

SJAF e-Magazine



ST JEANNE ANTIDE FOUNDATION

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RESISTANCE TO TAKING MEDICATION FOR DEPRESSION

- by Connie Magro, Psychiatric Nurse, LWIEN Service of the Foundation

In our work with sufferers of mental illness and their caring relatives, we encounter a range of attitudes that lead to resistance to taking prescribed medication. We spend time explaining about the important role of medication in managing depression. Underlying all of the reasons is fear. Here are some of the main reasons reported by service users themselves and their care giving relatives. Provided in the list is a brief overview of helpful dialogue which often enables persons to overcome their resistance to taking their medication.

Nature of fear underlying resistance	Helpful dialogue to overcome resistance
Fear of being on habit-forming medication.	Anti-depressants are prescribed for six months and then they are tailed off. These medications are not habit forming
Fear of such side-effects as dry mouth and weight increase.	True, they do cause dry mouth but there is a solution. You can either chew sugarless gum or else keep a lemon rind in your mouth, especially when exercising. Exercise is useful when you are depressed. It releases endorphins which make you feel better. Exercise helps you maintain your weight. To overcome craving for food, nibble on carrots, cucumber and apple.
Fear that others may perceive them as weak for taking their medicines.	Depression is very common; it affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 males. Depression can affect everyone, even high achievers.
Fear of slowing down at work and seeing their performance suffer.	You are allowed to go on sick leave when you are too overcome by tiredness to work. Continue taking medication as prescribed. Anti-depressants do not cause slowing down. Rather, they increase your psycho-motor energy.
Fear of being unable to marry since they will eventually have to own up to having taken medication.	Depression is not a marriage impediment. There is a cure for it. If you prolong seeking help, you can become chronically depressed.
Mothers are afraid of side effects which will render them sleepy and unable to hear their baby crying.	It is true that persons with depression feel tired and sleepy. They therefore cannot take care of their baby. In the beginning of the treatment, you will need to plan well to obtain support both during the day and night.
Men are especially afraid of becoming impotent.	Not all anti-depressants cause impotency. Impotency itself is also caused by depression. Discuss this well with your doctor.
Women are afraid of becoming frigid.	It is the depression itself that puts you off sex, not the medication.
Fear that, since they are in the process of marriage separation, their spouse may use medication taking as a weapon for child custody.	Judges know that depression is curable and that, in order to cure it, you need to take medication until you need them. Always involve a social worker to support you during this difficult period and to monitor you and your children. She can be a witness to vouch for you on the love and care with which you nurture and bring up your children. Family members can also help you with child care during the acute phase of depression.

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SETTING UP A COMMUNITY-BASED FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

the experience of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation, by Nora Macelli

This paper provides an overview of the experience of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation in the setting up and running of a community-based, family support, drop-in centre offering a range of support services for vulnerable individuals and families. It also outlines the philosophy and practice of outreach work as a dynamic tool in the identification of hard-to-reach families with tenuous links to support services across key sectors.

IDENTIFYING AND SETTING UP A DROP-IN CENTRE IN THE HEART OF A SIZEABLE COMMUNITY

In its early stages of development, the Foundation was guided by a three key factors:

- *the availability of the infrastructure:* the Province of the Sisters of Charity decided to allocate a sizeable modern part of its Tarxien convent as an operational base of the Foundation. The premises has a number of features that make it ideal for a family resource centre: it is nestled in the heart of the Tarxien community and is close to a number of neighbouring localities. Residents of neighbouring communities find it easy to access the premises by bus and on foot. It is close to a number of community access points such as shops, pharmacies, the district health centre, schools, parish and Local Councils' offices.

- *the catchment area:* one major factor that was considered was the

fact that the Foundation wanted to avoid duplication of work. It ascertained that no other state agency or NGO were offering community-based generic social work services to families in the target localities. Discussions with key community-based actors enabled the Foundation to determine the high need for such services.

