

affiliated with Bipolar Fellowship Scotland

Bipolar Fellowship Scotland
0141 560 2050
www.bipolarscotland.org.uk

The Bipolar Foundation
www.bipolar-foundation.org

Breathing Space Scotland
0141 435 3901
Helpline 0800 83 85 87
breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Fife Carers Centre
01592 642999
www.fifecarerscentre.org.uk

Depression Alliance Scotland
0131 467 3050
www.depressionalliance.org

Scottish Assoc for Mental Health
0141 568 7000
www.samh.org.uk

Fife Advocacy
01383 511155
www.fifeadvocacy.org

Fife Families Support Project
01592 641401
www.fifefamilies.org.uk

Drop-in Centres around Fife

ENERGI
01333 730477
www.energi.verycool.co.uk

Barony Housing Contact Point
0871 700 7777
rowangroup.org.uk/barony.htm

Core Club
01383 623179
lesley.forbes@samh.org.uk

Express Group Kirkcaldy
01592 652975
gavin@expressgroup.fsnet.co.uk

Express Group Dunfermline
01592 652975
www.expressgroupfife.org.uk

The Cottage NSF Scotland
01334 657421
thefifecottage@hotmail.com

Would you like to see your organisation here? Simply get in touch with your details! We'll add you to our list.

We meet 2nd Tuesday every month

No referral needed, simply come along! All welcome

7pm The Express Group Kirkcaldy

Fife Bipolar Group

Empowering Bipolar People in Fife



Extra Meeting in November

Head of Mental Health Services

25th November, see page 4

www.cfbg.co.uk

Issue 23 **October 08**

About the Fife Bipolar Group

We meet once a month in Kirkcaldy but welcome people from all over Fife. The main purpose of the group is to offer a supportive environment to those affected by bipolar affective disorder and allow them to talk about and share their experiences with others. To attend is free & you do not need a referral.

We also provide an information service through our website, this monthly magazine & a library of reading material relating to bipolar & mental health. This we hope will help you address the issues that affect you in your life. If you have anything you'd like to talk about or would like to come along to a meeting, please get in touch!

People with bipolar disorder

Friends Relatives Carers

Meeting

2nd Tuesday of every month
7 - 9pm

Location & Mail Address

Fife Bipolar Group
Express Group Kirkcaldy
110 Rosslyn Street
KY1 3AD

Contacts

fifebipolargroup@cfbg.co.uk
www.cfbg.co.uk
07749 039 624

Disclaimer FBG cannot be held responsible for any information supplied in this magazine. Any views expressed by articles do not necessarily represent the views of FBG. The Group's decision on material to be included is final.

Please complete this page and send it to Bipolar Fellowship Scotland at the address below:

I enclose my membership fee (tick as appropriate):

Individual	0	£15.00
Unwaged Individual	0	£ 5.00
Family	0	£20.00
Organisation (Voluntary Sector)	0	£25.00
Professional	0	£30.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TEL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

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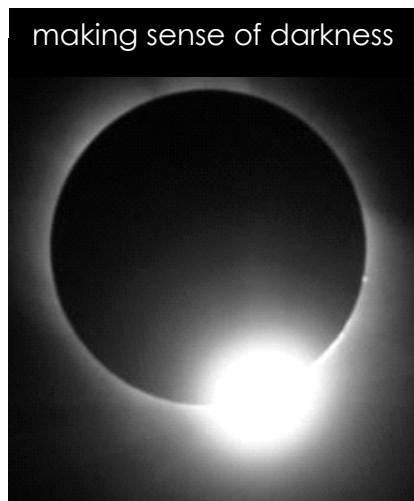
Come & Join ...

Bipolar Fellowship Scotland

Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in Bipolar Disorder and/or the need to increase understanding of the illness. Every new member strengthens the voice of those affected - if you have the illness, are a carer, friend, relative, a caring professional or an interested individual.

