Anxiety Matters – Publication Notes

Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria

ARCVic is a state-wide community mental health organisation, providing support, recovery, early intervention and educational services to people and families living with anxiety disorders. Education, training and consultation services are provided to professionals and agencies to promote wider availability of services for people with anxiety disorders. ARCVic is a charitable, non-profit organisation, funded by the Department of Human Services, and supported by membership, donations and sponsorships. ARCVic is the business and promotional name of the Obsessive Compulsive & Anxiety Disorders Foundation Victoria (OCADF Vic). The OCADF Vic was established in 1987. OCADF Vic is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporations Act, governed by a committee of management. The Committee of Management includes people with anxiety disorders, family members, carers and professionals.

ARCVic’s core functions encompass the following areas: support, self-help, recovery, skills, education, training and advocacy. Services include: telephone counselling HelpLine; support, self-help and social groups; recovery programs and workshops; family and carer support and education programs; community education; information & library services; advocacy; counselling; early intervention programs; professional education and training programs.

ARCVic’s mission is to foster the emotional, mental and social well-being of people living with anxiety disorders; and to empower people with support, knowledge and skills that will build resilience and recovery, and reduce the impact of anxiety disorders on people’s lives.

Anxiety Matters is a periodical publication which is produced by the Obsessive Compulsive & Anxiety Disorders Foundation of Victoria Inc., 292 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills, Victoria, 3127. The purpose of Anxiety Matters is to enable a sharing of information between people with anxiety disorders, carers, clinicians and researchers, and to provide a source of hope, encouragement and support to members.

Contributions

Contributions to Anxiety Matters are welcome. All contributions are subject to approval, and must be consistent with the principles and purposes of ARCVic. The Editor reserves the right to edit contributions or request editing by the contributor.

Disclaimers

Views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the ARCVic Committee of Management. The printing of stories of people’s personal experiences of anxiety disorders and recovery stories does not indicate that ARCVic endorses any treatments or coping strategies suggested. People with an anxiety disorder should not consider any articles or stories in this Publication as personal advice regarding treatment. Such advice should be obtained directly from a clinician.

Notices published in this Publication regarding new research which contain requests for participants does not imply that the research is endorsed by ARCVic; however the Committee of Management regulates research projects which are presented to ARCVic, and seeks to ensure that the research proposed has obtained approval from the relevant ethical committees of the auspicing body.

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Please direct all submissions or enquiries to the Editor or Assistant Editor.

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Acknowledgments

For permission to reprint articles, thank you to:
Leader Newspapers

Thank you to all the health professionals and members of ARCVic who contributed stories and articles to this Newsletter.

Printed by ARCVic, Surrey Hills, Victoria, Australia
Dear Members,

On behalf of all the staff and volunteers at the Anxiety Recovery Centre, I would like to wish you all a very safe and happy holiday season. May your Christmas be a joyous occasion and the New Year bring hope for the future.

Warm regards

Michelle Graeber

CEO
6 week Group Recovery Programs for 2012:

“Managing Stress & Anxiety”

Term 1: 8th February to 14th March 2012
Course duration: 6 sessions x 2.5 hrs
Time: 6:30am – 9.00 pm Wednesday
Cost: $180 for 6 week program
(Medicare rebates available)

“Shyness & Social Anxiety”

Term 1: 16th February to 22nd March 2012
Course duration: 6 sessions x 2 hrs
Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm Thursday
Cost: $180 for 6 week program
(Medicare rebates available)

“Mindfulness for Anxiety” with Dr Craig Hassed

Term 2: 21st May to 2nd July 2012
Course duration: 6 sessions x 1.25 hrs
Time: 6.00pm – 7.30pm Monday
Cost: $200 for 6 week program

For further information or to register your interest in attending any of these groups, by contacting Dr Louise Cooper on 9830 0566, lcooper@arcvic.org.au

"As we advance in life it becomes more and more difficult, but in fighting the difficulties the inmost strength of the heart is developed."
by Vincent van Gogh

Vincent Willem van Gogh (March 30, 1853 – July 29, 1890) was a Dutch post-Impressionist painter whose work, notable for its rough beauty, emotional honesty, and bold color, had a far-reaching influence on 20th-century art. After years of painful anxiety and frequent bouts of mental illness, he died at the age of 37 from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. His work was then known to only a handful of people and appreciated by fewer still.
ARCVic Recovery Programs & Workshops