- *pockets of vulnerability:* Another key criterion was the identification of pockets of vulnerable families. In each of the target localities, phased entry-point outreach work was undertaken so as to reach as many hard-to-reach vulnerable families as possible. Funding was obtained in a phased manner and staff gradually increased to tackle the increasing number of referrals.

- *Tapping infrastructure of other community-based organisation:* The Foundation wanted to avoid incurring expenditure on infrastructural development, arguing that it could make use of existing infrastructure owned by other community-based organisation. To this end, it gradually started making use of a computer lab of a religious congregation close by, group work rooms in 5 premises of the Paola and Żabbar Parishes; office and counselling room at the Żabbar Parish office; house for live-ins of the Żabbar Parish.

- *Furnishings:* The majority of required furnishings were donated by banks, hotels and companies

which were an invaluable source of quality second-hand office furniture. The result is a family-type milieu that is very welcoming and homely. There is a blend of tasteful furnishings with comfortable settees, armchairs, cushions and colourful/cheerful art around the place. Minimum requirements include the following:

- It is felt that the available space at the Foundation's Antide drop-in centre are the basic minimum for a family resource centre. The space includes:

- reception area;
- 4 offices;
- 2 counselling/therapy rooms;
- 3 groupwork rooms one of which doubles up as a board room;
- Kitchen which is highly used for courses for service users



a meeting space for service users who participate in a support group members and others who drop by or have a pre-scheduled appointment;

- 4 toilets & 1 shower;
- open spaces for computer access to service users; sofas for visitors; book shelves for children to pick up books; bean bags, notice boards, play area;
- yard.

VOLUNTEERING: SCREENING, SELECTION, DEPLOYMENT AND ON-GOING SUPPORT

Volunteers are a key pillar of the Foundation. They assume a range of roles and responsibilities which complement the work of the Social Work team and maximise successful outcomes of family care plans. Among the roles assumed by Volunteers within the Foundation are the following:

Reception work: Reception workers are co-ordinated and supported by the administration team. Service users are also encouraged to volunteer within this service. Through volunteering, service users gain experience of being of service to others, a sense of purpose, meaning and dignity in life and a sense that one has moved from being socially excluded and living life on the periphery of one's community and society to being an active participant.

Learning Support and Mentoring: Through these volunteering opportunities, regular one-to-one support is extended to children and young persons from families supported by the Foundation. The expected duration of the commitment is a minimum of one year, possibly even during the summer months.

Handymen: Volunteer handymen undertake basic repair work in support of families experiencing poverty.

Befriending: Volunteer Befrienders regular contact and visit

a frail and lonely person under the guidance of Social Workers.



THE ENTRY POINT LEADING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMAND-DRIVEN SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Community Work and Community Social Work approach

The staff team at the Foundation adopts the following approach in each locality where the Foundation operates:

1. **Dialogue with key local actors:** Meetings are organised for depth discussions with key community-based organisations (CBOs) such as the Local Council, the Parish, Heads of School and their Senior Management Teams (SMTs); College Principal, clubs, Diaconia Commissions (volunteer service teams of the parish), Parish Family Commission, religious congregations especially those offering support services, health centre, private practitioners and clinics, youth centres, parent group, social security branch, job centre (if there is one), social club for the elderly and state day centres for persons with a disability, the elderly, mental health patients. Discussions also focus on collaborative work and observed trends and gaps/needs.

2. In parallel with step '1' above, team members prepare a **Community Profile**, gathering

information about the locality from the above meetings, NSO publications, local history books, photos of available infrastructure that could be tapped, details of resource persons, services already on offer – be they on a voluntary basis or not, map, location of depressed neighbourhoods/ pockets of vulnerable families, etc.

