



BPD COMMUNITY

Volume 1, Issue 16

August 2019

The newsletter of
BPD Community Victoria Ltd.



Let's fix the system!

Applications to the Board of Directors of BPD Community are encouraged from people with lived experience—whether 'consumer' or 'carer'.

For more information visit:
www.bpdcommunity.com.au/who-we-are/vacancies

Or call Barb at 0409 952 754

Or email:
barb@bpdcommunity.com.au

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Mental Health Minister Martin Foley said the "broken system" was costing the Victorian government \$2 billion a year but delivering "worse results" despite increased funding.

The Royal Commission into Mental Health in Victoria finished its public community consultations and the public hearings. Submissions have been submitted.

Now is time for deliberation prior to the next round of consultations which will be determined by the commission.

These will involve stakeholder discussions and 'round table' discussions from Aug to Sept.

The Interim Report will be in November. Following this will be research, site visits and consideration of data and papers pre-

sented by agencies and govt.

The final report won't be till October 2020.

BPD Community presented a submission <https://www.bpdcommunity.com.au/publications/submissions-and-reports>

The experience of people affected by BPD here in Victoria tells us that:

Funding goes to the medical model of mental health and the medical model does not serve people with BPD well. Successful treatments are psychotherapies. The medical model is reliant on medication.

Stigma and discrimination is embedded within the system and is manifest in many forms. It is based on not understanding what BPD is and how to treat it—even though ef-

fective treatment has been available since 1980s.

Recovery means so much more than treatment. Support for recovery might involve housing support, financial guidance, addressing physical health needs and more. Yet the treatment and support systems are fragmented and divided.

Families are unable to support their loved ones in part because they are excluded. Families can be a part of the solution, it is usually family that is the core support for people with BPD.

Co-morbidity is central to understanding BPD and if the BPD is not successfully treated, then the co-morbidities will continue to occur.

Your voice matters

Telling your story of experience with BPD not only requires courage, it requires effort and dedication to the task. It is a deeply personal experience that we share with others.

Teresa and Nicole told their own personal stories at the Royal Commission. Their stories are a reflection of many people with BPD.

On our blog (<https://www.bpdcommunity.com.au/blog-1>) you can access their stories.

BPD Community in conjunction with Mental Health Victoria held the first BPD Ambassador Training Program in June/July. An intrepid group of people affected by BPD learnt the basics of telling our story.

On Thurs 1 Aug we celebrated this at our Info Night, 'Telling Stories', where Joanne Switser-loot the first graduate of the program and Barb Mullen, one of the trainers, spoke of how BPD affected their lives.

This issue is dedicated to those who speak on our behalf.



Stories of love

It was a large gathering of old friends and new at the 2nd BPD Community Info Night for the year. The audience was chattering away, glad to be out of the chilly night air when we were called to take our seats.

What followed were two gripping stories. First Joanne Switserloot related her story towards recovery. She explained that the thing that mattered most to her was hearing the stories of others who were in recovery. This gave her the hope to continue on her journey.

Dr Michelle Blanchard



Joanne Switserloot

Following years of inpatient admissions and feeling her distress not understood nor validated, Joanne saw her marriage and sons suffering. She finally desperately sought help outside clinical medical model settings of care.

Joanne currently is a peer worker in an inpatient setting. She connects with others offering hope and optimism for those living with BPD and their loved ones: recovery is possible.

Barb Mullen told the audience about her early years growing up in a highly dysfunctional family environment.

"Hindsight", said Barb, "is amazing."

Barb's relationship with her mum was strained for most of her life, until those final years when her mum needed Barb to care for her. This marked a change in the dynamic of the relationship.



Barb Mullen



Kevin Walsh was the MC for the night.

"Hindsight" said Barb "is amazing", looking back she could describe the stages that made a difference in the relationship, beginning with the acceptance that her mum could never be the mum that she wanted.

