



MEETING
FOR
MINDS

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Three-March 2016



ENOSH/HEADSPACE

Enosh recently launched an innovative youth mental health model in Israel, inspired by the successful model of headspace Australia (www.headspace.org.au), a national flagship program and global leader in the field.

Headspace - The National Center for Youth Mental Health Israel

Mental disorders and related alcohol and substance use are undoubtedly the most important health issues affecting young people.

Overall, they account for a staggering 60-70% of the non-fatal burden of disease among 15-24 year olds. Also, at least 75% of mental disorders emerge for the first time before the age of 25.

These disorders appear at a critical time in development and lead to individual and family-related distress, poor academic achievements, and school/college dropout, unemployment, long-term disabilities and even early fatality.

In Israel studies show that only 34% of the adolescents suffering from symptoms of mental disorders and 40% of the mothers of adolescents suffering from mental disorders have turned to professional help.

This is a result of a health care system that does not conventionalize effective, optimal interventions that are tailored to the mental health needs of young people.

The *headspace* Israel project focuses on improving service delivery and access to mental health services for young people aged 12-25 (and their families) suffering from mild to moderate mental health problems (e.g. anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, sexual orientation questions).

It involves the establishment of youth friendly centers that serve as a 'one stop shop', providing in house multi-professional preventative and early intervention services and referrals to mental health services in the community.

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headspace centers provide a soft entry point that is more effective in attracting distressed young people into the service without labeling or prematurely “medicalizing” the problem.

Also, outreach educational programs for professionals and care providers will be delivered.

The first *headspace* center opened in Bat Yam in December 2014 and has exceeded our expectations in terms of client demand.

While initially we anticipated 138 patients in the first year of operation, approximately 371 youth have already received services, and we expect that approx. 800 youths will contact the center annually.

The fact that *headspace* is distinct from official institutions such as hospitals, HMOs, etc. and that it is branded as a center for growth and development, its convenient location, and appealing design, all encourage youth to use our services. ■

The Starfish, The Woman Giving Schizophrenia Sufferers New Hope Newsletter, August 7, 2015.



Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert.

SCHIZOPHRENIA - A TWIN'S QUEST

A leading world expert on schizophrenia believes hope for a vastly improved treatment for sufferers could lie in a drug currently being used to help people with osteoporosis, Raloxifene.

Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert, who has done groundbreaking research on the links between sex hormones and schizophrenia, says an initial clinic trial on 80 people with

schizophrenia given Raloxifene showed marked improvement in 40 per cent of patients.

“Now if we can only get funding, we can do more clinical trials, and take it from there,” she told a forum at Christchurch Grammar School this week.



Cyndi with her twin brother Scott.

*“My aim is to apply what we know,
or what we have learnt so far, and just test
if its going to be of benefit”*

Page 18-The Post Newspapers, August 15, 2015.

Brother's illness a catalyst for study

By RHIANNON SHINE

When Cyndi Shannon Weickert's twin brother was diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 17, it was the first time she had heard the word.

She grew up in the US alongside him, shared teachers and friends, played baseball and went on holidays.

She said they had both been intelligent children, but once the teenage years hit, something changed.

“I remember that while I was socialising and partying, my brother was starting to withdraw,” Professor Shannon Weickert said.

“We were both very academic over-achievers and competed

for the top grades in school, but then I noticed his grades were slipping.

“He got worse. He withdrew more into his room.

“He would listen to Beatles records and play them backwards and think they had special messages for him.”

When a psychiatrist diagnosed schizophrenia, Professor Shannon Weickert decided: “I gotta learn this biology stuff, because I gotta find out what's wrong with his brain.

“I knew I wanted to help my brother, because the medicines that were available to him at the time were terrible.”

Now a world-leading neurologist, Professor Shannon Weickert moved to Australia from the US

The Sydney-based American says it was the love of her late, twin brother, Scott, diagnosed with schizophrenia in his teens, which propelled her to make it her life's mission to find a cure for this debilitating mental disorder.

Afflicting one per cent of the population, it causes sufferers to experience hallucinations and delusions, and at times lose the ability to discern which part of their life is “real.”

Medication used to treat the disease has barely improved since the early 1950s.

