



PULSAR Newsletter

JANUARY 2017

Welcome to the January PULSAR Newsletter

This newsletter is for everyone involved in PULSAR including mental health service staff, GPs and other interested people. It is our way of keeping you in touch with how the project is going. If you don't wish to receive this newsletter, just email us at pulsar.admin@monash.edu and we will remove you from the mailing list. Keep an eye out for our new website but in the meantime, please visit our current website for previous editions: www.pulsarrecovery.org.au

Spotlight – Consumer Research Assistant, Michelle Kehoe

Can you tell us a little about yourself and how you came to be involved in PULSAR?

I joined PULSAR as a qualitative research interviewer in 2015 and have subsequently been involved in the PULSAReveryday project. My own personal experience as a consumer began 20 or so years ago with post-natal depression. I have since trained in psychology and am in the final year of my PhD.

How have you found the PULSAR training and interviewing from the perspective of a consumer-identified researcher?

The PULSAR training is fantastic. It is extremely informative and very sensitive to the consumer and consumer experience. As an interviewer, having some degree of personal understanding is really beneficial; I've found that as soon as I disclose my own experience of mental illness, consumers are much more comfortable opening up and talking about their experiences. Obviously there's a lot of discrimination around mental health issues, so it just breaks down that barrier straight away.

How has being involved in PULSAR influenced you on a personal level?

My husband and I often talk about my mental health journey and recovering from that experience. I think a lot of that has to do with PULSAR. The PULSAR work environment is very encouraging and supportive, and I feel like I am treated not just on the basis of my



Michelle Kehoe, Consumer Research Assistant.

consumer experience, but as an individual with something to contribute. It's given me a real sense of purpose and helped me to put my own experiences to good use. I have new insights and a new language around personal recovery that I can take out into the community and say: these things actually work. Recovery is achievable. I'm the living proof.

What is recovery-oriented practice and the PULSAR project?

Recovery-oriented practice involves supporting people to build and maintain a meaningful life and personal identity regardless of their ongoing symptoms of a mental illness. The Principles Unite Local Services Assisting Recovery (PULSAR) project encompasses the delivery and evaluation of a training intervention in recovery-oriented practice for General Practitioners (Primary Care) and Specialist Mental Health Service workers (Secondary Care) in Melbourne, Victoria.

HOT OFF THE PRESS! Check out our recent publication: "The PULSAR primary care protocol: a stepped-wedge cluster randomized controlled trial to test a training intervention for general practitioners in recovery-oriented practice to optimize personal recovery in adult patients" bmcp psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-016-1153-6

Meet the PULSAR project team



Associate Professor Lisa Brophy

Each newsletter we want to introduce members of our project team. This issue we feature Associate Professor Lisa Brophy, who is one of the Chief Investigators on the PULSAR project. Lisa is the Director of Research at Mind Australia and an Associate Professor in the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne. Lisa has a background in social work and specialises in research about mental health law, recovery and

social inclusion and serves as a community member of the Victorian Mental Health Tribunal. Outside of work, Lisa is at her happiest in water and competes in the Lorne pier to pub ocean swim every year.

PULSAR Primary Care

GP SPOTLIGHT

Dr Sulo Mahendran, Glenhuntly Medical Centre

Glenhuntly Medical Centre opened in the 1930's and has been in its current location since 1964. Patients are generally older, although the patient profile is beginning to change with younger people now moving into the area. Dr Mahendran has been practicing at Glenhuntly Medical Centre since 1989.

Why did you join the PULSAR project?

My initial motivation for joining PULSAR was curiosity. I wanted to know what PULSAR was about, including what the PULSAR acronym stands for! During the initial information session I started to think about the recovery of my own patients with a mental health diagnosis and how I could assist them with this, particularly helping them to find meaningful employment, even if it was voluntary work. For me, it's been a nice journey as well and I have appreciated the opportunity to give back to a country which accepted me as a person with a disability.

What is your experience of the PULSAR project?

