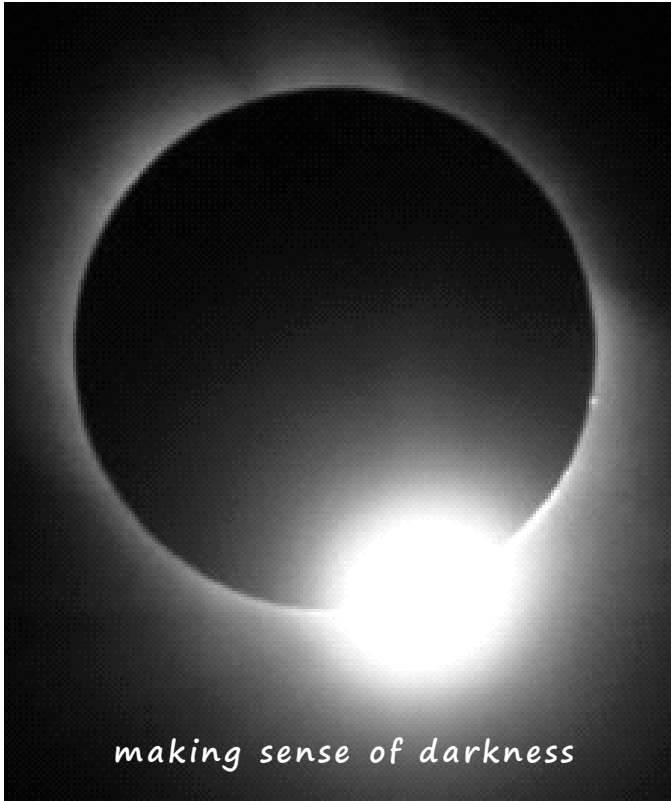


# *Fife Bipolar Group*

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*www.cfbg.co.uk*

*Issue 31 June 09*



Alan Douglas is June's Speaker

Bipolar Fellowship Scotland

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*Empowering Bipolar People in Fife*

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## 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 and a free monthly magazine. 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!

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## People with bipolar disorder

*Friends Relatives Carers*

### **Meeting**

2nd Tuesday of every month  
7 - 9pm

### **Address**

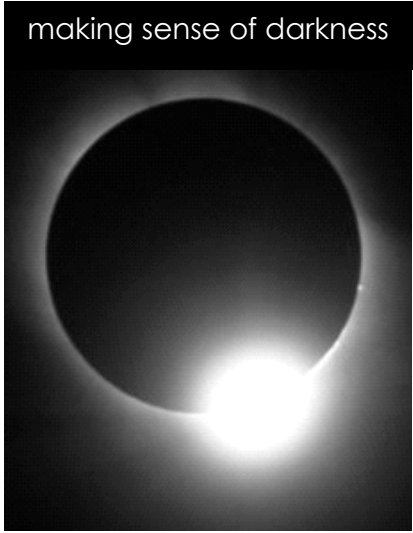
Fife Bipolar Group  
The Express Group Kirkcaldy  
110 Rosslyn Street  
KY1 3AD

### **Contact**

fifebipolargroup@cfbg.co.uk  
www.cfbg.co.uk  
0753 863 9461

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**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.



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Our Committee

- Chairperson** Mark
- Secretary** Pauline
- Website** James
- Magazine** Ross
- Treasurer** Barbara
- Librarian** Margaret

[fifebipolargroup@cfbg.co.uk](mailto:fifebipolargroup@cfbg.co.uk)

Get in touch with any comments or ideas about the magazine.  
The magazine deadline is the 16th of every month

# *Bipolar News & Round-up*

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## *New Chairperson*

We welcome Mark as our new Fife Bipolar Group Chairperson. Mark has been a big part of the group for a while now, so Chairperson was the natural next step. We all wish him well and offer all the support we can!

## *June's Speaker*

June's speaker will be Alan Douglas who is a Development Worker for Bipolar Fellowship Scotland. He'll be coming along to talk about the work of the BFS and the important issues that affect you.

## *Starting a Book Club*

We are looking to start up a book club for our group members. If you've got any ideas about good books about Bipolar that you think we should be discussing, let us know ASAP!

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## *Crisis Phone Lines*

### **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



# Recall of All Missing Library Books

Over the years a number of library books have been borrowed from the group and not returned.

We would now like to urge all members who have taken books from our group to return them as soon as possible.

This will allow us to build up a useful library of reference materials that can be shared equally between all our members.



