Why the lavender plant

There is no shortage of information on lavender. It is a common but beautiful plant with a strong perfume, widely grown and available throughout Australia.

The lavender plant is very symbolic. Throughout time, it has been used to symbolise meditation, love, longevity, relaxation, calmness, healing, protection, acknowledgement, perseverance, kindness and compassion.

The colour lavender represents dignity and the flower itself is talked about as coming into full development, to mature and to flourish.

We think the lavender plant, its colour and its flower are very appropriate as a symbol for National Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness day.

We hope you agree!

Why don’t you,

- Buy a lavender plant for your office, reception area or lunch area
- Put some lavender flowers around your office or home – great for tables, shelves and stands

and let people know what they represent and why you are supporting the day!

Acknowledgements

- To all consumers for their courage to persist in the face of barriers and their ability to find their own creative solutions
- To all carers who support their loved ones throughout their journey
- To every clinician who accepts and respects people affected by BPD, who provides a good level of care and who is a partner in that care
- To all who work for better recognition for those affected by BPD, who actively seek to reduce the prejudices and discrimination associated with this serious condition, and who strive to provide access to appropriate services offering choices

The Project Air strategy is funded by NSW Health and involves mental health workers, consumers and carers improving the lives of people living with a personality disorder. The project offers high quality training and education and implements research strategies supporting scientific discoveries and better treatments.

info-projectair@uow.edu.au
www.projectairstrategy.org

National Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness Day

Please help us continue to build awareness about BPD by letting others know about this day.
Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a complex mental disorder that is often misunderstood.

Symptoms for people affected by BPD often include frequently distressing emotional states, self-harming behaviour, difficulty in relating to other people and the world around them. This can be very distressing for the person and for people close to them.

Currently between 2% and 5% of Australians, that's 440,000 to 1,100,000 individuals are affected by BPD at some stage in their lives. The symptoms of the disorder usually first appear in mid to late teens or in early adulthood, with women three times more likely to be diagnosed with BPD than men.

The causes of BPD are not fully understood with a variety of origins. They are likely to be biological and life factors, social or environmental, which, for some people, may relate to childhood experiences of trauma or neglect. Many consumers and clinicians prefer to use a different diagnosis as a way of overcoming current prejudice within the health system.

Contrary to common belief, people with BPD can recover well with appropriate on-going treatment and support. With early diagnosis and effective treatment including choices, the outcomes for people with BPD are good.

Having BPD is not deliberate; people do not choose to have it. And, people can get better!

We believe that a National Awareness Day is the best public arena and provides the greatest opportunity to raise and enhance awareness of and increase understanding about BPD within the health system and the community. With this, we hope that acceptance and respect will follow. We believe it's critical to:

- Provide a voice for consumers affected by BPD
- Provide a voice for carers of people affected by BPD
- Help people affected by BPD feel accepted
- Treat people affected by BPD with dignity and respect
- Understand that BPD is the business of mental health services
- Increase access to services
- Provide treatment options for people with BPD who don’t necessarily self-harm
- Highlight the need to offer choices
- Support clinicians working in this field
- Increase respectful awareness of BPD to clinicians in mental health services, GPs and staff in Emergency Departments
- Provide awareness of and support for the establishment of a state-wide specialist service in every state, based in the community and offering choices including trauma informed care and practice

You can demonstrate your support by doing something practical!

- Talk about BPD with your friends and colleagues
- Listen, really listen, to the experiences of those affected by BPD and that includes carers
- Share with someone affected by BPD that you acknowledge their struggle
- Challenge prejudices associated with this diagnosis wherever possible
- Contact someone you know and tell them about Awareness Day
- Lobby your managers/directors about the need for better services for consumers and carers affected by BPD
- Write to your local politician and the Federal Minister responsible for mental health advocating for the need for the community based state-wide specialist service

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