My experience of the project has been very good. I have been using the GP Mental Health Treatment Plan, received during the PULSAR Mental Health Skills Training course, although I use an abbreviated version to save time. Being introduced to the K10 and other measures has increased my curiosity to find other measures I can use to assess my patients. My approach to looking after my patients changed as a result of the training. For example, I schedule patients to see me less often as they improve, rather than seeing them at the same frequency



Dr Sulo Mahendran.

regardless of how they are doing. This allows them to become more self-reliant. I am also using goal setting and informing patients of the REACH¹, CHIME² and SMART³ frameworks. I feel the CHIME framework is very helpful for both myself and patients and has allowed me to feel more connected to my patients and to empower them – the power should be in their hands.

What methods do you use for recruiting patients?

I am careful not to pressure patients to complete the survey due to feeling obliged to me, and I explain they should only take part if they feel happy to do so. At the start I found it a bit difficult to know how to speak to patients about PULSAR, but now I've done it so often it comes out easily!

1. REACH: Reflect, Explore, Agree outcomes, Commit to action, Hold to account.
2. CHIME: Connectedness, Hope and optimism, Identity, Meaning and purpose, Empowerment.
3. SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely.

PULSAR Primary Care Project Status

 **30** GPs

 **16** CLINICS

 **24** GPs TRAINED IN RECOVERY ORIENTED PRACTICE

 **228** SURVEYS RECEIVED FROM PATIENTS

 **3** SURVEY COLLECTION PERIODS (T0, T1 T2)

 **5** INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH GPs

GP PALS NEWS – PULSAR Active Learning Sessions

New scheduling for PULSAR GP PALS

We thank all GPs and practice staff for their participation in GP PALS in 2016. In 2017, GPs and practice staff who have attended PULSAR training have the option of attending one videoconferencing PALS session per month in February, March and April. It is anticipated that one of these sessions will comprise a specific youth – focused session, looking at how to use recovery-oriented practice for young people. We are continuing to work on our web-based PALS and will keep GPs and practice staff informed of the launch date.

PULSAR PRIMARY CARE SITES



What is PALS?

GPs and other professionals who have received PULSAR training are invited to attend monthly online sessions with our consultant specialist psychiatrists to review, reflect and share their experiences in the implementation of recovery-oriented practice. These sessions provide an interactive learning environment for supporting practice based implementation of learnings from the PULSAR resources and training package.

2017 PALS dates:

- Tuesday February 14, 2017 6pm - 7pm
- Tuesday March 14, 2017 6pm - 7pm
- Tuesday April 11, 2017 6pm - 7pm

For more information or to register for PALS, contact us on 03 9902 9695 or pulsar.admin@monash.edu

PULSAR Secondary Care

Secondary Care PALS Update

The PALS (PULSAR Active Learning Sessions) have been running for about 12 months with the teams who completed training in 2015. All teams who undertook training in 2016 should now have PALS sessions planned. These sessions are an opportunity to reflect on your

practice and work as a team to improve the implementation of recovery-oriented practice. If you have any questions about these sessions you can talk to the facilitator or contact Vrinda Edan, Consumer Academic, on vrinda.edan@monash.edu

PULSAR *Everyday* News

The PULSAR *Everyday* workbook will be piloted with two groups of consumers in early 2017. The facilitated groups will be conducted over a four week period at a Community Care Unit and a PARC facility. Consumers who attend the facility will be invited to join the closed group sessions on a voluntary basis. The aim of the sessions will be to introduce consumers to personal recovery and each aspect of the CHIME framework. Sessions are planned to run for approximately two hours to allow time for discussion and completion of the



book. During the first session consumers will be encouraged to prioritise the order they wish to complete the workbook in future weeks. The final session will include a discussion on how consumers feel their service can support them to complete the remaining aspects of the book such as 'Working practice 1: Values, treatment and support preferences'. At the conclusion of the four weeks, consumers will be asked to evaluate the delivery and content of the sessions to inform future delivery of the PULSAR *Everyday* workbook.

