

Launch of the New Multi Media training resource: "Being Seen and Heard:

Embargoed until Tuesday, January 13, 2004

The Royal College of Psychiatrists today launches a new multi-media training package for professionals who work with adults with mental illness. It provides creative and practical suggestions about working with parents with mental illness and their children.

Entitled 'Being seen and heard: the needs of children with parents with mental illness', this resource includes clips of children, young people and their parents talking about their experiences of mental illness within the family, and how professionals can work effectively with them.

As many as 175,000 young people in the UK are involved in the care of an adult with a health or a mental health problem. These children usually worry about their parents, may blame themselves for the illness, fear that they will 'catch' it and feel unsupported.

"Many thousands of children have to care in some way for a parent with mental illness. The problem is that their role as carers many not be recognised by the adults around them, or even by themselves. For instance, they are sometimes quite inappropriately left to manage a parent's medication," said Dr Alan Cooklin, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, who developed, wrote and produced this new training tool.

"Children with a parent with mental illness often fall through the professional net and are seen as nobody's responsibility.

Nothing is explained to them, and they often receive no help at all to deal with the effects of the parent's illness. These children need to be seen and heard.

"All professionals working with adults with mental illness need to stop and think about the needs of these young people.

We want to:

- Alert them to the seriously neglected needs of these children
- Encourage them to talk to, and plan for them
- Encourage liaison and joint working between the different agencies involved."
- Being seen and heard' includes a video (60 minutes) divided into two sections.
Section1 includes:
 - the referral and the questions professionals need to consider
 - children and young people describing their experiences
 - children and young people describing what they need from professionals
 - children and young people's views about what they need when their parent is admitted to hospital.Section 2 includes:
 - techniques for talking to children and young people on their own and with their families
 - clips of a special projects that works with children in a group
 - key messages.

The CD-ROM includes hand-outs for use as part of a professional training session.

Cost: £30.00 + £5.25 VAT (including postage and packaging). Available from Book Sales, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG. ext. or See www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications.

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Note to editors:

1. The training film was produced by Dr Alan Cooklin in partnership with Camden & Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust, Camden & Islington Family Services Unit, Camden Area Child Protection Committee, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and virtuall.org: the London Mental Health Learning Partnership. 2. 'Partners in Care: working together to make a real difference' is a year-long joint campaign between The Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers which aims to: highlight the problems faced by carers of people with different mental health problems and learning disabilities encourage true partnerships between carers, patients and professionals.