Simply send the books to the express group or contact us and arrange to drop them off.

*Thank you for your co-operation*

# Develop a healthier frame of mind

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*Mental health problems will affect one in four of us at some point in our lives, but the stigma associated with them means few of us will seek the help we need. Campaigning charity **Time to Change** looks at why attitudes need to change.*

Most people with mental health problems feel they cannot talk to other people. They feel misunderstood and isolated and some even face fear and ridicule.

In a recent Time to Change survey, 85% of the 4000 mental health service users and carers questioned reported that people's reactions had had a negative impact on their lives.

People are all too aware of this stigma and discrimination. One young member who failed to declare her mental health history was sacked, another was banned from her employer's computer area because her managers feared she might deliberately harm the system.

These attitudes deny us the opportunity to live our lives to the full. They deny us relationships, work, education and hope. They also have a negative effect on society and the economy; the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health estimates mental health problems cost employers £26 billion a year.

## **It's time for change**

By taking a negative attitude to mental health problems we are missing out on the positive contribution that so many people with mental health issues could make—if they were given the chance.

That is why mental health charities Mental Health Media, Mind and Rethink have launched Time to Change—England's most ambitious programme to end the stigma and discrimination that have been holding back people with mental health problems.

## **Make a difference**

Time to Change wants the campaign to act as a catalyst to break down barriers and bring people together. We are running a range of local community projects and national mass-participation physical activity events. Why not check out our website for details of events near you?

We also plan to take legal test cases to challenge the law around discrimination and protect people's rights. We are also supporting a network of people with experience of mental health problems to speak out and challenge discrimination for themselves and providing training for groups of people who have a significant impact on their lives, such as trainee teachers, headteachers and doctors.

**[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)**

.....  
*How to Help...*

## *...With Good Listening Skills*

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Good listening skills are vital to healthy relationships. Whether you're strengthening a relationship, resolving a conflict, or offering support in a facing a crisis, good listening skills can be a lifeline to peace. Learn how to be a truly supportive listener, and you may find yourself surrounded by others who are able to do the same. Here are some important steps to developing good listening skills:

### **Listen, Listen, Listen.**

Ask your friend what's wrong, and really listen to the answer. Let them vent their fears, frustrations and other important feelings, maintaining eye contact and showing that you're interested in what they have to say. Resist the urge to give advice, and just let them get it out.

### **Reframe What You Hear.**

Summarize and repeat back your understanding of what they're saying so they know you're hearing them, and focus on the emotions they might be feeling. For example, if your friend is talking about family problems, you might find yourself saying, "It looks like things are getting pretty hostile. You sound like you're feeling hurt."

### **Ask About Feelings.**

Ask them to expand on what they're feeling. Asking about their feelings provides a good emotional release and might be more helpful than just focusing on the



facts of their situation.

### **Keep The Focus On Them.**

Rather than delving into a related story of your own, keep the focus on them until they feel better. You can reference something that happened to you if you bring the focus back to them quickly. They will appreciate the focused attention, and this will help them feel genuinely cared for and understood.

### **Help Brainstorm.**

Rather than giving advice in the beginning, which cuts off further exploration of feelings and other communication, wait until they've gotten their feelings out, and then help them brainstorm solutions. If you help them come up with ideas and look at the pros and cons of each, they're likely to come up with a solution they feel good about. Or they might feel better after just being able to talk and feeling heard.

## *Helpful Tips*

### **Stay Present.**

Sometimes people feign listening, but they're really just

waiting for their friend to stop talking so they can say whatever they've been mentally rehearsing while they've been pretending to listen. People can usually sense this, and it doesn't feel good. Also, they tend to miss what's being said because they're not focused.

### **Don't Give Advice.**

It's common to want to immediately give advice and 'fix' your friend's problem. Unless it's specifically requested, don't. While you're trying to help, what would work for you might not work for your friend; also, advice can feel condescending. Unless they ask directly for advice, your friend probably just wants to feel heard and understood, and then can find his or her own solutions.

### **Trust The Process.**

It might feel a little scary to listen to feelings before diving into solutions, and hearing your friend talk about upset feelings might even make you feel helpless. But usually offering a supportive ear and sitting with your friend in an uncomfortable place is the most helpful thing you can do, and once the feelings are cleared out, the solutions can start coming.

### **Let Things Even Out Over Time.**

With all this focus on your friend's problems, it might be difficult not to focus equal time on your own. Relax in the knowledge that, when you need a friend, your friend will likely be a better listener for you. If you're consistently doing all the giving, you can re-evaluate the dynamics of the relationship. But being a good listener can make you a stronger, more caring person and bring a more supportive angle to your relationships.

