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Springwood Qld 4127

*Caring, Support, Awareness, Education*

**Telephone Help Line 24/7: 1300 767 022**

Issue No. 4

July / August 2012

# Emotion Modulation Therapy

-- AISRAP

## What is it?

Emotion Modulation Therapy (EMT) is a mode of psychotherapy developed at the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention. It helps patients improve their ability to cope with problems in life and reduce the level of discomfort in approaching everyday challenges. It has been used to treat a wide range of disorders, including depression, anxiety, and personality disorders.

## What is the goal in EMT?

The principles behind EMT are:

- Individuals become unwell whenever they over-activate (thinking too much, being too alert, doing too much) for too long. That can happen as a result of: specific events triggering an increased level of activation; over-estimating the level of activation required to perform; under-estimating the significance and impact of fatigue/stress symptoms.
- Whenever we perform there is a tendency for the body and the mind to increase the level of activation to cope with the process of fatigue. Most of it occurs sub-consciously and if do not consciously monitor the changes we go through, we can lose the ability to contain them and eventually to be aware of them.
- In general, society constantly reinforces the idea that if we do not succeed in what we are doing it is because we have not tried "hard enough".
- From that, society also reinforces the idea that individuals can never try "too hard". That is why we find that many of the symptoms mentally ill individuals present with indicate very high levels of activation (mental distress, hyper-vigilance, burnout, etc.).
- Many of the behaviours patients present with (alcohol abuse, deliberate self-harm, illicit drug use, overdosing on medication, avoidant behaviours, etc.) are often initiated to relieve an uncomfortably high level of activation.

**The main goal in EMT is to help patients find out which levels of alertness, mental and physical activation achieve the best possible performance in a sustainable way. Instead of continuing to "try as hard as they can" patients learn how much trying is "just right".**

## How is Emotion Modulation Therapy structured?

The treatment process involves three distinct stages.

The first stage aims at making the patient aware of the need to monitor and contain activation. It initially focuses on the strategies (functional and dysfunctional) the patient currently utilises in reducing activation.

*Continues on page 6...*

## 2012 Meeting Dates for the Annerley Support Group (Brisbane)

Friday fortnightly at 7:30pm

July 6, 20	October 12, 26
August 3, 17, 31	November 9, 23
September 14, 28	December 7, 21

## Management Committee

**President:** Cherrie Cran  
**Vice President:** Donna Cumming  
**Treasurer:** Darrin Larney  
**Secretary:** Jennifer McMahon  
**Fundraising Coordinator:** Lauren Leslie  
**Members:** Elna Rongonui & Mark Williams

## S.O.S.B.S.A. Support Group Meetings

### Brisbane Support Group

DrugArm Auditorium  
 473 Annerley Road, Annerley (Cnr Fanny St)

Fortnightly from Friday 6th July 7:30 pm

Contact 1300 767 022

### Bundaberg Support Group

Neighbourhood Centre  
 111 Targo Street, Bundaberg

2nd Wednesday of every month at 10:30 am

Contact Peter on 4155 1015

### Cairns Support Group

Cairns Red Cross, Douglas House  
 198 Grafton St, Cairns

2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm.

Contact Fran on 4045 2955  
 or 0407 695 891

### Mackay Support Group

Gordon White Library Meeting Room  
 54 Phillip Street, Mt Pleasant, Mackay

2nd Saturday of every month at 2 pm

Contact Renee on 0412 448 805  
 or Kim on 0430 186 149

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## Become an SOSBSA member for 2012!

Pensioner / Student	\$20
Adult member	\$30
Family	\$50
Not-For-Profit Org.	\$50
Affiliate Business	\$100

Visit [www.sosbsa.org.au](http://www.sosbsa.org.au) or contact [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) for membership form or to renew.

“May the love hidden deep  
 inside your heart find the love  
 waiting in your dreams. May  
 the laughter that you find in  
 your tomorrow wipe away the  
 pain you find in your  
 yesterdays.” (Author unknown)

# President's Report

*Welcome everyone to our newsletter for July/Aug 2012.*

I have only just returned from attending the Postvention Conference in Sydney over the weekend, with Darrin, our Treasurer. This was a productive time and we learnt heaps. Darrin and I will provide more details next newsletter, but for now I'd like you all to know that when considering the future it seemed that most people in attendance agreed that we need to have a national co-ordinating Postvention Association.

