

this approach is rarely successful however, and often makes them more determined than ever to continue.

Generally we've found it more useful to have open, honest discussions about these difficult subjects, trying to strike a balance between encouraging healthy choices, while at the same time respecting every young person's right to make decisions of their own. It can help to remember that much of our most valuable learning comes from having made the 'wrong' choices and having to take responsibility for those.

We appreciate that taking this approach is often 'easier said than done', especially when it involves someone close to you. Accordingly, if you have concerns about your young person's behaviour we encourage you to discuss these with the young person themselves and with their care manager.

### ***Communicating with someone who is experiencing psychosis***

Due to the symptoms they have, communicating with someone who is experiencing psychosis can be difficult at times. It is not always possible to get it 'right', but remembering a few simple suggestions may help.

#### **If the young person is having difficulty concentrating**

- Keep your conversations brief
- Give one message at a time and don't offer too many choices at once
- You may need to help them stay 'on track' by, for example, checking they've understood what you've said, and vice versa, checking you've understood what they've said.

#### **If the young person is expressing unusual ideas**

- Don't dismiss, rubbish or ridicule them
- Remember that even if they sound unusual to you, their ideas and experiences may seem very real to them
- Take a moment to listen respectfully to what they're saying
- Avoid arguing or getting into a debate
- It is OK to say you disagree with them, but don't expect to convince the young person to change their mind.

**FAMILY, FRIENDS, FLATMATES  
– YOU ARE VERY  
IMPORTANT!**

*Nga whanau, nga hoa, nga noho hoa - he tino whakahirahira kia koe!*

Recovery from psychosis happens best when everyone is working together. We aim to develop good communication, trust, and co-operation between our staff, the young person experiencing psychosis and their family.

**SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN  
DO TO HELP YOUR FAMILY  
MEMBER/FRIEND/FLATMATE  
INCLUDE:**

*Ko etahi e mahia kei a kow ko tou whanau/nga hoa/nga noho hoa kai roto:*

### ***Giving support and encouragement***

People who have recovered from psychosis often say the biggest thing that helped them was having people who believed in them and that they would recover. Even though it's a tough time for everyone, full of uncertainty, worry and stress, if you hold out hope and give encouragement this makes a **big** difference.

### ***Accepting that the person has a serious illness***

Psychosis can be a serious, though often confusing, illness. It is not always clear exactly how, or how much, it is affecting someone. This uncertainty makes it difficult for the young person themselves, and for those of us trying to help them. One of your best strategies is to learn all you can about psychosis, especially how it affects the young person you know. Please talk with your care manager about the best ways to do this.

## ***Recognising that they are likely to need 'time out' and rest***

Like any other serious illness, psychosis takes its toll on a person. For many people this means they will need time to recover and may be less active as a result. The key is to get a balance between rest and a healthy level of activity. 'One small step at a time' is often the best approach. Talking with the young person and their care manager will help you get an idea about appropriate levels of activity for them.

## ***Keeping life going normally (as normal as possible!)***

Even if the person is not able to do as much at the moment, or is making unusual demands of you, it is important to try to maintain normal household routines - both for your own sake and theirs. Normal routines are reassuring and give a sense of security.

## ***Learning about Early Warning Signs and relapse prevention***

While a person is still recovering, or even when they have fully recovered, they may experience a **relapse** - that is, a return or worsening of their psychotic symptoms. There are usually some '**early warning signs**' before this happens. We can help a person recognise their 'early warning signs' so they can take steps to lower the chances of a relapse. You can also help in this process. Recognising early warning signs and developing a plan to cope with them is a crucial part of recovery. Please discuss doing this with your care manager.

## ***Understanding medication***

As part of helping your young person recover we may recommend medication for them. Taking medication is usually voluntary. We don't make anyone take it unless safety is an issue. It is important for a person to feel in control of the decision to take medication (for additional information please see '*Do you force people to take medication?*' on page 13).