"Parenting Anxious Children"

Presented by: Gael Harris - ARCVic Community Education Officer

This session is designed to suit parents of pre-school or primary school age children and will cover:

- The signs and symptoms associated with anxiety in children
- How both personality and environment contribute
- Helpful ways to support your child
- Tips on building resilience
- & Where to go for more information/help

The dates and venues for 2012:
Term 1: Tuesday March 6th in Balwyn East
Term 2: Tuesday May 15th in Hillside
Term 3: Friday August 10th in Frankston South
Term 4: Monday November 23rd in Eltham

$10 Donation at door please - Bookings required for catering purposes

Mastering Stress for VCE Workshop

facilitated by, Aisha Brydon - Psychologist and ARCVic consultant
Each participant receives materials to take away.

A 3 hour Morning Workshop held at your school (with mid-morning break) including:

- Learning strategies to reduce and manage stress and anxiety whilst studying for VCE.
- How to recognise when things are getting too much.
- How to plan your study time and improve problem solving.
- How to stay motivated and maintain a healthy mood.
- How to create your VCE study team.
- Where to get help.

Cost: $300 for group of maximum 20

How to Manage a VCE House - a workshop for families

To be held at your school for parents—topics include:

- How to help your family's VCE student to stay healthy and productive when preparing for and sitting exams
- Maintaining healthy relationships
- How to offer practical and emotional support
- Maintaining a healthy productive brain
- Healthy sleep and recreation
- How to help rather than hinder
- When enough is enough
- Managing the rest of the family during stressful times

Evening workshop—2 hours (timing by arrangement with school)
Cost: $20.00 per family

For further information or register your interest by contacting Dr Louise Cooper on 9830 0566, lcooper@arcvic.org.au
Professional Development Opportunities:

"safeTALK" Workshop: Suicide Alertness for Everyone

safeTALK is presented by Michelle Graeber (CEO - ARCVic) and Renee Tsatsis (ARCVic Helpline Coordinator)

Why come to a safeTALK workshop?
In this 3 hour workshop, you will learn how to become a suicide alert helper and be better prepared to:

- Notice and respond to situations in which thoughts of suicide may be present
- Apply basic TALK steps (Tell, Ask, Listen, & KeepSafe)
- Connect the person with thoughts of suicide to suicide first aid help and further community resources

safeTALK is run by registered LivingWorks Trainers and uses internationally standardised learning materials.

Two-Day Group Training Workshop

ARCVic will be hosting the Pathways - Freedom from Obsessions and Compulsions Using Skills (FOCUS) workshops in 2012. The workshop is developed for psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health professionals who have training and experience in CBT.

Attending this two-day workshop certifies you to introduce and maintain an ongoing FOCUS program in your clinical practice.

**Time:** 9.30am - 4.30pm

**Cost:** $250.00

**Venue:** Anxiety Recovery Centre 292 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills

If you would like further information about these workshops, dates and venues, please contact ARCVic on 9830 0566.
Media Watch

The reading cure: a hand reaching out from the pages

READING YOUR WAY to health - it sounds too good to be true, right? But according to the members of a new book group in Surrey Hills, ‘bibliotherapy’, the use of reading as therapy, is much more than the latest fad.

The Anxiety Book Club meets at the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre on the last Wednesday night of every month, and its members say reading and discussing self-help books, novels and poems brings them not just social enjoyment and support but valuable insights, increased wellbeing and inspiration.

The group, which is free and open to anyone, is the brainchild of the Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria, which has just moved its offices to Surrey Hills.

ARCVic coordinator of consumer services Tabitha Dougall says that behind the group's formation is the knowledge that reading can 'enlighten [people] with information, understanding and helpful strategies towards recovery'.

While therapeutic book groups may be a new development, the understanding that reading has the power to heal is as old as classical Greece - and just how therapeutic reading is has now been shown by controlled studies. In one striking study, 70 per cent of people with depression recovered after reading a highly regarded self-help book, David Burns's *Feeling Good: the New Mood Therapy* - and were still better three years later.

Other studies have found that ‘therapeutic’ book groups improve people's social confidence as well as their awareness of themselves and broader life issues.

Anxiety Book Group member Marnie, who has obsessive compulsive disorder, says she values both the tips she gets for managing OCD and the enjoyable and supportive social environment.