## Last Month's Meeting...

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At Tuesday's meeting (12<sup>th</sup> May) the group welcomed along Michelle Cook a trainee Clinical Psychologist from NHS Lanarkshire. Michelle was interested on our views on what to include in the training of professionals who work in health care. This sparked a lively discussion. Some of the points suggested were the following:

- q Trainee Psychologists, Psychiatrists and nurses meet with service users, particularly those who are in recovery who will have insight into how they have coped with their condition and how they have managed to stay well.
- q Encourage health professionals to come along to a group such as ours to meet with a whole group of current and ex service users who can offer the trainee an insight into the many different ways a condition like bipolar can affect someone.
- q The group felt it was important that the trainee's saw people's conditions in more than one context i.e. when they were in an acute phase for example in hospital or in the middle of a difficult episode. Also seeing people who were managing well and had not had an acute phase for some time.
- q The group felt it was important that there was an effort to challenge negative language used by professionals, like 'long-term' 'illness' 'lifelong' etc and more emphasis placed on positive recovery models with professionals electing to use language linked to the possibility of recovery.

Ultimately, the evening stimulated much discussion and Michelle will be visiting some of the other groups in the network.

# Meditation May Increase Gray Matter

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That's the finding from a group of researchers at UCLA who used high-resolution magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to scan the brains of people who meditate. In a study published in the journal *NeuroImage* and currently available online (by subscription), the researchers report that certain regions in the brains of long-term meditators were larger than in a similar control group.

Specifically, meditators showed significantly larger volumes of the hippocampus and areas within the orbito-frontal cortex, the thalamus and the inferior temporal gyrus — all regions known for regulating emotions.

"We know that people who consistently meditate have a singular ability to cultivate positive emotions, retain emotional stability and engage in mindful behavior," said Eileen Luders, lead author and a postdoctoral research fellow at the UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging. "The observed differences in brain anatomy might give us a clue why meditators have these exceptional abilities."



Research has confirmed the beneficial aspects of meditation. In addition to having better focus and control over their emotions, many people who meditate regularly have reduced levels of stress and bolstered immune systems. But less is known about the

link between meditation and brain structure.

In the study, Luders and her colleagues examined 44 people — 22 control subjects and 22 who had practiced various forms of meditation, including Zazen, Samatha and Vipassana, among others. The amount of time they had practiced ranged from five to 46 years, with an average of 24 years.

More than half of all the meditators said that deep concentration was an essential part of their practice, and most meditated between 10 and 90 minutes every day.

The researchers used a high-resolution, three-dimensional form of MRI and two different approaches to measure differences in brain structure. One approach automatically divides the brain into several regions of interest, allowing researchers to compare the size of certain brain structures. The other segments the brain into different tissue types, allowing researchers to compare the amount of gray matter within specific regions of the brain.

The researchers found significantly larger cerebral measurements in meditators compared with controls, including larger volumes of the right hippocampus and increased gray matter in the right orbito-frontal cortex, the right thalamus and the left inferior temporal lobe. There were no regions where controls had significantly larger volumes or more gray matter than meditators.



Because these areas of the brain are

closely linked to emotion, Luders said, "these might be the neuronal underpinnings that give meditators' the outstanding ability to regulate their emotions and allow for well-adjusted responses to whatever life throws their way."

What's not known, she said, and will require further study, are what the specific correlates are on a microscopic level — that is, whether it's an increased number of neurons, the larger size of the neurons or a particular "wiring" pattern meditators may develop that other people don't.

Because this was not a longitudinal study — which would have tracked meditators from the time they began meditating onward — it's possible that the meditators already had more regional gray matter and volume in specific areas; that may have attracted them to meditation in the first place, Luders said.

However, she also noted that numerous previous studies have pointed to the brain's remarkable plasticity and how environmental enrichment has been shown to change brain structure.

Other authors of the study included Arthur Toga, director of UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging; Natasha Lepore of UCLA; and Christian Gaser of the University of Jena in Germany. Funding for the study was provided by the National Institutes of Health. The authors report no conflicts of interest.

# Puzzles & Games

Question 1 Solve the following math problem:

$$2 + 5 + 15 + 9 - 4 + 3 + 8 - 12 + 26$$

Question 3 It is between 8:00 and 9:00 and the minute hand is covering the hour hand.

What time is it?