Most medications take a while to start working. This is normal. It could be two weeks or more before the person begins to notice any change.

While we try to give medications that cause the least side effects, some can still happen. These might include feeling drowsy or dizzy, constipation, having a dry mouth or feeling thirsty, headaches, or gaining weight. Some of these side effects go away after the first couple of weeks, but others don't. Our staff will regularly check how the person on medication is feeling, and if their dose or kind of medication is right.

Remembering to take medication at the right time is difficult for all of us, and it often helps to have a reminder from someone close. Reminders can sometimes be misinterpreted as nagging, however, causing a person to feel 'hounded' or pressured. This can actually make them less likely to take it (especially if they're already a little reluctant). It is very important to talk together and have an agreement if you're going to help your family member, friend or flatmate remember to take their medication. We're more than happy to help with this, so please ask.

## ***Respecting privacy***

Like many other health conditions, people who are experiencing psychosis often want this news to be kept private. It is a good idea, therefore, to check with them about who it is OK to share information with.

Similarly, young people sometimes tell our staff things they do not want passed on to their family or friends. While we aim to share all appropriate information openly with close family members, we must respect any request for confidentiality and consider it carefully. Building trust is a vital part of our work with young people and maintaining confidentiality is central to this. However, if we receive information that leads us to believe there is a serious risk the young person may harm themselves or someone else, we have a duty to pass this on in order to protect everyone involved.

## ***Respecting lifestyle choices***

While we encourage young people to make lifestyle choices that help in their recovery, we often see them making decisions that seem unhealthy (eg, using illegal drugs, engaging in risky behaviour, wagging school). When this happens it can be tempting to step in and try to prevent them making a 'mistake'. Experience has shown us that

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*He rite tonu pataiti a atu*

### ***How long does it take for a person to get better?***

This depends on a few things, like how long they were unwell before getting treatment and how well they respond to those treatments. Many people notice a change for the better within a few months, but more complete recovery is likely to take longer.

### ***How long do people stay with the Early Intervention Service?***

We can give treatment and support for up to two years, though some people are with us for a shorter time. Toward the end of their time with us we will talk with the young person and their family about follow-up. This might mean we refer them on to another mental health service or to GP care.

### ***How often does the Early Intervention Service see a person?***

It depends on their needs. In the early stages staff may offer to meet or phone the young person a few times each week. After that we might see the person once a week, once every two weeks, or every few months. It's different for everyone.

### ***How much does it cost to attend the Early Intervention Service?***

The service is free (it's part of mental health services paid for by the government for New Zealand citizens and permanent residents). For any medication from the chemist there is a prescription fee (this costs less if the person has a Community Services Card). For group activities there are sometimes small costs.

## WHAT TREATMENTS DO THE TEAM PROVIDE?

*Hei aha ma matou kaupapa?*

In offering treatment we try to look at all the aspects of a person's life that can help them recover. This includes:

- the need for information and encouragement
- social support
- cultural needs and cultural identity
- physical health
- thoughts and feelings
- lifestyle
- spirituality

We do this through:

### ***Education***

An important part of treatment is learning about psychosis and the things that may trigger it. We offer a variety of education on an individual basis or within a group.

### ***Medication***

People with psychosis often benefit from medication at some stage of their treatment. The young person's psychiatrist will check their general health and discuss the option of medication with them. They will meet with the young person regularly to see how they are doing and if medication has been prescribed, they will check how it is working.

*Our philosophy is to recommend medication only when we believe it will help with recovery, and only to use the lowest possible effective dose.*

## ***Taking the time to talk***

Coming to terms with an episode of psychosis is not easy. The experience usually generates a great number of questions and can lead to a variety of mixed thoughts and feelings. Talking through those thoughts and feelings with someone who understands what you are going through can usually help. All our staff are experienced at doing this and are more than happy to take the time to talk. Some have particular skills in helping people sort through distressing or problematic thoughts and feelings, working with them to develop more helpful ways of dealing with things. If you would like to find out more about this kind of talking, please discuss this with the young person's care manager.

