

NewsPoint

AUTUMN 2010

HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A newsletter produced by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, part of Eastern Health, to highlight issues relating to alcohol and drug treatment and the activities and concerns of the organisation.

Turning Point strives to promote and maximise the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities living with and affected by alcohol and other drug-related harms.

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REDUCING RISKY DRINKING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Turning Point has recently begun work on a project funded under the State Government's Reducing Risky Drinking Initiative, in collaboration with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and the Northern Division of General Practice. The project aims to address the issue of risky drinking among members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in northern metro Melbourne.

Research has shown that the use and abuse of alcohol is a taboo subject among some CALD communities, and that members of these communities may be reluctant to access mainstream services for assistance with alcohol problems because of the stigma associated with alcohol and the cultural appropriateness of health services. Research has also shown that opportunistic brief interventions delivered in primary care settings are effective in reducing risky drinking. This project will investigate the feasibility of training GPs to deliver brief interventions among CALD community members.

The project takes a two-pronged approach to reducing risky drinking among members of CALD communities - a community development approach and GP focused brief interventions.

A number of Community Development workers from the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) will spend time in CALD communities in the northern catchment area of Melbourne educating residents and allied health

services about the harms associated with risky alcohol consumption. The MCWH workers will attempt to raise the profile of alcohol as a health issue, reduce the stigma associated with seeking help and encourage CALD community members to access primary health care services for alcohol related problems.

Concurrently, a number of primary health care services in the Northern Division of General Practice (NDGP) will be trained by Education and Training staff at Turning Point to screen for risky alcohol consumption among CALD communities in primary care settings and if needed, provide brief alcohol interventions to patients.

Turning Point's Clinical Research Program will evaluate the practicalities of the Community Development Model, the use of GPs to deliver brief alcohol interventions in primary care settings and changes in outcomes among this distinct population.

The project runs for three years in duration, and will be completed in late 2012.



Turning Point
Alcohol & Drug Centre

New director for Turning Point

A new decade heralds an exciting new appointment! We are extremely pleased to announce that Associate Professor Dan Lubman has accepted the position of Director and will commence working at Turning Point in early April. Dan leaves his current position at Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne, where he heads a clinical research unit that investigates young people's problematic substance use and co-occurring mental health issues to join the Turning Point team.

Turning Point is entering a new era, with the Eastern Health amalgamation now in place, and a new affiliation with Monash University's Eastern Clinical School where Dan holds a joint position as Professor of Addiction Studies and Services.

Dan says, "I am delighted about the opportunity to join Turning Point. I believe that the link with Eastern Health and Monash University will provide substantial opportunities to enhance Turning Point's position as an international centre of clinical and policy research excellence, and to advocate strongly on behalf of the AOD sector, carers and consumers.

"Alcohol and drugs are always a significant issue for the community, but I believe that we are fortunate to have so many key organisations and researchers working within Victoria. I am enthusiastic about joining together with colleagues and stakeholders to provide the most effective policy and service responses, and to build the community's capacity to support people with alcohol and drug issues."

Turning Point looks forward to supporting Dan's vision in further developing the organisation's reputation as a key driver of policy, training and service delivery, both within the AOD field and across all sectors of community and government.

We extend a very warm welcome to Dan!



NEWS IN BRIEF

Colleagues were both saddened and shocked to hear the news of the death of Chris Watson after a short battle with cancer in November last year. Chris had previously been treated for cancer earlier in the year and had only just commenced working at Turning Point. Chris was admired for her quiet but confident leadership style, her considered opinion, never reactive nor dismissive, her wonderful sense of humour and most of all, her enormous capacity to get any job done without fuss and bother. She faced her illness bravely and calmly, with her family and close friends supporting her throughout. Turning Point, Spectrum Services and Eastern Health Mental Health Program mourn her loss.

