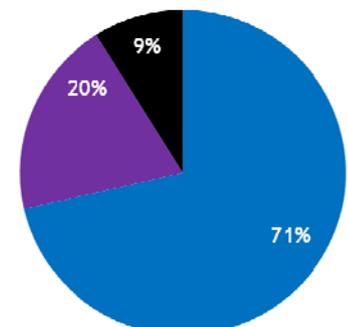


Figure 2. MHFA Manuals Distributed Across Australia by Course Type, 2002-2010

- Standard MHFA Manuals (Total of 145,000)**
- Youth MHFA Manuals (Total of 40,000)**
- Aboriginal MHFA Manuals (Total of 18,000)**



Mental Health First Aid ACTION PLAN



- A**pproach, assess and assist with any crisis
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive support and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other supports

VISIT www.mhfa.com.au FOR INFORMATION ON COURSES

New Evaluation Study of the Youth MHFA Course



Our 14 hour Youth MHFA course is for adults working or living with adolescents. We are currently having weekly team meetings to work out the design, measures and logistics for a large randomised control trial to be conducted around the greater Melbourne area, delivering the YMHFA course to parents of a young adolescent. Once a large number of parents have been recruited for this trial, they will be randomly allocated to receive either the 14 hour YMHFA course or a 15 hour First Aid course (from an accredited First Aid instructor). Each parent and their adolescent child will be given evaluation interviews over the phone at pre, post and follow up intervals, hopefully for quite a number of years.

Latest MHFA International News !



www.mhfa.com.au/international.shtml

In 2010, the MHFA Program was taken to Sweden, China and Nepal, making it 16 countries that have adapted the MHFA Program so far. These countries are: Canada, China, England, Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, USA and Wales.

Canada, England and Wales have also rolled out the Youth MHFA course whilst China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Sweden are presently developing their Youth MHFA programs.



Making Do With What's Available: MHFA in Nepal

By Prof. Tony Jorm



L-R: Dr Pramond Shyangwa, Dr Arun Jha, Betty Kitchener (and Algee), Prof. Tony Jorm & Prabhat Pradhan.

In November 2010, Betty Kitchener ran a demonstration of the Australian MHFA course in Nepal as a first step in a Nepalese adaptation of the course. The course was run in the training room of a Kathmandu hospital. Up on the rostrum, there was a statue of Ganesh (the god who looks like Babar the Elephant) with a bowl of plastic flowers on either side of him. Soon, he was joined by Algee, the MHFA mascot, who was also given a prominent place on the rostrum.

Betty knew there would be challenges in adapting the course to a developing country with a very different culture from Australia and limited mental health services, but there were nevertheless a few surprises on the way. On day 1 of the course, as she was about to begin, she was told: "The power is going off in one hour. We could buy some kerosene to start the generator if electricity is really needed, but would prefer you did without it".

Other challenges occurred when trying to show DVDs. These had to be fitted into periods when the power was available, but there were other problems. Firstly, there was a data projector, but no speakers to amplify the sound. However, a microphone and loudspeaker were available, so someone was coopted to hold the microphone against the laptop speaker. This worked reasonably well, but an even bigger challenge

soon became apparent—the accents of Aussie blokes on a golf course (in the depression DVD) were unintelligible to the Nepalese.

Some of the Australian course content was not applicable to Nepalese society and Betty had to improvise as she went. Many of the resources to support a person with a mental illness in Australia are not available in Nepal. Fortunately, two Nepalese psychiatrists sat in on the demonstration course and Betty would call on them at appropriate times.

There were also some aspects that went very well. The Nepalese participants were very willing to speak up, discuss issues and participate in activities. A highlight occurred during a discussion of mania, when one participant, who had bipolar disorder, did an amazing dramatic re-enactment of mania.

At the end of the demonstration course, there was enormous enthusiasm from the participants to develop a Nepalese MHFA course. Goals were set to have a manual written, a pilot program operating in a region with mental health services, and an evaluation study during 2011. If MHFA Nepal is successful, this could be the model for how MHFA can be adapted to other developing countries.



Youth MHFA in Hong Kong

In January 2011, the Youth MHFA program was introduced to Hong Kong. 17 Standard Instructors attended training with Dr Claire Kelly, co-ordinator of the YMFA Australia Program, experiencing the course for themselves, and attending specialty talks from Claire and from local Hong Kong experts. The attendees were employees of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong (MHAHK) and counsellors at the City University of Hong Kong. www.mhfa.org.hk



Above: Claire Kelly (back row, 5th from the left) joined by the class and Prudence Wong (left of Claire), Director of MHFA Hong Kong Program, and Ms Kimmy, CEO of MHAHK (on Claire's right).

NEW Online Resource for parents ...



Parenting Strategies:
preventing Adolescent Alcohol Misuse

Website: www.parentingstrategies.net

Link to article:

www.biocentral.com/1471-2458/11/13

Parents concerned about what are the best strategies to use to help their adolescent avoid misusing alcohol will now be able to test their skills and obtain help online, thanks to a new website.

A team of mental health literacy researchers at the University of Melbourne has collaborated with Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre to produce a website for parents providing them with evidence-based information about how they can best prevent their adolescent child from misusing alcohol. The website also gives parents the opportunity to assess their current approaches via a survey, which provides them with immediate, personalised feedback on how they can more confidently manage the issue of alcohol use in their teenager.