What membership offers:

- The Bipolar Fellowship Scotland regular newsletter On the Level Quarterly issues of the MDF The Bipolar Organisation's UK Journal—Pendulum
- Access to a wide range of information covering all aspects of bipolar disorder/manic depression at our lending library (no need to come to the office, we can post things out to you)
- Free entry to self help groups network events
- Access to the self management training courses
- Access to facilitators' training events if you are/plan to be an organiser of a self help group
- Free entry to our annual national conference
- Legal Advice Line
- Insurance Services



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Our Committee

Chairperson Edie

Website Mike

Secretary Pauline

Magazine Ross

Treasurer Jim

Librarian Margaret

Support Mark

Support Lee

fifebipolargroup@cfbg.co.uk

If you would like to submit something to be included in the magazine, simply send it through to us. The deadline for inclusion in the magazine is 16th of every month

Bipolar News & Round-up

Please come on 25 November!

Bob McLean, the Director of Mental Services for Fife NHS has agreed to come along to a meeting with the group on November the 25th (date subject to change). We want to stress how important it is that as many members as possible attend to show Bob how seriously we take his visit. So please come along, ask as many questions as possible and show Bob that we need him to take our opinions seriously.

This Year's Xmas Party

We'll be holding our Christmas party at our December meeting, the 9th at 7pm. Last year was a roaring success and everyone had a lot of fun. So come along, say hi and let's toast the success of a very healthy, happy year for our group! **Entry free to all.**

Crisis Phonelines

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87

Samaritans

08457 90 90 90

Saneline

0845 767 8000

Social Work out-of-hours

01592 415000

NHS Direct

0845 24 24 24

Mind

0845 766 0163



What's on in Fife?

Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum

Closes for the summer season at the end of October with gift shop and coffee area.

Andrew Carnegie House, Pittencrieff Street, Dunfermline

Runs until 31 Oct

Free and free visitors car park
www.carnegiebirthplace.com

Annual Mental Health Awareness Exhibition

Free Entry

In its 9th year, this exhibition is recognised by both health professionals and health service users as being instrumental in reducing the stigma associated with mental health problems.

Lochgelly Centre Bank Street

Runs until 24 Oct

During Normal Opening Hours

Cupar Arts Festival

Cupar's first major Arts Festival showcasing visual arts, musicians, poets and performers. Music, contemporary art, craft, spoken work, drama, heritage, presentations by local organisations, workshops and activities for all ages.

10 Oct - 26 Oct

Various venues throughout the town
enquire@cupararts.org

Good Mood Food!

Grilled Salmon with Mango Salsa

Mouth-watering grilled salmon fillets are made even more enticing with a homemade mango salsa.

PREP TIME 20 Min COOK TIME 20 Min READY IN 40 Min

Ingredients

- 1008 g Atlantic salmon fillets, boneless and skinless
- 5 g Salt
- 15 ml olive oil

Mango Salsa:

- 1 ripe mango, peeled seeded and diced 1/4 inch
- 40 g diced red onion
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green onion, finely chopped
- 30 ml orange juice
- 3 g chopped fresh cilantro
- 30 ml olive oil
- 0.4 g Salt

Directions

Season the salmon fillets on all sides with Salt, pressing the spices into the flesh. Brush salmon lightly with olive oil and set aside.

Meanwhile, prepare the Mango Salsa. In a bowl, combine the mango, red onion, red pepper, green onions, orange juice, cilantro, olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon of Salt.

Preheat grill to medium-high.

On a seasoned grill, grill the salmon for 6 to 8 minutes per side until lightly charred and just cooked through. Serve with Mango Salsa.

