



HCQU Reflections

Fall / Winter 2015 Edition



HCQU Staff

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Just Relax	1&7
Making Happiness Around the World	2
Amazing New App Gives a Voice to People with Communication Challenges	3
MHWAsks Your Help in Reducing Mental Health Stigma	4
HCQU Happenings	5
Save a Life FAST: Know the Signs & Symptoms of Stroke	6
Robin Williams: What was Going On Inside His Brain	7
Directors Note	8

Just Relax

By Brian Speakman, MA, NCC, Behavioral Health Specialist

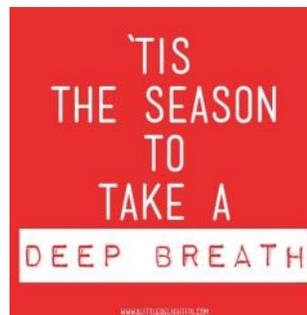
Just Relax... Yeah right! A lot easier said than done! It's the holiday season after all! And with all the joy and revelry comes additional layers of stress and anxiety. For some individuals with disabilities, the holidays may be particularly troublesome as memories of family, losses, or disappointments fill their minds. For staff, there is the hustle and bustle of trying to prepare for the holidays both in the group homes and in their own personal homes.

When a person is confronted with anxiety and stress, their body undergoes several changes and enters a special state called the fight-or-flight response. Using a variety of skills, you can end the fight-or-flight response before the symptoms become too extreme. These skills will require practice to work effectively, so don't wait until the last minute to try them out!

Deep Breathing - It's natural to take long, deep breaths when relaxed. However, during the fight-or-flight response, breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Deep

breathing reverses that, and sends messages to the brain to begin calming the body. Practice will make your body respond more efficiently to deep breathing in the future.

Breathe in slowly. Count in your



head and make sure the inward breath lasts at least 5 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs. Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds (again keep count.) You don't want to feel uncomfortable, but it should last quite a bit longer than an ordinary breath. Breathe out very slowly for 5-10 seconds (count!). Pretend like you're breathing through a straw to slow yourself down. Try using a real straw to practice. Repeat the breathing process until you feel calm.

Imagery - Think about some of your favorite and least favorite places. If you think about the place hard enough – if you really try to think about what it's like – you may begin to have

feelings you associate with that location. Our brain has the ability to create emotional reactions based entirely off of our thoughts. The imagery technique uses this to its advantage.

Make sure you're somewhere quiet without too much noise or distraction. You'll need a few minutes to spend quietly in your mind. Think of a place that's calming for you. Some examples are the beach, hiking on a mountain, relaxing at home with a friend, or playing with a pet. Paint a picture of the calming place in your mind. Don't just think of the place briefly, imagine every little detail. Go through each of your senses and imagine what you would experience in your relaxing place.

Here's an example using a beach:

- A. **Sight:** The sun is high in the sky and you're surrounded by white sand. There's no one else around. The water is a greenish-blue and waves are calmly rolling in from the ocean.
- B. **Sound:** You can hear the deep pounding and splashing of the waves.

(Continued on page 7)

Making Happiness Around the World

By Kelly Fisher, RN, Clinical Supervisor

Local Mars resident, Jacob Brown's love of art began at an early age. He would crinkle paper from

brown bags to give it a leathery feel. Bottle caps were just another object to embrace his creative nature. He was always coming up

with different art projects, along with his brother, a fellow artist. His brother

helped Jacob to foster his love and talent for art. While in high school, Jacob's teacher helped him to

enter an art project into an organization called the Very Special Arts at the time. This organization merged with the Kennedy Center's Office on Accessibility in 2011 to become the Department of VSA and Accessibility at the

John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.

Jacob started his current style of painting around 2011. He

has a diagnosis of spastic cerebral palsy and notes that he likes to paint as it helps him to use his mind and to relax.

Jacob states "My working process is directly affected by my having

spastic cerebral palsy. Starting with found grounds, I began

drawing and building up the surface with lines using oil stick and oil pastels. Drawing is at the core of my artistic process. The disconnect between my mind and physical abilities gives my drawings unique calligraphy."

Jacob has had his artwork exhibited at the Three Rivers

Art Festival; The Smithsonian Institution; U.S. Department of State, in U.S. Embassy Muscat; Oman; American Consulate of St. Petersburg, Russia; and the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Jacob begins his piece utilizing crayons to draw. He then begins to layer different mediums until he gets the effect he is seeking. His favorite thing about the type of artwork he does is watching the types of paint react with one another. He says he hopes that his artwork brings people happiness.

