

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

It is with regret that we have to advise you that our Project Worker, Gavin Burtwell, has decided to leave us after three years and move on to pastures new. We wish him well in his new job and thank him for all of the hard work that he has put in during this time.

**Thank You Gavin.**

However, it is not all sad news, as the first Support Group for a while took place at Midstocket Church Hall and was well attended.

Additionally, one of our fellow members, Brenda, has raised £145 from the sale of her hand made cards and donated this money to Bipolar Aberdeen.

**Thank You Brenda.**

For those of you interested, Brenda will have a selection of cards with her at the next Support Group.

The next Support Group is on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February at Midstocket Church Hall 7pm.

## OFFICE NEWS

Dear all, this will be my last news letter for Bipolar Aberdeen as after 3 years it is time for me to move on.

I would like to take this time to thank everyone who has been involved with the organisation over this time.

I wish everyone the best of health and the best of luck for the future.

Take care and good bye.

*Gavin*

## TEN TIPS TO BEAT DEPRESSION

**SMILE:** It is quick, easy and doesn't cost a penny! When you smile your body gives out feel-good hormones, while the stress hormone cortisol is reduced. It keeps your blood pressure healthy and makes you feel good about yourself.

**EXERCISE:** It improves blood flow to the brain, helping you think more clearly. Exercise is a great way to release endorphins, the body's natural painkillers and feel good hormones.

**GET ENOUGH SLEEP:** Chronic sleep deprivation can affect your mood, which can be a key factor in raising stress levels.

**POSITIVE THINKING:** Altering your thoughts is not as difficult as you think. Attempt to adopt an outlook on life that stops you seeing external events as determining your happiness. See your thoughts as the factor that determines your happiness.

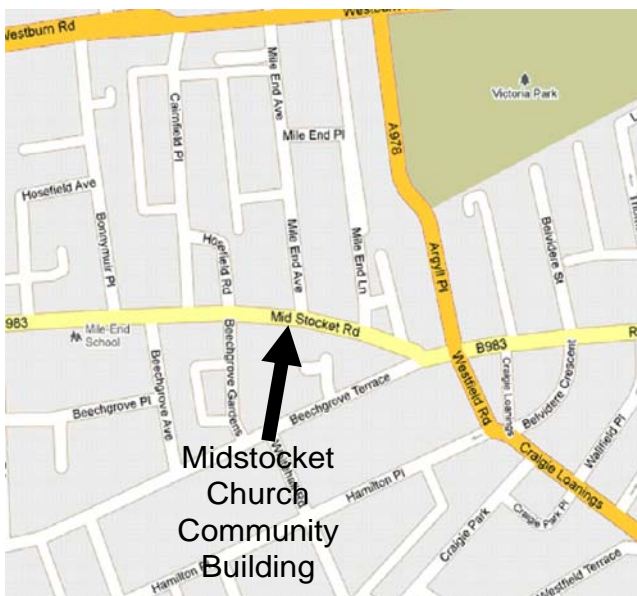
**REACH OUT TO OTHERS:** Friends and family can help you to cope with your illness better, ask them for support. They can help elevate the strain, whether it is practical help or just a shoulder to cry on

**MANAGE TO BALANCE YOUR ILLNESS:** Don't let illness take over your life. No matter how ill you are, it is important to make time for relaxation and enjoyment.

**RELAXATION:** A good relaxation technique is an anti-stress device that you always carry with you. There are many techniques, from deep-breathing to self-hypnosis. Find one that works for you. Look out for the many CDs, books and DVDs that can help.

**EAT A HEALTHY DIET:** A balanced diet is essential for dealing with depression. Cut back on stimulants like caffeine and sugar, and depressants like alcohol and nicotine to keep your blood sugar levels constant and help you avoid mood swings.

**HUGGING:** Make sure you get and give your fair share of hugs. Not only does hugging feel good, it has been proven to help reduce the stress hormone, cortisone.



# IN THE MOOD



FEBRUARY 2011

**SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU NEED IT:** If you feel that depression is getting the better of you, there are lots of people that can help.

## TEN TIPS TO BEAT MANIA

**TAKE YOUR MEDICATION:** Living with bipolar disorder involves seeing your doctor and taking your bipolar medication exactly as prescribed.

**LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU:** The people you are closest to can often assess your mood more objectively than you can. Remember that they are trying to help you and keep you safe.

**RELAX:** Anxiety can trigger mood episodes in many people. So make a real effort to relax. Lying on the couch watching TV isn't enough. Instead, try something more focused, like yoga or meditation.

**CUT BACK ON COFFEE, ALCOHOL AND OTHER STIMULANTS:** Caffeine is a stimulant, which can keep you up at night and possibly exacerbate your mood. So cut back -- or cut out -- soda, coffee, and tea. Alcohol and drugs can affect how your medications work. They can also worsen your condition and possibly trigger a mood episode.

**GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP:** Being overtired can trigger mania in many people. So get into good sleep habits. Go to sleep and get up at the same times every day. Relax before bed by listening to soothing music, reading, or taking a bath. Don't sit up in bed watching TV.

**REDUCE STRESS:** Ask for help with some of the stressful things in your life. See if your spouse, family, or friends will take care of some of the housework and other hassles. If your job is proving to be too much, think about ways of scaling back some of your responsibilities. Do what you can to simplify your life and make it easier.

**EXERCISE:** Studies show that regular exercise can help improve mood. It can also help you sleep better. Talk to your health care provider about what kind of exercise routine you should try. Start slowly. Take walks around the neighborhood with a friend. Gradually, work up to exercising on most days of the week.

**EAT A HEALTHY DIET:** No, there isn't a miracle diet for bipolar disorder. But a good meal plan can help you feel better and give you the nutrients you need. Avoid fad diets that force you to cut out food groups. Instead, focus on the basics: Eat lots of fruits, vegetables, and grains, and less fat and sugar.

**LEARN TO SPOT TRIGGERS:** Early intervention will help to avoid severe episodes developing.

**SEEK SUPPORT:** Do not struggle on alone. There is a great deal of support available, you only have to ask.

## SUPPORT GROUP

The next Support Group is on the **17<sup>th</sup> of February** in Midstocket Church Community Buildings, 35 Midstocket Road from **7pm – 9pm**.

Come along for a chat and a coffee. The support group offers a friendly atmosphere in which you can talk about how you are feeling, and listen to others.

It offers help and advice from people who are going through or have gone through the same or similar issues.

**A Scottish member of Parliament has hit out at the practice of jailing some offenders who suffer from mental health problems, saying it was reminiscent of "Dickensian Britain".**

Margaret Mitchell claimed some men and women were being locked up rather than being given medical treatment. The Conservative MSP said about 80 per cent of offenders in Cornton Vale, Scotland's only all-women prison had mental health problems.

She said that "at least one per cent to two per cent of these prisoners ought to have been hospitalized rather than being sent to prison" while a further eight to ten per cent could be cared for in the community.

Ms Mitchell said: "Put bluntly, if some women and, inevitably, some male offenders are being incarcerated instead of being hospitalized, then in 21st century Scotland we are witnessing scenarios which are more akin to Dickensian Britain."

More at: <http://news.scotsman.com/news/Offender-mental-health-care-39Dickensian39.6669357.jp>