Dr Michelle Blanchard introduced the speakers and facilitated the questions and discussions. The audience had been touched by the personal testimonies and the sense of hope in the air was palpable. Recovery is possible; fractured relationships can be restored.

The 16th BPD Community Info Night was great!

A missing ingredient

Why is BPD so difficult to recover from? The answer to this might be complex but its important to try to address.

Neuroscience has shown us the plasticity of the brain, so we can see how it is possible to change how we think, which in turn will change how we behave. This is the core to addressing emotional and behavioural dysregulation. Psychotherapy can lead to resolution of issues relating to identity dysregulation. It is relational dysregulation that can be a core challenge.

Both speakers at the Info Night highlighted the destructive aspects of BPD both for the person with BPD and for the ones they love. Joanne spoke as a mother of her three boys and the effect her illness had on them and her marriage. Barb spoke of a n unreconciled relationship with her mother until her mother's late 90s, when the circumstances changed to make a positive relationship possible.

A core element of a successful treatment program is the positive and productive relationship between the therapist and the person with BPD. Currently our system does not prioritise this. But a strong relationship between the therapist and the person with BPD is not enough.



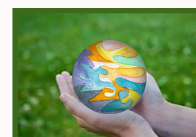
It is families that are usually the source of greatest support for the person with BPD. And families are usually overlooked in the mental health system or are even blamed for being the cause of their loved ones ill health.

Undoubtedly, trauma is an all too common experience. When we consider that 1 in 5 women in Australia have experienced sexual violence, we know we live in a violent society. Families are doing their best.

A therapist sees the person with BPD occasionally, the family often bears the sense of responsibility and the financial burden for their loved ones. Families are a part of the solution, not the problem. They need to be able to access the support and learning essential to better support their loved one.

The person with BPD needs the support necessary to achieve the recovery they want and that they deserve. This means that they too need to have the support that comes from close personal relationships.

If we don't have a supportive family, we need a supportive community.



Recovery is possible

Recovery is more than no longer experiencing symptoms, it means being able to achieve your potential, to live in your community and contribute to the growth of your community.

Joanne Switserloot is living proof that recovery is possible. Like many others with BPD it was alcohol addiction that contributed to the chaos of those years and it was when Joanne had lost everything that was precious to her that she began to turn around.

When she was hospitalised, Joanne met peer workers who were recovered. Seeing others who had been disabled by BPD, but who were no longer, gave Joanne the hope that she too could recover. Today Joanne herself works in this area. She is contributing to her community and its growth.

Joanne has recently completed the first BPD Ambassador program and now as an Ambassador to our BPD Community she can reach a wider audience.

Recovery is a challenge and an individual journey for all. We have others who have trodden the path who can show us the possibilities. Joanne's personal experience gives us all hope.

Barb Mullen described her life growing up in a 'BPD family' in the 1950's. Like too many before and since, Barb's early childhood was riven with violence both verbal and physical, and alcoholism. The result of this for Barb was a highly dysfunctional relationship with her mum.



For most of her adult life, it seemed to Barb this mother daughter relationship was difficult and cruel. When Barb became a mother herself, she described this time as the most isolated she had ever felt.

It was when Barb consciously understood that she had to accept that her mum would never be the sort of mother that she wanted, that the relationship with her mum began to turn around. This was about the time that Barb first began to learn about BPD, she said suddenly her family experiences started to make sense.

When she looked back on the relationship, Barb could describe the four stages which marked change: boundaries, validation, acceptance and mindfulness. She described them as the keys that unlocked the door to her understanding and her own personal growth. She is still learning today.

'Best Practice Deserved'

The National Conference on BPD 'Best Practice Deserved' will be held in Melbourne on 14 & 15 th November. The theme is based on the knowledge that recovery is possible and people deserve access to treatment and support.

