

Media Release

OCD Awareness Week 22nd – 28th May 2016

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder characterised by ongoing unwanted/intrusive thoughts and fears (obsessions) that lead to individuals feeling the need to carry out certain rituals in order to feel less anxious (compulsions). It is one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented of the anxiety disorders.

This year OCD Awareness week runs from 22nd-28th of May. It aims to raise awareness of the challenges in living with OCD as well as provide individuals with lived experiences and their careers with a greater understanding of their condition.

Julie Leitch is a WayAhead Educator whose life was ruled by obsessive compulsive disorder. She is passionate about breaking the stigma surrounding OCD and making sure that others know that there is hope.

“If people can know that for someone with OCD life can be miserable and lonely, it affects relationships and work but they can get help and manage the Disorder, they can control the OCD rather than the other way around”.

Having been unable to finish her schooling due to her condition, Ms Leitch is focused on helping others finish their education.

“I am quite passionate about raising awareness so that people can get treated early, finish their education and then choose their own career path – not just go into something because that is all they can do”, says Ms. Leitch, “Let’s try and get to these kids early so they don’t waste years going undiagnosed or with incorrect treatment.”

According to Beyondblue “people with OCD often feel intense shame about their need to carry out these compulsions. These feelings of shame can exacerbate the problem and the shame, and consequent secrecy associated with OCD can lead to a delay in diagnosis and treatment.”

To help raise educate the public as well as individuals living with OCD and their carers WayAhead will be running a series of free events over the course of the week. These events include panel discussions, public forums, conferences and a professional development workshop. It is also offering a collection of educational resources which are able to be downloaded from its website.

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Anxiety Website: understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au

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Additional Resources:

[OCD Awareness Week Website](#)

[Resources](#) – posters and other print resources

Articles:

[Book Review - The Unlikely Hero of Room 13B](#)

[Family Accommodation](#) – new research and the dilemma for carers

Personal Stories – [Michael, Pure Obsessional OCD](#) [Lather, scrub, rinse, repeat](#)

Video: [Professor Rocco Crino on OCD](#)

[WayAhead](#) - Mental Health Association NSW is an 80 year old mental health charity. WayAhead champions mental health and wellbeing through education, support and advocacy

WayAhead provides support for Anxiety Disorders with 35 [Anxiety Disorders Support groups](#) operating in NSW. We also run 12 week CBT [Self Help Anxiety Courses](#).

We provide free mental health education through Understanding Anxiety Forums, [Small Steps seminars](#) for primary school teachers and parents, and through our WayAhead websites and [fact sheets](#).

We promote better mental health through programs such as October's [Mental Health Month](#), the [Mental Health Matters Awards](#), Stress Less Tips and Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week, the [Workplace Health Promotion Network](#) and the [Young and Parenting Project](#).

WayAhead run free information services such as the telephone services; Mental Health Information Line - 1300 794 991 and the Anxiety Information Line - 1300 794 992, as well as the [WayAhead Online Directory](#) of mental health services.

WayAhead websites:

www.mentalhealthmonth.org.au www.wayahead.org.au

www.understandinganxiety.wayahead.org.au www.directory.wayahead.org.au

www.whpn.org

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