



# LifeSpan

Investigating the Mental Health of people  
with Intellectual Disability across the LifeSpan

Welcome to the sixth Issue of the  
LifeSpan Project Newsletter.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Data Collection Update
- ◆ Resource Review :DM-ID
- ◆ LifeSpan Events
- ◆ Acknowledgment from Orana Inc
- ◆ Staff Profile: Caroline Mohr
- ◆ Information Box/Upcoming Events
- ◆ Research Team & Contact Details



### Data Collection Update

The LifeSpan Team has now completed 11 mail-outs with the more recent coverage of the Riverland, Mid North and North Eastern suburbs This will take us up to a total of 4297 consent letters posted so far across the state .

Given that we are potentially canvassing between 7000 and 8000 people in the metropolitan and regional areas of SA we are now approximately half way towards reaching our target population through our mail rollouts across the state.

The response rate continues to be around the 13% mark but of the received consents we have a successful 80% return of completed questionnaires which provides us with the valuable research data that we are seeking.

DECS has produced 45 responses to date of those people 16+ years who have an intellectual disability and who are in still in school, or in the transition process towards post school options. We are hopeful of a greater return as further rollouts occur across the DECS regions as it is crucial that we receive the data that is relevant to this young population.

A reminder that if you have not had the chance to fill in your Questionnaire booklet(s) it is not too late to do so. We will be happy to receive them as soon as you are able to spare 45 minutes to fill them in and send them off. Remember to use the reply paid envelope to save yourself the postage cost.

If you have lost the consent forms or Questionnaire booklet please contact us and we will be happy to send out what you need to participate.

*The LifeSpan Project newsletter will be a quarterly publication with updates about the progress of our research, useful information relevant to research participants, information about our team members and their extensive experience in the fields of intellectual disability and mental health, and upcoming events.*

## Resource Review

### Press Release Announcement

The National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD), recently announced the publication of a new diagnostic manual developed in association with the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

The title of this manual is the: **Diagnostic Manual - Intellectual Disability (DM-ID): A textbook of Diagnosis of Mental Disorders in Persons with Intellectual Disability.** The purpose of the DM-ID is to obtain a more accurate psychiatric diagnosis for persons with Intellectual Disabilities (ID). The need for this manual is long overdue; Persons with ID have been under-diagnosed or mis-diagnosed due to the limitations of expressive and receptive language skills.

A shorter volume, **Diagnostic Manual - Intellectual Disability (DM-ID): A Clinical Guide for Diagnosis of Mental Disorders in Persons with Intellectual Disability** has been abridged for clinical usefulness. It focuses on issues related to diagnosis in people with ID, the limitations in applying DSM-IV-TR criteria to people with ID, and the adaptation of the diagnostic criteria.

Now the manuals are available, clinicians will be able to identify signs and symptoms of specific psychiatric disorders. The DM-ID teaches how to arrive at a diagnosis using the same classification system using the DSM-IV-TR. Adaptations, where applicable, are applied to various diagnostic criteria.

## LifeSpan Events

### Riverland Trip

On June 28th the Adelaide research team presented a LifeSpan information session at the Berri Resort Hotel to parents, carers and service providers in the Riverland region. Public relations for this event included an interview with the ABC Riverland radio and a news item broadcast on the regional news channel, .....

Thank you to all those who attended on the day and to Ruth Firstbrook, LAAS, for facilitating our presence in the Riverland. The team also had a team building moment as you can see by the photo below.

### Conference Presentations

The team also presented papers at the following conferences:

- D'Arpa conference held in July 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2007.
- The Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine Annual National Conference, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2007.

### Industry Partners Meeting

The next IPM is Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October at the Child and Youth Specialist Services office (formerly SISS) at Regency Park, 9.30 - 11.30AM.

### \*\*\*\*\*Gift Voucher Winners\*\*\*\*\*

By just providing their consent to participate in LifeSpan another three people were the lucky winners of a Woolworth's gift voucher to the value of \$50.00

- Narelle Jantke (Mail-out 7)
- Mark Bond (Mail-out 8)
- James Kelbie. (Mail-out 9)

A lucky draw will occur for each future mail out.

