

FROM THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR ...

LIFE Unlimited and Parent to Parent NZ Inc partnership were awarded the Ministry of Health contract to deliver a national disability information and advisory service for Autism Spectrum Disorders in June 2007.

Our first task in securing the contract was to deliver a roadshow across the country to introduce the service and consult with potential service users and providers prior to implementation. Forums were delivered in 17 centers across NZ and attended by approximately 800 people in July and August. It proved to be wonderful networking exercise and opportunity for people to talk about service gaps as well as positive things happening in their region. A report was compiled and distributed to all who attended.



We then set about finding a name for ourselves with the help of Blacksheep Creative web design studio. After much deliberation we came up with the name Altogether Autism, Te Puna Koreo - A source of information, He puna atawhai - A source of advice/support. We are proud of our name and feel that it embraces who we are and what we are about.

Next came the setting up of our website and provider database which went live on the 5th October 2007. Not long after we contracted People First to reword our welcome page into plain language. We are very pleased with the result. Development of the website is ongoing and we have made much progress with the provider database thanks to all our advisors, Sue Davies our website administrator and Jean Lamusse who has overseen the finer details.

We have now appointed and trained 12 of our 14 regional ASD advisors, who have been busy networking and navigating people to services. The appointment of advisors for the Wellington and Greymouth/West Coast regions will be completed by the end of February 2008.

The advertising and recruitment for the panel of experts is presently underway. Closing date for expressions of interest was 31st January 2008 with short-listing and appointments to be completed by mid February. We have had an interesting range of applicants from a diverse range of background. It is hoped that this group will be fully operational by early April 2008.

After being in operation for three months a Qualitative Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted at the end of December 2007. The main findings of the overall survey were that people accessing the service were all positive about the service they received. We have included a summary of this for your interest.

We have been busy. It has been a very exciting time and we look forward to meeting with everyone again at our regional network meetings. These are due to start on Wednesday 20th February in Christchurch and Wellington and then in Auckland on the 5th March and Hamilton 7th March. We will keep you updated with venues, dates and times for the meetings in each region.



Warm Regards

Michelle Rivers
National Coordinator

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Altogether Autism

New Zealand ASD Guidelines

Work on the content of the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline has been completed. Publication of the Guideline now follows usual government processes. It is hoped that these will be completed by early 2008. The Ministries will update their websites to let people know as soon as approval to publish has been received.

The guideline will come in several different versions (the full guideline, a summary version, and a Maori language version), and be available in hardcopy, and for download from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education websites.

A 'Living Guideline' approach has been established. This will help to ensure the Guideline is updated regularly and refined to reflect new evidence and changing user needs to prevent the Guideline from becoming quickly outdated.

Further work on the implementation of the guideline is underway.

Tanya Breen
Clinical Consultant

REGIONAL MEETINGS

REGION	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Auckland	5/3/08 Wednesday	10.00 am	Fickling Convention Centre Lynfield Room 546 Mount Albert Road 3 Kings AUCKLAND
Hamilton	7/3/08 Friday	10.30 am	CCS Board Room 17 Claudelands Road Hamilton East HAMILTON
Nelson	18/3/08 Tuesday	10.30 am	Victory Community Centre Centre Totara and Vincent Streets NELSON
Dunedin	19/3/08 Wednesday	9.00 am -11.00 am	Nations Church 334 King Edward Street SOUTH DUNEDIN
Invercargill	20/3/08 Thursday	9.00 am	Disability Resource 137 Spey Street INVERCARGILL
Bay of Plenty Rotorua	31/3/08 Monday	9.00 am -12 Noon	Rotorua Methodist Church Bainbridge Centre 187 Old Taupo Road ROTORUA
Bay of Plenty Tauranga	31/3/08 Monday	1.00 pm - 4.00 pm	Parent to Parent Village Hall Village on 17 th 17 th Avenue TAURANGA

QUALITATIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

By Adri Isbister
Chief Executive Officer LIFE Unlimited
December 2007

Executive Summary

The purpose of this survey report was to gain an understanding of client's perceptions and feelings of the newly developed Altogether Autism disability information and advisory service. This was developed and implemented in joint partnership with Parent 2 Parent and LIFE Unlimited. LIFE Unlimited and Parent 2 Parent, both national health and disability service providers, continually seek to improve the quality of their services. This preliminary customer satisfaction survey will better inform the continuous quality of this service.

A person independent of Altogether Autism was employed as a telephone evaluator for this piece of work therefore ensuring honest and unbiased recording of the feed back. People were asked verbally to rate the service and were asked to make additional comments.