This could be a very good thing. At the moment many of us are 'reinventing the wheel' and developing all of our own materials etc. The charter for such an organisation hasn't yet been discussed, but I would expect that it will engage each of the current associations to share resources, ideas and knowledge so that we can all take advantage of the work that we each do. Along with this, it would be nice to see them act as an advocacy group – to lead any lobbying efforts with the government to see the changes that we know that need to happen to reduce suicide being put in place. However, as I said, the charter for such a group hasn't yet been discussed. I would like to know what you think such a group could provide to us and the other Postvention groups around Australia? Please email me at [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) with your thoughts.



A reminder:

## **Candlelight Memorial 2012**

When: Friday **13 July** 2012 at **7pm**  
 Where: **New Farm Park** – the Rotunda  
 Booklet Contribution Deadline: 10 July 2012

Any contributions for the booklet need to get to Jen at [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) as soon as possible. This could be a photo, a song, a poem or something that you would like to say to your loved one.

You will see in this newsletter the main article is on Emotion Modulation Therapy (EMT). This article is basically the information provided to patients who attend the Life Promotion Clinic at Griffith University and was provided to me by Dr Angelo De Gioannis, who heads up the clinic.

Dr De Gioannis and I have been having an ongoing conversation about the research that Griffith are doing and how they are providing support to their suicidal patients. I asked Dr De Gioannis if he had something that our readers might be interested in, and provided us permission to print this for you.

The theory is that there is a common thread between all suicides and that is 'overdoing', either their level of alertness, their thinking or their physical activity. When they talk of 'overdoing' they are not talking about normal 'working too hard' things, but consistent, long-term overdoing that the person has little to no ability to control, eg the racing mind, the mind that goes much faster than we speak and that cannot be slowed, the frustration of trying to keep up with a mind like this and the impact of this being the case for someone for many many years, can lead to suicide.

*Continues on page 4...*

# President's Report cont.

Continued from page 3...

I'll point you to the paragraph on the front page:

***The main goal in EMT is to help patients find out which levels of alertness, mental and physical activation achieve the best possible performance in a sustainable way. Instead of continuing to "try as hard as they can" patients learn how much trying is "just right".***

Have a read of it, and see what you think. Does this resonate with you? Do you think that your loved one might fit into this 'theory'?

I'd be very interested to hear what you think – so please email me at [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) and let me know.

After talking to Dr De Gioannis, I do believe that this was true for my son, Bede, and the way he described it made so much sense to me. I can't imagine living with a mind that I can't slow down to speaking speed, the implications of which are for me something I wouldn't like to comprehend, and provides an explanation as to what my son meant when he said to me "Mum I can't live inside my head anymore – it's like a war going on in there".

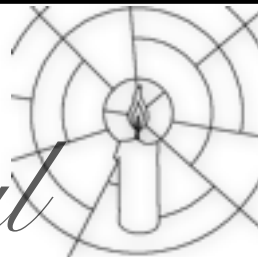
If this is true, even for many potential suicides, then over time Griffith might have found a way to provide assistance to people that simply hasn't been there before, and it's well worth watching as they progress.

Take care of yourselves over the cold months, and I hope to see you at the Candlelight Memorial service or at our support group.

Love and peace to all of you

*Cherrie*

*Candlelight  
Memorial*



All welcome.

Please contact Cherrie on  
**0423 567 055** for details.

Please send in submissions (eg- poems, photos, songs)  
prior to 10th July to be included in the program booklet.

FRIDAY 13TH JULY 2012, 7PM

New Farm Park, Rotunda



### Recovery Weekends

Join Bronwen, a sister to suicide, life coach and personal trainer for a weekend of recovery in Coolum Beach. Learn simple techniques to help you cope better and look after yourself during your grief and beyond.

0410640803

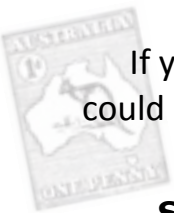
[www.rosesintheocean.com.au](http://www.rosesintheocean.com.au)

## Call for Stamp Donations.

Thank you to those kind people who have sent in a few unused stamps for us to use. It all helps to keep our costs down so we can use our valuable funds in other ways to support the bereaved.

