

Workshop Review

Facilitating healthy lifestyle change: Preventing or managing serious illness

Review of a one day workshop 'Facilitating healthy lifestyle change: Preventing or managing serious illness' presented by Dr. Bob Montgomery and Dr. Laurel Morris – Bardon Centre 29th March

Dr. Bob Montgomery BA, PhD, FRAPS has been in private practice for thirty years and is currently the Adjunct Professor of Psychology at the University of the Sunshine Coast. He is at present Vice President of the APS and will commence his role as President in late 2008. He is married to Dr. Laurel Morris and together they have co-authored many self-help books. Dr. Morris has been in private practice for over 20 years and is an adjunct Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

In addition to his impressive list of accomplishments, Dr. Bob Montgomery is also a diabetic. Though his personal experience, and that of his significant other, workshop participants were afforded a rich understanding of the challenges faced by clients with chronic illnesses. This workshop adopted a very practical approach to addressing the psychological obstacles faced by such clients and helping them to make healthy lifestyle choices. Participants were encouraged to consider:

- Given that 80 % of Australia's health budget is spent managing chronic illness, the challenge for health professionals is to make it appealing and enjoyable for clients to make healthy choices.
- Embedding motivational interviewing techniques within the therapy process.
- SMART goal setting and problem solving as essential skills for clients.
- A functional analysis of a client's behaviour to determine what purpose it's serving.
- Developing a client's self-efficacy as the key component of a successful intervention.
- Situation specific self-efficacy as the key to relapse prevention
- Developing distress tolerance by using a mindfulness approach
- The concept of the difference between lapse and relapse as a way of reframing a client's 'failure'.

This workshop was attended by a cross-section of health professionals including nurses, physiotherapists, clinical and health psychologists. In a 'green approach' all workshop participants were fortunate to receive a CD full of resources including relevant articles, assessment instruments and references that have direct application to practice.

Some useful reading:

Sperry, L (2006) *Psychological treatment of chronic illness: A biopsychosocial therapy approach.* (APA)

Toumborou, J. (2006) *The effectiveness of health psychology interventions.*

http://www.groups.psychology.org.au?Assets/Files?coh_Psych_Effectiveness_article_s.pdf

Julie Hodges