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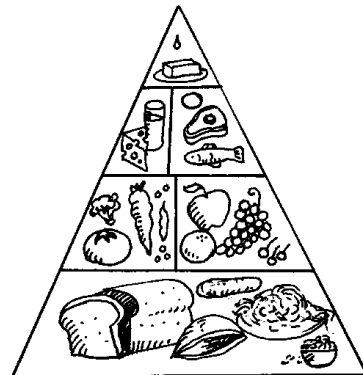
Food for thought

Eat your way to a better brain
Barry Downard

CHILDREN have a lot to contend with these days, not least a tendency for their pushy parents to force-feed them omega-3 oils at every opportunity. These are supposed to make children brainier, so they are being added to everything from bread, milk and pasta to baby formula and vitamin tablets. But omega-3 is just the tip of the nutritional iceberg; many nutrients have proven cognitive effects, and do so throughout a person's life, not merely when he is a child.

Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, a fish-loving professor of neurosurgery and physiological science at the University of California, Los Angeles, believes that appropriate changes to a person's diet can enhance his cognitive abilities, protect his brain from damage and counteract the effects of ageing. Dr Gómez-Pinilla has been studying the effects of food on the brain for years, and has now completed a review, just published in *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, that has analysed more than 160 studies of food's effect on the brain. Some foods, he concludes, are like pharmaceutical compounds; their effects are so profound that the mental health of entire countries may be linked to them.

Last year, for example, the *Lancet* published research showing



Unscramble the words!

School Words

1. UNGNPLODARY _____
2. OHLSCO _____
3. RHEETAC _____
4. DNERGAI _____
5. EERSBETMP _____
6. ESSREC _____
7. INNGERLA _____
8. OWRMKHEO _____
9. KPCBCKAA _____
10. TMHA _____
11. DERGSA _____
12. OOSBK _____
13. IWNTRGI _____
14. NSRFDEI _____

Answers next month

able to go back and delete, or at least edit your own posts. No member of the bipolar forum on the DBSA had a comment.

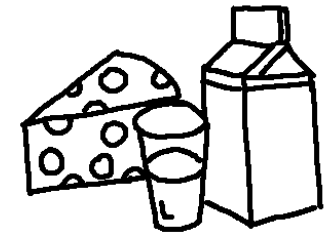
(USA) BipolarConnect.com

<http://www.healthcentral.com/bipolar>

A US site (that welcomes international members) that has a discussion forum for bipolar disorder – for survivors, their family, and for professionals. A good, friendly, warm site, easy to use, moderated to keep it safe and friendly for all. And, something not found on many sites, the ability to ask questions of professionals. Replies are not slow; mine took less than a day. And when they say experts/professionals answer the questions, they really mean it. John McManamy is a regular contributor, and he answered my question – and he is also videoed on the site, as is Prof Kay Redfield Jamison, giving advice about various aspects of bipolar disorder, in what appears as heartfelt advice coming from painful personal experience. One downside is the number of adverts that flood the site – but I can forgive that. Another downside or upside, depending on what you want, is that the site is slow. Replies and messages do not flood in. If you want a lot of advice and input, this site may drag too much, but if you are patient and in no rush, it is ideal. It's what I would describe as a semi-forum. There aren't running threads, rather they have what they call shareposts that people can comment on. What does tend to happen is that members stay in touch via email, not just on the forum. It is possible to go back and edit your previous posts.

This article was taken from Equilibrium the bipolar foundation's website.

that folic-acid supplements—sometimes taken by pregnant women—can help those between 50 and 70 years old ward off the cognitive decline that accompanies ageing. In a study lasting three years, Jane Durga, of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, and her colleagues found that people taking such supplements did better on measures of memory, information-processing speed and verbal fluency. That, plus evidence that folate deficiency is associated with clinical depression, suggests eating spinach, orange juice and Marmite, which are all rich in folic acid.