We often associate people with disabilities with their struggles instead of their unique abilities. Had Jacob's family not fostered his talents, our

world would not be enriched by his immense artistic abilities. We need to find out what people enjoy and nurture what makes them feel alive and passionate. Sometimes this may mean we

have to think outside the

box, introduce people to new

things, and help them to decide what they might want to pursue. How often do we expose people to photography, art, mechanics, drawing, music, body building, cooking, or computers?

A disability is just one facet of the person. Encouraging people to reach for the stars or even other countries, we can help others discover who they are inside. Jacob's talent is phenomenal. May his pieces bring happiness to all of those who are lucky enough to enjoy his art.

"...nurture what makes them feel alive and passionate..."



Whatever you do, do it well. Do it so well that when people see you do it they will want to come back and see you do it again. And they will want to bring others and show them how well you do what you do.
-Walt Disney



Amazing New App Gives a Voice to People with Communication Challenges! By Leslie Dollman, MIS Administrator

The ability to speak and be understood is basic for most people. However, for 1.5% of the world’s population living with speech disabilities, something as simple as asking for a drink of water can have the relative difficulty of summiting Mount Everest. Whether due to cerebral palsy, autism, traumatic brain injury, stroke, or other causes, many people live without the ability to speak clearly. This disability can severely affect a person’s quality of life.

But a new startup company out of Israel, called Voiceitt, is looking to change that. Their ground-breaking new app, Talkitt, can recognize and translate indecipherable language into clear communication. While the muscles and nerves responsible for vocalization may not be functioning properly, a person that’s able to produce even difficult to understand speech still has unique speech patterns. “This isn’t

standard speech recognition,” said

“YOUR voice matters!”

Danny Weissberg, the cofounder and CEO of Voiceitt. “We are using pattern recognition that is personalized for the speaker.” For



example, a person with Cerebral Palsy might say ‘sho-ko-la.’ Based on the user’s own personalized, pre-recorded dictionary, the app will recognize that they said ‘chocolate.’ Moreover, the company states that it will work with any language because the technology is not language dependent, but is rather user-focused.

Talkitt is currently being tested at hospitals and universities in Israel and Europe. The plans are to make it work on just about any device so that people would be able to communicate freely whether they are at home or out getting a coffee with friends. This app could be a game-changer for people with communication challenges. Formerly cut-off by an inability to express themselves, they may be able to enjoy greater independence and well-being.

GET INVOLVED!

Are you, or do you know someone living with a speech impairment? **YOUR** voice matters. You can drive change by donating your voice. What’s in it for you? A chance to have your voice help shape the final product. The company will also grant you 1 free license to Talkitt, once the paid version is on the market! Visit their website at <http://www.talkitt.com>, for details.

Look here first....
It’s **FREE!**

Lending Library

Milestone HCQU West has a lending library available for your use!

If you are interested in a topic, log onto our website at MilestonePA.org. Then go to the *Health Care Quality Units* tab on the top and click *Lending Library*.

All items are available to checkout for 30 days.

So if you want a book, video, or DVD... look here first.... It’s **FREE!**



**Be The Help
Someone
Needs!**

**Milestone HCQU West Asks Your Help in Reducing Mental Health Stigma
By Lori Duffy, Behavioral Health Specialist**

Would you know what to do to help someone who is having an emotional crisis? Mental Health First Aid is a certification course designed to give participants key skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Studies show that participating in the course improves knowledge of mental health conditions, reduces stigma, and increases the amount of help provided to others. Results prove that this course helps the public identify, understand, and appropriately respond to signs of mental illness. Just as CPR training helps a non-medical professional assist an individual following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps those who do not have clinical

training assist a person experiencing mental health difficulties.

Mental Health First Aiders learn to help someone

through a panic attack. The training also addresses engaging with someone who may be suicidal, supporting a person experiencing psychosis, and helping an individual who has overdosed.

One in four Americans will have a diagnosable mental

Mental Health First Aid is for everyone in the community who would like to learn more about mental illness. Mental Health First Aid provides necessary education, training, and increased awareness of mental health resources in your community. It is a positive step forward to support the treatment and recovery process for people experiencing mental illness and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

Consider being part of the change in attitude toward mental health problems. Register this spring for the Mental Health First Aid course! Engage in

experimental activities that build your understanding of the impact of mental illness on individuals and families. Learn about treatment and self-help strategies. You could be the help someone needs.



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

ALGEE, the 5 step action plan teaches participants to:

- **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- **L**isten non-judgmentally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies



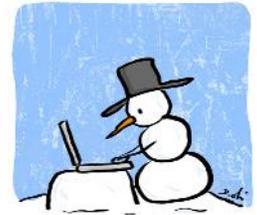
**New Mailing List
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Want more information?
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HCQU Happenings

By Denise Quinn, Training Coordinator



We are excited to announce our winter webinar season! Throughout January and February, you will have the opportunity to get great trainings from the convenience of your computer. Is bad weather keeping you indoors? Not a problem! Grab some hot coffee or cocoa and settle into a one hour webinar. As most webinars are presented two different times a day, you can pick what suits your schedule.

