

North Gloucestershire ICD Information and Support Group

Newsletter October 2008

Next Group Meeting.

This has been arranged for Thursday for Thursday November 6th. The venue will be Up Hatherley Church Centre, Cold Pool Lane, Cheltenham, at 16.00. All are welcome, and tea and coffee will be served.

The main focus of the programme is a follow on from our discussions in July on dealing with stress.

Stress

All of us, whether we have an ICD or are close to someone who has one, are very familiar with the stress and psychological problems that are always there, whether or not the ICD and the drugs we have to take are causing actual physical problems. We are also aware that in many instances our GPs are not able to offer much in the way of help.

We have become aware that **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** (CBT) is a popular and recommended approach. CBT has a well proven record of helping people who may have difficulties adjusting to a life style change such as having an ICD implanted. It is a practical form of treatment that helps people to develop problem-solving techniques to help alleviate any irrational beliefs, and personal or social difficulties and conflicting emotions. This approach is increasingly used to solve psychological problems that may develop as a result of physical ailments.

The expression CBT reflects how the approach works:

- **cognitive** refers to how you think about yourself and situations you find yourself in;
- **behaviour** refers to how you act or behave.

The two parts are linked because the way people think and feel affects how they behave and *vice versa*. CBT is a talking therapy, and a therapist will identify problem areas and help develop more positive ways of dealing with tricky issues, feelings or situations.

CBT has an advantage of being used for a fixed number of sessions with a CBT practitioner; however the disadvantage is that it is not available through the NHS.

We have given much thought as to how we can get some help in this area, and at our next meeting **Nicola Meldrum** has agreed to give a short presentation on CBT and how we might move forward. She will talk about the principles involved and how productive it can be.

Recently, we have sought trained CBT therapists in our region – as a rule their services have to be paid for privately. In particular, however, we have spoken with a local CBT practitioner and details are available from Robin. In a gesture to reduce costs, the practitioner is prepared to offer Group rates for up to 8 people. The sessions will probably be held in the Gloucester area. If any members are interested, please contact Robin directly and he will make the necessary arrangements. All calls to Robin will be confidential.

Benefits and Grants available to keep you warm and well.

Our government is determined to reduce fuel poverty and has launched a number of initiatives to keep us all Warm and Well. Cheltenham Citizens Advice Bureau has been funded by Gloucestershire Warm and Well to give presentations to groups of people explaining many of these initiatives and the grants available.

The first presentation will be by Robin (wearing his 'Citizens Advice' hat) on how to keep you and your house warm and outline the various generous grants that are available. There will also be hints and tips on keeping yourself well during the winter months and saving money at the same time.

The second presentation will be by Janet Sheridan, also from Citizens Advice, who will discuss the range of welfare benefits that are available. It is surprising that many benefits people are entitled to go unclaimed.

Fund raising by our Group

We regularly receive donations, from members as well as external groups, of money for our AED Fund (External Automated Defibrillator). Currently this is about £1000, and it is held in a separate account on our behalf by the Arrhythmia Alliance. At the present time we have scheduled meeting with various parties (Ambulance Service, Arrhythmia Alliance, Rotary International). We are keen to identify Best Practice. This will include defining the recommended hardware, training required for First responders, location of AEDs, how our efforts relate to others elsewhere nationally. This is taking a little while to sort out as it is a complex subject, and we will keep you all fully informed of our progress. In the meantime, our Fund can be added to, should anyone feel inclined.

Future Activities

For our first meeting in January, 2009, we propose a group lunch – we would meet at a pub/restaurant in the Gloucester area. We are mindful that we never seem to have enough time to speak with each other, and to do so in the informal atmosphere of a pleasant lunch seems attractive to us. There is no doubt that sharing 'ICD experiences' with others is a very effective way of easing any concerns that always build up in our minds – across our group, we seem to have experienced all of the things that can happen when you have, or live with someone who has an ICD!

We do need to have your playback as to whether you would be willing to attend such an event before we start seeking venues and fix dates

Play-back from members

The one feature of helping to run a group like ours is that we rarely get any feed-back from members to our Newsletters. It would be of great help to us if you can say whether or not you are able to attend our meetings. Also, if there are any issues or subjects we want us to pursue, please let us know – we are well networked with many similar groups in the country. Please phone, us e-mail or write to us.

For further information, visit our website at www.icd-gloucestershire.org.uk.

Any questions should be emailed to information@icd-gloucestershire.org.uk or by telephone to 01242-260-614/01242-527-588

Colin Prottey & Robin Harvey October 2008