'I find it quite uplifting, and I find snippets of joy in tapping into books, quotations, poems and other bits and pieces,’ Marnie says, adding that people do not have to be big readers to get the benefits because the texts are read in bite-size chunks.

Group co-facilitator and ARCVic volunteer Brian Lynch points out reading can also 'remind you of the of the range of options and possibilities available. One of the worst aspects of anxiety and depression is that they close your options and narrow your thinking.' Brian says the group offers a supportive, non-pressured sense of community, with members participating or listening as they choose.

The British playwright Alan Bennett once wrote that in really good literature the reader recognises a feeling or perspective they thought was theirs alone, and ‘it as as if a hand has come out, and taken yours’. It's a hand the Anxiety Book Group and its fellow therapeutic book groups are making available for all.

The ARCVic Anxiety Book Group meets at 7.30 p.m. on the last Wednesday of every month in the Maitland Meeting Room at the back of Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, 157 Union Rd Surrey Hills. More info: ARCVic ph. 9830 0566.


Photo: Wil Gleeson

Photos info: Tabitha Dougall and colleagues at ARCVic model a book group

ARCVic team would like to thank all those who participated and sponsored this year's Melbourne Marathon on 9th October 2011. $1,742.00 was raised this year which will help to . If you would like to join us on the next run, please call Carmel, Renee or Angelique at the office on 9830 0533.
The Opening Door

"The Opening Door" is dedicated to featuring original written works – stories, poems, book reviews, inspirational thoughts, comments, of people and families who live with anxiety and related disorders. Any contributions to this section are most welcome – many people who are unable to attend our support groups are able to find comfort and hope from reading stories by other people who experience anxiety disorders, and it also provides an opportunity for professionals, family members, carers and friends to gain a more empathic understanding of anxiety disorders and how they can more effectively help.

Please send your story, poem, idea, helpful quote or other contribution to: The Assistant Editor, ARCVic, PO Box 23, Ashburton, Vic, 3147, or email. arcmail@arcvic.com.au. Your contribution can be published anonymously, however your name and address must be supplied. Please note “the rules” covering contributions in the Newsletter Notes (inside front cover of Newsletter).

‘The day I buried my demons’

I have been suffering from OCD and other anxiety disorders since 1971, which all started with germs and worries about my health. The OCD started getting worse in November, 1974 and May, 1975. It came on really bad with intrusive thoughts. I could not make them go away and found them very distressing. I felt enormous guilt and I was afraid to tell anybody about them. I carried on the best way that I could and I went around thinking I was a bad person for years. In the summer of 1978, the intrusive thoughts came on really bad again and I thought I might lose control. I went on holiday to Southern Ireland in August that year and was bombarded with horrible thoughts, during the two weeks that I was there. I did not get any peace from them and felt enormous guilt. I remember travelling back to England and had thoughts that I might lose control and hijack the plane.

In the summer of 1982, I was referred to a psychiatrist to be assessed and I was put on medication. This helped a little bit but did not get to the root of the problem. I was also referred to a neurologist, as I was having involuntary movements in my arms and legs. They carried out tests but they came back negative. The problems can only be anxiety related.

In January 1999, my father died and this made my anxiety problems worse. The following year, spring 2000, I was referred to a psychiatrist and a psychologist. I was assessed and my medication was changed. In the autumn of 2000, I was assessed by another mental health team and was diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. They put me on the waiting list for exposure therapy for a year and in the autumn of 2001, I started having exposure therapy. This involved evoking the thoughts three times a day, giving a score on a scale of one to ten. I responded well to the treatment but in January 2001, I started having setbacks. My medication was changed and I started to feel depressed.

In August 2002, my mother died suddenly and my whole world fell apart. I had to move house and my OCD and anxiety went through the roof. I became more depressed and I used to go to bed, hoping not to wake up. I was also overestimating danger and had severe phobias. I telephoned the Samaritans, No Panic helpline and talking to my staff counsellor on a regular basis. I had a lot of guilt in me and was constantly beating my self up over past mistakes, thinking I was a bad person. I was a complete wreck, with low self esteem and loss of confidence. I began receiving bereavement counselling and this lasted for ten months. The counsellor’s name was Debbie; she was very helpful. And at the end of the counselling sessions, Debbie gave her opinion on me and told me I was a very nice person. She also told me I was a good person and wished me all the best for the future.