Most important to this service was a question in the survey which asked for a rating of the assistance and respect customers received from the service, this came in at 100% outstanding or excellent rating.

Also important to note is the small sample size of people telephoned; however it is early days and the intention to continue to evaluate in this manner will mean a comprehensive report when the service has been facilitated for one year.

The overall main findings of this customer satisfaction survey are that people accessing the service were all positive about the service they received. People were helpful in their comments and pleased to be called and to be asked for feed back.

The survey has identified areas to concentrate on such as promoting the use of the web site and data base. However the people working one on one with the clients in this service must be congratulated for the overall excellent result of respectful and helpful dealings with Altogether Autism.

If anyone would like the full version of the survey including methodology, please contact us at

info@altogetherautism.org.nz or phone 0800 273 483.



Jame's Gift

Reviewed by Michelle Rountree, ASD Advisor

The Story of an Asperger Family by Bill Murray

Printed by First Edition Ltd, in Wellington

Bill Murray tells the story of his family and their struggle with getting diagnoses for their son James, his schooling, and their family life. Then the realization that he and his wife are also on the Autistic spectrum. I found this book to be an enlightening read of an account of a family living in New Zealand and the struggles and successes they have had.

Bill Murray shares with us the tips, resources and interventions he has used that have significantly improved their sons and their family life.

An insightful explanation of what it is like to have Asperger syndrome.



Altogether Autism

Meet the Team from Altogether Autism

ASD Coordinator

I am employed by LIFE Unlimited who are in partnership with Parent-to-Parent NZ Inc in developing Altogether Autism. I have 20 years experience working with families and individuals in the field of disability, in both service delivery, and the funding and development of support services. Since joining LIFE Unlimited 7 years ago, I have worked as a service coordinator and needs assessor for our NASC services and in particular the Kimberley (deinstitutionalisation) Project. My role also extended to assessing young persons' circumstances to ascertain the risk, the nature of family relationship breakdown, and making referral to specialist and support services for youth at risk.

In 2003 I became involved in a 3 year Ministry of Health ASD Midland project undertaken by LIFE Unlimited. My role was to facilitate community meetings across the wider Waikato region with the objective of raising the profile of Autism Spectrum Disorders, increasing professional/clinical knowledge and skills base about ASD and building strong networking relationships across the sector. As part of this project I compiled a website database of service stakeholders for people with ASD for the Midland area.

In 2004/2005 I completed further Postgraduate Study at Massey University in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. I am also a current member of Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers - ANZASW (Inc).

By Michelle Rivers (ASD Coordinator)

Clinical Consultant

The Clinical Consultant is available to Altogether Autism as required to advise on current best practice.

As a consultant clinical psychologist based in Hamilton. Tanya has 20 years of experience working as a clinical psychologist specialising in the field of intellectual and/or physical disabilities of individuals with challenging behaviours.

Tanya's varied career spans from 1980 when she commenced as Psychopaedic Assistant at Mangere Hospital, progressing to the role of Senior Clinical Psychologist in hospitals and disability services both in New Zealand and the UK.

Throughout her career Tanya has been involved in major projects such as the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Project, a Ministry of Health funded research project, for which she was Project Manager, and she has also been principal researcher involved in various research projects.

Tanya's experience is such that she has been asked to present many papers on her work, and is a sought after conference keynote speaker. Tanya has written and published several articles, some of which recently include:-

- Key note Presenter "Evidence-Based Guideline for Autism Spectrum Disorder"
- Author of "Ten years of working as a clinical psychologist in the criminal court when people with an intellectual disability are complainants, witnesses or defendants"
- Presented "Autism the Hidden Challenge" workshop
- Author of "The Autistic Spectrum Disorder project: with ASD in Aotearoa New Zealand"

Today Tanya successfully runs her own private practice as a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and is also currently employed by LIFE Unlimited as Clinical Consultant for Altogether Autism.

By Tanya Breen

Hamilton Advisor

Hi I'm Ingrid Jones and am the Waikato ASD Advisor for 10 hours a week. I spend the rest of my time working three other casual jobs supporting intellectually disabled people, and working on the final year of my masters at Waikato University Management School. I'm passionate about improving the lives of disabled people, and helping to improve the lives of their families as well.



It's been a challenging but interesting few weeks already in the job, and I'm finally confident in saying that I have found my feet and am actively finding out what is going on in the Waikato region. I have been along to a few meetings already and am looking forward to getting out into the community some more and letting people know that Altogether Autism exists. If anyone knows of any meetings they would like their Waikato Advisor to come along to, please give me a ring on (07) 848 1362.