Professor Jayashri Kulkarni of Monash is the keynote speaker. Professor Kulkarni recently appeared in the online newspaper, 'The Conversation' where she said that BPD should be renamed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. She founded and directs a

large psychiatric research group, the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre (MAPrc).

Three speakers with lived experience from SA and WA will be a part of the Plenary Session.



Tickets are not yet ready for purchase. But you can put the dates in your diary.

Radical Self Acceptance

We are all good people doing our best and we are all making mistakes and letting ourselves and each other down. Tara Brach shows us how to hug our 'evil twin' in her very short video on Radical Self Acceptance.

<https://www.bpdcommunity.com.au/family-friends/family-and-friends-group>

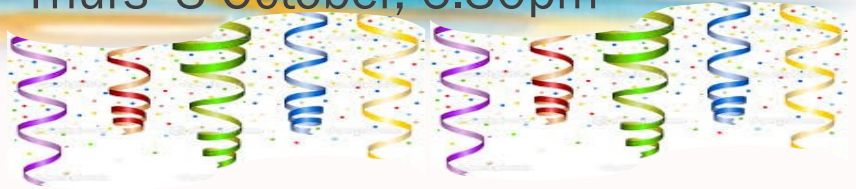


Tara Brach hugging her 'evil twin'.

Like a pep talk every month, via our website, we focus on an aspect of learning about BPD and ourselves. While it is a part of the Family & Friend's Group program, it is open to anyone to explore via our website:

Info Night - Thurs 3 October, 6.30pm

Celebration!



Woohoo! Its here again. This is our 5th Celebration Night and we are celebrating this with aplomb.

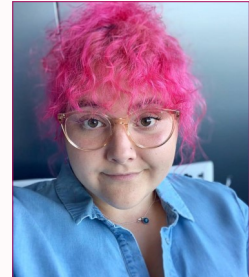
Every year at this time we acknowledge the year's successes and again we have a lot to acknowledge. We celebrate the improvements that have happened in the system over the year, we celebrate BPD Community's work over the year and we celebrate the story of recovery.

This is the year of the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health. BPD Community's submission to the Commission was supported by the individual support of many people with lived experience who also submitted on their own behalf. The Commission's mid term report will be published in October.

BPD Community built on its strength. Still lacking significant funding to employ staff, nonetheless, thanks to the commitment of volunteers, the work continues.

This year saw the introduction of the Ambassador Program delivered in conjunction with Mental Health Victoria. Our first BPD Community Ambassador, Joanne Switserloot spoke at our August Info Night.

This year we will hear the story of recovery of Stephanie Isherwood. Stephanie joined the Development Committee of the Board this year and works on our Communications and Social Media Committee. Stephanie's skills in social media are guiding BPD Community's Facebook page: BPDcommunityvic



Stephanie Isherwood

Come along and join us, all are welcome to the party.

Please rsvp to assist catering to:
barb@bpdcommunity.com.au



TITLE: Celebration Night

PRESENTED BY:
BPD Community

TIME: 6.30pm
DATE: Thurs 3 Oct 2019

PLACE:
The Theatrette
Sth Melbourne Town Hall
Sth Melbourne

Please RSVP to:
barb@bpdcommunity.com.au

Zeke Ox sings

The sort of entertainment for a BPD Celebration Night should reflect the purpose of the night and Ezekiel Ox is just the person to encapsulate the mood. He has the voice of an angel, with just a touch of wickedness.

Zeke joins our 5th Celebration Night as he did way back in 2015. Zeke is a conundrum to those who don't know him: he is a nu metal rocker and musical theatre performer. When he sings at our BPD Celebration, he sings solo, acoustic and movingly. There is no contradiction in these very different personas, they all meld to create a man dedi-

cated to making the world a better place through music and performance.

On Thurs 3 October, we will benefit from the experience of Zeke's talents in his fourth appearance at our Celebration Night.

Book your seat at the table and put it in your diary now, rsvp to:
barb@bpdcommunity.com.au