For more details or to register for a webinar, visit the **Webinars & Special Events** page on our website <http://www.milestonepa.org/health-care-quality-units/milestone-hcqu-west/special-speaker-series>.

Documentation for the Professional

January 5, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.	January 13, 2016 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. 5 p.m. – 6 p.m.
January 21, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	January 25, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Nutrition and the Brain

January 7, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.	January 15, 2016 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. 5 p.m. – 6 p.m.
January 19, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	January 27, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Strategies for Efficiency and Time Management

January 6, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	January 9, 2016 9 a.m. – 10 a.m.
January 12, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	January 22, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
January 28, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	

Individual to Individual Abuse: Reducing the Risk

February 3, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.	February 12, 2016 7 a.m. – 8 a.m. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
February 18, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.	February 22, 2016 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Psychosis

February 2, 2016 7 a.m. – 8 a.m. 11 a.m. – Noon	February 11, 2016 8 a.m. – 9 a.m. Noon – 1 p.m.
February 19, 2016 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	February 24, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Traumatic Brain Injury

February 4, 2016 Noon – 1 p.m. 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.	February 8, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
February 16, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	February 26, 2016 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.

It's An Emergency! Time is Ticking

January 11, 2016 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.	January 29, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.	February 6, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
February 10, 2016 11 a.m. – Noon 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.	February 23, 2016 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	



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Spring Syllabus
coming
April 2016!
Look for more
information in
March.

Save a Life... F.A.S.T. Know the Signs & Symptoms of a Stroke

By Margie Fend, RN, HCQU Nurse

Did you know that stroke is the 5th cause of death and leading cause of adult disability in the United States? Each year nearly 800,000 people in the U.S. experience a stroke. That's 1 stroke every 40 seconds!

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that

carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts/ruptures. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, so it and the brain cells die.

Uncontrollable factors that put you at higher risk for stroke:

Age - The chance of having a stroke approximately doubles for each decade of life after 55.

Heredity (family history) - Stroke risk may be greater if a parent, grandparent, sister, or brother has had a stroke.

Race - African Americans have a much higher risk of death from a stroke than Caucasians do. This is partly because they have higher risks of high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

Gender - Each year, strokes affect and kill more women than men. Use of birth

control pills, pregnancy, history, of preeclampsia/eclampsia, or gestational diabetes, oral contraceptive use, smoking, and post-menopausal hormone therapy may pose special stroke risks for women. Always discuss your specific risks with your doctor.

Prior Stroke, TIA, or Heart Attack -

The risk of stroke for someone who has already had one is greater than that of a person who has not. Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) are “warning strokes” that produce stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage. TIAs are strong predictors of stroke. If you’ve had a heart attack, you’re at higher risk of having a stroke.

Lifestyle risk factors are habits or behaviors people choose to

engage in. Lifestyle risk factors include eating habits, physical activity, smoking, and drinking. Changes to improve these habits can directly affect and lessen some medical risk factors.

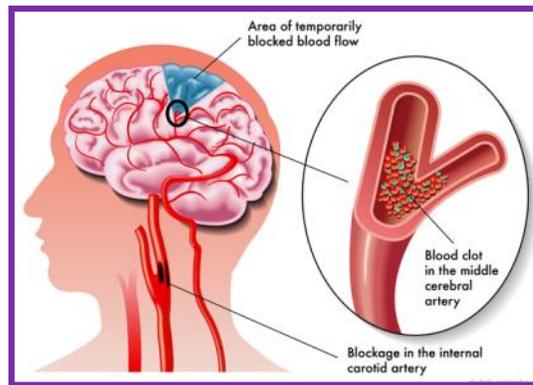
Medical risk factors are often caused by a combination of things including family history. They include things like:

- High Blood Pressure
- Atrial Fibrillation
- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Circulation Problems

Medical risk factors are treated by medications and special diets. Talk to your healthcare professional about options available for you.

For more information on Strokes, visit www.stroke.org

ACT FAST—if you observe any signs/symptoms, immediately **CALL 911!**



F **FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A **ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S **SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

T **TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

WARNING SIGNS

- ◆ Numbness, especially on one side of the body (face, leg, arm)
- ◆ Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- ◆ Vision problems
- ◆ Difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of coordination, or balance
- ◆ Severe headache with no known cause

Recognizing the sudden symptoms and getting treated quickly will more likely lead to a better recovery.

