



MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE OF SOUTH AFRICA

2005 YEAR-END SUMMARY

Welcome to the final 2005 MHIC Newsletter, which will review our activities of the past year. The 10th year of the Mental Health Information Centre's existence has been marked by changes, but despite this we were able to continue with the promotion of mental health in South Africa. This year has been challenging, yet very interesting, with many activities to report on:

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

This year we successfully hosted three awareness campaigns:



The International **Brain Awareness Week** took place during the week of 14-20 March 2005. The event was once again celebrated across the globe, in collaboration with the Dana Alliance for the Brain (EDAB). As opposed to previous years, the MHIC did not present specific BAW events for 2005, but continued to liaise with the media and support groups. Our call centre responded to queries and requests for information from the public and professionals and provided referrals as needed.

During the week of 20-26 June 2005 the MHIC had its first **Substance Abuse Awareness Campaign** in which we aimed to make young people more aware of the impact of substance abuse on mental health. We adopted the United Nations theme for 2005, "**Value Yourself, Make Healthy Choices**". This year we focused especially on the effects



On 13 October the Mental Health Information Centre celebrated its 10th anniversary at the Two Oceans Aquarium, V&A Waterfront. A diverse audience of journalists and mental health stakeholders was present to commemorate our efforts of the past 10 years to promote mental health and fight the stigma associated with mental illness.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE

MHIC Newsletter

Stellenbosch University
Department Psychiatry
PO Box 19063
Tygerberg

Phone: 021-938-9229
Fax: 021-931-4172
Email: mhic@sun.ac.za

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AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

of dagga and TIK because these substances are increasingly popular amongst Western Cape youth. Press releases on the impact of dagga use on emotional health; drug abuse and sexual risk behaviour; and general info on substance abuse awareness guaranteed the necessary media attention. Substance Abuse Awareness Kits were sent to over 100 High schools in Western Cape. Our call centre was at hand to answer questions from interested people and link our callers with community resources. We collaborated with other substance abuse role players and participated in their activities (e.g. the SANCA youth event) to ensure the highest possible impact of this campaign.

In October we had our **National Anxiety Disorders Awareness Week** campaign (10-16 October 2005) in the week surrounding World Mental Health Day. Since 1997 the MHIC has been celebrating World Mental Health Day (WMHD), 10 October, by focusing on the anxiety disorders in the week surrounding this international event. This year the WMHD theme was 'Mental and Physical Health across the Life Span'. As usual our National Anxiety Disorders Awareness Campaign was launched by a strong media drive. A number of press releases was sent out and resulted in several radio interviews, a television interview on SABC Africa, and numerous newspaper articles. Once more our call centre activity peaked as we answered calls from people all over South Africa. We also hosted 2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions for psychiatrists and neurologists in collaboration with Aspen Pharmacare.

On Thursday 13 October 2005, we hosted our annual **Mental Health Media Awards** at the Two Oceans Aquarium, Cape Town. A panel representing academic, research, treatment, support, advocacy, government and non-government mental health organisations from across South Africa nominated and voted for journalists who had played a significant role in informing the public about mental health and illness in the past year. Winners of the 2005 Mental Health Media Awards were

Jillian Green (The Star) for the Newspaper category, SJ du Toit (article in You/ Huisgenoot) for the Magazine category, and Ilse Pauw (Health 24) for the Radio/ Television/ Internet category. Ilse Pauw was also voted overall winner for 2005. Certificates of Special Recognition were awarded to Karen Rutter (Fair Lady) for creating awareness about violence against women and to Fanie du Toit (Radio Sonder Grense) for his efforts to raise awareness about the difficulties and successes of people with a disability. Nominees, consumer advocacy and support groups, academics as well as our sponsors attended this event, making it an interesting evening. At the same event we commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Mental Health Information Centre, therewith adding on to the festivity. This was once more a wonderful event with positive feedback from all attendees.



Media Awards winners

From left to right: Winnie De Roover (MHIC); Ilse Pauw (Health 24); Liezel de Villiers (MHIC); SJ du Toit (You/ Huisgenoot); Fanie du Toit (Radio Sonder Grense); Jillian Green (The Star); Karen Rutter (Fair Lady); Annerine Roos (MHIC)

UPCOMING CONFERENCE



The preparations for the International Anxiety Disorders Conference are proceeding well. This conference is planned for 24-26 February 2006 at Spier Estate in Stellenbosch. The full programme, registration and accommodation details can be viewed at www.mentalhealthsa.co.za/anxietyconference.html. Expert international speakers will address the most topical issues and new developments in the field of the anxiety disorders and related conditions.

