



Community Support Service

HEADLINES

OCTOBER 2010

Headway Essex

Upcoming Support Groups

Basildon

Tuesday 12th October
Tuesday 9th November
Tuesday 14th December

Venue:

St John Ambulance South
Essex Headquarters,
Sandon Road, Pitsea,
Essex, SS14 1TH
7.30pm - 9.30pm

Chelmsford

Tuesday 19th October
Tuesday 16th November
Tuesday 21st December

Venue:

Swift House, Hedgerows
Business Park, Colchester
Road, Springfield,
Chelmsford, Essex,
CM2 5PF
7.00pm - 9.00pm

Tendring

Tuesday 2nd November

Venue:

Tendring Specialist Stroke
Services, 85 Frinton
Road, Holland-on-Sea,
CO15 5UH
7:00pm - 8:30pm

Carers Support Group

Friday 22nd October
Friday 26th November
No Meeting in December

Venue:

The Headway Centre,
2 Boxted Road,
Colchester, Essex,
CO4 5JD
10.30am - 12.30pm

Colchester Social Club

Monday 4th October
Monday 1st November
Monday 6th December

Venue:

Phone 01206 845945
The Headway Centre,
2 Boxted Road, Colchester,
CO4 5JD
7.00pm - 9.00pm

CARERS SEMINAR - 12 NOVEMBER 2010

Redefining relationships after brain injury

Brain injury affects whole families, not just individuals. The road towards acceptance is a long one and unfortunately the percentage of separations following acquired brain injury (ABI) is high. Some would argue that family members suffer more than their loved ones who sustained ABI, as they often have a more accurate insight into the difficulties involved. Research into the effects ABI can have on other family members gives an indication into the problems they face:

Close family members are likely to experience high levels of anxiety and depression during the years following ABI. As time elapses, there is often a decrease in relatives' capacity for coping, particularly with the emotional and behavioural problems brain injured people may be experiencing.

Spouses/partners may feel isolated and trapped in a situation where their emotional needs are not met. It is common to hear they have lost the person they knew before the accident/illness.

Children experience their own emotional problems. Alongside coping with the initial trauma and then living with a parent with ABI, their own needs are often neglected which can have an impact on their behaviour and possibly impair their performance at school.

Families need attention, guidance and support to help them through an extremely difficult period of their lives.

The stages of a family's emotional reaction

The stages a family has to pass through from the initial shock of the news of ABI can be seen as follows:

1 Shock, panic - "Please let them live"

2 Relief, elation, denial - "They're going to be fine"

3 Hope - "They're making progress, but it's going to be slow"

4 Realisation, anger, depression, mourning - "They're not going to get back to their old selves"

5 Acceptance, recognition - "Our lives are now very different"

These stages may not follow the strict order shown above, can take a considerable period of time and acceptance and recognition may never be reached. Our experience from carers seminars we have organised in the past has shown it is crucial for carers to look after their **own needs**, both health-related and personal. Are carers able to tell their GPs how **they** feel, eat well, exercise and relax? Are they able to take time for themselves, keep up social contacts and do the type of things **they** enjoy?

Kate Banks, a trainer from Relate, will lead this carers seminar in Chelmsford (location to be confirmed) from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Friday 12 November 2010. It will look at ways in which relationships can change after ABI and discuss how families can deal with these new situations. If you are a carer and are interested in attending, please contact the Community Support Service on **01206 768797**.

Source: Headway UK - Family reaction to a brain injury

FOR CLIENTS TO BE AWARE OF: *Migration of Incapacity Benefit (IB) to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)*

The government is in the process of phasing out incapacity-related benefits – these are Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support on the grounds of illness or disability. From early next year to March 2014, all existing recipients of these benefits will be re-assessed for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), the benefit that replaced IB for new claimants in October 2008.

The process will formerly begin in February 2011 following a four-month pilot to start this month in Burnley and Aberdeen that will cover 1,700 claimants. When a re-assessment is due, Jobcentre Plus will write to all customers to explain the changes. After that, they will telephone you to talk about how this change will affect you and answer any questions you may have. Following that, a medical questionnaire (ESA50) entitled 'Limited Capability for Work' will be sent that will have to be filled in with details about your illness or disability.

The government has said that this transfer of benefits, "will be a challenge for Jobcentre Plus, but one that we are equipped to deliver". Having said that, Essex County Council has already questioned the adequacy of the pilot scheme and whether there is sufficient staff capacity to handle the number of re-assessments that will have to be done.

We wish to inform all of our clients who currently receive incapacity-related benefits that this migration process is now under way, and we will do our best to keep you up to date as this benefit change progresses. (For previous information about ESA and the relevant questionnaire, please see the February 2010 newsletter.)

Source: Essex County Council

LEGAL SURGERIES

Just to let people know that our legal surgeries now take place on the first Friday morning of each month between 10.00am and 12.00pm at The Headway Centre. There are four, free 30 minute slots available for advice or guidance on any legal matter. To book an appointment, it is necessary to call the Community Support Service on **01206 768797**.

NEWS FROM SOUTH ESSEX...

LIFE AFTER BRAIN INJURY (formerly the Moving on Group)

As you may be aware from previous newsletters, Headway Essex Community Support Team organized and ran two 10-week pilot Moving On Group schemes in the Basildon area for people living in south Essex. Based on the positive feedback received we are now running further group sessions, although with the changed name of **Life After Brain Injury Group**. The aim of these sessions is:

- ◆ to increase attendees' own understanding of their individual brain injury with some explanation of brain anatomy;
- ◆ to recognize the effects of brain injury across physical, cognitive and emotional/psychological headings;
- ◆ how the above impacts on everyday life including relationships, employment, social situations etc;
- ◆ acceptance versus adjustment;
- ◆ awareness of some coping skills and strategies to assist with everyday life.

There is a structured programme to follow and attendees need to have some awareness and insight into their difficulties and the impact these can have on their lives. There must also be a willingness to look at and share experiences, as peer support is one of the group's main strengths. Anyone interested in the above, including those who were on the pilot groups, should contact the Community Support Team on **01206 768797**.

CARERS SUPPORT GROUPS

This is just a note to remind people that two carers groups in south Essex are now up and running. They are held on alternate months at The Marillac Nursing Home, Eagle Way, Brentwood, CM13 3BL and at The Stables, Chalkwell Park Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1LX. Upcoming meetings are from 7.00pm to 9.00pm on 26 October in Brentwood and on 23 November in Leigh-on-Sea. All those who care for someone who has sustained acquired brain injury and would like to share their experiences with other carers would be more than welcome to attend. For further information about these meetings and directions of how to get there, please call us on **01206 768797**.

If you require any further information, please contact any team member at the Community Support Service on 01206 768797 or email us at: communitysupport@headwayessex.org.uk