

Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Media release

Wednesday 20 October 2010

October is Mental Health Month – Relationships Australia launches new local programs

As part of Mental Health month in October Relationships Australia is launching a range of new support programs in Newcastle, Maitland and the Central Coast.

The new programs include *Partners in Depression*, a six week program to support people who love or care for someone with depression.

“Mental Health Month is part of a national mental health promotion campaign held in October each year and is funded by NSW Health. Its main aim is to promote social and emotional wellbeing, encourage people to maximise their health potential, enhance coping capabilities and support communities to learn more about mental health,” Chris Hardwick from Relationships Australia Newcastle said.

“This year’s theme ‘Good friends help us bounce back’ highlights the importance of building and maintaining good friendships to share the good times and help and listen when times are tough,” Chris said.

Research has shown that carers and loved ones of people experiencing depression can themselves be at risk of developing mental illness, yet they are often the forgotten allies in the battle against depression. Support for these people is now at hand, with a range of local health and community professionals having just received free training in *Partners in Depression* – an initiative of Hunter Institute of Mental Health (HIMH).

The *Partners in Depression* program starts in Newcastle in late October and runs for six weeks. It will also be run in Maitland and the Central Coast in 2011. To find out more call Relationships Australia Newcastle on 4940 1500. Bookings are essential and there is a minimum charge to attend.

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Email: hunterrep@ransw.org.au Web: www.nsw.relationships.com.au

Media contact for *Partners in Depression*:

- Media enquiries about local courses should be directed to **Chris Hardwick 4940 1500**.
- Media enquiries about the *Partners in Depression* program should be directed to the **Hunter Institute of Mental Health on 02 4924 6870**.

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