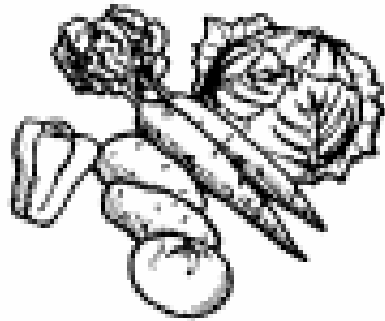


Another suggestion from Dr Gómez-Pinilla's review is that people should eat more antioxidants. That idea is not new. Antioxidants are reckoned by many to protect against the general effects of ageing. Vitamin E, for example, which is found in vegetable oils, nuts and green leafy vegetables, has been linked (in mice) with the retention of memory into old age, and also with longer life.

Dr Gómez-Pinilla, however, gives the antioxidant story a particular twist. The brain, he observes, is peculiarly susceptible to oxidative damage. It consumes a lot of energy, and the reactions that release this energy also generate oxidising chemicals. Moreover, brain tissue contains a great deal of oxidisable material, particularly in the fatty membranes surrounding nerve cells.

That suggests, among other things, the value of a diet rich in berries. These have been shown to have strong antioxidant effects, though only a small number of their constituents have been evaluated in detail. One group

that has been evaluated, the polyphenols, has been shown in rodents to reduce oxidative damage and to boost the ability to learn and retain memories. In particular, these chemicals affect changes in response to different types of stimulation in the hippocampus (a part of the brain that is crucial to the formation of long-term memories, and which is the region most affected by Alzheimer's disease). Another polyphenol, curcumin, has also been shown to have protective effects. It reduces memory deficits in animals with brain damage. It may be no coincidence that in India, where a lot of curcumin is consumed (it is the substance that makes turmeric yellow), Alzheimer's disease is rarer than elsewhere.



Peas of mind

Though the way antioxidants work in the brain is not well known, Dr Gómez-Pinilla says it is likely they protect the synaptic membranes. Synapses are the junctions between nerve cells, and their action is central to learning and memory. But they are also, he says, the most fragile parts of the brain. And many of the nutrients associated with brain function are known to affect transmission at the synapses.

An omega-3 fatty acid called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), for example, provides membranes at synaptic regions with "fluidity"—the capacity to transport signals. It also provides "plasticity"—a synapse's capacity to change. Such changes are the basis of memory. Since 30% of the fatty constituents of nerve-cell membranes

your personal stories near the top of a Google search on your name.

A comment from one member, asked to list 3 reasons why she loved the SLOTMD forum wrote: The people here are caring, considerate and always very useful in a crisis. I enjoy the intelligent conversations I have had, particularly regarding literature, and in complete contrast, the very silly conversations too! I have met some really lovely people

(USA) Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, "We've been there. We can help."

The DBSA is a great site, they are a top class charity working to help people with different mental health problems, and they get results and my respect – but based on my personal experience, I cannot, in good conscience recommend their forums to bipolar readers. (Note I am only talking about the forums, the website and the work done by the DBSA is superb). There is a lot about the forum that works – a large number of members, forums separated clearly for each problem, the offer of support, a great number of well informed members from all over the world advising each other with up to date information, and in the majority of cases, well meaning, friendly members. However, the forums are not moderated. (Yes there are administrators, but they are few in number and hardly ever seen – even a direct request to them remains unanswered after weeks). So this means that a few members, probably ill and therefore angry and agitated, hiding behind their usernames, bully other members, and the bullying goes on and on, others joining in – or people get the cold shoulder – on another forum that sort of behaviour would have been stopped. One thing that is really frustrating is not being

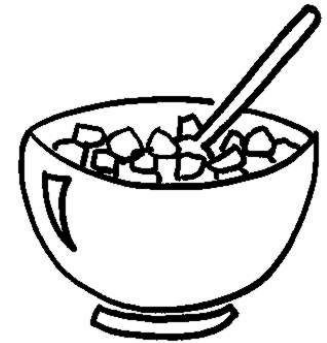
cally, but these days most forums are international – all the ones I cover below are full of people from all nooks and crannies around the world. I can only give you some advice based on my own personal experience on these forums, which is quite extensive, but all the same, subjective.

