

Making a **Difference**

2008/09 plans and actions for Well Wairarapa

Improving mental health and reducing addictions

Services working together

- Set up new consumer advocacy service
- New respite services for youth both locally and regionally
- Establish closer links between hospital and residential care services for older people
- Make sure there is active participation of Maori in planning and delivery of services
- Increase Maori health workforce
- Appoint a Suicide Prevention coordinator

Increase access to mental health services in the community

- Increase access to counselling and support services to secondary students
- Establish new position to address mental health needs of older people
- Improve access of clients of kaupapa Maori providers to GPs and psychiatric services
- Build on the "To be heard" programme to include younger people and people needing support with long term illness or palliative care

Increase access to hospital-based mental health services

- Develop more comprehensive eating disorder services
- Improve systems that measure patients' clinical progress

Promote healthier lifestyles

- Promote Mental Health Line
- Establish more services for youth with alcohol and drug problems



These plans and actions are part of national health targets 5,7,8 (see summary sheet)

FOR MORE INFORMATION



See the full version of the *District Annual Plan* at: wairarapa.dhb.org.nz

The Incredible Years

'The Incredible Years' is a new parenting programme designed to strengthen parenting skills and prevent and treat behaviour problems in children from 2-12 years. It is being offered in the Wairarapa through a collaborative agreement with the Wairarapa DHB and Special Education Services (SES).

One mum who attended the course was 'blown away' by the increasing confidence of parents who attended the course. "People were there because they wanted answers, and wanted help with their children. They were looking for different ideas and ways to help because what they were presently doing was not working. I take my hat off to them because they all wanted to do better for their kids," she says. "As the course continued they seemed happier in themselves as they gained confidence and learnt new strategies for dealing with conflict and aggression at home. After each session they went home, tried new ideas and came back the following week with their success stories. It was really neat. The group formed a real bond and we continue to see each other for mutual support."

Another parent said, "I got so much out of it and things have really improved at home. I have more understanding of my son's behaviour and the benefits of praise. He helps me now; before he refused to do anything. We are both more positive. The difference is amazing. Before, he couldn't play with other kids without hurting them. Now he plays happily with others and we get along much better."

The Incredible Years, a programme endorsed by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education comes from the USA and was offered to parents in Wairarapa for the first time in 2007. Susan Walker, Health Social Worker at Wairarapa Hospital, is passionate about the 13 week programme. "Parenting courses teach discipline strategies and alternatives to smacking, 'The Incredible Years' is more comprehensive. It is grounded in developing positive relationships with children and encouraging



positive behaviour. We work with parents whose children have challenging or extreme behaviour problems. Parents can self refer or they may be seeing the paediatrician or attending the Children & Adolescent Mental Health service.

It is delivered in a collaborative learning style which incorporates role play and brainstorming techniques. Parents re-learn how to play with their child, help them learn, praise effectively, give rewards, set limits, deal with non compliance, ignore and avoid misbehaviour, and use preventive strategies. There are activities for them to take home and try and discuss at the following group session. One of the basic principles is the more time spent reinforcing the positive, the less time parents need to spend punishing or removing privileges because of misbehaviour. Susan Walker says that parents often distance themselves from their children who are uncooperative or aggressive and as a result the child's needs are not met and their behaviour becomes worse. "We teach parenting skills and strategies for problem solving, anger management and improved communication. Research shows that early intervention with children prevents anti-social adults and I feel passionately about seeing children growing in a healthy family environment."