



## NDI: Hope for all Kiwis

**The launch of the National Depression Initiative (NDI) last month signifies a new approach in improving public awareness about one of the most common mental illnesses experienced in New Zealand – depression.**

The NDI campaign, centred around an advertising campaign featuring John Kirwan, aims to help New Zealanders cope with the impact depression can have on individuals, families, friends, colleagues and other people by reinforcing positive messages.

“We know that depression is a major contributor to suicide risk, so this campaign will be valuable to all New Zealanders,” says Judi Clements, Chief Executive Officer of the Mental Health Foundation.

“The Mental Health Foundation works

actively to increase public understanding of all mental health issues. It is our mission to make mental health everybody’s business – to give ourselves permission to talk about these things, to make them a natural part of the national conversation. “We are sure this campaign will contribute significantly to these goals,” Judi Clements says.

Depression is a significant issue in New Zealand. The New Zealand mental health survey, issued in September, found that nearly half of the population will meet the criteria

## Season’s Greetings

**Welcome to the third edition of the Platform newsletter. We are pleased to present this issue which has a special focus on innovative mental health support services for women.**

The issue of women’s mental health is not frequently discussed but the leadership and originality shown by the organisations profiled in this issue is representative of the outstanding work happening in our sector for women.

In line with that, we are also pleased to announce that the NgOIT Report has been released. The report is a truly unique

snapshot of the mental health and addictions sector and sets out some ground-breaking data on how our sector is made up, the sort of work groups do and what issues currently face the sector.


You can find out more about NgOIT on page three, or you can contact us directly for your own copy of the report.

Seasons Greetings to all of our supporters we look forward to bringing you more Platform news in 2007.

Marion Blake  
Chief Executive Officer

for a mental disorder at some stage in our lives, one in five of us has experienced a mental health issue in the past year and depression is the most common issue experienced.

The same survey showed that the majority of New Zealanders know at least some symptoms of depression and are sympathetic and willing to support people with depression, but there was less understanding about what they could do about it. About two thirds said they would not seek professional help, mainly because of stigma, but lack of knowledge and concerns about cost were also barriers.

New Zealanders clearly want to know more about what can be done to help, and the campaign will be providing information on self-help strategies as well as when to get professional help, through the television advertisements, print resources, a website, an 0800 information phone line, public awareness activities, and a radio presence through the summer of 2006/07. 

**The core messages of the campaign include:**

- If you think someone you care about is depressed, early acknowledgement is important so that practical help can be given;
- There are ways to help people with depression, and self help strategies such as regular exercise can be very effective;
- If you are worried about being depressed, get professional help - there are effective psychological therapies and treatments;
- There is a way through it.

**For more information on the NDI and to download resources, please visit :**

[www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

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# IRIS

## Walking Alongside Women

**A significant number of women will experience trauma and depression during their lifetime. IRIS is a new, Hamilton-based wellness service offering a fresh, flexible and responsive approach to these issues.**

IRIS was established in response to women's requests to explore other ways of addressing the treatment of depression by community providers.

At the heart of the service is the relationship between women and their IRIS team member, which is based on a framework that emphasises the importance of rich relationships based on respect, information, connection and hope.

The IRIS service is trauma-informed and acknowledges the links between trauma and depression.

"Although trauma is acknowledged in mental health services the links between trauma and depression are not always made. Many women who come through IRIS have experienced some sort of trauma that later manifests itself as depression, so it's important that we can provide services that identify and make that connection," says IRIS Service Leader Brenda Ford.

"The IRIS service focuses on the importance of the relationship and everything revolves around that. We meet women where they are at - emotionally and physically - giving them choices and asking them what they want to happen, and supporting them in ways that they think will benefit them," says Brenda.

Brenda says these choices can be as subtle as a phone call to assist with getting up in the morning or helping women find childcare so they can take a break. IRIS has an art room and women can choose to sculpt, paint and visit galleries, or go for walks, enjoy a change of scenery and just take time out to 'smell the roses'.