If you have a few stamps you could send our way, please post to:

**P.O. Box 334  
Springwood Qld 4127**



## Mourning Dove Pin



Purchase one of our beautiful pewter Mourning Dove pins to honour and remember your loved one.

Price: \$8 each (+ \$3 postage)

Please submit any orders & cheques either by mail to:  
P.O. Box 334  
Springwood Qld 4127

or by email to  
[secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)

## THANK YOU

Thank you to **Maree Hart** for her generous donation of stamps to help with posting newsletters and information packs. Much appreciated.

XXXX



## The Rolex and Modavo

By Anne-Marie Snider, for my father Rodney Snider who took his own life December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

In the 26 year of my life I spent 900 dollars on watches.

These were items of indemnity - you left them, for me, maybe.

Dropped into my possession, they stopped working – like clockwork and I felt responsible; to hours, and minutes and seconds that needed fixing.

(Without you) In the 26<sup>th</sup> year of my life I can safely say, I no longer wait, for permission (from you) to not go on fixing things, yes, things, that I didn't want to be responsible for (mostly you).

We just live with the memory of you.

And that is enough.

# Emotion Modulation Therapy cont.

-- AISRAP

*Continues from page 1...*

The second stage involves the identification of which activities (generally mental and/or alertness) contribute to the patient's excessive activation (excessive critical self-talk, worrying too much, hyper-vigilance, etc.). The objective is to assess what role those activities have at an appropriate level and to identify how and why they become so intense.

Once the first two stages have been achieved, the third stage is aimed at identifying the most efficient way to assess that the level of activation is becoming excessive. Patients learn how to interpret physical and mental symptoms as well as behaviours so that it is easier to gauge the impact from excessive levels of activation. The ultimate goal is for the patient to be able to perform at their best without the risk of unnecessary exhaustion or stress.

## **What does it involve?**

The initial session will generally include a thorough assessment to establish if the treatment is suitable to the patient. If suitability is established, the clinician will introduce the patient to the treatment process. Treatment sessions can be conducted individually and/or in a group. Part of the assessment will also include consideration of the use of medication that will be offered depending on the specific needs the patient presents with. Overall, the most important component of the treatment is to encourage the patient to explore more efficient ways of approaching life. This is usually the most challenging part, because it involves changing habits that in many cases have been in place for a very long time.

It is important to consider that the treatment will in no way involve avoiding or abandoning the problems/tasks patients are trying to deal with. Rather, patients find that by improving the way they approach situations, it makes it easier to face and manage difficulties because of the reduction in mental, emotional and physical distress.

## **What else should I know about the treatment?**

- Psychotherapies are not a quick fix; they can often take months and in some cases years before individuals recover from their illness. In some instances, it may take some time before patients are well enough to receive psychological treatment. When that occurs, often patients need a course of pharmacological treatment before they can proceed with psychotherapy.
- Confidentiality is one of the most important elements of any therapeutic relationship. However, there are some rules regarding the kind of information that can be kept confidential that will be discussed with you during the first session.

## Book Reviews

This column is for book reviews that are submitted by readers or that are found to be of relevance to any area of suicide bereavement, grief recovery, self-healing, suicide or mental illness, or any other topic that you think is worth sharing.

Please submit any book reviews either by mail or by email to [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)



### **Spirit Children Life Goes On & Spirit Whispers**

By Charmaine Wilson

Review/Letter by Michaelle Luijs

Dear Charmaine,

I would to thank you so very much for your inspiring books. I cannot believe how much they are helping me on my journey.



In August I went to your show in Gladstone and that opened up so much inside of me. I then brought both of your books and just read and read and read. In the beginning of reading them I cried, had constant tears (my partner said he didn't mean for me to get so involved in a book...he always tells me to open my mind and live the story) but at the end of your second book I surprised myself, I could handle your words, the only thing was, I got goose bumps.

I could not believe how much was in there that I have experienced since my son passed on. I don't feel like that crazy woman anymore. I know now what I have felt is real. Before my son passed on, I always thought, dead was dead and I had never seen a dead person before. My son was the first one. Since he left so many things have happened, he has come for visits and in one instant even brought some friends along and let me see into a classroom. His first visit he told me that is wasn't what he expected, that the people were strict and he had to do a lot of work (like school work). He has showed me signs with songs and birds and even changing the radio station.