(UK) The Adventures of Mr Stephen Fry, forum: The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive.

<http://stephenfry.com> for the forums

Stephen Fry, who is bipolar himself, has a very popular website (internationally utilised) with a number of discussion forums – all great. Following the production of the two-part documentary, *The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive* (TSLOTMD), a new forum by the same name was added. This has attracted people with bipolar disorder (and other mental illnesses) where a single forum is used to discuss all factors. I am almost tentative to release the secret that is this wonderful forum - It has many members yet feels so intimate. I have many friends there. People are supportive, more so than on any other forum I have been on. The quality of advice shared is superb. Now this might be down to the inimitable Mr Stephen Fry, all members are fans of his, and as such tend to have a sense of humour and a brain. It is a great site. Yes there are occasionally baiters, who join to cause problems, but the moderators are fantastic, and yes I'm biased because I am a mod there! In Stephen's own words, "I have no philosophy, religion or lifestyle to espouse. This is a virtual place in which to browse peacefully and without being harangued, harassed, heckled or hectorated." That's what he has created. It is possible to edit your previous posts. My only word of caution would be that if (like me) you do use your real name, because the site is so popular, you could find

are DHA molecules, keeping your DHA levels topped up is part of having a healthy brain. Indeed, according to the studies reviewed by Dr Gómez-Pinilla, the benefits of omega-3s include improved learning and memory, and resistance to depression and bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dementia, attention-deficit disorder and dyslexia.



Omega-3s are found in oily fish such as salmon, as well as in walnuts and kiwi fruit, and there is a strong negative correlation between the extent to which a country consumes fish and its levels of clinical depression. On the Japanese island of Okinawa, for example, people have a strikingly low rate of mental disorder—and Okinawans are notable fish eaters, even by the standards of a piscivorous country like Japan. In contrast, many studies suggest that diets which are rich in trans- and saturated fatty acids, such as those containing a lot of deep-fried foods and butter, have bad effects on cognition. Rats put on such diets show declines in cognitive performance within weeks.

In the past few years, several studies have looked at the effect of adding omega-3s to people's diets—particularly those of children. One such, carried out in the British city of Durham, was controversial in that it was funded by a maker of children's omega-3 supplements and did not include a control group being given a placebo. Despite the publicity this study has received, Ben Goldacre, author of a book called "Bad Science" that includes an investigation of it, says the results will not be released.

Work by other researchers, however, has suggested such supplements do improve the performance and behaviour of school-age children with specific diagnoses such as dyslexia, attention-deficit disorder and developmental co-ordination disorder. Moreover, although more work is needed to elucidate the effects of omega-3s on healthy school-age children, Dr Gómez-Pinilla says that younger children whose mothers took fish-oil supplements (which contain omega-3s) when they were pregnant and while they were breast-feeding do show better cognitive performance than their unsupplemented contemporaries.

Eating well, then, is one key to a healthy brain. But a word of warning—do not overeat. This puts oxidative stress on the brain and risks undoing all the good work those antioxidants have been up to. For those who would like a little practical guidance, *The Economist* has some suggestions for dinner (see menu). So why not put the Nintendo brain trainer away tonight, and eat your way to intelligence instead?

This article review is from the Economist.com

opinions about meds tried - and their side effects - although all issues with medication must be talked about with a doctor, no changes to medication should be made based on online discussions. The plus side is the fact that many fellow survivors are making contact because they want to provide and share in support and encouragement to others, and good administration/moderation can deal with any trolls or baiters – although even on the best forums I have seen them cause immense problems.