PSYCHO-EDUCATION

In 2005 the MHIC published **4 books**, namely *False Alarm: How to Conquer the Anxiety Disorders*; *Psychiatric Medications in Primary Care: Algorithms and Guidelines*; as well as the second edition of the Afrikaans and English *Textbooks of Psychiatry* in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry, University of Stellenbosch. The *Mental Health Resource Guide of Southern Africa 2006* is currently in print and will be available from our offices early next year. This year's Resource Guide was extended with the SA Federation for Mental Health's database, therewith adding extra value to this unique tool. We have been working simultaneously on the *electronic*

PSYCHO-EDUCATION

version of the *Resource Guide*, which will be loaded on our website early next year in order to increase the accessibility of mental health resources for professionals and lay people.

The MHIC also distributes **brochures** covering various mental health topics and other educational materials free of charge during all our educational activities and on a day-to-day basis through our call centre. New this year was a series of OCD handouts, compiled and distributed in collaboration with Solvay Pharma as well as the brochure ‘Practical tips on how to cope after rape’ for the Karl Bremer Hospital.



*Picture:
The MHIC's
Publications*

In 2005 we coordinated 4 **CPD accredited lectures** to mental health professionals.

A half-day “*Side-Effects Psychiatry Workshop*” was held in association with Janssen-Cilag on February 5th 2005 at the Cullinan Hotel in Cape Town. Dr Ozayr Ameen (UCT) presented on “*Narcolepsy and Excessive Daytime Sleepiness*” at the Cullinan Hotel on February 17th 2005. This CPD accredited activity was made possible by Pharmaplan. We collaborated with Aspen Pharmacare for 2 continued professional education sessions: On the 11th of October, Prof. Soraya Seedat had a round table discussion on “*PTSD: Current and Future Drug Treatments*” at De Oude Welgemoed. On October 18th, Dr Paul Carey presented on “*New Developments in the Treatment of Anxiety Disorders*” at the Two Oceans Aquarium. All events were of high standard and well received by the attendants.



*Picture:
The MHIC Call Centre*

During the past year the MHIC has informed the public (lay people and professionals) about mental health at a number of forums (see table below). Our educational talks and **exhibits** to lay groups, including family, support, and work groups, have been well attended and received.

2005 EXHIBITIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH

EVENT	DATE	VENUE	AUDIENCE
CINP Regional Meeting 2005	18- 22 April	Cape Town International Convention Centre	Local and international psychiatrists
Cape Technikon Wellness Week	19-21 April	Cape Technikon	Students, lecturers, staff, visitors
SANCA Youth Event	June 23 rd	Parow High School	Youth & parents
Department of Agriculture: Wellness Day	July 6 th	Elsenburg, Muldervlei	Department of Agriculture staff, farmers
ABSA Employee Health Wellness Day	August 11 th	ABSA Building St Georges Mall, Cape Town	ABSA employees
49th Annual Academic Day of the Faculty of Health Sciences	17-18 August	Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Stellenbosch	Students, staff, visitors, medical representatives
Stikland Open Day	October 7 th	Stikland Hospital, Neuroclinic C	Patients, family, staff, visitors
Friends of Stikland	November 24 th	Stikland Hospital, Auditorium	(Ex-)Patients, family, staff, visitors

We also had 2 **lay talks**: On February 17th Charmaine Hugo presented on “*Depression and Stigma*” in De Tijger Centre. March 30th. Charmaine Hugo talked on “*Mental Health and the Workplace*” in a networking meeting of the clothing industry health care fund in Salt River, as part of their health promotion campaign.

The MHIC **website** proves to be an increasingly popular tool for disseminating mental health information, with a current average of over 40 800 hits per month.

The MHIC **Call Centre** receives numerous calls from across the country (and even abroad), from health professionals, patients, family members and lay organisations. The Call Centre continues to serve as a training ground for nursing students in community mental health and information dissemination.

MHIC STAFF

The MHIC underwent personnel changes at the beginning of this year. In order to give everybody the chance to settle in their new roles we scaled down on our activities for the first part of 2005 and the following 8 months we energetically undertook numerous exciting activities.

At the end of December 2004, Charmaine Hugo, the MHIC Director for the past 9 years, resigned to pursue a career in industrial psychology and to spend more time with her family. In 2005 she has been involved in the MHIC in an advisory function and as speaker at some of our educational events. Winnie De Roover returned from maternity leave in April and took over Charmaine's position.



Picture:
MHIC staff 2005

A special word of thanks for 2005 goes to the dedicated MHIC staff:

Annerine Roos who has gone the extra mile to update the Resource Guide and has shown great efficiency in coordinating our events. Johnny Daniels continues to keep our website up to scratch and takes care of our finances. Liezel de Villiers happily supervises our students, liaises with the pharmaceutical industry and assists with all other activities. We are all involved with the day-to-day running of the call centre and managing electronic queries.

We would like to wish you the very best for the New Year and hope you'll have a wonderful Festive Season!



MERRY CHRISTMAS & BEST WISHES for 2006

MHIC



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