3. **Entry point/s:** At the same time as steps 1 and 2 described above, the team starts offering two to three much needed initiatives and services such as social work interventions, a Support Group for family caregivers, a Family Club for very vulnerable and young single parents or learning support. These initiatives serve as entry points to the community. Residents will perceive the team as being able to provide support that is needed. An entry point is linked to (a) needs expressed by the CBOs contacted as well as (b) the skills of team members who are in a position to swiftly respond to an expressed need and who are not simply 'talkers'.

4. **Marketing:** (1) Posters are placed in key locations, indicating drop-in function, address, contact details, access times. (2) Making use of the community radio to inform the residents to announce start-up initiatives. Invite residents to establish contacts to give suggestions. Make it known that the service base has a drop-in function and indicate access times. (3) Request Parish Priest to include the service in weekend mass notices and parish notice-boards.

5. Outreach: Undertaking outreach work in one or two identified neighbourhoods. This work generates referrals of individuals and families in difficulty.



6. Referrals: (1) Holding discussions with other organisations for referrals of families on their waiting list who are from localities served by the Foundation who can be referred to the Foundation team. (2) Seeking referrals from the Parish Priest and his Diaconia Commission members.

7. Reaching out to community volunteers: (1) Working closely with the Diaconia Commission since members may be in a position to provide certain interventions within a Family Care Plan that could be provided by such volunteers. (2) Identifying training needs of volunteers locally and seeking to provide training support so as to build a team that is broader in scope.

8. Collaborative relations: collaborating with national service providers: On a proactive basis, establishing and maintaining contacts with service providers at national level – state and NGOs. Hosting University social work practicums: Social Work, Youth Work, Counselling.

9. No duplication: Always being on the alert so as not to unwittingly start services that replicate existing ones.

10. Reflective community: striving to grow as a reflective team that is able to learn from its practice and change strategy when certain approaches fail.

Outreach work – an essential tool for community social work practice

One of the most effective tools for the identification of hard-to-reach vulnerable individuals and families with tenuous links to the support services is outreach work undertaken through door-to-door contacts and visits to households in neighbourhoods identified as target zones for such work. First time visits are undertaken by a Community Worker and a Social Worker. Follow-up visits are undertaken by a Social Worker or the Foundation's Psychiatric Nurse or both, depending on identified need. The approach adopted during first time visits is normally as follows:

- Self-introductions and the provision of a leaflet in Maltese about the Foundation's services; the visitors explain who they are, their profession, the Foundation, how the team works hand-in-hand with community-based organisations and other agencies at national level.
- They ask whether the family has heard about the Foundation from the media, or from the community radio or from the parish notices.

- They explain that the team is that day/ week visiting all the families in that particular street/ alley/ block. The latter reassures families that they are not being singled out and labelled as 'needy'. Team members ask whether it is a convenient time for the family or whether they would prefer a visit on another day and time. In which case, they will thank the family, set up an appointment and leave.
- If the family is willing to welcome the visitors, the team will then talk about the Foundation and its services. They engage those present in a discussion of perceived needs in the locality.
- If, in the course of the conversation, someone in the family mentions having any difficulties, this would be a signal for an offer of support.
- If, in the course of the conversations, the workers have concerns, they might decide to invite the family member/ family for an office visit, thus gaining time to go back to the office and plan how best to help in an ethical way.

Training in outreach work is provided to the workers. Mentoring is offered on a regular basis. -----end



THANK YOU MFIN Charity Events Committee for enthusiasm and generosity!

MFIN is composed of a group of colleagues working at the Ministry for Finance (MFIN). On a yearly basis MFIN, with the support of other Ministry employees, organizes a series of fundraising activities to raise funds for non-governmental organizations engaged in providing community services.

In 2013, the *MFIN Charity Events* raised funds for Richmond Foundation and the St. Jeanne Antide Foundation. The total sum collected was of €3,074.36c which was divided equally between the two organizations. The activities organized to raise these funds included several Jeans Days and Cake Sales, a Buffet Dinner, a Football Tournament and a Bike Ride.