By Ingrid Jones

Napier/Gisborne Advisor

Hi there - I'm Sally Rudzevecuis (pronounced Rusavages) and am delighted to be appointed ASD Advisor for the Hawkes Bay/Gisborne Region.

My background began as a nurse, then for the past 12 years as a Needs Assessor working full time for the Hawkes Bay District Health Board (NASC). Studies include Diplomas in Psychology and Health, Human Behaviour and lots of life experience.

I love meeting with parents and families helping them identify their support needs whilst seeking the best information available. Now I am keen to get the word out about this exciting new service. My main task now is to find out about service providers, support programmes etc. in the community for ASD.

Please feel welcome to contact me by phone, email or at my new office.

Napier Community House, No.4, Level 1, 62 Raffles Street, Napier (06 835 1036)

By Sally Rudzevecuis

Palmerston North/Manamatu Advisor

I want to bring to my role as ASD advisor for Manawatu a passionate interest in ASD. This began with the birth of my eldest son (25 years ago) and subsequent diagnosis at 11 of Aspergers Syndrome. One of my great milestones was a support group and then formalising this into a branch of the Autism Association. I then moved on into fulltime work in the health and disability area, and am currently employed as a Needs Assessor with the NASC Supportlinks in Palmerston North. I am excited about being part of a team setting up an information advisory network that is accurate, pertinent to the local area, but also national and linked with professional expertise is exciting."

I am the mother of 3 children, and have one grandson. Tribal affiliation is Ngati Huri (Ngati Raukawa). "Travel is on the horizon but feet will always be planted near family."

By Carolyn McPeak

Meet the Team from Altogether Autism

Nelson/Marlborough Advisor



I have worked in the field of disability for the past 20 years. Trained in the UK as a social worker (Intellectual Disability). I was employed by local social services as a community worker involved in the deinstitution process. I have managed a unit for 12 adults who exhibited challenging behaviour. Through this work I became very interested in Person Centered Planning and designing a "Needs Led Service".

I spent a number of years training in Reflexology / Massage and Aromatherapy. I worked specifically with a client base who had limited communication or who found interaction with others problematic. By using the guidelines laid out in "augmentative mothering" I designed a working practice for staff and carers using gentle touch as a means to instigating two way communications and potentially lessen aggressive outbursts.

I lectured in Nurse Training Hospitals and Teacher Training Universities on Alternative therapies and ASD. I have lived in Nelson for the past 4 years with my husband and 3 children. I have worked with local families of children with ASD offering support and advocacy within schools and allied services.

I am currently working part time in a local primary school offering supervision to teachers and teacher's aids on the educational implications of inclusion/transition and communication for children with ASD.

I am very excited by this new post within Altogether Autism.

My contact details are, 50 Halifax Street, PO Box 1164, Nelson.

Telephone: (06) 835 1036

By Felicity Jordan

Otago Advisor

Hello, my name is Sharon Bain and I am the local ASD advisor for Otago.

I have a passion for helping families deal with the day to day struggles that come from having a family member with an autism spectrum disorder.

I am married to Mike and we have two wonderful son's Regan who is 10 and Luke our youngest son who is 8, has classic autism.

I believe my strengths are learning to - not take "No" for an answer, and believe that if there is a problem that we need to get to the bottom of it we need to work together with other people and organizations to get an outcome where everyone is happy. I am happy to research around the local area to help families get answers and help. I built good relationships with a wide range of professionals. One thing I have learnt over the years is that sometimes the best advice you can get is off someone who has walked the road before you!

Call into the office and say "Hi" – the Jug is on and a listening ear! Level 1, 365 Princes Street, Dunedin

Telephone: (03) 470 1086

By Sharon Bain

Tauranga/Rotorua Advisor

I am the ASD Advisor for the Bay of Plenty / Lakelands area. My area covers Tauranga, Whakatane, Opotiki, Kawerau, Edgecumbe, Rotorua, Turangi, Taupo and any area in between. I have worked in the field of Autism for seven years after completing a National Certificate in Community Services. During this time I attended a number of conferences and workshops which are Autism specific. I have an interest and a passion for those living with someone who has Autism Spectrum Disorders, due to my involvement with a family member on the spectrum. I look forward to talking with and meeting many of you at the Regional Network Meeting in Tauranga and Rotorua.

By Lorraine Steele

Auckland Advisor

I am the mother of two fantastic sons who are 11 and 13. My 11 year old son has autism. My son was diagnosed 9 years ago, and with that diagnosis my passion around ASD developed. My role prior to becoming the ASD Advisor for the Auckland Region was the Auckland Regional Coordinator for Parent to Parent NZ Inc. I also am a volunteer Support Parent for them. I am enjoying my new role assisting people and organisations to gather information and obtain support.

