



Edition 53 - August 2013



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Director's Report

THE WAY AHEAD

Providing information to members is vital to White Wreath achieving its primary objectives.

White Wreath's main aim is to raise funds to establish Safehaven Centres for those who need urgent mental health treatment and ongoing care.

Equally important to this is:

Provide Advocacy and support to the sufferers of mental illness and their families

Provide support to the family and friends of suicide victims through our National White Wreath Day held on the 29 May each year.

Raise awareness of the social impact mental illness has on our society

Reduce the stigma associated with mental disorders through public awareness campaigns like White Wreath Day, Wear White At Work and Sock It To Suicide

The quarterly email newsletter has been our main publication to keep you informed on personal mental health experiences, medical issues and future fundraising activities.

The email newsletter has limitations on the length of articles, which often restricts our ability to provide as much detail as we would like to.

The rapidly changing face of computer technology has seen the introduction of new communication options.

Some of these are Facebook, Twitter and Blogs, which are proving more popular to

a growing number of people, to the extent that the email newsletter concept is fast becoming obsolete.

White Wreath aims to provide information in the manner most favoured by members.

We have decided to canvass members on their views on the way in which they would like us to provide them with information.

Among the options we are looking at:

- Continue with the present email newsletter
- Blogs;
- Facebook/Twitter; or
- A combination targeting specific groups of members.

We realise that some of our members do not have access to or are not comfortable with using computers.

Let me assure you that, whatever communication method is chosen, printed copies will always be available on request.

The Board when making our decision will take your opinion of the most preferred method of communication under serious consideration.

Please email Yes / No to white.wreath@bigpond.com

SMS/Text 0410 526 562 or 1300 766 177

Fanita Clark
 CEO

Peter Neame, Research Officer White Wreath Association Ltd



The recent revelations, Weekend Australian 11-12th May, show quite clearly that the whole basis of planning of mental health in Australia and New Zealand has been based on a falsehood.

Forty years of nonsense planning in mental health has led to a situation where suicide has been quite deliberately ignored.

Why has it been ignored? Because suicide, violence and homicide are related neurologically as well as in clinical practice. In the space of minutes or days the same individual who is suicidal may become very violent and homicidal, but senior psychiatrist and policy advisors said "the mentally ill are not violent" despite hard scientific evidence to the contrary.

This has major implications for an individual and his family, who is suicidal for he/she is likely to be

diagnosed as "personality disordered therefore not mentally ill". The diagnosis personality disorder is code for "we, the mental health profession do not want to treat you".

White Wreath has been campaigning since its inception for places of safety or sheltered villages for seriously mentally ill people who are suicidal to overcome the rejection of suicidal mentally ill by the mental health system. The mental health system has had its beds cut from 300 beds per 100,000 population to no medium and long-term beds and health professionals have been taught to treat everyone in the community, a hideous death seeking mess.

SOCK IT TO SUICIDE!



Wear bright coloured socks

★ **DURING THE 3RD WEEK OF OCTOBER** ★

**DONATE A GOLD COIN TO SUPPORT THE ORGANISATION'S WORK
WITH FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUICIDE AND MENTAL ILLNESS**

World News

The doctor won't see you now



(June 21, 2013) Even psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses are biased against individuals with schizophrenia who are seeking general medical care, according to a new study.

<http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org>

The study found that people with severe psychiatric diseases often receive poor care for their physical health problems even though they are at high risk for chronic medical conditions ("Bias against schizophrenia patients seeking medical care," *Psychiatric Times*, June 13).

To investigate possible bias, the researchers presented two hypothetical vignettes to primary care physicians and nurses and to psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses. In one, the patient had stable schizophrenia and was taking risperidone. In the other, the patient did not have the disorder and did not take risperidone.

They found that all providers expected patients with schizophrenia to be less likely to adhere to medications

for chronic medical conditions or to participate in prescribed weight management programs. The providers also expected these patients to have lower social functioning and be less competent to make treatment decisions.

The biases and misperceptions were found across the board – in both nurses and doctors, mental health and primary care physicians.

When we ponder how to prevent people with severe mental illnesses from dying approximately 25 years younger than people without them, eliminating biases against providing medical care to this population would be a good place to start.

Today

Today we are new people
We start afresh this day
The past is simply left behind
As we go on our way
Today is a beginning
For yesterday has flown
Tomorrows still a dream away
Unseen and yet unknown

This day is made for caring
We need to love and live
To share a thought for those in need
And spare the time to give
Today is very precious
And soon will slip away
New people, new beginnings
Reach out and seize the day

The Peoples' Friend
Trish Hesseldon

A family's story



Brief history of our son

Our son was a happy child. His problems occurred from when he was 18-30 years of age, due to broken relationships, and termination of pregnancies with his partner.