Robin Williams: What Was Going On Inside His Brain

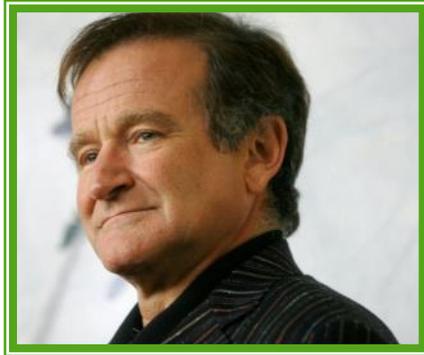
By Christy Irwin, BSN, HCQU Nurse

Robin Williams, Oscar-winning actor and comedian, died in August 2014 of suicide. Many speculated that his death was due to his ongoing battle with depression or substance abuse; however, that was not the case. Williams was struggling with physical and cognitive changes that were later found to be due to Lewy Body Dementia (LBD), a progressive neurological disease.

Williams was 63; already diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, he knew that his memory and cognitive skills were slipping. His family recalled many instances that he would forget where he was or what he was doing. For instance, his wife recalled a time she came into the bathroom; she found Williams was bleeding from the head and he couldn't speak or explain how

it happened.

The symptoms of LBD make it hard to diagnose. Many people suffer from visual hallucinations, causing people to see things like



animals or people who aren't in the same room with them or have conversations with loved ones who are dead. They also have physical symptoms that include muscle rigidity, restricted movement, sweating, increased blood pressure, dizziness, falls, and difficulty sleeping.

LBD is the second-most common cause of dementia after Alzheimer's disease, yet it is still widely unknown. The diagnosis is often confirmed after death when looking through a microscope which reveals Lewy Bodies, tiny protein deposits on the nerve cells of the brain. Just like Alzheimer's disease, there is no cure for LBD.

Robin Williams will be missed greatly as an actor and comedian, but hopefully, his story will help others to think about dementia in a different way. His story helps us to realize sometimes the behavioral changes in those close to us, are due to undiagnosed medical concerns. For more information about LBD, check out <http://www.lbda.org>.

Just Relax

By Brian Speakman, MA, NCC, Behavioral Health Specialist

(Continued from page 1)

There are seagulls somewhere in the background.

- C. **Touch:** The sun is warm on your back, but a breeze cools you down just enough. You can feel sand moving between your toes.
- D. **Taste:** You have a glass of lemonade that's sweet, tart, and refreshing.
- E. **Smell:** You can smell the fresh ocean air, full of salt and calming aromas.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation - During the fight-or-flight response, the tension in our muscles

increases. This can lead to a feeling of stiffness, or even back/neck pain. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches us to become more aware of this tension so we can better identify and address stress.

Find a private and quiet location. You should sit or lie down somewhere comfortable. The idea of this technique is to intentionally tense each muscle and then to release the tension. Let's practice with your feet.

A. *Tense the muscles in your toes by curling them into your foot. Notice how it feels when your foot is tense. Hold the tension for 5 seconds.*

- B. *Release the tension from your toes. Let them relax. Notice how your toes feel differently after you release the tension.*
- C. *Tense the muscles all throughout your calf. Hold it for 5 seconds. Notice the feeling of tension in your leg.*
- D. *Release the tension from your calf, notice how the feeling of relaxation differs.*

Follow this pattern of tensing and releasing tension all throughout your body. After you finish with your feet and legs, move up through your torso, arms, hands, neck, and head.

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**Have A Question?
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“Ask the HCQU”
to submit your
question. Our
staff is happy to
answer!**

Director’s Note By Natalie Symons, RN, Director

Dear Readers,

It is the time of year when our thoughts turn to buying gifts, hanging stockings, and spending time with our loved ones. Here at the HCQU, we love all of those, but we also have been enjoying planning for 2016. Below are some new things on the horizon:

- * This year we will be focusing on health and wellness. Be on the lookout for new trainings designed for Direct Service Professionals with a special concentration on preparing healthy meals and easy ways to increase activity.
- * In the Spring, we will provide the internationally recognized Mental Health

First Aid training on our Syllabus. This is a one day class that assists people in recognizing mental health diagnoses and where to turn for help.

* We are now offering Self-Study trainings on our Training Center! Participants have the opportunity to read about important topics and take a brief quiz. All participants, who pass, will receive credit.

Along with all of the new things, we are also preparing some favorites, like our one day camp at Lutherlyn and a training event with Dave Hingsburger.

We are looking forward to serving you in the New Year!

Natalie Symons

Natalie Symons



The New Year brings potential and opportunity on the horizon!