Let me explain the technical terms. Trolls are quite simply people who post controversial and usually irrelevant or off-topic messages in forum, such as an online discussion forum or chat room, with the intention of disrupting the conversation or baiting other users into an emotional response (obviously that is serious on a forum of people who may be ill and extremely sensitive). Baiters are even worse! Like trolls they want attention, the difference is that the response is supposed to be embarrassing to the user in question, and humorous to others. Baiters frequently concentrate on unpopular groups – like those with mental illness. The baiter often seems to be talking nonsense, but that does not matter, because the only aim is to baffle the baitee, and to produce an “interesting” result. Baiting is used in attempts to empty/reduce a forum's usage. This is done by making forum owners, moderators and long-time users look foolish – such as posting comments to elicit rude responses from prominent members, thus making the responding member or members appear bad to others. As a result, forum users in general may become disgusted and leave the forum.

If you are looking for a forum, Google “bipolar forum,” possibly adding your location if you want to meet up lo-

Internet Resources for Bipolar Disorder

By Katy Sara Culling, Fellow bipolar survivor.

Introduction

The Bipolar Foundation recently ran an online questionnaire and from well over 3,000 bipolar respondents, all obviously computer literate and internet friendly (or why would they be on our website and answering an online questionnaire), only a small proportion, that is 30%, found online forums (online support communities) for bipolar disorder useful and supportive. This raises the question of why? What are sites out there getting right and what are they getting wrong, and maybe in the future, could discovering these facts lead to a truly supportive forum be born?

A few things need to be considered before we look at a tiny sample of bipolar forums out there. There are always problems on forums – people rarely use their real name, instead an assumed name, which is fine in many cases, and helps people open up, but some people hide behind their fake name to cause problems. Add to this mixture people who may be manic, depressed, or both, i.e. mixed, or psychotic, or dysphoric – i.e. angry and irritable, and tensions can run high. Suicide can be a common subject, as can self-harm, addictions and symptoms – any advice about which must of course be checked with a real doctor, because there are people posing as doctors out there. (There are real doctors too, but they are not there to treat other forum members, they are looking for support and hoping to provide it, just like everyone else). But it can be beneficial to share



Cartoons



Cartoons

Summary of September's Meeting

Initially we were introduced to Sandy from Edinburgh who had brought along her son Tony, currently doing his University dissertation on Bipolar. Throughout the evening various members of the group talked with Tony in the quiet room whilst the meeting took place. An initial draft of questions was handed out to each member present containing suggested questions for Bob McLean, Mental Health Directorate Manager for Fife NHS who is attending our November meeting.

The group was informed that both Sharon Rodger, Head of Local Services and Kranti Hiremath, Fife Constabulary's F.M.E. had been written to and a reply received from Sharon Rodger stating she would be pleased to set up another meeting but could not attend the November date with Bob McLean.

Since the September meeting took place, there has also been feedback from Fife Constabulary, with Kranti Hiremath's secretary having phoned to discuss a date for a meeting between herself and some of the group's members. A letter has been composed to send to Victoria Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department, again, for the purposes of more awareness of Bipolar and any discussion on forthcoming changes to Fife Mental Health Services. There was also a suggestion made with regard to some form of memorial for Lawrence, namely a group biscuit barrel with a personal inscription. This would be in addition to a social evening previously discussed.

September's meeting was very well attended and as usual members were treated to a cuppa and a biscuit after all business was discussed. It was also great to see our member Tony and his mum, Marie who, through their golf club had managed to raise £2400 for our funds.

I'm Fine

There's nothing whatever the matter with me.

I have manic depression that no-one can see

I'm locked inside a world of confusion,

And when I'm low I can't take intrusion

I take the pills to ease the pain

I guess they stop me being insane

By now you're thinking that's a shame

Now go and find someone to blame

There is no one just how life goes

You have to be strong and take the blows

There's nothing whatever the matter with me,

Take a look around and you will see

Poor people much worse off than me

Straighten your back, you must walk tall

You'll rise to the sky and then you'll fall

Vicious circles on and on, life's worth living;

WHAT A CON

Sleepless nights , after night , after night

And in the morning what a sight

It's better to say "I'm fine" with a smile

Because if you don't THEY'LL RUN A MILE

A member's poem