He turned to drug use, got in trouble with the law, and disappeared for two years until we found him. He became an alcoholic and could not hold down a job, so we took him under our care and he lived with us for 12 years.

We helped him with his own accommodation as he wanted to be independent, but he was always getting into financial difficulty or trouble with the police. We were always there to bail him out and help him financially.

We lost a lot of friends and family, as they could not understand why we kept helping him. He hit rock bottom so many times, but we knew we had to help him. He stopped taking drugs when he was 27, but started to go into depression and was drinking heavily.

Our son was admitted to hospital where he was kept overnight. After being assessed through the mental health system, they said there was nothing wrong with him mentally and that he needed to sober up and sent him home.

Numerous doctors prescribed him anti-depressants. In 2011, one doctor diagnosed him as bipolar and gave him medication, which made him feel sick. So our son stopped taking them. We could see he was going through mood swings and was not himself any more. We had seen him when he had problems with drug and alcohol use, but this was different.

Our local general practitioner prescribed him anti-depressant medication and he seemed much happier. We decided he would come to work with us. We would pick him up from where he was living; take him to work with us. We managed his wage as he was not good at budgeting his spending and we had to pick up the shortfall.

I would cook his meals and make sure he was eating

well leaving a small amount of cash for cigarettes, otherwise he would buy alcohol. Dad would go with him to pick up his prescription to make sure he had enough medication.

One day, after our son had been drinking and fighting with his girlfriend, Dad found him at work where he had tried to hang himself. Our son had sent text messages to friends that he was going to kill himself. Dad had to climb 30 feet up a toilet block wall to bring our son down. He was admitted to hospital and placed under guard for a week.

We spoke to the hospital psychiatrist, who said our son had told her he did not want to be on this earth and he would try again.

When we spoke to our son, he had a blank look on his face, could not give us an answer and stared at the ceiling all the time.

During his time in hospital, we asked to see his doctor, but no one spoke to us or contacted us to say our son was being transferred to a high security mental health facility.

He was released after a week, given medication and had an appointment the following week to see a psychiatrist. Our son did not like the psychiatrist so, after three visits, we found a psychiatrist who our son liked.

Our son was doing well, but his medication was not working. He said he could not sleep and complained that people were following him. His medication was changed several times.

One Sunday we took our son and his new girlfriend to see his close friend for the weekend farm. We had not met his girlfriend, but he told us she was much older than him. He said: "Mum, when you meet her she looks very much older and rough around the edges."

I gave her a hug and said to our son that if she makes him happy we are happy.

He was in good spirits and we hugged. His birthday was on the following Tuesday and I asked him what he could like to do to celebrate it.

He said: "Mum, nothing as you and dad have done so much." I said we would do something the next weekend. That was the last time I saw him. Dad saw our son on his birthday when he took him to get his medication script; he was happy.

The next day, Dad received phone calls on the way home from work from a friend of our son. He was worried that our son was not answering his phone. Dad went to our son's unit and his girl friend's – no one was at home.

Every time over the years that we could not contact our son, we would ring the hospital or police. We had to hear over the phone that our son has died in hospital – the news no parent wants to hear.

Our son was found hanging in a tree outside his girlfriend's home; he had been drinking. A passer-by found him and called the ambulance, who tried unsuccessfully to revive him.

It is eight months since our son died and we are still waiting for the police and coroner's report.

Our son had a habit of not taking his medication and then drinking. He had been told many times by doctors, psychiatrists, us and friends that he should not do this. He would just say, "I know what I am doing, I am 32 years of age."

On cleaning our son's unit, we found so many clues – police reports that he has been admitted to hospital for cutting his wrists, fights with police, etc, in the 12 months before his first suicide attempt.

As our son was an adult – and very good hiding behind his mask to the hospitals, health professionals, and his family – the hospital or psychiatrists to discuss his admission never contacted us.

The mental health system failed our son – he was misdiagnosed. We were alone in trying to help our son the best way we could, not knowing about mental illnesses.

Our son should have been kept under observation in hospital or mental health facilities to see if the medication was suitable and if there were any side effects.

I believe the medication he was on gave him suicidal tendencies, as this was one of the side effects mentioned when we read the warning label on his medication.

Our son never mentioned this – only that he could not sleep at night and slept all day. In his last six months, our son was not well enough to work with us.

We will never know why our son wanted to end his life as his conversations with the health professionals and psychiatrists are confidential. If we had been informed we could have understood him better.