The IRIS team comprises seven women with professional backgrounds from within the health sector, including nursing, family therapy, counselling, mental health support and psychology. A collaborative approach is important to the team because, as Brenda explains, women's connections are with the team rather than individuals at IRIS.

"We don't see ourselves as the expert in their lives, we see ourselves as walking alongside women, helping them find their way back to themselves."

There is no prescribed process for engagement with IRIS. Referrals come via self, GPs and social and mental health services. Brenda says

the service talks about things in a woman-to-woman way, for example spending an hour walking around the lake talking - and listening.

"A lot of women who come to IRIS feel they don't have a voice and that they are

**"We don't see ourselves as the expert in their lives, we see ourselves as walking alongside women, helping them find their way back to themselves."**

unimportant, which impacts self esteem negatively. So when they talk to us, we listen, affirm, listen again, give them a sounding board and help put things into place that they may not have considered before. It's about being there, consistently, whether it's on the end of the phone or in person. It's also about helping them to explore alternatives for lifestyle, self-care or any number of areas in their lives - and showing them that their voice does matter and, therefore, that they matter."

Demand for the IRIS service is high in Hamilton and the team welcomes future policy development around women's wellness.

"It is so rewarding to see women recognising their strengths and abilities and making choices for themselves and their families. IRIS will continue to walk alongside women, listening, building relationships, making connections, giving them choices and helping them find themselves again." P

**For more information on IRIS and its services, please visit :**

[www.iristeam.co.nz](http://www.iristeam.co.nz)



Brenda Ford, Manager

# NgOIT Survey Published

**Our landmark survey, NgOIT, has been published and is now available in both printed and PDF formats.**

The survey is a fantastic new tool for the mental health and addictions sector and is the first set of data to accurately map the current shape and needs of groups working in these areas.

NgOIT highlights the incredible diversity of services provided by NGOs working in the mental health and addiction sectors. The extent of services offered to support people who experience mental health or addiction issues ranges from housing, employment and education support through

to counseling, advocacy and family/ whanau support.

NgOIT also sheds light for the first time on the variety of government agencies that NGOs contract with.

We are confident that NgOIT will be a most useful resource for groups within the sector, as well as funding and contracting organisations. It is exciting to see so much useful information about our sector brought together for the first time.

**You can get a copy of the NgOIT 2005 Landscape Survey by visiting [www.platform.org.nz](http://www.platform.org.nz) or calling our office on (04) 385 0385**

## In the News

### NGO Issues Recognised

- The last Ministry of Health-NGO Forum, held on 19 October, included a speech from Minister of Health Hon. Pete Hodgson that recognised some of the issues currently facing NGOs working in the mental health and disability sector. Among the issues acknowledged by the Minister in his speech were workforce development, prices paid for NGO Services, contracting, participation in consultation and the uncertainty some organisations have about their role in the implementation of the Primary Health Care Strategy and their relationship with PHOs. You can read the full text of the Minister's speech at [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz)

### Tax Incentives for Charities and Not-For-Profits

- The Government has recently released a discussion document that outlines potential changes to the tax regime for charities and other not-for-profit organisations. This is a vital issue for many groups within the NGO sector. Submissions close on November 28, 2006 and you can read the full discussion document at [www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz](http://www.taxpolicy.ird.govt.nz).

### Copies of Te Awhiti available

- Te Awhiti, the National Mental Health and Addictions Workforce Development Plan for NGOs (2006 – 2009), was published recently and copies of the plan are available from Platform for review. To get a copy of Te Awhiti please contact Platform on (04) 385 0385 or [admin@platform.org.nz](mailto:admin@platform.org.nz).

### New Website for Te Pou

- A new website for Te Pou, the National Centre of Mental Health Research and Workforce Development, was launched at the October Ministry of Health-NGO Forum. Te Pou has been set up to support Te Awhiti and the work of NGOs within the mental health and addictions sectors. Maree Maddock, project leader for Te Pou, will be co-located at Platform during the next 12 months. You can check out the new site at [www.tepou.co.nz](http://www.tepou.co.nz).