Question 4 You are baking a cake and only have two measuring cups.

One measures 1 cup and the other measures 3 cups.

If you need 5 cups of flour, how could you use your cups to get exactly 5 cups?

BONUS: How could you use both cups to find exactly 2 cups of sugar?

Answers

Answer 1 52

Answer 3 About 8:43 (give or take a minute, depending on your clock)

Answer 4 For 5 cups of flour:  
Use 3 cup once with 1 cup twice (3 + 1 + 1) OR  
Use 1 cup five times (1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1) OR  
Use 3 cup twice then take 1 cup out (3 + 3 - 1)  
For 2 cups of sugar, measure 3 cups of sugar then take out 1 cup (3 - 1)

# Easy Tomatoes with Basil

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These tomato slices simply topped with freshly sliced basil and salt and pepper. Prepare these tomatoes about 30 minutes before serving and allow them to come to room temperature.

Prep Time: 3 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 large tomatoes
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- 4 large basil leaves, chopped or rolled and sliced thinly
- vinaigrette or salad dressing

## Preparation

Slice tomatoes; arrange on a serving plate. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, then the chopped basil. Let stand for 30 minutes. Serve with vinaigrette, salad dressing, grated cheese, or serve as is.

Tomatoes with basil serves 4.



# *What's on in Fife?*

## **Kinghorn Gala Crowning Day**

Sunday 07 Jun 2009 - 13 Jun 2009

Celebrate the start of Kinghorn Gala Week with the crowning of the Gala Queen. The Crowning of the new Gala Queen takes place at 2.30pm in the Kinghorn Community Centre followed by fancy dress and talent show starting a week of fun activities throughout Kinghorn. 2:30pm onwards—FREE

Kinghorn Community Centre  
Rossland Place  
Kinghorn

01592 890937  
[www.kinghorngala.org](http://www.kinghorngala.org)

## **Family Nature Walk**

Wednesday 24 Jun 2009

Stewart Bonnar from Fife Countryside Ranger Services joins John Done in conducting a family walk through the Carlingnose Reservoir pointing out the many items of interest.

18:30  
Free

01383 417167  
[www.nqht.org](http://www.nqht.org)

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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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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	£20.00
Unwaged Individual	0	£ 5.00
Family	0	£25.00
Corporate	0	£35.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TEL:

E-MAIL:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Please make all cheques/postal orders payable to Bipolar  
Fellowship Scotland.

Studio 1015, Mile End Mill  
Abbey Mill Business Centre  
Seedhill Road  
Paisley PA1 1TJ

**Telephone 0141 560 2050**  
**e-mail [tildab@bipolarscotland.org.uk](mailto:tildab@bipolarscotland.org.uk)**

affiliated with Bipolar Fellowship Scotland

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**Bipolar Fellowship Scotland**

0141 560 2050

[www.bipolarscotland.org.uk](http://www.bipolarscotland.org.uk)

**The Bipolar Foundation**

[www.bipolar-foundation.org](http://www.bipolar-foundation.org)

**Breathing Space Scotland**

0141 435 3901

Helpline 0800 83 85 87

[breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Fife Carers Centre**

01592 642999

[www.fifecarerscentre.org.uk](http://www.fifecarerscentre.org.uk)

**Depression Alliance Scotland**

0131 467 3050

[www.dascot.org](http://www.dascot.org)

**Scottish Assoc for Mental Health**

0141 568 7000

[www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

**Fife Advocacy**

01383 511155

[www.fifeadvocacy.org](http://www.fifeadvocacy.org)

**Fife Families Support Project**

01592 641401

[www.fifefamilies.org.uk](http://www.fifefamilies.org.uk)

Drop-in Centres around Fife

**ENERGI**

01333 730477

[www.energi.verycool.co.uk](http://www.energi.verycool.co.uk)

**Barony Housing Contact Point**

0871 700 7777

[rowangroup.org.uk/barony.htm](http://rowangroup.org.uk/barony.htm)

**Express Group Kirkcaldy**

01592 652975

[gavin@expressgroup.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:gavin@expressgroup.fsnet.co.uk)

**Express Group Dunfermline**

01592 652975

[www.expressgroupfife.org.uk](http://www.expressgroupfife.org.uk)

**The Cottage NSF Scotland**

01334 657421

[thefifecottage@hotmail.com](mailto:thefifecottage@hotmail.com)

**Link Living**

01592 644048

[www.linkliving.org.uk](http://www.linkliving.org.uk)

*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**

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