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Media release

For immediate release

From: Able Charitable Trust

Able Charitable Trust Chief Executive Sarah Dowie says the organisation is pleased to announce the start of its 'Children Understanding Mental Illness and Addiction' (CUMIA) programme.

Dowie says the course runs over six weeks and is held in Dunedin, Otago, starting on Wednesday 3 March 2021.

It is tailored to address the specific needs of primary school-aged children aged six to 12 years who have a family or whanau member with a mental illness or addiction, she says.

The programme can be undertaken as a group exercise, or parts can be used with individuals using activity-based exercises to aid in the understanding of mental illness and addiction in a fun and appropriate way.

"Able is proud to offer this course and we believe it is extremely valuable for the children who take part," Dowie says.

"It provides them with a safe space to learn and express their feelings and develop important emotional self-regulation strategies.

"Mental illness and addiction affect more than just the sufferer.

"The family of a person with these challenges may experience loss, grief, anger, frustration and much more in dealing with the illness of a family member."

Dowie points to data collected in a 2016 survey of Kiwis aged 15 years and older that found 80 per cent either had personal experience of mental illness or knew others who had.

It also found 30 per cent had personally experienced mental illness, and 33 per cent reported some degree of depression and or anxiety.

"Children do not have the skills or life experience needed to cope with such trauma and that is why this programme is so important," she says.

"Initiatives such as this literally save lives. The more children we can help, the more people growing up in our society with the resilience needed to overcome such challenges.



“That is good not just for them personally but for the people around them and for New Zealand in general.

“Plus, education and understanding of mental illness and or addiction are key factors in the recovery process.”

CUMIA is presented as a six-week programme during the school term. The course is provided free of charge to participants.

Referrals can be made through the Able website at www.able.org.nz/family-support or phone 03 218 1831.

About Able Charitable Trust:

Able is a South Island-based organisation that supports families and whanau who care for someone with mental illness or addiction.

Its aim is to give families the strength and skills they needed for a better life experience at home, in the community, and at work.

For more information, phone:

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