The St Jeanne Antide Foundation thanks all MFIN workers for their fundraising efforts and wishes them another active year!





Maria Buckle – Club Familti



Tony Macelli – Overseas Development & Emotional Freedom Services



Ruth Stafrace – Community Social Work & Counselling Service



Sr Rose Rizzo – Community Social Work



Luke Collins – Volunteer Youth Mentoring



Janice Sergeant – Volunteer Youth Mentoring



Josephine Rizzo – Learning Support Service



Astrid Camilleri - Youth Worker & Self-Esteem Groups



Sr Agnes – Befriending Service



Lisa Vella – Youth Mentoring



On Wednesday 29th January, at the event organised by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) that falls under the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, our Jessie Spiteri, Volunteer Co-ordinator of the *Learning Support Service*, came second in the National Award for Volunteering.

God bless you Jessie for your invaluable contribution!

We take this opportunity to again thank all Volunteers whose outstanding collective efforts throughout each year enable the Foundation to meet our service users' needs in creative way that would otherwise be impossible.

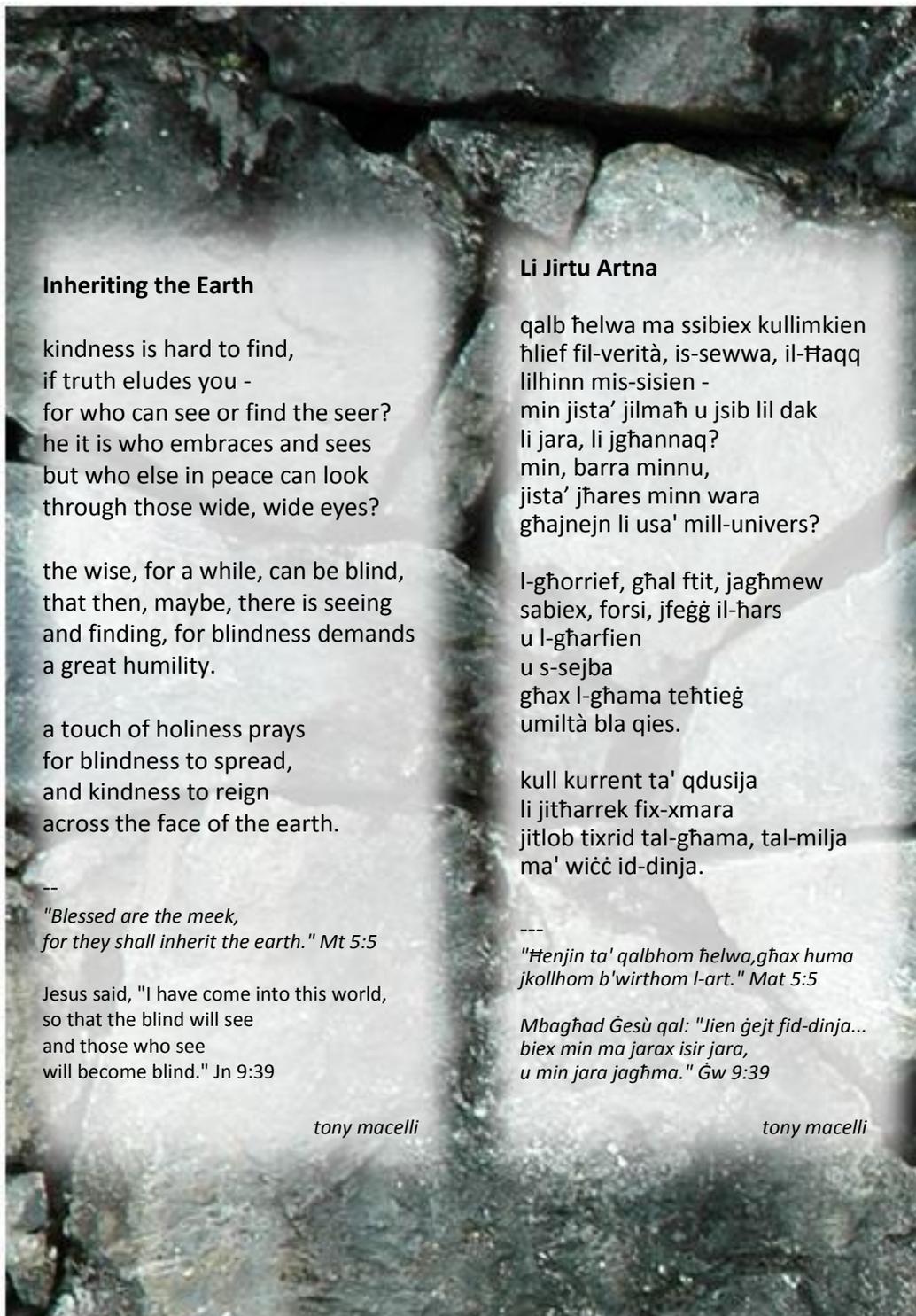


Christmas day meal for lonely and alone service users

SJAF Volunteer Anne Marie did not wish to spend another Christmas feeling lonely and depressed. She decided to do something about it. She cooked a special three course meal for a small group of persons who had no one to spend Christmas with and welcomed them at SJAF and served them a delicious meal which they still mention with joy. God bless you Anne Marie!



POETRY PAGE



Inheriting the Earth

kindness is hard to find,
if truth eludes you -
for who can see or find the seer?
he it is who embraces and sees
but who else in peace can look
through those wide, wide eyes?

the wise, for a while, can be blind,
