



GASP!

Volume 1, Issue 6 - June 2004

GASP - Group Assisting Springvale Puffers
c/- Springvale Community Rehabilitation Service
P O Box 90 Springvale 3171



Editor:
Cheryl Wright

Website:
www.cheryl-wright.com

Email:
write_cheryl@optusnet.com.au

Coping with COPD—Can Psychology Help?

by Gillinder Bedi

Having any kind of medical problem can be very stressful. When these problems are chronic they often present challenges to both the person involved and their family.

There is evidence that people living with COPD are at risk of having difficulties in coping with the stress of their illness. In some cases these may be short-term issues, however in others people can develop more serious problems such as depression or anxiety. While some people are able to manage these challenges without help, for others psychological assistance can help.

What can psychology offer?

The field of health-related psychology specialises in helping people with medical difficulties to manage their own mental and physical health. Talking to a psychologist can be an opportunity to look at ways in which your physical health problems have affected you emotionally. It can also involve looking at how patterns of thinking might influence the way you feel and behave. This is particularly important, because the way you feel and behave can affect both how much you enjoy life, and your physical health.

What does seeing a psychologist involve?



The first couple of meetings with a psychologist would be an opportunity for the psychologist to find out about the specific challenges you've been facing and for you both to work out some goals for dealing with them. It's also a time for you to decide whether you feel like you could work with that psychologist towards your goals. From there how often you meet and what you discuss would depend on your needs and what goals you have both agreed to.

Psychologists are governed by the ethical standards of the profession and will discuss issues such as confidentiality with you in the first session.

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Contributions Needed!

Ongoing contributions required
to keep the newsletter going.

Please help!

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Coping with COPD—Can Psychology Help? (Continued from page 1)

Who might benefit from seeing a psychologist?

If you answer yes to any of the following, it might be worth considering psychology:

- Would you like to discuss how you are coping with your illness with someone outside of the family?
- Have you noticed that your thoughts or feelings have been particularly negative?
- Do you feel panicky or anxious in some or certain situations?

- Do you avoid certain situations because of thoughts about what might happen there?

Would you like to work out some goals for the future, or develop some strategies to better manage how you live with your illness?

Psychology and the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program

Starting in May, there is a clinical psychology intern attached to the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program on Mon-

days and Thursdays.

This means that if you are experiencing any of the challenges described above, or would like to ask any questions relating to psychology and COPD, you can ring Gillinder Bedi, on 8558-9158.



Christmas in July Luncheon

We will be holding a Christmas in July luncheon at the Clayton RSL (Carinish Rd, Clayton) on Thursday 22nd July 2004.

There is no charge for financial members, but partners and all others will need to pay \$9 per person (which is darned cheap!).

We will have a set menu, with a choice of two soups, five mains, and three desserts.



This could be a good opportunity for us to all get

to know each other better.

Flyers regarding this activity can be obtained from either Viv or Norma.

Please advise whether or not you will be attending asap so that numbers can be finalised.

Many thanks to Bill for organising this with the Clayton RSL.



Exercise Diaries

We are extremely lucky that the SCHC offers a pulmonary rehabilitation program. We are even more fortunate that we have access to the maintenance program—most groups are not so lucky.



However, to get the most benefit out of the program, you need to undertake the exercise program at home as well. Sue Wright has created an exercise diary so that we can track our progress better.

If you haven't received a diary, or need a replacement one, contact Sue in the physiotherapy department.

Help Wanted

We desperately need your help.

If this newsletter is to continue, we need regular contributions.

The previous issue was October 2003; that's solely because we had no contributions to publish.



Gasp! has become a good source of information and entertainment—we don't want to lose it, so please send us your contributions.