## ***Family Services***

We run regular education sessions for family/whanau (and friends, flatmates). These are held over a number of evenings or two Saturday mornings. They are a chance for families to meet others in similar situations, to find out more about psychosis and to learn what can be done to help recovery.

We also recommend family members contact SF Wellington (Supporting Families). They give a range of information, advocacy and support for families/whanau and friends of people experiencing mental illness on a one-to-one or group basis (SF ph: 04-499 1049). We can contact SF on your behalf if you would prefer.

## ***Groups***

We run several kinds of groups, for young people of different ages, and one group for young Maori. Group activities include: socialising and sharing a meal, day and overnight trips, education and group discussions, and outdoor activities.

## ***Specialist Input***

The young person's care manager may suggest they also use other services, such as:

- Alcohol and Drug Counselling
- Maori Mental Health Services
- Pacific Island Mental Health Services
- Chaplaincy Services
- Interpreters.

## ***If the young person is annoying or irritating you***

- Be patient and prepared to let some things go, but also clear about the type of behaviour you won't tolerate
- Describe this behaviour specifically and explain how it affects you
- Say how you would prefer them to behave and why.

## ***If the person's behaviour is frightening you***

- Given them space
- If possible, move to quieter, more open surroundings
- Try to speak and act calmly
- Tell them what it is they are doing that is frightening
- Ask them what is wrong and what you can do to help
- Contact the police if you believe the situation is an emergency.

## ***Looking after yourself***

Having someone close to you experience psychosis can be stressful. It's a time when, quite naturally, a lot of attention is paid to the needs of the young person who is unwell. This can lead some people, especially parents, to neglect their own needs. If this happens everyone is worse off. It's harder on you, and it's much harder for you to help them if you are over-stressed. That's why all of us need to find a way to look after ourselves. This includes taking time out and finding healthy ways to take your mind off your worries. Most people say that having support of their own from a close friend or relative is invaluable. Again, SF are particularly good at providing support for relatives of people with a mental illness. We also cover this topic in more detail during our Family Education meetings.

## ***Coming to Family Education meetings***

We run education meetings for family members and friends that can help your understanding of psychosis and provide practical ideas on what can be done to help recovery. It is also a chance to meet other parents, family members and friends who are facing some of the same issues, and to hear about what has worked or not worked for them. Please ask one of our staff when the next family education meeting is happening.



person definitely needs medication, and that they are not well enough to make an informed decision for themselves at the time. This situation is almost always temporary, lasting as short a time as necessary.

Normally people decide for themselves whether to take medication or not. We encourage them to do this after they have spoken to their psychiatrist about all the pros and cons. That same freedom of choice goes for all the treatments we offer (eg, attendance at groups, psychological therapy, employment assistance, etc.).

### ***Do you put people in hospital against their will?***

Similarly to the question above, in rare situations which are also covered by the Mental Health Act\*, a person may be placed in hospital without their consent (**compulsory admission**). Again, this can only happen if two doctors believe the person would be very likely to harm themselves or someone else if they were not in hospital, or if they had become so unwell they were not caring for themselves properly (eg, not eating or drinking). In situations like this we have a responsibility to protect everyone involved. Hospital can provide a safe place for people to recover until they are well again.

It is important to note that compulsory admissions are quite rare. Less than 10% of our clients are admitted to hospital this way.

Sometimes people consent or choose to go to hospital as part of their recovery. This is called an **informal admission**.

At the Early Intervention Service we work with people to develop strategies that help them stay well, in the hope that they won't need to be admitted to hospital. We understand that most people prefer not to be in hospital and work hard to keep any stay as short as possible.

