



Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

# PULSAR Newsletter

July 2016

## Welcome to the first 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. We plan to produce newsletters every few months for the remainder of the project. If you don't wish to be kept up to date on PULSAR, just let us know and we will take you off the mailing list ([pulsar.admin@monash.edu](mailto:pulsar.admin@monash.edu)).

### What is PULSAR?

The Principles Unite Local Services Assisting Recovery (PULSAR) study is designed to improve the treatment and care of people with mental illness across Victoria. The PULSAR intervention involves the delivery of Recovery-Orientated Practice (ROP) training to General Practitioners (GPs; Primary Care) and Specialist Mental Health Service workers (Secondary Care). We aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the PULSAR training by using cluster randomised control trials over 4 years. This means that half of our GPs and Secondary Care sites were randomly selected to receive the recovery-oriented training in the first year of this research study and the rest to receive the training in the second year.

### What is Recovery Oriented Practice?

Recovery is the active process of regaining control over one's life. Recovery-oriented Practice (ROP) is a focal point of the PULSAR Project; this practice involves supporting people to build and maintain a meaningful life and personal identity regardless of their ongoing symptoms of a mental illness. ROP encompasses hope, social inclusion, community participation, personal goal setting and self-management. ROP provides a bridge for people accessing health services and mental health professionals. This method shows that people are experts on their own lives and experiences and can work with mental health professionals who provide their expertise in their available treatment services.

## PULSAR Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP)

The PULSAR Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) is a group of consumers and family/carers who have been involved throughout PULSAR. The LEAP consists of consumers and family/carers from each of the participating services as well as from VMIAC (Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council), Tandem, and Bouverie Centre. LEAP includes 2 of the Principal investigators, Vrinda Edan (Consumer Academic, Monash University) and Ellie Fossey (Professor Occupational Therapy, Monash University). Throughout the project the membership of LEAP has changed and over this time has included: Joanne Sheedy, Katrina Clarke, Peter Mackenzie, Liz Carr, Julien MacDonald, Mardi Sheahan, Danni Brooks, Patricia Rogerson, Wendy Muller, Tamara Stillwell, Salome Argyropoulos, Rose Coulter, Lorelle Zemunik and Michelle Kehoe.

In the initial phases of the project, LEAP provided advice and recommendations regarding adaption of the materials, ethics applications and the implementation of the training intervention. Last year, with the successful application for a grant to develop materials for consumers and family/carers, workers from the South Eastern Primary Medicare Local Partners in Recovery program joined the LEAP. Recently LEAP have been concentrating on supporting Michelle Kehoe, the project worker, to finalise these materials for piloting in the near future. We hope to have this material finished and ready for distribution in the coming months.

## Meet the PULSAR project team

### Professor Graham Meadows

Each newsletter we want to introduce members of our project team. This issue we feature Professor Graham Meadows, who is the Principal Investigator on the project. Through over 40 years in medicine, Graham has trained and practiced in General Practice, public health, internal medicine and psychiatry. For the past 12 years he has been a Professor of Psychiatry at Monash University. Outside of work, he enjoys swing dancing, bushwalking and theatre going.



# PULSAR Primary Care

The PULSAR Primary Care study aims to promote and evaluate recovery-oriented practice in General Practice. To test whether PULSAR training is effective, we will look at how patients are going before the GP training and then for up to 2 years after the training. By making these comparisons over time, we can evaluate the training. The results will help to refine the PULSAR training materials and improve GP practice.

## GP SPOTLIGHT

### Dr Rebecca Overbury, Prahran Market Clinic

Prahran Market Clinic is a medical General Practice, supported by Allied Health providers. Particular focus is placed on sexual health, and Gay, Lesbian and gender diverse health. The Clinic is well regarded and respected for its involvement in HIV clinical research trials and for the teaching of medical students.

#### Why did you join the PULSAR project?

I joined the PULSAR project because I am interested in mental health. Shortly after obtaining my FRACGP, I did more study in family therapy and completed a Graduate Diploma in Family Therapy. That was a few years ago, and before I had my own family, so when I read about this project I thought it would be great to get more skills and be involved.

