

Mental health discussed at Probus

Thursday, 22 March 2007

Guest speaker at the recent Kimba Probus Club meeting was Michael Wallis, the promotion, prevention and early intervention officer for the regional mental health service, based at Port Lincoln.

Michael proceeded to deliver a most entertaining and enlightening address on the way our brain functions and develops and stressed the important of possessing good mental health.

We all begin to learn from birth by repetition, observation and example, by responding to these lessons and by performing different tasks, and all the while brain cells are forming by the millions to guide us through life.

An example given here was that a new born baby soon learns that by crying it will be fed or attended to. This idea forms in the brain, it is retained and so the baby cries whenever attention is sought for whatever reason.

On and on through our lives we meet new people, experience new associations, undergo different situations, happy or traumatic, and all the time this information is retained in cells within the brain.

As we grow, our brain cells fill with years and years of life's experiences.

Another part of the brain is capable of filtering out unnecessary information.

Our brain responds to traumatic situations by releasing adrenaline to make us feel better and releases more of the same in really happy enjoyable circumstances, making us feel great.

When we experience feelings of being unable to go on, the brain releases endorphins, giving us the feeling of gaining "a second wind", thus continuing and overcoming the obstacles.

Under stress, good feelings are filtered out by the brain. When we are relaxed the brain makes us feel really good.

To maintain good mental health, Michael recommends living a healthy lifestyle physically and diet wise.

We should drink at least two litres of water a day, and more water is required to counteract any intake of coffee, tea or alcohol to excess.

Solve your problems – don't worry. Think well – be positive and enjoy Life.

Learn to relax by doing things you enjoy. Communicate, listen, think and respond.

Laughter is great for your health. A good belly laugh as often as possible is great therapy. Develop a good sleeping routine and follow it regularly.

Contribute to your community in any way possible; friends and social contacts are most important and above all good mental health is "normal".

Club member Margaret Mayfield presented Michael with a small gift and her vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Many members privately expressed their appreciation to Michael on his excellent talk.