By Michelle Rountree

Invercargill Advisor

I'm Jean Finnerty and I am the ASD Advisor for Southland, I work out of the Parent to Parent office at 46 Kelvin Street, Invercargill. I have three young family members with ASD's, two in Invercargill and one in Whakatane, they are all very interesting little people.

I have been involved in the autism field for eight years and find it can be hard work but very rewarding.

Autism is my passion and if I can be of any assistance please contact me at (03) 214 1379, call into the office on Wednesday or Thursday between 9.00am and 2.00pm or email me at southland@altogetherautism.org.nz

By Jean Finnerty

New Plymouth Advisor

Academic qualifications include a BA in Psychology and Human Development, a PostGrad Diploma in Disability Studies, with an Endorsement in clinical autism. I have completed numerous papers in the fields of Education, Social Work and Discursive Therapies. I am a qualified adult literacy

tutor and am currently tutoring through Adult Literacy Services Taranaki.

My passion for Autism Spectrum Disorders is both Personal and Professional and I feel honoured I was taught by Doctor Tony Attwood.

Over the years I have mainly worked in the voluntary sector and not for profit sector, holding various titles. I work as a private consultant supporting people with ASD and have been the Coordinator for ASD Empowerment Group Taranaki for many years, serving to educate and advocate for the empowerment of people with autism spectrum disorders.

This year I am embarking on my registration as an Educational Psychologist.

My passion and drive to bring about understanding and inclusion for ASD serves me well in my role as The Advisor for Taranaki for Altogether Autism.

By Vicki Douds



Altogether Autism

Parent to Parent Training Dates



Subject to funding, some Support Parent Training with have additional dates to be arranged

March	Support Parent Training	Southland & Dunedin	Morning 22 Feb Cromwell Evening 26 Feb Dunedin Evening 27 Feb Invercargill Weekend 8-9 and 15th March
March	Support Parent Training	Auckland & Waikato	Evening 12 Feb, Evening 27 Feb Weekend 8-9 & Evening 18 March
March	Support Parent Training refresher	Central Lakes	Saturday 8th
March	Support Parent Training refresher	Auckland	Saturday 29 th – 10am till 3pm
March	Sibling Day	Wellington	Saturday 29 th – 10am till 3pm
April	IEP Workshop	Hutt Valley	Tuesday 1st
April	IEP Workshop	Wellington	Wednesday 2nd
April	Support Parent Training refresher	Southland	Saturday 5 April
April	Sibling Day	Hamilton	TBA
April	Support Parent Training	Greater Canterbury	Weekend 5-6 April and 12 April
April	Advocacy Training	Auckland	Tue 8-Wed 9
April	IEP Workshop	Nelson	Friday 11th
April	Advocacy Training	Southland	Weekend 12-13
April	IEP Workshop	Whangarei	Tuesday 15th
May	Advocacy Training	Central Lakes	Weekend 3-4
May	Advocacy Training	Christchurch	Weekend 17-18
June	Support Parent Training	Wellington & Manawatu	Weekend 7-8
June	Support Parent Training	Christchurch	Weekend 6-8
June	IEP Workshop	Hamilton	Tuesday 10th
June	IEP Workshop	Rotorua	Wednesday 11th
June	IEP Workshop	Tauranga	Thursday 12th
June	Advocacy Training	CBOP	Weekend 21-22
August	Advocacy Training	Wellington	Weekend 2-3
August	Advocacy Training	Waikato	Weekend 16-17
September	Advocacy Training	Manawatu	TBA
September	IEP Workshop	Auckland	Thursday 11th
September	IEP Workshop	Auckland	Friday 12th
September	Support Parent Training	Christchurch	Weekend 13-14 and 20
September	Support Parent Training	CBOP & Central Lakes	Weekend 13-14
October	IEP Seminar	Greymouth	Tuesday 14th
October	IEP Workshop	Christchurch	Wednesday 15th
October	IEP Workshop	Christchurch	Thursday 16th
October	IEP Workshop	Timaru	Thursday 16th
November	IEP Seminar	Napier	Tuesday 4th
November	IEP Workshop	Wairoa	Wednesday 5th
November	IEP Seminar	Gisborne	Thursday 6th
November	IEP Workshop	Wanganui	Tuesday 11th
November	IEP Workshop	Palmerston North	Wednesday 12th
November	IEP Workshop	New Plymouth	Tuesday 18th
	Sib Facilitator training		TBA
	Advocacy Training	Nelson	TBA
	Advocacy Training	Northland	TBA