The Bidirectional Impact of Mental Illness within Families of Regional Rural Victoria
Introduction

- A brief overview
- What might be some of the problems impacting on rural families?
- The rural audit!!!
- Some initial findings from interviews.
- Questions?
Challenges for ANY Parent or Child:
# Impact of Parent’s Mental Illness on Children

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Relationship Issues</th>
<th>Care Issues</th>
<th>Anger / Behaviour</th>
<th>Economic Issues</th>
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### Impact of Children’s Mental Illness on Parents

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Where is the Problem?

Parental Mental Illness

Parent

Social
Stress / Mental Health
Genetic
Relationships

Young Person

Social Relationships
Expressed Emotion
Stress / Mental Health

Child Mental Illness

Young Person

Attachment / Mental Health
Genetic
Learning / Behavioural

Parent

Stress
Social
Aggression
Mental Health
Attachment and Parenting:

1. Infant’s attachment experiences

2. Individual's attachment representations (internal working model)

3. Parenting behaviour

Ed Tronick (2014)
The Questions for Rural Families?

- What is the extent of mental illness in rural families where a parent and child both have a mental illness?
- How do children perceive the interplay between their own mental illness and their parent’s mental illness and vice versa?
- What is the impact of any interplay on the parent-child relationship?
- What would help children and parents in these families?
DATA
Audit of Child and Adolescent service: Rural Canadian Region.

Parents with and without a Mental Health concern of total cases reviewed (262 cases) (diagnosed and suspected)

- Parents without PMI, 83
- Parents with PMI suspected, 83
- Parents with PMI diagnosed, 96

Note: Survey consisted of 17 CYMH clinicians (part-time, full time and one Aboriginal CYMH clinician) and 6 Master’s level students
Children receiving counselling in the US by family type and history of mental illness in the family, 2011-201 (Iyue Sung, 2013).
The steps:

- **Data Analysis:**
  - Service review through a simple questionnaire
  - 1173 Community Mental Health Clients (August – September 2014)
  - 313 at Intake & Assessment - not included
  - Separation of CYMHS from adult:
    - 182
    - Re analysis

- **Questionnaire:**
  - Three parts-
    - Child / Parent information
    - Parent / Child Information
    - Parent outside the family with mental illness

- **CYMHS review:**
  - From Questionnaire
  - From File Audit
## Mental Health Within Families Clinician Data:

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<th>Child: Number</th>
<th>Primary Carer (Parent): Number</th>
<th>Other Relative with Dx in household: Number</th>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>Secondary Diagnosis</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>Ethnicity ATSI</td>
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<td>Ethnicity Other</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>72</td>
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- Primary Diagnosis: 182 child, 79 primary carers, 12 other relatives.
- Secondary Diagnosis: 122 child, 84 other relatives.
- Non-validated Diagnosis: 45 child, 84 other relatives.
- Ethnicity ATSI: 20 child, 84 other relatives.
- Ethnicity Other: 162 child, 84 other relatives.

Not recorded by clinicians:
- Other Relative with Dx in household: 12.
- Secondary Diagnosis: 122.
- Non-validated Diagnosis: 21.
- Ethnicity ATSI: 20.
- Ethnicity Other: 162.
Mental Health Within Families File Audit Data:

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<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Child: Number</th>
<th>Primary Carer (Parent): Number</th>
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Clinician Report vs File Audit - (Validated Diagnosis):

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<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>182 (100%)</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>182 (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>79 (43%)</td>
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<td>144 (79%)</td>
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From file audit-

Parent with either primary or non-validated mental illness:

Child: 181 (99%)

Parent: Valid and non-valid: 182 (100%)
Neurodevelopmental Spectrum
Depressive disorders
Anxiety disorders
Trauma and stressor disorders
OCD
Eating disorders
Conduct disorders
Substance disorders
Personality disorders

Primary Care Giver Non-Validated Diagnosis Male
Primary Care Giver Non-Validated Diagnosis Female
Semi-Structured Interviews:

- Nine Interviews
- Plus one extraordinary!
“Interview” Themes:

**Parents**
- “I feel wound up like a clock”
- “Home is like walking on egg shells it makes me feel depressed”
- “I worry too much but I can not help it”
- “He gets anxious and then I get anxious”
- “Some professionals give you more time, it makes a difference”
- “As he gets sad I get sad”

**Young People**
- “I can see mum getting anxious but feel unable to do anything about it and just worry”
- “I don’t know where to turn”
- “There is no support in the country”
- “Why is ‘everyone’ judgmental”
- “We are stuck in a hole”
- “I have no one to talk to”
What support would be helpful in a rural community?:

**Parents**
- “Help sooner – More family support”
- “More support and empathy”
- “Less judgmental attitudes and more practical support”
- “Being understood and Not being blamed”
- “Some practical help when I need it”
- “When I pick up the phone I can be sure I will be listened too not judged”

**Young People**
- “People who listen and don’t talk down to us kids”
- “People who talk to me so I don’t feel guilty”
- “Somewhere to go to”
- “Someone to talk to when I need, not the next day”
- “Being able to understand what’s going on way before now”
- “We just get into a cycle and it is just by everyone ‘hibernating’ things eventually come right”
Tymoteusz (18yrs):

**Myself**

- “Not being labeled”
- “Mum not worrying about me so much”
- “Being listened to”
- “Being accepted for who I am not who my mum is”
- “Not having to be anxious all the time about mum”

**My mum**

- “Being less stressed”
- “Always doing too much - like she wanted to make up for her own things”
- “More education (for me and mum”
- “Going off to hospital and no one talking to me about what was happening”
Possible Collaboration Areas in Regional Communities:

- Better understanding of the interrelation between child mental illness and parent mental illness
- Taking account of both child and parent perspectives
- Changes in intervention approaches
- Cultural & International comparisons
- Achieving Participant input and challenging clinician paternalism


Fernbacher, S., Goodyear, M. & Farhall, J. (2009). Taking a closer look:

A cross-sector audit of families where a parent has a mental illness. Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health (AeJAMH), 8, (3), 242 – 249.


THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?