Celebrating Mental Health Week

Future expansions in Sunshine Coast Mental Health Services have reignited Child Mental Health Psychiatrist Dr Chris Lilley’s passion for the industry.

“Mental Health is my passion. I trained as a doctor in England under the National Health Service. I’ve always been driven to provide exemplary care for people with mental health needs in a public health setting. I’m determined to work for an organisation that provides the best possible care.”

In 1995, Child Mental Health Psychiatrist Dr Chris Lilley moved to the Sunshine Coast to begin his training in psychiatry, working for the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service.

Eight years later he was a qualified Child, Adolescent, Family and Adult Psychiatrist and discovered his calling in Mental Health Services.

“I believe that all people should be able to access fantastic healthcare irrespective of their financial status,” Dr Lilley said.

Dr Lilley Acting Clinical Director of the Sunshine Coast Mental Health Service is currently involved with the steering committee for a new mental health educational facility, the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience – Thompson Institute.

The Thompson Institute, an initiative of the University of the Sunshine Coast and its partners, will be a clinical, research and teaching facility focusing on mental health and neurological diseases based on the Sunshine Coast.

“The Thompson Institute will be instrumental in providing research into Youth Mental Health and measuring and monitoring effective treatments for our younger mental health consumers, which is of course where my passion is as a Child Mental Health Psychiatrist,” Dr Lilley said.

Mental Health expansions on the horizon

- The completion of the $1.8 billion Sunshine Coast Public Hospital in late 2016 will also see a significant expansion in Sunshine Coast Mental Health Services. The new mental health unit includes 20 acute adult inpatient beds, 12 acute older person inpatient beds, four mental health intensive care beds as well as six acute adolescent inpatient beds.

- This development will see a doubling in the number of authorised mental health beds on the Sunshine Coast. It will also see the development of the first inpatient services for youth and adolescent mental health patients.

“For the first time, we will have an opportunity for inpatient treatment of adolescents, so people from about the age of 13 upwards, who will be managed on the Sunshine Coast whereas previously we needed to provide that care in the Brisbane based hospitals,” Dr Lilley said.
“Maybe more significantly, we’re also going to be providing a day program with the capacity to treat up to 15 young people in a hospital based therapeutic treatment setting, without the need for overnight care, yet still successfully managing their needs. The new mental health unit will be a significant improvement on facilities we’ve had in the past.”

“People have concerns generally talking about their diabetes, asthma, yet we have some significant reluctance to talk about our depression and anxieties and I think that’s a problem that we need to take head on. I think increasingly as people understand how ubiquitous mental health concerns are for the majority of the population I think it becomes increasingly easy to talk about it.”

“The most important thing is to be able to talk about mental health. I proudly wear the mental health badge day by day and I’m not afraid to talk about it. I think in the past we’ve been reluctant to admit that we could possibly experience mental health issues ourselves or indeed work within that arena. It doesn’t need to be an embarrassment to suffer mental health concerns, because indeed with adequate treatment people can clearly get back a significantly improved way of life.” Dr Lilley said.

As part of Mental Health Week, October 4- 10 Dr Lilley is encouraging everyone to help dispel the stigma which still surrounds Mental Health and start a conversation about it.

The Sunshine Coast Mental Health Service will be holding an information stall in the Nambour Hospital Foyer throughout mental health week.

ENDS

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