that then, maybe, there is seeing
and finding, for blindness demands
a great humility.

a touch of holiness prays
for blindness to spread,
and kindness to reign
across the face of the earth.

--

*"Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth." Mt 5:5*

Jesus said, "I have come into this world,
so that the blind will see
and those who see
will become blind." Jn 9:39

tony macelli

Li Jirtu Artna

qalb ħelwa ma ssibix kullimkien
ħlief fil-verità, is-sewwa, il-ħaq
lilhinn mis-sisien -
min jista' jilmaħ u jsib lil dak
li jara, li jgħannaq?
min, barra minnu,
jista' jħares minn wara
għajnejn li usa' mill-univers?

l-għorrief, għal ftit, jagħmew
sabiex, forsi, jfegġ il-ħars
u l-għarfien
u s-sejba
għax l-għama teħtieġ
umiltà bla qies.

kull kurrent ta' qdusija
li jitħarrek fix-xmara
jitlob tixrid tal-għama, tal-milja
ma' wiċċ id-dinja.

*"Ħenjin ta' qalbhom ħelwa, għax huma
jkollhom b'wirthom l-art." Mat 5:5*

*Mbagħad Ġesù qal: "Jien ġejt fid-dinja...
biex min ma jarax isir jara,
u min jara jagħma." Ġw 9:39*

tony macelli

Poetry bookmark - Instructions: Print this page using a good quality printer. Cut out, fold vertically along the midline. Optional: insert a thin card before gluing. Glue carefully with a glue stick without solvents (e.g. Pritt)

ATTENTIVENESS Mark 13:35-37

Therefore, stay alert! You don't know when the head of the household will come, whether in the evening or at midnight, or when the rooster crows in the early morning or at daybreak. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"

Commentary: But the Master of the house is already here! The Master is ready to take over, but we are sleepy, we won't be ready for the take-over. We live in a daze carried along our self-made stories and random attachments and tendencies. We have forgotten to keep the door open. So why does Jesus insist, "Be awake!" ?