Though anti-psychotic drugs assist in preventing hallucinations and delusions, side effects are often unpleasant, and they have proved largely ineffective in preventing intellectual impairment.

eight years ago when she was invited to lead a top schizophrenia program in Sydney.

Last week, she gave a public lecture at Christ Church Grammar School, in Claremont, about her latest research and her personal experience with schizophrenia.

“My aim is to discover biological subsets of schizophrenia so that we can target novel therapeutics by re-purposing available drugs that are already known to be safe for other diseases,” she said.

“My aim is to apply what we know, or what we have learnt so far, and just test if it's going to be of benefit.”

She said a range of people attended her lectures, from

those personally affected by schizophrenia to those who were simply interested in the human brain.

“There is a lot of intrigue in the human brain,” she said.

“If you think about it, it may be one of the most complex organs on the planet.”

Professor Shannon Weickert's lecture was organised by mental health awareness group Meeting for Minds.

Details about the group's events can be found at meetingforminds.com.

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Cyndi giving a talk at Christchurch Grammar School.

But in her trial, 40 per cent of patients reported “a marked improvement in memory and attention,” says Cyndi, the chair of the Schizophrenia Research Faculty at the University of New South Wales.

During her Perth visit, Cyndi, who has lived in Australia for nine years, told how her brother Scott, a healthy, kind and highly intelligent boy, began withdrawing from her, family and friends in his teens.

“I remember eating 17th birthday cake together and he started saying strange things like, ‘you’re not my sister, you’re the daughter of the devil,’” Cyndi recalls.

It was only when he was later arrested after trying to assault his mother, that he was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Watching this highly intelligent and sensitive man withdraw from society and his studies, and suffer greatly, was what prompted her to devote her life to understanding schizophrenia.

Cyndi has spent years investigating how receptors in the brain responded to oestrogen and other sex hormones.

Initially she had to work to convince some colleagues that certain parts of the brain even contained oestrogen receptors. She says that when receptors are somehow damaged, schizophrenia can result.





Cyndi, with her teenage brother pictured behind her, gave a TED Talk at the Sydney Opera House.

Now her big challenge is to get the funding necessary to continue her vital research.

Funds are needed to conduct new clinical trials, but frustratingly, it's an uphill battle persuading government authorities to come up with the money.

And judging from the sea of concerned faces in the room at Christchurch on Wednesday night, better treatment for loved ones suffering from schizophrenia couldn't come quickly enough.

Many shed a quiet tear as Cyndi told of how, on the night she last saw her brother in

the US on Thanksgiving in 2008, she told him "I'm thankful for you Scott, because you gave me my life, showed me my life's purpose." He died later that night, of a heart attack.

"It makes me sad I couldn't help my brother, but I'm more determined than ever to find better ways to treat this illness," she said to applause.

Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert was in Perth as a guest of **Meeting For Minds**, a WA organization dedicated to raising more awareness of mental health issues. ■



SOCIAL HACKATHON

THE CHALLENGE

Mental health is a growing global problem. Despite 50 years of scientific research, there has been no significant new treatment available. The pace, implementation and impact of interventions of research are too slow. We urgently need to find innovative ways to reduce the time from research to better clinical solutions that are readily available.

ONE-WAY FORWARD

Co-production refers to the process where people with different expertise share knowledge and work together to develop solutions. **M4M** Co-design sees individuals living with mental illness, scientists and clinicians working together on the development and delivery of treatments as critical to successful implementation.

The Social Hackathon will tackle:

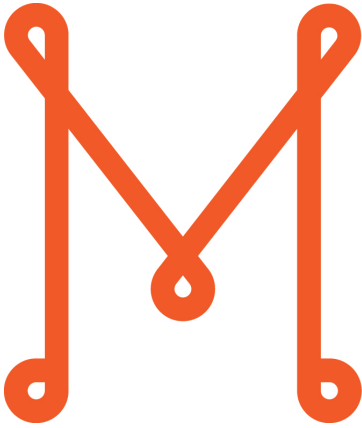
- How do we bridge the gap between research and clinical implementation?
- How do we reduce the time to implement new treatments? and
- How do we improve the access to those treatments by clinicians and individuals living with mental illness?

Teams will have access to a diverse range of mentors including world-renowned psychiatrist Professor Norman Sartorius.

