



History of CASE Consulting Ltd

In 2000 Gary Platz and Sarah Gordon created a company called Case Consulting Ltd. Both Sarah and Gary identified as people with experience of mental illness and the creation of Case was primarily to utilise their experiences to offer a consumer perspective in the development and consultancy of work for the mental health sector.

Gary Platz

Gary had been working in the mental health area as a consumer worker. He had set up recovery programmes, ran recovery focused day programs and developed training syllabuses for mental health consumers.

As part of his recovery journey, Gary has qualifications in adult teaching, has trained as a psycho-dramatist over many years and has qualifications in many types of bodywork therapies. In his years of training as a psycho-dramatist he concentrated on organisational development. In 2004 Gary left Case to become the Consumer Advisor to Wellink Trust.

Sarah Gordon

Sarah worked as a consumer advisor for Canterbury DHB and Researcher for Otago University during her studies and holds a BSc (Psyc), LLB, MBHL. In 2010 she gained a PHD for her work on the development of a self-assessed measure of consumer recovery outcome. Sarah wanted to be recognised as a person with experience of mental illness who could lead by example to others and demonstrate that a diagnosis of mental illness does not hinder one's opportunities to excel. Sarah decided in 2009 to exit Case and pursue other options.

Background

Sarah and Gary wanted to have the freedom to express and promote opinions that people were not necessarily ready to hear and adopt. They needed to create a platform and

environment which supported this mandate, hence the creation of Case Consulting limited. CASE stood for Consumers as Advisers, Supervisors and Educators. The business started as a mental health consultancy, the mission being to provide services for the development of improved mental health sector and societal perceptions of mental health from a consumer-focused perspective. The main criteria for working at CASE were the experience of mental illness, and a desire to work to a high professional and ethical standard.

Case Consulting was the first consumer-led organisation to contract services to the Ministry of Health and offer training to both public and private sector to increase the awareness of stigma and discrimination of people with experience of mental illness. Whilst offering a professional environment for individuals to work, it also offered the opportunity for consumers to develop and influence the ideologies around mental health promotion to include recovery and professional recognition. A staff of nine all with experience of mental illness worked together to service a peer-support programme with the local District Health Board, regional and national contracts with the development and delivery of the Like Minds, Like Mine anti-stigma and discrimination programme and also provide training and consultancy services.

Case worked to provide the sector with education and services that helped lead mental health promotion towards one of an inclusive nature that respects the consumer perspective as an integral and valued part of future approaches.

Case pursued and developed professional relationships with organisations such as the Mental Health Commission, Mental Health Foundation and Ministry of Health to name a few.

KEY PROJECTS:

Mental Health Workforce Development Programme

Employment guidelines, competencies, training needs assessment tool and training programme for consumer advisors of mental health services.

Power of Contact

Studies have identified that 'contact' with people who have experience of mental illness is the most effective strategy in countering stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness. The 'Power of Contact' is a research paper which identified that in order for 'contact' to be effective, several conditions must be associated with it. These are:

- Equal status
- The opportunity for individuals to get to know each other
- Information which challenges negative stereotypes
- Active co-operation
- Pursuit of a mutual goal.

Stepping out of the Shadows – Publication of Book

Insights into self-stigma and madness, is a collection of articles, essays and personal accounts about self-stigma associated with mental illness. The chapters of this book explore the concept of self-stigma from the perspective of authors who have experience of mental illness, or have researched self-stigma, or both. To purchase this book

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/shop/item/view/1/257/>

Development of a self-assessed measure of consumer outcome: Tāku Reo Tāku Mauri Ora:

My Voice My Life (Mental Health Research and Development Programme). For further

information <http://www.tepou.co.nz/page/433-Research-Projects+Outcome-Measurements-Development>

Training – Health Law & Ethics

The complexity of situations that frequently arise within the mental health sector are more appropriately considered from an ethical perspective rather than a strict rules-based approach. CASE devised workshops that support people to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make and apply ethical decisions in respect of their work.

Design and delivery of workshops to health professionals on topics including Compassion Fatigue and Recovery.

Mental Health Awareness – NZ Police, Housing New Zealand, Work and Income New Zealand

Wellington Speakers Bureau

The first voice of mental health education, and now called First Voices. This is a group of professional speakers who share their experience and speak on these issues to groups from various organisations working in the mental health sector, and further afield, as well as people experiencing mental illness themselves. Using personal stories speakers talk about aspects of mental illness including: the effects of mental illness, recovery, discrimination and stigma, and maintaining personal health and well being. The Speakers Bureau is a New Zealand concept and a world leader.

As a result CASE developed into one of New Zealand's foremost consumer-led and working organisations.