

AFINet Newsletter Number 1: May 2014



Welcome!

- * This is the first AFINet Newsletter so a big welcome to all AFINet members and to others of you who have expressed an interest in receiving newsletters.
- * We launched AFINet in February 2014 and we have been delighted with the interest and response from across the globe. After three months we have 48 members (plus the five core members of the UK ADF Group) from 14 different countries, spread across all regions and continents. Members represent a range of organisations and professions, and there is diversity in how they work with families affected by addiction. This is very much the mix of countries and interests which we hoped for, and we hope membership will continue to increase.

Development of the network

- * It is early days but the website is being used in a range of ways. As the website is the hub for AFINet we are keen for use of the website to increase, and for the site to continue to develop accordingly.

AFINet Members are from the following countries:

Australia
Brazil
Finland
Germany
Hong Kong
India
Iran
Ireland
Mexico
New Zealand
Spain
Uganda
United Kingdom
USA

AFINet: use of the website

Between the launch in February 2014, and mid May 2014, we have had over 150,000 website hits, from over 1,300 unique visitors from over 30 different countries.

AFINet - <http://www.afinetwork.info/>

- * One thing which is clear is that there is a great deal of research and work with families going on across the world, and this is very encouraging. We've given a few examples of international work, and news from around the world, below. **You may have something from your own work to add to the website, or which you want included in a future newsletter – if so then get in touch!**
- * Lorna is working with AFINet member Ed Sipler (and others) in **Northern Ireland** to continue the rollout of *Steps to Cope* (the 5-Step Method for children). The 4 year Big Lottery funded project has started, and the first practitioner training was delivered in March 2014.
- * In **Germany** AFINet member Ursula Buchner and her colleagues have produced a German translation of the Short Questionnaire for Family Members (SQFM), gambling version, and checked it for accuracy by the method of back-translation. So the SQFM is now available in versions relevant to substance misuse and problem gambling and exists in two languages!

Working with families around the world

- * Richard has just returned from **Hong Kong** where (with AFINet member Grace Mary Leung) he delivered a two day workshop to a range of practitioners focused on use of the 5-Step Method (the UK ADF's Group intervention for affected family members and significant others).
- * Richard, Gill and Alex are continuing to work with colleagues, including AFINet member Megan O'Leary, in the **Republic of Ireland** to introduce the 5-Step Method, to support workers to deliver the intervention, and to train others to go on to train and assess further practitioners, so that Ireland becomes self sufficient in developing newly accredited 5-Step practitioners.
- * In **India**: Richard and Gill have run one 2-day 5-Step training course in Goa for local practitioners; Richard and Jim are working with two AFINet members (Anil Rane and Abhijit Nadkarni) to investigate the impact of serious alcohol problems on Goan family life – Anil and his team are collecting quantitative data and are also conducting qualitative interviews with family members who have accompanied dependent drinkers into a local in-patient detoxification unit; and Abhijit, Richard and Jim have recently submitted a grant proposal to train lay health workers in Goa in the

AFINet - <http://www.afinetwork.info/>

5-Step Method so that they can use the intervention locally.

- * In **Brazil** AFINet member Maria de Fátima Rato Padin and her colleagues at the Federal University of São Paulo have collected the largest set of data, to our knowledge, from family members affected by their relatives' substance misuse problems; over 3000 family members from all regions of the country. The data, which includes family impact, coping, symptoms and hopefulness questionnaire data, are currently being analysed.
- * In **Australia** The Gambling Impact Society (New South Wales) are currently filming a DVD for training those who are working with family members affected by gambling, based on the 5-Step Method. Jim and colleagues have been providing advice to AFINet member Kate Roberts and others. There will then be in existence 5-Step training DVDs relevant to both substance misuse and gambling.
- * Jim recently gave two presentations about gambling and family members at the Third International Multidisciplinary Symposium, Excessive Gambling: Prevention and Harm Reduction, which took place in **Switzerland** in January 2014.
- * In **England** Brunel University has just completed an evaluation of the first

Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) to operate in the UK (in London). It provides focused help for parents with substance problems whose children are at risk of being taken into care. Jim has been providing research advice to the evaluation team. The results are very promising and FDAC is now likely to be disseminated outside London.

- * Also in **England**, Lorna has been working with AFINet member Jan Hernen to roll-out the 5-Step Method across Turning Point (a voluntary provider of health and social care services, including for substance misuse).

It's your network!

- * We cannot emphasise enough that we are very keen for members to get involved in the development of AFINet, both individually as well as with colleagues in the same or from other countries. There is a range of ways in which you can get involved – see the next page.
- * We are also keen to have feedback on the website, how you would like to see it develop, and how you think AFINet could also progress. Please let us know your thoughts and ideas – you can contact us directly or post feedback via the website.

AFINet: how you can get involved

- * Submit something for the site. This could be a brief description of what you are doing, an observation on something you have read or witnessed, an idea of your own, or a request for help. It could be submitted in any language alongside an English translation or summary.
- * Comment on things that other people have put up on the website. For example, there are items on the site which ask for your opinion on addiction and family-related issues. For example, are affected family members entitled to compensation?! What you think of the idea that there is something special about the experience of being an affected family member in your country, as suggested in a recent article about affected family members in Greece?
- * Get in touch with other members, exploring the potential for collaboration with those within your own country as well as in other countries.
- * Help us to spread the word about AFINet, so membership can grow and the network can continue to develop.
- * What projects do you think AFINet should undertake? One other thing some of us had in mind was a survey, to which members and others would contribute, of policies in different countries regarding adult and child family members affected by alcohol, drug, gambling and other addictions. We suspect that the interests of affected family members are low on the priority lists of most governments, but we need to know much more about that. Is that something that you think AFINet should do? If so, have you ideas about how we should go about that and how you might be involved?

Next steps

- * One of the next steps is to make AFINet into a more formal organisation. What we have in mind for the moment is what is called in Britain an 'unregistered charity'. That would give us some status but involves the minimum of bureaucracy. We shall need a short constitution and a small group of Trustees. That would at least give us some status in any dealings we wish to have with organisations such as the World Health Organisation or relevant Ministries in different countries.

AFINet – an unregistered charity

If you think you would like to get involved in this AFINet development then we'd love to hear from you.

Acknowledgements

- * To [Laura Nice](#), who has been working with us as a Development Officer, to set-up the website and the AFINet unregistered charity.
- * To [Paul Orford](#) (West5Web) for his work and support in getting the AFINet website up and running, and maintained!
- * To the [SSA \(Society for the Study of Addiction\)](#) for providing the funding to support the Development Officer post and the development of the website.