### NGO Staff Changes

- Kath Fox was recently appointed CEO of Christchurch-based Richmond New Zealand, while Virginia MacEwan has been appointed CEO of Wellink. Congratulations to Kath and Virginia on these exciting new roles.

## In Print

# I Had A Black Dog

### The Author

Matthew Johnstone is a New Zealand-born, Sydney-based writer, artist and photographer, and a self-confessed sufferer of 'the Black Dog'. He describes depression as 'like a drop of ink in a glass of water', and cites his daughter as 'undoubtedly the best natural anti-depressant'.

### The Book

With soft, beautiful illustrations and direct and engaging text, *I Had A Black Dog* is a fantastic story about the author's struggle with depression. The eponymous *Black Dog*, popularised by Winston Churchill, serves as a powerful symbol for the effects depression can have on your life, hounding the author and making his life a misery. Ultimately, he overcomes both his fear of stigma and the Dog itself, and changes his life for the better. No mere picture book, *I Had A Black Dog* takes a touching yet penetrating look at life with depression and the struggle to beat it.

### Why You Should Read It

Johnstone's book captures the terror and isolation of depression, but finishes on a triumphant, uplifting note. It is an inspirational book, and its place as a finalist in the 2006 Montana Book Awards is well deserved; a must for anyone who has a Black Dog of their own, or knows someone who does.

# Giving Women the Special Gift of Time



"When she arrived she was so distressed she couldn't sleep or eat. On leaving she said she had hope again, everything felt better, she felt transformed with new strategies for life."

**Women from all walks of life can experience stress, trauma, or depression. And yet, in New Zealand, there are few alternative options for women seeking a private, holistic retreat away from a clinical setting.**

The Monastery offers women that alternative. Believed to be unique in this country, The Monastery combines the best of pampering treats with professional staff during its live-in, five-day programme.

Named for its heritage as a one-time Passionist monastery, The Monastery is a striking 1900's villa located near Hamilton with expansive gardens, a peaceful rural setting and outlook to the Waikato River.

A simple, back to basics approach is at the heart of The Monastery's programme. The Monastery offers a holistic, contemporary view of health care that integrates traditional and complementary approaches to maintaining wellness of mind, body and spirit.

Programme Leader and registered psychologist (community), Roxie Hanes, says The Monastery is fortunate to have 12 professional staff including a counsellor, personal chef, gardeners and five registered nurses with varying skills in reflexology, massage and anthroposophy.

Individually tailored programmes are aimed at early intervention. Typically, guests have a one-to-one check-in to discuss their needs when they arrive. With a member of The Monastery

team, guests talk about the workshops and services available, including anthroposophical treatments, counselling, massage, reflexology, mini facials, healthy eating and recreational therapy.

"How often do you get to pause and say 'what do I do now'? Our guests are encouraged to switch off from work and home, to leave their cellphones in their bedrooms. Most women get a sense that this is a chance to focus on what their needs are, instead of constant juggling."


Hanes says women do as little or as much as they like at The Monastery. Some just want to sleep, soak in a bath, or curl up with a book. Others enjoy exercise classes or walks. They might swap recipes for organic cuisine with the personal chef in the kitchen, or enjoy the gardens where a major permaculture project is under way.

Before guests leave, they discuss a plan for the future, examining the resources and support they'll have when they go back to work and families.

Hanes says a week at The Monastery is a journey of self discovery and guests love the transformation they see in themselves.

"One guest wasn't sure what change she would see in five days. When she arrived she was so distressed she couldn't sleep or eat. On leaving she said she had hope again, everything felt better, she felt transformed with new strategies for life."

Hanes says it's humbling to be a part of something like The Monastery that helps put sparkle back into a woman's life.

"The ultimate reward," she says, "is seeing women leave The Monastery with a new inner glow." 

**For more information about The Monastery visit [www.themonastery.co.nz](http://www.themonastery.co.nz)**

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