Congratulations to our students who have completed the Graduate program. Hosted by Professor Robin Room, a graduation ceremony was held on 26 March for 24 students who were awarded certificates and diplomas for AOD studies. As with previous years, graduating students came from varied professional backgrounds including AOD, health and welfare, corrections and education. Several students had been recipients of Department of Health scholarships.

Case Management in Alcohol and Drug Treatment Settings is the latest in the series of Clinical Treatment Guidelines developed by Turning Point. Released late last year, this CTG explores the many models of case management used by practitioners and looks at the principles of collaboration, assessment, planning, advocacy and linking clients with necessary services. Case management is available to buy for \$31.95 or as part of a set of 15 clinical treatment guidelines for \$407.00. For more info, go to the website and download our catalogue: www.turningpoint.org.au.

An introduction to acceptance and commitment therapy will be offered as a two-day counselling workshop for AOD workers at the end of May this year. The interest in the training has been considerable and the program is now full. ACT therapy was developed in 1986 and is considered one of the 'third wave' of behavioural therapies. The training will include an overview of the assumptions and core processes of ACT as well as a range of interventions. Anyone interested in future ACT workshops can contact Margret Petrie on 03 8413 8722.

A team of eight Turning Point staff and family members participated in the Run For The Kids on Sunday March 14th. The 5.2km run raises money for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. The team hopes to raise \$5,000. To make a donation, go to: http://www.everydayhero.com.au/turning_point_alcohol_and_drug_centre. Great team effort.

Dual diagnosis policy in Victoria: an exploration

In 2007 the Victorian government released a policy aimed at improving services for people with both mental health and AOD problems and national guidelines were published last year on the management of mental health problems by AOD services. These activities are happening some 15 years after a report called Not Welcome Anywhere highlighted the way people with co-occurring mental health and AOD problems were falling through the net of services, and 20 or more years since research on 'dual diagnosis' began to be published.

Turning Point researcher Bridget Roberts is currently analysing how Victorian dual diagnosis policy has evolved over this period and is exploring its meaning for the future of treatment, care and support for people affected.

Since 1985, there has been the closure of large psychiatric hospitals and the increased growth of community-based care delivered by multiple service providers and professions. In addition, the growth and professionalisation of a distinct drug treatment sector, the evolution of a national drug strategy based on harm minimisation principles, changes in drug use, misuse and pharmacotherapies, and the advent of 'whole-of-government' language has had an impact on mental health and AOD policy. The overarching question of

Bridget's research concerns the nature of Victorian dual diagnosis policy discourse/s – the 'talk and the text' of service users, policymakers, service providers and the wider community - and their impact on the realisation of the policy's vision of person-centred, rather than system-centred, care.

Bridget Roberts is a Research Fellow at Turning Point and has over ten years' experience in conducting service and program evaluations in the mental health and drugs field. Previously she ran adventure-based programs for people with a mental illness.



Oration '09

Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police Simon Overland launched Turning Point's 2009 annual report and addressed staff, stakeholders and media at the annual oration and awards presentation held on 1 December at the Museum of Victoria.

The Chief Commissioner's address focused on alcohol-fuelled violence and he spoke of the importance of reforming a drinking culture that has become "all too destructive in its nature", saying: "Alcohol-related crime is estimated to cost Australia \$1.7B each year with \$750M alone spent on policing. It is also a major cause of death and hospitalisation with 3,000 lives lost each year and 65,000 hospitalisations."

The oration was an opportunity for Ben Kelly, Acting Program Director to present Turning Point research staff, Pauline Kenny and Dr Belinda Lloyd the Frank

Murphy and Margaret Hamilton Travelling Scholarships. Congratulations to Pauline and Belinda!

A transcript of Mr Overland's speech is available on the Turning Point website, along with the annual report: www.turningpoint.org.au.



Pauline Kenny accepting her award from Ben Kelly, Acting Program Director



Professor Robin Room introduces Chief Commissioner Simon Overland

