

Wednesday, 2 April 2008

New resource will help young people to mind their heads

Leading Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) agency **UnitingCare Moreland Hall** (Moreland Hall) is launching a major new resource for young people struggling with alcohol and drug issues and mental health problems, called 'Mind Your Head'.

The book, '**Mind Your Head – Some Things You Might Want To Know About Drugs and Mental Health**', has been developed by a partnership of Moreland Hall together with specialist mental health organisations Nexus Dual Diagnosis Service, and the Substance Use and Mental Illness Treatment Team (SUMITT).

The 56 page book, designed for young people to use as a self-help resource, but also available to be incorporated into educational curricula, and is important in filling in gaps in information that was available.

Before now, there has not existed a resource targeted to young people (15 to 25 years), that goes into detail about both mental health concerns (such as anxiety issues, depression, psychotic episodes and suicide), and issues related to drugs and alcohol, and how the two areas can affect each other.

Laurence Alvis, Chief Executive Officer of Moreland Hall, said he believed there was a significant need in the community for resources like 'Mind Your Head'.

"We already know that there is a demand for a resource like this, from workers in the sector who've told us that something like 'Mind Your Head' would be immensely useful," Alvis said.

"We know that there are significant links between mental health issues and problematic alcohol and drug use," he said. "There is already significant research looking at the links between say cannabis use and schizophrenia for predisposed individuals, or between methamphetamine use and paranoia."

"And equally, people with mental health issues often use drugs or alcohol to self-medicate," he said. "But using drugs or alcohol can also affect other medications they maybe taking."

"But now we have a resource that goes into detail about these issues, including strategies and behaviours for dealing with anxiety, depression, strange thoughts, and how to take care of their mental health."

"And it's written in a way that's targeted specifically for young adults – a group that is particularly sensitive to both exploring drug and alcohol use and to mental illness."

Alvis said he hopes many in the community, including young people, their families, and those that work with them, will use this resource.

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An Alcohol & Other Drug Treatment & Education Service
www.morelandhall.org

The 'Mind Your Head' book will be launched this Friday April 4th. with a keynote speech by Dr Dan Lubman, Consultant Psychiatrist and Associate Professor at the Orygen Research Centre, University of Melbourne. Dr Lubman will talk about problematic drug use and co-occurring mental health problems in young people. Free copies of the 'Mind Your Head' resource will be available at the launch.

ENDS

*Mind Your Head launch, at Moreland Hall, 26 Jessie Street, Moreland, at 10am Friday April 4th.
For further information or comment, contact Laurence Alvis, Chief Executive Officer or Andrew Milnes,
Manager Communications and Fundraising, on 9386 2876.*

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