*(All our lucky winners are selected using a random number generator via BP Software.com).*



**Staff Profile: Chief Investigator  
Caroline Mohr**

**Caroline Mohr:**

Dr Caroline Mohr is a clinical psychologist and researcher in the field of mental health care for people with an intellectual disability. Following 20 years experience in psychiatry and intellectual disability services she completed a PhD in 2003, which developed the Developmental Behaviour Checklist for Adults. The DBC-A is a carer completed checklist of emotional and behavioural problems for adults with intellectual disability.

Caroline lives in Christchurch, NZ where she works in a mental health service for people with ID. As one of the Chief Investigators on the LifeSpan Project, she regularly travels to SA to work with the project team and supervise the higher degree students whose studies are supported by the funding package in the research programme.



*Caroline Mohr*

**Orana Inc's Acknowledgment of LifeSpan**

Orana is an organization providing support for people who have an intellectual disability and are pleased to be part of the LifeSpan project.

As a service manager I saw this project as exciting, as up until now most mental health issues have gone unrecognized and untreated. This gives us as service providers a basis of communication, evidence and direction when dealing with people with complex issues. The language used in the checklists now level the approach with supporting people when attending doctors and specialist appointments.

The staff that have used these checklists have all commented that they were very thought provoking and ensured that the holistic approach to people with disabilities were recognized. The checklist gives carers/staff the baseline to manage or seek further support and advice if scores indicate this evidence.

The staff used a time when there were no interruptions and could think of that client, to get the best result, These checklists need to be carefully thought through to ensure that the score does indicate what is really happening in the client's life. Some staff needed to have some discussion relating to some questions which lead to very positive and clear scoring.

The benefits for the client will be invaluable as will the outcomes for the carers, staff and organization as we will have an effective tool to gauge any changes for clients and seek appropriate support. Thank you for this opportunity to be part of the LifeSpan Project

**Carolyn Edwards, Manager  
Loxton/Berri Accommodation Service, Orana Inc**

## Information and Upcoming Events

**Information Packs** - containing information about the project and details about your involvement with the research can be obtained from the address below.

**Mailing list** - Let us know if you want to be on our mailing list to receive our newsletters and new information via email as it becomes available (contact details below).

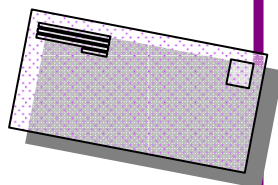
**Conferences** - The team's next conference presentations will be at the Mental Health and Ageing Conference October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2007

**Training** - The team will be providing training to Staff at Orana Inc in November the is year on the topics of;

- Understanding the differing prevalence
- Nature of MH
- Development of MH conditions
- Transitional problems of young people with MH between service types
- MH and the older person with ID.

## Contact Details

Ann Rymill  
LifeSpan Project  
PO Box 34  
Ferryden Park SA 5010  
Ph: 83486500 Fax: 83486599  
[ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au)



## Research Team

### CHIEF INVESTIGATORS

- ❖ Professor Bruce Tonge
- ❖ Professor Stewart Einfeld
- ❖ Dr Caroline Mohr

Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology, Monash University

### RESEARCH TEAM

#### Project Manager

- ❖ Ann Rymill  
[ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:ann.rymill@med.monash.edu.au)

#### Higher Degree Research Students

- ❖ Barbara Pennington  
[barbara.pennington@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:barbara.pennington@med.monash.edu.au)
- ❖ Phil Flint  
[phil.flint@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:phil.flint@med.monash.edu.au)

#### Research Officers

- ❖ Sharon Stinson  
[sharon.stinson@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:sharon.stinson@med.monash.edu.au)
- ❖ Caroline Keating (Melbourne)  
[caroline.keating@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:caroline.keating@med.monash.edu.au)

The LifeSpan Project is a Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology Research Project. It is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and APEX Foundation for Research into Intellectual Disability.

*This project is consistent with the Federal Government's National Research priorities and the Third National Mental Health Policy.*

Check out our Webpage - [www.med.monash.edu/spppm/research/devpsych/lifespan.html](http://www.med.monash.edu/spppm/research/devpsych/lifespan.html) and find out more about the project. It will be updated regularly as the research progresses.