In the summer of 2003, things started improving; I started enjoying life again. I had a few setbacks but kept going. In April 2004, I took a ten week course at South Thames College, Tooting in South London. This was an introduction to counselling, with the possibility of me becoming a counsellor and at the end of the course, I decided not to progress with it.

In May 2007, I became a volunteer warden for the National Trust at Box Hill, Surrey. My role was to assist the full time warden with the duties on Box Hill and Headley Heath. This was to litter pick the area and check on the cattle and sheep. I really enjoyed my time there. On one occasion I was sent by the duty warden to look for one of
the sheep that was unaccounted for. I managed to locate the sheep but sadly it was dead. I dealt with the situation calmly by first radioing the duty warden. She came and we both got it down the hill and into the Land Rover. We then drove back to Warren Farm, with the carcass in the back of the vehicle. After that, I just carried on as if nothing has happened. The duty warden was very impressed on how I handled the situation, knowing that I suffer from OCD. I also volunteered as a warden at Osterley Park, West London. This was a big turning point for me, giving me enormous confidence.

In October 2009, I took a three month course at Merrist Wood College near Guildford. This was a course on countryside crafts and estate skills, in preparation for a career change. This involved skills such as fencing, sheep handling, coppicing, hedge laying and tractor driving. The tractor driving was amazing. We had a day of it and I really enjoyed it. The tutor said I done very well and I thought it was not bad for somebody who cannot drive a car.

Going back to 2002 and 2003, I was a total ‘wreck’ and I did not have any confidence in myself. For someone who used to overestimate danger, getting into a cab of a tractor and qualifying shows how far I have come. Back in 2003, driving a tractor would have been light years away. For someone who has Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Anxiety Disorder and had severe phobias, this is a fantastic breakthrough, giving encouragement and hope to other sufferers. A lot of people were very pleased with me, including Jean from No Panic, Sutton and Merton and Alison from Southgate OCD group, as well as the people who attend these two groups. Also, Colin from No Panic and Joel from OCD action were very pleased too.

When I took on this four day tractor driving course, I took on the anxiety and won. When I was in the cab of the tractor, on the day of my test, I was not only doing it for my future career, I was doing it for my fellow sufferers and I was determined not to let them down. I now volunteer at Merrist Wood College, working with tractors for future employment. This is using annual leave from my current job, which I face redundancy in the future. I have just got an NVQ in customer services, level two, which is equivalent to five GCSE’s. I hope other sufferers benefit from my achievements and become successful themselves. I believe there is no such thing as “I can’t” and I believe you can if you think you can.

Gerry McEvilly

This story was taken from the transcript sent to ARCVic by Gerry in September 2011. If you would like to view the full story written by Gerry, you can find this on the ARCVic website at http://www.arcvic.org.au/resources/ocdandanxietystories
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Communication Preferences</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>written or phone contact with others who have an anxiety disorder or experience loneliness and depression (any age)</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>written/telephone contact with people aged between 40-50 years, living with any anxiety disorder, depression and loneliness.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonya</td>
<td>like contact with others who have similar experiences with anxiety</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>written/telephone contact with people aged between 40-50 years, living with any anxiety disorder, depression and loneliness.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathon</td>
<td>like contact with others who experience Generalised Anxiety Disorder and/or Health Anxiety via email, mail or phone.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>penpals around the same age who also experience OCD or borderline personality disorder</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travis</td>
<td>social anxiety and panic attacks and would like email or mail contact with others (25-40yrs) who have similar experiences.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>like contact with others who experience Generalised Anxiety Disorder and/or Health Anxiety via email, mail or phone.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>experiences OCD and some anxiety in certain aspects of her life and is looking for male/females between ages 24-36 by phone or email contact</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>written or telephone contact with others who live with anxiety disorders, panic attacks and ocd.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian</td>
<td>is interested in contacting others (via email, mail or telephone) with OCD, social anxiety or depression.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>like email contact with others who experience generalised anxiety and are over 30 years of age.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>like email contact with people experiencing isolation or social anxiety.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>like email contact with people of a similar age who also experience social phobia, ocd depression or anxiety.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>25 years of age, would like contact with others who also experience OCD.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan</td>
<td>is interested in contacting others (over 20 years of age) by mail or telephone who experience any anxiety disorder.</td>
<td>ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number).</td>
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If you would like to respond to any of these requests please contact Chrissy on the ARCVic Office Line 03 9830 0566, or send your name and address by mail to: ‘Pen Pals’, ARCVic, PO Box 367, Canterbury Vic 3126, and indicate which person you are interested in contacting (by name and code number). ARCVic does not accept responsibility for any outcome, resulting from any written or verbal correspondence entered into, in relation to these requests.
ARCVic Publications - Order Form