#### What is your experience of the PULSAR project?

I really didn't know what to expect. I attended the introductory session and discovered a whole new focus on recovery and supporting patients to look beyond control of their illness to living the life they want to live. This was revolutionary compared to the training in

mental health that I had received through medical school and as a junior doctor in hospitals in Australia and England. I have enjoyed introducing the concept of recovery and what recovery is to my many patients with short and long term mental illness. They are often surprised and encouraged that we can talk about this concept.

#### What methods do you use for recruiting patients?

When asking my patients to complete a questionnaire, I explain to them that I am participating in a study into mental health and how to improve my practice as a GP. I generally find that people are happy to help me out by taking a questionnaire to complete at home. Often they are appreciative of the fact that the project is interested in their opinion. A lot of patients are very pleased to get the gift voucher too.



## PULSAR Primary Care Project Status

 **30** GPs

 **16** CLINICS

 **24** GPs TRAINED IN RECOVERY ORIENTED PRACTICE

 **157** SURVEYS RECEIVED FROM PATIENTS

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

 **3** INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH GPs

The PULSAR team is keen to learn more from GPs who have undertaken PULSAR training, so please contact us at [pulsar.admin@monash.edu](mailto:pulsar.admin@monash.edu) if you are interested in being interviewed or would like more information about this.

## GP PALS NEWS – PULSAR Active Learning Sessions

GPs and other professionals who have received the PULSAR training are invited to drop in for 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. All eligible GPs will receive an invitation to participate in the PALS sessions once PULSAR training is complete.

PALS are currently running at the following times:

- Tues 6pm - 7pm – 4<sup>th</sup> week of the month
- Wed 6pm - 7pm – 1<sup>st</sup> week of the month
- Thurs 4pm - 5pm – 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month
- Fri 12pm - 1pm – 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month

For more information or to register for PALS, contact us on 9902 9695 or [pulsar.admin@monash.edu](mailto:pulsar.admin@monash.edu)



# PULSAR Secondary Care

The PULSAR Secondary Care study aims to promote and evaluate recovery-oriented practice in specialist mental health services in Victoria; specifically Monash Health, Mind Australia and Ermha. Sites include Community Care Units, Crisis Assessment & Treatment Teams, Community Mental Health Services, Community Outreach Services, Mobile Support Teams, Continuing Care Teams and Prevention and Recovery Care. Consumers from these services are invited to complete questionnaires and face-to-face interviews about their recovery, well-being and experiences with mental health services.

## Research Evaluation and Interviews within Secondary Care

The research interviewers who complete the face-to-face interviews for the project are carefully selected and trained. Because interviews take place in “steps” and across a number of sites, our approach to face-to-face interviews has been to train a bank of casual interviewers that we can call on. PULSAR research interviewers are postgraduates in the health science sector and/or consumers of mental health services who undertake intensive initial training using a workshop format. The training includes the theory and practice of research interviewing, clinical risk management, professional and ethical conduct, data management and confidentiality, and how to administer the specific instruments used in the project. The training is supported by a manual which has been developed as a “living document” over many years and adapted to different projects. With 29 research interviewers now trained, a useful by-product of this project has been to contribute to capacity building within the various health services that are linked to PULSAR.



## PULSAReveryday

PULSAReveryday is a subproject of the PULSAR Project Implementation Group, however the difference between the two is that PULSAReveryday is a consumer led project. The aim of PULSAReveryday is to develop a range of tools based on the wider PULSAR principles to help consumers, their families and carers to better understand

recovery-oriented practice. Consumer, family and carer collaboration will make PULSAReveryday the first identifiable project led by consumers that focuses on supporting consumers, families and carers to work with both clinical and primary care services to improve empowerment and recovery in mental health.

## PULSAR Secondary Care Project Status

 **18** SITES

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

 WE ARE CURRENTLY IN **T1**

 **623** SURVEYS RECEIVED FROM CONSUMERS

 **187** INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH CONSUMERS

## Contact PULSAR

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

**Phone:** (03) 9902 9695

**Email:** [pulsar.admin@monash.edu](mailto:pulsar.admin@monash.edu)

[www.pulsarrecovery.org.au](http://www.pulsarrecovery.org.au)