He is our son and we have lost friends, as suicide is a stigma. I am pleased we have found White Wreath as we thought we were alone; it has helped me realise we are not.

Reading the stories on the website, the similarities stand out – changes need to be made to the mental health system.

We need facilities where patients can be assessed, kept under observation, monitored, and families given support.

Once a person has tried to commit suicide they should be on a register with the mental health system, hospitals, and police so the local GP or psychiatrist can be contacted immediately if they are involved in any altercation or hospitalised.

If they are adults, their next-of-kin should be notified. We don't know if our son was honest with the hospital, health professionals and doctors about his feelings. We now know from the police reports that he lied to them.

Thanks to White Wreath for standing up for all the unheard voices of victims of suicide and their families.

We have to live without our loved one every day. It is like your heart has been ripped out. No one understands the pain, except if you have lived in our shoes. Everyone keeps saying that you have to move on and live your life, but is so hard – you feel so helpless.

White Wreath Day



Special services held nationally on White Wreath Day, 29 May, are dedicated to the memory of all suicide victims and aim to increase public awareness of the tragedy of suicide in Australia.

He turned to drug use, got in trouble with the law, and This year's service in Brisbane's Post Office Square displayed hundreds of white wreaths on the lawn area, each bearing a photograph, representing a suicide in the past year.

Each photograph carried a name and age of how the person died. Having the details of how a person took their lives is very important as it makes people realise they are not the only one whose loved ones took their lives.

There are so many people to thank for their support on the day that I don't know where to begin.

However, first and foremost are all the volunteers.

In Brisbane a special "Thank You" to Suncorp staff who came out in full force to assist us with assembling, manning tables, odds and ends jobs during the day and helping us to pack up at the end of the day. Your help was so much appreciated.

Lyn Mast from Warrnambool Victoria who followed correct procedure and organised a service in Warrnambool. "Thank You" Lyn.

Also to be thanked are those who travelled from interstate to attend and our guest speakers.

A special "Thank You" to Queensland's Assistant Minister for Health Dr Chris Davis, Reverend Leigh Hubbard, and Police Pipes and Drums.

Without the organising help of all these people, the services and remembrance displays would not have been possible.

Funds raised by public donations at the White Wreath services help us achieve our major goal of opening Safehaven centres, fully staffed with medical professionals to care for those when suicide threatens.

We are committed to daily providing support for anyone in need, by advocacy assistance and aiding families and individuals affected by mental illness or suicide.

The shortcomings of mental health facilities in Australia is emphasised in a report released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in May this year.

The report reveals that in the five years to 2011 an average of 2320 people suicided each year. In 2011 there were 2273 suicides – an average of six deaths by suicide each day.

These figure forcibly remind us that every life is precious and that suicide victims are not just statistics, but human beings dearly loved by family and friends.

It makes us redouble our efforts to succeed in our aims and, wherever possible, give aid to vulnerable people in our society in their hour of crisis.

A friend 4 me - my story



Kelly's Journal continued.

19th March 2010- My first attempt

It's been one week since I found out about David's Joanne. Today I have all my bills up to date. I don't want to leave a mess behind. The only bill I have left is my \$20000 car loan for both mine and David's car. I brought a heap of flowers and visited the cemetery. I said hello to all my dead family and asked them to look after me when I join them. I went to Bunning's and brought a hose for my car. I went home and video recorded a message to my family. I explain to David why I left him. I tell David that I always loved him It's just that I loved Jo so much more.

I leave a message on facebook thanking everyone without telling them what I was doing. I had some alcohol. I got so drunk. I had never been so drunk in my life. I couldn't go.

I was thinking of Jo. She would blame herself. She would think she killed me. I had to make sure she would be ok. I done the only thing I could think off.

I phoned Kim. I knew she would be at work. She was very close to Jo. I told her that it was not Jo's fault. I asked her to look after Jo for me. She said she wouldn't but I knew she was lying. I hung up the phone.

I felt Jo would be ok and so would I. Kim has no idea where I lived and she does not have my phone number.

I go outside. I had already set the car up to gas myself. I lay on the back seat of the car. I was only in my car for about 20mins and my phone rings; it's my mother's number. I answer so people wouldn't come looking for me. What a surprise I got. It was the police. They were at my mother's house, which is in the same street as me. I started to cry I told them to go away. I stayed in the car hoping the gas would work before they got there.

The police turn's up with Melissa. I'm thinking Kim had given me away. I was wrong. She thought I would be ok. Turns out Trudi had read my facebook message. She had phoned the police that day. I find out as I text Trudi and tell her the police have me. She text's back please get them to phone me. When the police phone her back I realise that she was the one that had phoned them that day.