Now I joke that I see more of him in spirit than when he was here on earth.

I feel now that I am waking up and know that I am healing. I do have a lot to live for. I have a beautiful partner (my soul mate) who has held my hand and dragged me out of that deep dark place, I have a beautiful daughter who is married to a great guy and they have the most gorgeous daughter who is my blossom. I still have a long way to travel and still have dark days, but I am finding peace on the way and placing things in a special place in my heart.

Thank you once again for sharing your gift.

With love from my heart and soul

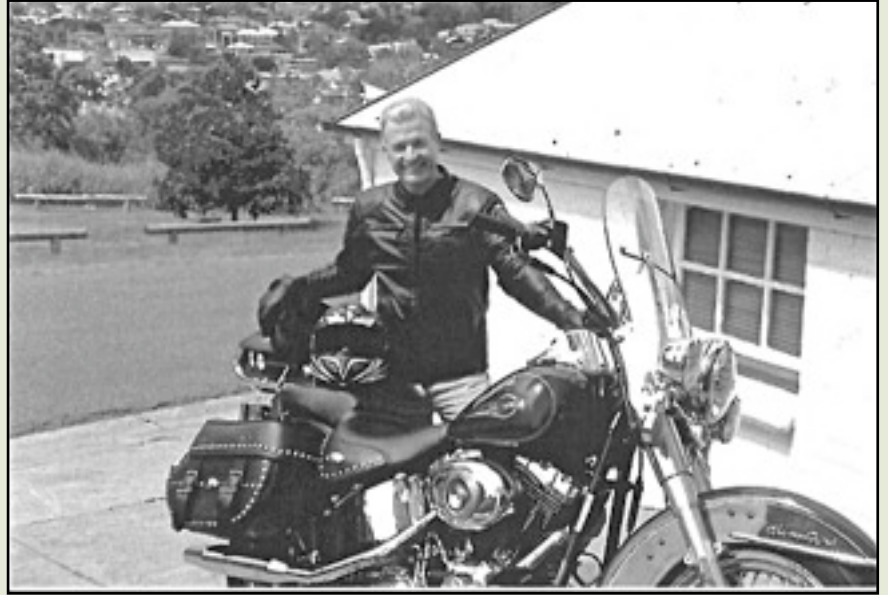
Michaelle xo

# A letter to my father

-- *Tony Fathers*

On August 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 my father lost his battle with depression and chose to take his own life by hanging himself.

He had been diagnosed with 'severe depression' a couple of years previously. I also lost a close friend in 2005 by the same method, which made it all the harder to accept Dad's suicide, especially since Dad had said suicide was the easy way out, and told me of the pain and suffering of the many left behind.



*Max Fathers*  
26/7/1951 - 13/8/2009

I never in my wildest dreams imagined an intelligent, articulate, well educated, well adjusted man like my father, would even contemplate, let alone go ahead with suicide, and in doing so, leave such a void in our family and friends lives.

He was my hero, mentor, mate and motorbike riding buddy, and always there for me. In addition he was also the family patriarch and exceptionally good at finding solutions to problems and generally helping out myself and many other people.

My time with him has been cut short and has left so many questions unanswered. My children have also missed out, he is not here to watch them grow and develop. It is hard to explain to young children about an illness that can't be seen, all they saw was a loving, happy grandfather.

I know he was 'in pain' with the depression, but we are in so much pain without him.

Living 2 states away from the family and not being able to talk to my Dad anymore really makes me feel sad and isolated.

Miss you mate,

Love Tony.



# Other Suicide Support Groups

If you would like to add your suicide support group to this page, please email [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).

## Sunshine Coast

### Head High Young People Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre  
Fifth Avenue, Maroochydore  
Linda —5479 0394

Meetings are held last Thursday of the month at 4:30 —6:30pm.

### Caloundra Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

42 Croydon Avenue  
Currimundi

Jeanine and Ron —5491 7452

Meetings are held every 1st Monday of the month at 10:00am-12 noon.



