

It was great to see such a good group of people come to the last support group meeting and attend the AGM. I hope you found it the conversation useful and that discussing our problems with other bipolar sufferers and carers was helpful to all

Kirsty Anne Jamieson and Christine Watts, CPNs at Cornhill hospital, have kindly offered to give a talk at the next support group meeting on 26th May 2011. We hope to see a good turnout for what I am sure will be an informative and helpful evening.

The meeting will be held at the Midstocket Church Community Building, 35 Midstocket Road, Aberdeen.

The Bipolar Aberdeen evening meetings are not a welfare service but they are intended as self-help group meetings in which people with bipolar disorder and their carers can get together to share experiences and to provide mutual support and advice on coping with Bipolar. They are also a great opportunity for general conversation.

We all have the ability to help one another.

Emailing the Newsletter

Printing the newsletter, enveloping it up and posting it is a considerable amount of work, particularly since we are short of volunteers. One area where we are trying to reduce work is the posting of the newsletter. If you currently receive the newsletter through the post and would prefer to receive it by email, we would be grateful if you could let us know by emailing us at office@bipolar.uk.com

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Bipolar Aberdeen was held on take place on Thursday 28th April 2011.

The AGM was called to order, previous minutes were taken as read and were approved and a report from the Board of Trustees was presented by David Aldridge who chaired the meeting.

The report detailed events since the last Board Meeting and the present challenges facing the organisation.

Financial figures were also presented indicating that the charity has run at a deficit for several years due to a fall off in funding received from outside sources. The charity still has sufficient reserves to continue operating at the present reduced level at least until the end of the year.

Members were asked to consider the future of the organisation – how it will continue to support users and how it can develop in the future. It was agreed that the present emphasis should be on continuing to produce the newsletter and to run monthly support meetings and that at this time there would be no commitment to take on new premises or to employ permanent staff until the future direction has been determined and funding issues have been resolved. In addition it is not the intention at this time to re-instate the telephone helpline unless the situation was to change e.g. if volunteers were identified who

would be willing to man the helpline at specific times.

A full copy of the report together with financial information is available to any member on request. Please contact any Board Member to receive this information.

Three members of the existing Board of Trustees, David Aldridge, Alastair Soutar and Hester Mackay, indicated that they would not be seeking re-election to the Board and all were thanked for their contributions to the Board over the past period.

Existing Board Members Mark Manzocchi and David Hutcheson indicated their willingness to continue to serve and were duly re-elected to the Board of Trustees.

Marcus White offered himself for election to the Board and was duly elected.

It was also agreed that the Group would continue to meet at Midstocket at least until the end of the year and arrangements would be made with the Rev Cowie to obtain the room for each monthly meeting.

It was also agreed that the status of Bipolar Aberdeen would be changed from that of a Company Limited by Guarantee to a charitable organisation in order to save costs and administration time.

There was no other competent business and the meeting closed at 8:30 p.m.

How can I help myself if I have bipolar disorder?

It may be very hard to take that first step to help yourself. It may

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take time, but you can get better with treatment.

To help yourself:

- Talk to your doctor about treatment options and progress
- Keep a regular routine, such as eating meals at the same time every day and going to sleep at the same time every night
- Try to get enough sleep
- Stay on your medication
- Learn about warning signs signaling a shift into depression or mania
- Expect your symptoms to improve gradually, not immediately.

How can I help a friend or relative who has bipolar disorder?

If you know someone who has bipolar disorder, it affects you too. The first and most important thing you can do is help him or her get the right diagnosis and treatment. You may need to make the appointment and go with him or her to see the doctor. Encourage your loved one to stay in treatment.

To help a friend or relative, you can:

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement
- Learn about bipolar disorder so you can understand what your friend or relative is experiencing
- Talk to your friend or relative and listen carefully
- Listen to feelings your friend or relative expresses-be understanding about situations that may trigger bipolar symptoms

- Invite your friend or relative out for positive distractions, such as walks, outings, and other activities
- Remind your friend or relative that, with time and treatment, he or she can get better.
- Never ignore comments about your friend or relative harming himself or herself. Always report such comments to his or her therapist or doctor.

BIPOLAR IN THE NEWS

Catherine Zeta Jones

There has been a lot in the press about Catherine Zeta Jones' diagnosis of bipolar II disorder. In an interview to People magazine she said:

"This is a disorder that affects millions of people and I am one of them. If my revelation of having bipolar II has encouraged one person to seek help, then it is worth it. There is no need to suffer silently and there is no shame in seeking help."

Children of bipolar parents more susceptible to stress:

If either the mother or father is affected by bipolar disorder then it is advisable to keep stress in check, according to a Concordia University study.

The study suggests that the stress hormone 'cortisol' is a key player in the mood disorder and children of bipolar parents may be overly sensitive to stress.

"Previous research has shown that children of parents with bipolar disorder are four times as likely to develop mood disorders

as those from parents without the condition," says Mark Ellenbogen, senior author, Canada Research Chair in Developmental Psychopathology at Concordia University.

The study shows that when exposed to either type of stress, children of parents with bipolar disorder showed a greater increase in cortisol than those of parents without the disorder.

"Our study demonstrates that affected children are biologically more sensitive to the experience of stress in their natural and normal environment compared to their peers," says Ellenbogen. The study has been published in Psychological Medicine.