*\* The Mental Health Act (1992) spells out how and when a person can be admitted to hospital or given compulsory treatment, like medication. These laws aim to make things as safe and fair as possible for all concerned. They include details about the information family members must be given, and the process for challenging decisions to give compulsory treatment. If you would like to know more about the Mental Health Act please ask any of our staff. They will discuss it with you and give you a brochure containing additional information.*

## WHERE ARE WE?

*Kei whea a matou?*

You will find us at Pipitea House, 61 - 63 Thorndon Quay. This is a green building, next to Pipitea Marae and across the road from the Capital Gateway Centre. Reception is on the 2nd floor. Sometimes we ask people to come in to see us here. At other times we can come out to see people, either at home, or some other place if preferred, like a café.

Unfortunately we cannot offer free parking. There are metered car parks outside the building. We do not recommend parking in the Capital Gateway Centre if you don't shop there - you might get towed away.

## SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

*Te waipiro a me te rongoa whakawairangi*

Smoking is not allowed in the building, and people are not allowed to drink alcohol or take illegal drugs in or around the building. We also ask that people do not come to groups or other appointments if they are drunk or high/wasted as we've found they don't get much benefit from what is being offered. We can give support to help people cut down on, or stop, their use of alcohol or drugs if they would like this.

# WHO IS IN THE TEAM?

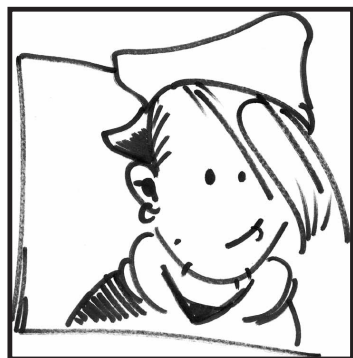
## *Ko wai ta matou tima?*

Early Intervention staff work together as a team, offering their different skills. These are:

- **Nursing\*** - ongoing support and education to assist recovery
- **Occupational therapy\*** - help to find the right kind of activities that promote recovery
- **Social work\*** - help for families and with living situations
- **Kai manaaki\*** - a Maori mental health clinician combining both Maori and western methods of health care
- **Psychology** - 'talking' treatment to help the person understand and manage their psychosis, as well as other problems like depression, anxiety or trauma
- **Psychiatry** - specialist doctors who check overall health and recommend medications and other treatments that can help recovery
- **Employment consultants** - ready to help the person back into work and/or study should they need it
- **Reception staff** - on the phones, welcoming visitors to the service and making sure everything runs smoothly
- **Duty person** - there is always one staff member 'on duty' during the day, to take incoming calls and deal with any issues that may come up. This duty role is shared between the different members of the clinical team.

The staff at the Early Intervention Service work together with the young person and, where appropriate, their family/whanau (or friends and flatmates), aiming to help them with their recovery. Generally two or more staff work with each young person and/or their family/whanau at any one time.

\* These staff all work as care-managers as part of what they do.



## ***Will the young person's GP be involved in their care?***

Yes, if possible. We try to work closely with their doctor to give the best, coordinated treatment. If the young person hasn't got a GP we can help them find one.

## ***Should the person stop work or study?***

Some people who experience psychosis find that they need to take a break from work or study for a while. Others choose to carry on working or studying, but cut down on pressure by going part-time or getting extra help.

If requested, our staff can speak to the young person's employer or tutor and explain their situation, having agreed beforehand about how much information they want us to share. We can also provide a medical certificate for sick leave, and help with an application for a Work and Income benefit.

We believe that getting back to work or study as soon as they are ready helps a person recover. Our employment consultants assist people with this, and offer ongoing support to help them stay in their job or course.

## ***Is my family member/friend/flatmate dangerous? Are we at risk?***

The person **most** at risk of harm is **the person experiencing psychosis themselves** (they are more likely to harm themselves than anyone else). It does sometimes happen (very rarely) that a person experiencing psychosis poses a risk to others. Every mental health service is required to take appropriate action to prevent harm occurring to any individual whenever this situation arises. If you think there is a risk of your young person harming themselves or someone else please contact their care manager, psychiatrist or the duty person. If the risk is immediate please phone the police (111) (also refer to 'Who should I call in an emergency?' below).