## Gold Coast

### Lifeline

2791 Gold Coast Road  
Broadbeach  
Monthly: 1st Friday of the month  
Time: 6:30-8:30pm  
Phone: 5579 6000

## Chermside

### Lifeline Brisbane North

766 Gympie Road  
Chermside  
Monthly: First Tuesday of each month  
Time: 6:00pm—8:00pm  
Contact: Lyndall Stafford  
Email: [enquiries@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:enquiries@uccommunity.org.au)  
Phone: 07 3624 2400



### Also

Lifeline facilitates an 8-week closed therapeutic group for the bereaved by suicide (daytime at Chermside and night time at Fortitude Valley).  
Contact: Lyndall Stafford at above phone number or email address.

## NSW

### Lifeline Harbour To Hawkesbury

4 Park Ave, Gordon, NSW  
Monthly: 2nd Thursday of the month 7-9pm.

Phone: 02 9498 8805

Email: [admin@lifelineh2h.com](mailto:admin@lifelineh2h.com)

### Lifeline MidCoast NSW

Sherwood Road Port Macquarie.



Meetings held on the 4th Wednesday of the month.  
Contact Lee-Ann on 02 6581 2800 or email [lifematters@lifelinemidcoast.org.au](mailto:lifematters@lifelinemidcoast.org.au)

If you wish to receive this newsletter via email, please contact us on [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).

# In Memoriam

If you would like an 'in memoriam', please send an anniversary record to SOSBSA, P.O. Box 334, Springwood 4127 or email to [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).



**Loved one lost to suicide:** Jo-Anne Louise Jackson nee Tung

**Date of Birth:** 28th October 1975

**Message:** To our darling Joey, it has been 4 long years. Amie and Joshua are doing well. We miss you heaps. Your sisters send you their love. I hope you are sitting up in heaven with Aunty Pam reading your bible. FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS. Luv Mum xxx

**Your Name:** Maree Hart

**Date of Death:** 6th July 2008

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Matthew

**Date of Birth:** 1st April 1970

**Message:** Miss you every day Matthew, love Mum.

**Your Name:** Linda Scanlan

**Date of Death:** 24th July 1989

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Andrew James Christian Bennetto

**Date of Birth:** 28th November 1964

**Message:** Loved and missed every day by Heather and their children, Caitlin and James; his parents, brother John and sisters, Jane and Sonja. Winston Churchill wrote to Clementine some years after the loss of their infant daughter, Marigold: "When the bandages and plasters of everyday life are removed the wound is still raw" (may not be the exact words but I am always drawn to them). He expresses the grief of parents so well. They later lost their daughter, Mary to suicide. Andrew, you live in your children and in our hearts.

**Your Name:** John and Gail Bennetto

**Date of Death:** 24/07/1989

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Christine Morley

**Date of Birth:** 29th December 1975

**Message:** Not a day goes by that I don't think of you. I wish you were here. You were such a beautiful soul, a beautiful friend and beautiful mother. RIP my beautiful friend. Miss you xxx

**Your Name:** Angela Goodwin

**Date of Death:** 26th August 2010

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Gavin Paul Simms

**Date of Birth:** 12th February 1969

**Message:** "Gavie Wavie, My brother, my mate, my Gavie. Everyday I wish, Everyday I cry, Everyday I remember your cheeky smile. But everyday please remember how much I love you. Love Sis xxx"

**Your Name:** Kellie Barnard

**Date of Death:** 3rd August 2011

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Peter Pascoe

**Date of Birth:** 9th October 1973

**Message:**

**Your Name:** Trina Mey

**Date of Death:** 27th July 2010

**Loved one lost to suicide:** Mark

**Date of Birth:** 12th August 1965

**Message:** My heart holds you just one beat away, the tears in my soul fall quietly every day.

**Your Name:** Bronwen Edwards

**Date of Death:** 31st August 2008

For everyone whose anniversary of their loved one is in July / August. On this anniversary of your loved one's death, may you remember the best experiences you shared, the most meaningful words that were spoken, the happiest moments you had together and the comfort that has given you the courage to go on.

## National Helplines

LifeLine: 13 11 14 (24 hour)

Mensline: 1300 789 978 (24 hour)

Suicide Callback Line: 1300 659 467 (24 hour)

National Hope Line: 1300 467 354 (24 hour bereavement support)

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 (24 hour)

SANE Helpline: 1800 18 SANE (M-F 9am-5pm)

## QLD

Standby Response Service 07 3250 1856 / 0438 150 180  
(24 hour mobile crisis response to suicide bereavement.)

Sunshine and Cooloola Coasts 0407 766 961

Photo by Ian Britton