

Media Release

Mental illness stigma forums

11 April 2016

In a collaborative effort between Murray PHN, Hume Partners in Recovery (PIR), and consumer and carer groups the *'Exploding the Myths'* forum series will commence on the 21 April at The Cube, Wodonga. The aim of the forum series is to help stop stigma and so improve the lives of people with severe and persistent mental illness, their family and friends.

The first forum *'Balancing Bipolar'* is presented by local consumer group, Moodswingers, and will reveal the reality behind the diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder. Speakers include Dr Jan Ormond from Black Dog Institute and Carlo Laruccia from beyondblue.

Two further forums will be held in May and June and will focus on Borderline Personality Disorder and Hearing Voices.

Hume Partners in Recovery Manager Jenny Donnelly said that the objective of the forums is for community members, including service providers and family members, to have an opportunity to receive accurate information about common mental illnesses which are often misrepresented.

"We've all grown up with prejudices and stereotypes in relation to mental illness that are passed on in society and reinforced by the people that we know.

"We want people to leave the forums knowing more about mental illness than they did when they arrived", she said.

In this first forum the formal presentations will be followed by a Q&A session from a panel including Hume PIR Intake Triage Clinician Rachel Harvey and Moodswingers co-founder Karen Purtle. Dale Skinner of the Black Dog Institute and Moodswingers will be the host for the evening.

Media contact

For more details, contact Murray PHN Communications Coordinator Zhoe Jess on 0400 952120 or email communications@murrayphn.org.au