## ***Do you force people to take medication?***

In rare situations which are covered by the Mental Health Act\*, a person may be given medication without their consent, though we try hard to avoid this. It can only happen if two doctors agree the

## SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

*He awhi te kai tautoko*

You are welcome to bring a support person or advocate to any meeting you have with us.

*An advocate is someone who works on your behalf to make sure you get the services you are entitled to, and that your feelings and needs are heard.*

Advocacy and support services are provided by:

- The Wellington Mental Health Consumers Union, ph: 04-801 7769
- SF Wellington (Supporting Families), ph: 04-499 1049
- Advocacy Network Services (contracted to the Health & Disability Commissioner) 0800 42 36 38 or 389 7701 (Wellington) 237 0418 (Porirua)

## HAVING YOUR SAY

*Ko tou e korerohia*

We are always trying to improve on what we do and welcome any feedback you may have about the services we provide. If you have any comments you would like to make you can:

- Talk to any of our staff
- Use the suggestions box in the waiting room
- Talk with our Consumer Advisor (please ask at reception for their contact details).

If you wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of this service, you will find information about how to do this in the waiting room at Pipitea House. Formal complaints will receive a response within two weeks.

## WELCOME TO THE EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

*Nau mai piki mai te tari "EIS" ki Poneke*

The Early Intervention Service is an 'Early Intervention in Psychosis' service. This means that we try to help - **as early as possible** - a young person who is experiencing psychosis. We provide a service to people aged 13 to 25 who are experiencing psychosis for the first time, or who have not previously had treatment for psychosis. The Early Intervention Service is a community mental health team, part of Capital and Coast District Health Board. We cover the Wellington region, including Kapiti, Porirua, Wellington and the Hutt Valley.

## WHAT IS PSYCHOSIS?

*He aha te mate ahotea?*

'Psychosis' is a medical term used to describe a condition where a person's thinking and perceptions become disturbed. It can also cause changes in mood and behaviour. There are three main **symptoms** a person with psychosis may experience:

- **Thought disorder** - disorganised thinking, such as feeling confused, finding it hard to concentrate or feeling like their thoughts are jumbled.
- **Delusions** - unusual beliefs which seem very real and often cause worry or changes in behaviour.
- **Hallucinations** - sensations that seem real, but are not experienced by anyone else, like seeing or hearing things no one else does.

Though each person is affected by these symptoms in a different way, psychosis is usually distressing and may stop a person from carrying on with their normal life. (Please see our 'What is psychosis?' handout for more detailed information about the symptoms of psychosis)

Psychosis could be a sign of serious mental illness developing. By getting help as early as possible a person experiencing psychosis has the best chance of recovery.

## At the Early Intervention Service we help people work out if they are experiencing psychosis

We do this by talking with them and (if possible) their family or other people who know them well, asking questions about what has been happening. This early stage of talking is called an **assessment**. If the assessment shows the young person is experiencing psychosis we can work with them to develop a treatment plan.

A treatment plan includes:

- Supporting the person in their **recovery**

Recovery is happening when someone is living well in the presence or absence of psychosis

- Giving support to the person's family/whanau, friends and/or flatmates
- Helping the person and their family/whanau, close friends and/or flatmates understand what psychosis is.
- Helping the person learn what they can do to stay well and what to do if they have another episode of psychosis.
- Linking the person and their family/whanau in with other people and services who can also give support and help them recover.
- Activities and group programmes. These are a chance for a young person recovering from psychosis to get out, meet others, socialise, have some fun, and try out some new challenges.

We also give you a **care manager**. This person will be your main contact at the Early Intervention Service and is responsible for arranging the care you receive from us.