Humans Who Watched

hear the bittersweet ballad of humans birthing, that angels sing a song of Great Current bearing cosmos, when love grows fire fire became stardust, dust became rock, and rock became soup, soup fermented, blossomed, and walked, and flew and minded —

abundant flood of dependent sovereignty, of surprise and joy, failure and lost chances, and dances, and pageants, and tragedies angels sing of sleep, and dozing, watchfulness, and waking and falling back asleep, of consciousness shallow and deep of proud and false ownerships, and watchfulness and sleep it's a song of new beauty and old, of seduction and remorse of crutches, of fools and false gold, of treasure found and lost —

the ballad sings of Great Current among apes as they grew, of somnolent babes, and humans that watched, and loved and flew higher than birds, higher than stars, deep and true deeper than space and time and cosmos, into love that grows fire, unabated awake, now: uncreated

Tony Macelli

The development of the faculty of attention forms the real object and almost the sole interest of studies. - William Law, English spiritual writer (1686-1761).

A listening ear and a seeing eye, the Lord indeed has made them both. Prov. 20.12

L-ghan u kwaži l-kontenut kollu tal-istudji huwa dan: li wiehed jizviluppa il-fakoltà tal-attenzjoni - William Law, kittieb spiritwali Ingliz (1686-1761).

Il-widna li tisma' u l-ghajn li tara, it-tnejn il-Mulej ghamilhom. *Bibbja: Ktieb tal-Proverbji 20:12*

IBQA' MQAJJEM Mk 13:35-37

Mela ishru, għax ma tafux meta jiġi Sid id-dar, jekk hux fil-għaxija, jew f'nofs il-lejl, jew xħin jidden is-serduk, jew inkella mas-sebħ, li ma jmurx jiġi għal għarrieda u jsibkom reqdin. U dak li qiegħed ngħid lilkom, qiegħed ngħidu għal kulħadd: ishru!"

Kummentarju: Iżda Sid id-dar diġà qiegħed hawn! Is-Sid lest li jieħu postu bħala s-sid, iżda aħna bingħas. Ngħixu nofsna reqdin, imkaxkrin mill-istejjer li ngħidu lilna nfuosna, u minn ġibdiet u rbit l' hawn u l' hinn. Insejna nżommu l-bieb miftuħ. Mela għaliex Ġesù jinsisti, "Ishru!" ?

poem by tony macelli



HSBC involves SJAF children in its Christmas activities

On 2nd December, the HSBC Malta plc organised a Christmas party for its senior management team at the Foundation. In preparation, HSBC decorated the hall with Christmas decorations which created an atmosphere of warmth and joy. During this party, 10 children from the Foundation performed a short play in front of HSBC Bank Malta plc CEO Mr. Watkinson and his team. With the assistance of Dance Tutor Sarah Lanzon, these 10 children met every week for rehearsals. After the play the children had the opportunity to play some games with the HSBC staff. At the end, all children, 25 in all, were each given a Christmas pudding and a bag of sweets which they could share with their parents.

On the 5th of December, 10 children sang Christmas carols for the HSBC Malta Foundation trust members. During both parties the children enjoyed themselves and shared their joy with invitees. Each child received a book voucher.

We sincerely thank Mr & Ms Watkinson and HSBC Malta Foundation personnel for their enthusiasm and support towards our Foundation and the children of families we regularly support..



The Awesome Without Borders in the US provided SJAF with a grant in aid of materials and supplies for the Volunteer Handymen Service (see link below; press 'like' and share the post related to the SJAF. Thanks.

<https://www.facebook.com/AwesomeWithoutBorders?fref=ts>

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12 - 20 Lulju 2014 – 9 ijiem
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INKLUŻ: Ajru dirett għal Ruma bl-Air Malta; coach;
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Harġa ta' Frar

Organizzata mill-Fondazzjoni Santa Ġovanna Antida

Lokalità – San Ġiljan

Millenium Chapel fejn ser ikun hemm quddiesa għal min jixtieq jattendi. Inżuru l-Bazaar li l-Fondazzjoni għandha f'San Ġiljan u wara nieħdu tazza te.

Data – il-Ġimgħa 21 ta' Frar 2014

Prezz €3.00

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