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UOW conference delivers new hope for personality disorders



Agron Latifi

Local News



NEW HOPE: Professor Brin Grenyer, NSW Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies, UOW vice chancellor Paul Wellings, Professor Anthony Bateman and Professor Glenn Salkeld. Picture: Adam McLean.

People with anti-social personality disorders (APSD) are punished unfairly for “being trapped within a socially toxic world”.

So said renowned UK psychiatrist Professor Anthony Bateman, during the [12th International Conference on the Treatment of Personality Disorders](#).

‘New ways of working with antisocial personalities and early intervention’, was the theme of Friday’s conference at the University of Wollongong.

UOW-based [Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders](#), organised the event which attracted close to 300 delegates involved in research, policy, treatment and care to improve mental health service delivery for those with APSD.

Professor Bateman said that people with APSD often have contact with mental health professionals in the justice system, but any improvements in behaviours there are not easily transferred to community living.

“Society portrays them as failing to conform to social norms, for which they are punished,” he said.

“Yet they feel disrespected, misunderstood, victimised, and ill-treated. The person is trapped within a socially toxic world.”

Prof Bateman outlined how Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) could help those with APSD.

MBT is based on techniques that make a person think about or “mentalise” what’s going on in their own and others minds, or to see their actions from the outside so they can reflect and possibly change.

Read more: [Multi-million dollar boost for Illawarra's Project Air Strategy](#)

Project Air Strategy director Professor Brin Grenyer said people with antisocial personality disorder were considered to be untreatable in the past.

“These people often end up in the justice system and the challenge is in getting clinician engagement with the client when there is such a high level of anger present,” he said.

“There is new hope being presented here at our conference for these people.”

Project Air Strategy was formed in 2010 and is being implemented in services in NSW, Victoria and Queensland through health services, justice departments and children’s networks.

It was borne out of a need to develop a model of care for people with borderline personality disorders, which occur in about 6.5 per cent of the community and represents about 25 per cent of all mental health admissions to inpatient units and emergency departments.

NSW Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies, who officially opened the conference. praised the work of Project Air Strategy.

“We are seeing this unique project significantly reduce presentations to emergency departments and shorten hospital stays, because the right help is getting to people faster,” Mrs Davies said.

“The NSW Government this year invested an additional \$5.5 million to the project, to ensure earlier diagnosis and more tailored treatments for people living with a personality disorder.”

For details visit www.projectairstrategy.org. For help call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/5737062/uow-conference-delivers-new-hope-for-personality-disorders/?cs=300>