They sent me to hospital. My mother and Melissa came with me. I'm drunk and laughing about it. I stay one night in mental health. It turns out they blamed the alcohol and let me out the following morning. I text Trudi and thanked her for saving my life.

The day I walked out that hospital I had already made my plans. I would do it again but next time I would not do it at home.

To be continued.

Correspondence



We appreciate you letting us know your thoughts and stories. We are always touched and delighted by the letters, postcards and emails we receive from our readers. Here are some we received this month.

Thank you, Fanita

I am emailing a photo to you of our son J, he committed suicide self harm hanging 18/9/2012 we are still grieving as coroner involved and a long and lengthy delay makes it harder, our son had years of drug and alcohol abuse which caused his mental condition and was not diagnosed until 2 years ago, as a adult we were not told anything by the hospital, psychiatrist as J told them not to disclose anything, he kept his feelings to himself he was doing so well and if we knew how he felt we could of maybe prevented him from taking his own life, I wish the laws were changed that if a adult child is receiving medical treatment as parents we should of been involved in discussions etc as our son hid so much from us until it was too late.

* * * * *

Thanks so much for all you do! I have lost two family members to suicide. My niece K & C. I knew nothing about their diagnosed depression. Both their mothers chose to keep it in the closet & swept in under the rug! I hope other families listen to me when I tell you this isn't the option you want to choose! Forget the stigma & get as much family & friends support

as possible! God bless all the families today suffering this horrible nightmare! Rest in peace all those souls who have got to go home early!

* * * * *

I have just perused your website and notice that you do not address the matter of WHY people are driven to suicide, and in particular, why it is predominantly males who do so. There does not seem to be any discussion either, of prevention. Your signs at the PO Square today 29/5 were a bit misleading in saying all those wreaths were for THIS YEAR.

I know only too well it is a terrible, the worst in fact, experience for family to deal with, and I thank you for your efforts.

Thanks. I had another look at your Aims site. I intended to send a second email as your plans for a care facility will help those contemplating suicide. I think there is a big issue of how our society behaves and the priorities we hold.

For instance: we put money and wealth at the top of our priorities, we insist on males being tough and Australians do not hold any real connection to the natural world. Unless we respect nature and

cherish it, we will never be truly whole and fulfilled, let alone be able to live on a healthy planet. Just some ideas for consideration?

* * * * *

SOMETHING ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A mother who has lost her child through suicide by hanging. Said " finishing this book has been the biggest achievement of my life."

I would first like to introduce myself. I am a Scottish mother who has completed a true story about how I coped when my son took his own life through hanging. All information throughout the book has used other names to protect my son and myself.

You are more than welcomed to email me anniemitchell60[at]gmail.com regarding my up and coming book which is due to be up for sale on Amazon as an eBook and pod.

I personally feel any mother who has had to deal with this situation would relate to my story. My heart goes out to all the young men and women and girls and boys who have died in this way and also to their families.

Kind regards Annie Mitchell

Coming Events

Sock it to Suicide!

Wear bright coloured socks
during the 3rd week of October

**Donate a gold coin
to support the organisation's work
with families affected by suicide
and mental illness**

Download the flyer from whitewreath.com

Important Notice

Annual General Meeting

WHITE WREATH ASSOCIATION LTD

**7pm, Monday, 2 September 2013
33 Bowen Avenue
Albany Creek 4035 QLD**

Light snack provided (B.Y.O)

You can help

You can do your part to help
White Wreath Association.

YOU CAN BE A VOLUNTEER

We need volunteers from any part of
Australia.

YOU CAN GIVE IN KIND

- Petrol Gift Cards
- Stamps
- DL Envelopes
- A4 Envelopes

OR DONATE BY SELECTING ANY OF THESE OPTIONS

1. Via credit card then follow the
instructions.
2. Directly/Direct Transfer into any
Westpac Bank
Account Name:
White Wreath Association Ltd
BSB No 034-109 Account No 210509
3. Cheque/Money Order to:
White Wreath Association Ltd
PO Box 1078 Browns Plains QLD
4118

Donations are tax deductible

Humour

A doctor and a lawyer are talking at a party. Their conversation is constantly interrupted by people describing their ailments and asking the doctor for free medical advice. After an hour of this, the exasperated doctor asks the lawyer, "What do you do to stop people from asking you for legal advice

when you're out of the office?" "I give it to them," replies the lawyer, "and then I send them a bill." The doctor is shocked, but agrees to give it a try. The next day, still feeling slightly guilty, the doctor prepares the bills. When he goes to place them in his mailbox, he finds a bill from the lawyer.