
MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Magic’ in group support for people with mood disorders

A certain magic happens in a support group, says Lifeline counsellor, Sophie Walker, extolling the virtues of group programs run by Lifeline’s Gordon-based Harbour to Hawkesbury centre.

"There's a lovely self-generating collective wisdom and care among participants," she said. "It's wonderful to see the support and empathy they offer each other."

Sophie and psychotherapist, Olivia Saxon, co-facilitate a group program known as REACH - an educational support group for people with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and/or depression.

Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury is currently enrolling participants for the next nine-week REACH program which starts on Tuesday, February 7. It is one of several support groups facilitated at the centre.

"When people with similar mood disorders get together in a safe, supportive environment, there's a connection, a collective wisdom of interpersonal feedback, normalising, encouragement – and much more," said Sophie. "There's definitely a magic about it."

Developed by The Black Dog Institute, REACH stands for Responsibility, Education, Acceptance, Connection and Hope.

"It aims to increase participants' understanding and awareness of their disorder and its impact on their lives," Olivia said. "They learn strategies to prevent, minimise and manage their symptoms and to recognise trigger points.

"The program helps them develop their own, unique, wellbeing plan, empowering them to take a more proactive role in their wellbeing."

Participants who complete the nine-week program at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury's Gordon centre will gain access to an ongoing support group for people with mood disorders, which meets once a month.

Other groups facilitated by Lifeline counsellors in coming months cover anger management, problem gambling, suicide bereavement, hoarding disorder and a new group for carers and families of people with a hoarding disorder.

For more information, contact Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury on 02 9498 8805 or email admin@lifelineh2h.org.au.

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