The Hackathon will take place on
**20-21 May, 2016, at Spacecubed, Reserve Bank,
45 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA.**

Visit <https://nvite.com/Meeting4Minds/d78a> to register your interest.

WORKSHOP



FORUM 2016

How can people with lived experience of mental illness, postgraduate researchers, trainee psychiatrists, and psychologists work together in researching the brain and brain disorders?

- The **M4M** Workshop will be held on Tuesday 12 April and seeks input on research priorities of consumers (people with lived experience of mental illness), of postgraduate researchers and of clinicians. The aim of the workshop is to establish a starting point for developing a community of people, including those in the early stages of their careers, who have shared interests in brain research.
- There will be a series of brief (5 minutes only) presentations on current research projects being undertaken or in development.
- The workshoping to follow the presentations will be structured in two groups—mental health consumers in one and researchers and clinicians in the other—working separately on developing a list of priorities for future research. Voting on the list will determine a consensus for the top ten priorities.
- The two groups will come together to see where there is common ground or synergies and to discuss common areas and the potential for developing research projects.

MEETING FOR MINDS

- The outcomes from the workshop will be presented at the International **M4M** Forum in Fremantle on Friday 27 May.
- The venue for the workshop is Notre Dame University Fremantle.
- Time: 8.30 to 4.30

Organisations promoting this style of research are operating in other parts of the world, click on following links.

www.pcori.org

www.invo.org

www.joinmq.org

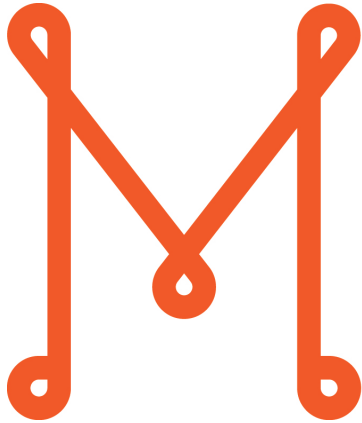
www.patientsacademy.eu

If you would like to be engaged with this type of research please register your interest with the attached form for one of fifty workshop places.

Complete and send to admin@meetingforminds.com no later than Monday 14 March 2016.

To find out more about **Meeting for Minds**, an international body committed to facilitating a broad conversation around researching the brain and brain disorders in partnership with people with lived experience of mental illness, visit www.meetingforminds.com

TO CONTACT US BY PHONE,
PLEASE CALL 0416 844 001 WEEKDAYS 9am to 4pm



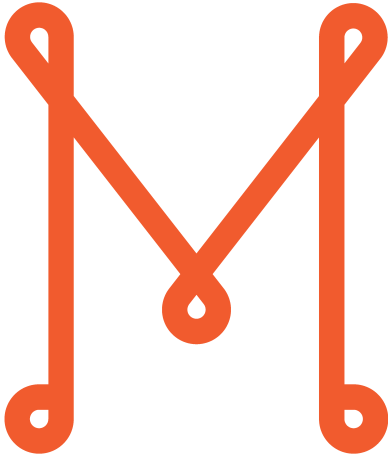
**MEETING
FOR
MINDS**

WORKSHOP

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

- 1. Your Situation - Mental Health Consumer or Carer / Researcher/ Clinician.**
- 2 . Your expectations from a workshop on research into the brain and disorders of the brain - in up to one hundred words.**

SAVE THE DATE



FORUM 2016

Research institutes may claim involving the lived experience community in hard science research is expensive, disruptive and counterproductive.

Meeting for Minds is convinced it is none of those things and instead represents an opportunity for research institutes and the lived experience community to engage in a process of mutual enrichment.

The Forum will take place on

MEETING FOR MINDS

SYNERGIES

Building a case for implementing a co-design platform involving people with lived experience of mental illness and their carers in all neuroscience research.

27 May 2016

8:30-17:00 in the B Shed,
Victoria Quay Waterfront,
Fremantle, Western Australia
followed by the Post Forum Mixer.

Jane Caro, MC

Speakers include

Jackie Crowe, Professor Ian Hickie, Dr Per Hamid Ghatan, Simon Denegri, Dr Ilana Kremer, Anne McKenzie, Dr Anne-Marie Engel and Dr Michelle Banfield.

Speakers subject to change

Visit <http://meetingforminds.com/forum2016> for updates