### What if the young person is not experiencing psychosis?

If the assessment shows the young person is not experiencing psychosis, then this service is not the best one to help. We will talk with them and their family/whanau about other services that could help.

### Who should I call if I need help urgently or after hours?

During normal working hours (8.30 to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday) you can call the Early Intervention Service on 04-494 9161.

If you call this number after hours you will go through to the Capital and Coast Health Mental Health Line. The mental health professionals there will discuss the situation with you and are often able to help with your concern over the phone.

If not, they will put you through to the CAT Team (The Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team). The experienced clinicians at CATT provide crisis assessment and treatment when there are urgent concerns about a person's wellbeing or safety. They will help you manage the situation until the staff you normally see here at the Early Intervention Service are available again, usually the next working day.

If you require emergency help, especially if the situation involves serious or immediate risk, call the emergency services (Police, Fire or Ambulance) on 111.

CATT are not an emergency service.

At any time when there is a serious or immediate risk that someone could be harmed, call the Police (111).



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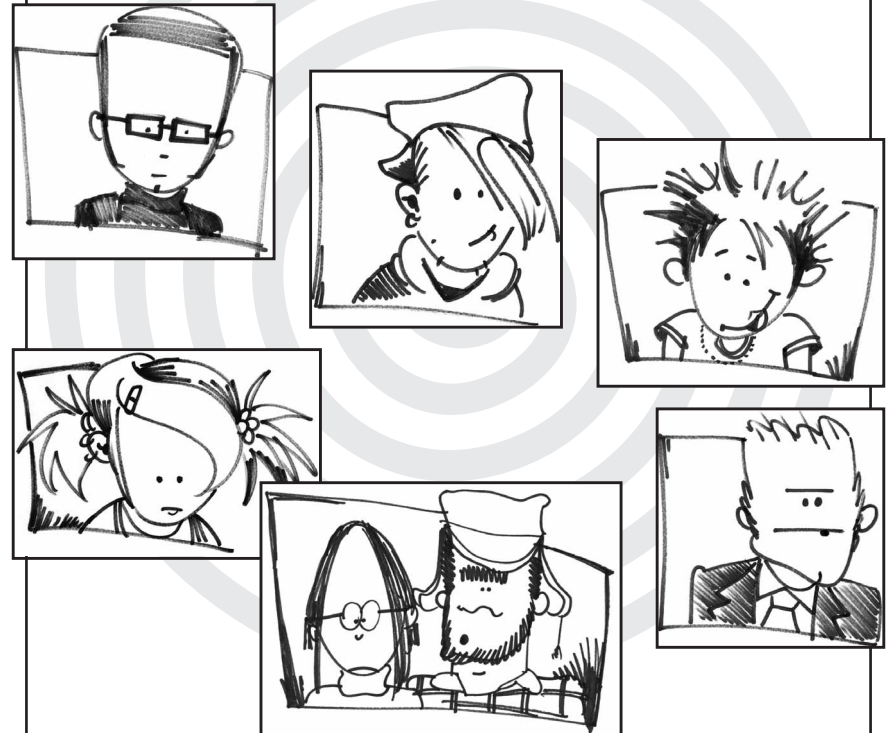
Illustrations by Campbell Kneale



Wellington Early Intervention Service  
Pipitea House, 61-63 Thorndon Quay,  
PO Box 1729, Wellington  
Phone 04-494 9161, Fax 04-494 9163

# Information for Families, Friends and Flatmates

*Rangahou korero mo nga whanau,  
nga hoa, me nga noho hoa.*



Wellington Early Intervention Service  
Pipitea House, 61-63 Thorndon Quay,  
Phone 04-494 9161

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### *Ka patai atu hei awhinatia*

There is a lot of information in this booklet and reading it may raise further questions for you. If you would like more information about anything mentioned here, or any other aspect of your family members/friends care, please feel free to ask. Similarly, please don't hesitate to bring to our attention anything you think it important for us to know, or any other ways you think we may be able to help.