Under-age drinking is widely viewed as an appropriate rite-of-passage within the community. Despite 90 per cent of adolescents consuming alcohol by the age of 14, there is a lack of widely available evidence-based guidelines for parents in responding to requests for alcohol from their children.

This website is an international first, in terms of giving families practical evidence-based strategies for dealing with the common dilemma of when to allow their children to drink alcohol. Parents who implement the strategies may also reduce the risk that their child will develop alcohol-related problems as a young adult. An initial evaluation of this intervention will be conducted over the next few months.

Research Assistant Alicia Holborn would greatly appreciate your assistance in promoting the website, such as in a newsletter or through a link on your website. If you have any questions, please email Alicia: aholborn@unimelb.edu.au

New MHFA Courses to be developed in 2011



1. Short peer-to-peer course for adolescents to use basic MHFA to help each other

During 2010, the MHFA Training and Research team undertook a research project to develop a list of things that adolescents (aged 12-18 years old) can say and do to help one another with mental health problems. The Delphi study methodology was used to ensure that all the strategies listed have a high level of consensus from both a panel of Youth MHFA Instructors from Australia and from Canada and a panel of young adults who are mental health consumer advocates (close enough in age to adolescents but with more life experience and maturity). In mid 2011, a full-time academic co-ordinator of a Peer-to-Peer (adolescents) basic MHFA Program will be appointed to flesh out these strategies to write a short 2-3 hour face-to-face curriculum with an accompanying booklet for adolescents. Such a program will be in demand and very useful in schools.

2. An online 2nd Edition Standard MHFA course

We are currently trying to find the 'right' e-learning IT company to engage to design a fabulous online version of our 2nd Edition Standard MHFA course. The evaluation study we undertook of the e-learning CD

based on our 1st Edition Adult MHFA course showed

some good outcomes:

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21070103

Thus, we are investing money into the development of an e-learning version of our 12 hour 2nd Edition Standard MHFA course.

3. Chinese version of 2nd edition Standard MHFA course for Chinese-speaking Australians

We are working with a reference group of Chinese-speaking Australian mental health workers to adapt the text of our 2nd Edition Standard MHFA manual to make the terms and concepts applicable to people now living in Australia who have moved from mainland China. We have been successful in winning a small grant from *beyondblue* to help with the adaptation, translation and publishing of this for later this year.

4. MHFA for the Elderly

Presently, this project is just at the idea stage. We are getting a number of requests to provide some additional information on how giving MHFA to an older person may involve other considerations. The MHFA Singapore Program has already developed additional information and film clips for the elderly.

MHFA in WA Prisons

Thanks to funding from the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia will start rolling out MHFA courses for peer-support prisoners across all WA prisons in early 2011.

With mental health problems being a significant issue in prisons, it is expected that the program will enable inmates to receive effective support by skilling peer-support prisoners to assist them. These benefits should also flow on to the community when the prisoners, who

have received the training, are released and can use the skills gained to support others in their community.

The Department is planning to deliver workshops in both regional and metropolitan prisons. Both the Standard and Aboriginal versions of the MHFA course will be run. The Department also plans to undertake an evaluation of the outcomes.

MHFA Wins Another Award

In December 2010, the MHFA Training and Research Program received the Australian Rotary Health 'Knowledge Dissemination' Award at the ASPR conference in Sydney. There is often a gap between knowledge gained through research and the dissemination of that knowledge to clinicians, consumers and carers, and its implementation into policy and practice. This award is for 'outstanding effort to disseminate knowledge about evidence-based interventions in mental health'.



Above. Betty receiving the 'Knowledge Dissemination' Award from Terry Grant, Deputy Chair of the Board of Australian Rotary Health.

2nd Ed. MHFA Manuals Reviewed

In 2010 we released our 2nd Edition MHFA Manuals. The December issue of *The Australian Community Psychologist*, a publication of The Australian Psychological Society, includes reviews on our 2nd Edition Standard MHFA Manual and the 2nd Edition Youth MHFA Manual. Both these reviews are very positive and comprehensive. The review of the YMHA manual highlights the sensitivities that this manual contains with considerations about how to help an adolescent.

URL to download the Standard MHFA (Manual review):
www.mhfa.com.au/documents/manuals/tutchener_review_dec_2010.pdf

[manuals/
Tutchener_review_Dec_2010.pdf](http://www.mhfa.com.au/documents/manuals/ogradey_review_dec_2010.pdf)

URL to download the Youth MHFA Manual review:

www.mhfa.com.au/documents/manuals/ogradey_review_dec_2010.pdf



Do you want to become an accredited MHFA Instructor?

Upcoming Instructor Training course dates advertised here: www.mhfa.com.au/instructor_courses.php



MHFA Instructors Kits - included in the course fee
 Youth kit (left) & Standard kit (right)

MHFA & Friends of the Koala



Algee, the first koala we sponsored through the Friends of the Koala organisation, is happy, safe and sound at his new property. After his carer put him in a big tree to get used to the wild, he took off straight to the top!

We have now adopted our second koala joey, Matilda (pictured above and below). She was found on the ground alone in September 2010. She only weighed 502g! The care coordinators at Friends of the Koala suspect that the mother was unwell and hence Matilda was on her own. Matilda had a couple of problems including a fungal infection.

After a few months of wonderful care, she now weighs 1.75kg and her fungal infection has completely cleared up! She has also started climbing her makeshift tree and has made some new friends (including our MHFA mascot soft-toy ALGEE and big ted as seen in the photos).