What is PULSAR *Everyday*?

PULSAR *Everyday* is a consumer-led sub-project of the PULSAR Project Implementation Group. The aim of PULSAR *Everyday* is to develop a range of tools based on the PULSAR principles to assist consumers and their families/carers to better understand recovery-oriented practice.

PULSAR SECONDARY CARE SITES



NOTE: Several sites have multiple services administered by the organisations indicated.

Refocus on Recovery 2017 Conference

A message from PULSAR investigator Mike Slade, Professor of Mental Health Recovery and Social Inclusion at the University of Nottingham: Registration is now open for **Refocus on Recovery 2017**, the largest regular scientific conference on recovery in the world, which will take place on 18-20 September 2017 in Nottingham, UK. The conference is all about recovery for people with mental health problems, and is presenting world-leading research about how people can live well with illness. Keynote speakers come from the UK (Steve Gillard, Isabella Goldie, Jayasree Kalathil, Anu Singh, Mike Slade) as well as from India (Manoj Kumar), Canada (Kwame McKenzie), Germany (Jasna Russo) and Norway (Mark Hopfenbeck). We will also hear from Jenny Edwards (Chief executive, Mental Health Foundation) and Ruth Hawkins (Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust). There is a lively social programme, and we aim to make the event enjoyable for all participants.

For more information see: www.researchintorecovery.com/ror2017 or #RonR2017



PULSAR Secondary Care Project Status

 **18** SITES

 **3** SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PERIODS (T0, T1 T2)

 WE ARE CURRENTLY IN **T2**

 **765** SURVEYS RECEIVED FROM CONSUMERS

 **213** INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH CONSUMERS

 **10** REPEAT INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH CONSUMERS

PULSAR Secondary Care

PULSAR Dissemination



Dr Ellie Fossey, PULSAR Investigator, at TheMS conference

A part of the management of PULSAR is the identification of opportunities to talk about or publish the work we have been doing. This process is overseen by the Dissemination Committee (otherwise known as Module 4) chaired by Vrinda Edan, Consumer Academic. We have developed some guidelines and processes to ensure that these activities are of the highest standard but also accessible by as many people as possible, including the staff and consumers who have given time to the project interventions and evaluations. This newsletter is an example of a dissemination activity.

PULSAR held a symposium at TheMHS (a conference for Australian and New Zealand mental health services) in 2016, discussing the different phases of the Project, learnings so far and the involvement of consumer researchers in the sub project PULSAReveryday.

So far we have:

- Presented at 8 conferences, with 5 planned for 2017
- Had 3 papers published (1 peer reviewed), and 6 planned
- Undertaken 3 speaking engagements.

PULSAR Research Assistant Training Update

You may recall from the July 2016 newsletter that our approach to completing the face-to-face interviews within secondary care has been to train a bank of casual research interviewers that we can call on as required. Because the work is casual, over time staff leave to take on other work, study or family commitments or even head off overseas. This means that each year we need to "top up" our pool of research interviewers. This year we were fortunate to retain 8 of our interviewers and we were able to recruit another 5 staff using informal advertising and word of mouth through our networks. We provided two full days of training to our new staff during October-November 2016. Our current staff were also required to attend a minimum of



PULSAR Research Assistant training.

one day as a refresher, to help ensure our high standards are maintained, including adherence to the research protocols. We are pleased to report that our interviewers are a very warm and enthusiastic group (see photos)! We have had a lot of experience training clinical interviewers through PULSAR and other projects and our trainees receive very comprehensive materials. Our aim is to ensure that the interviews are as pleasant and comfortable as possible for our participants while maintaining the rigour needed for the accurate and reliable collection of data.



PULSAR staff at Research Assistant training.

Contact PULSAR

Please contact us with feedback, questions or to unsubscribe from this newsletter:

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Email: pulsar.admin@monash.edu

www.pulsarrecovery.org.au