- Nine, Ten, Do It Again: A Guide To Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. By Kathryn I’Anson, OCADF, 1997. 2nd Edition. Provides information about the nature, symptoms and causes of this disorder, and a guide to the types of treatment which are effective in alleviating and controlling obsessions and compulsions. The book includes a section on self-help strategies, and a ‘how to help’ section for families or carers. Also included are quotes, stories and poems by people and families living with OCD.


- ‘Speaking From Experience: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder’. A video produced for people with OCD and their families. The video provides information about OCD from the perspective of six people who have lived with OCD for many years. The video includes segments on early signs of OCD, diagnosis and reaction, the symptoms of OCD, understanding OCD, other mental health issues, impact on life, family and relationships, telling other people, treatment, support and recovery. Produced by Speaking From Experience Pty Ltd with the assistance of the Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria. Available in DVD and VHS formats. (Duration 43 minutes).

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<td>Nine, Ten, Do It Again: A Guide To Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.</td>
<td>copies</td>
<td>@$10.00 ea</td>
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<td>OCD &amp; Anxiety Disorders Information Package</td>
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<td>Social Anxiety Disorder: Theory &amp; Management</td>
<td>copies</td>
<td>@$18.00 ea</td>
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<td>‘Speaking from Experience: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder’</td>
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<td>copies</td>
<td>@$29.95 ea*</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Speaking from Experience: Anxiety’</td>
<td>copies</td>
<td>@$29.95 ea*</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Exposure ... A Journey’ by Joel Magarey</td>
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☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

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Office Line 03 9830 0566 Fax 03 9830 4793
e-mail arcmail@arcvic.org.au

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These persons, professionals, and organisations have been awarded a “Friend of the Foundation / Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria” certificate, in appreciation and recognition of significant and valued contributions (educational forums, articles, conference papers, donations, sponsorship, organisational services, provision of specialised professional services) which have supported the aims, services and development of the Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria / Obsessive Compulsive & Anxiety Disorders Foundation of Victoria Inc.

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The Melbourne Clinic
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Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria – OCD & Anxiety Helpline

☎ (03) 9830 0533 or 1300 ANXIETY

(Local call rate for callers outside the metropolitan area)

Open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm Message Bank - 24 hours

For on-line information go to [www.arcvic.org.au](http://www.arcvic.org.au)

**NB.** The Message Bank operates when the Helpline volunteers are assisting other callers.

Please leave a message – the Helpline volunteers always attempt to return calls as soon as possible.

The HelpLine team provide telephone support, information and referrals to people with OCD and Anxiety Disorders, and their families.

☎ **Lifeline** - 13 11 14

Open 24 hrs per day – every day

For on-line information go to [http://www.lifeline.org.au/](http://www.lifeline.org.au/)

☎ **Suicide Helpline** - 1300 651 251

Open 24 hrs per day – every day


☎ **Kid’s Helpline** - 1800 55 1800

Open 24 hrs per day – every day


☎ **Griefline** - 9935 7400

Open 12 noon – 3am every day

For on-line information go to [http://griefline.org.au/](http://griefline.org.au/)

☎ **Mensline Australia** - 1300 789 978

Open 24 hrs per day – every day

For on-line information go to [http://www.menslineaus.org.au/](http://www.menslineaus.org.au/)

☎ **WIRE – Women’s Information Telephone Support** - 1300 134 130

Open 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday

For on-line information go to [http://www.wire.org.au/](http://www.wire.org.au/)

☎ **ParentLine** 13 22 89

☎ **Medicines Line** - 1300 888 763

☎ **SANE Helpline** - 1800 187263

☎ **Lifeline’s Just Ask** - 1300 13 11 14 (rural mental health information service)

☎ **Carer Counselling and Advisory Service** - 1800 242 636

☎ **Relationships Australia** - 1300 364 277

☎ **Australian Psychological Referral Service** - 03 8662 3300 or 1800 333 497

Open Monday to Friday, alternatively you can find psychological services online at