

21 June 2011. Light was shining through my curtains but the last thing that I wanted to do, was get up and start the day. I just wanted to sleep and never wake up. Another day I can't face, another day of the blackest of black thoughts pounding through my brain. I just want it all to end. It didn't matter how it happens anymore. All I've focused on for months on end is to find a way to end the hell, the blackness, the tears, the mood swings that have become my life. Heinz has an appointment with Dr Jeeva in the afternoon and drags me along to get me out of the house. So for me to see Dr. Jeeva as well this Tuesday afternoon is totally unplanned. But before the appointment is concluded, Dr. "J" has booked me into Garden City Clinic.

I'm overcome by a host of different emotions:- Anger – It didn't work the first time; Doubt – was I really sick enough?; Concerned - how would Heinz cope on his own?; Unease - who would do my work? ; And strangely, a sense of relief – I knew I needed help and despite trying to do it on my own, my level of depression was getting more severe. In any case, it wasn't something I would easily have confessed to, or even asked for. It was easier to pretend that my life was in order than admit that it was actually in total disarray. I was overwhelmed, I felt out of control. And I was.

I go home, pack my PJ's and toothbrush. Arriving at Garden City Clinic, the entrance seemed so cold and formidable. I can't breathe, I'm anxious. The staff is so busy, under pressure and business-like – no warmth here. Paperwork completed and I'm off to the ward. To me, new faces are always daunting, so I put on my happy face and pretend. Filling out reams of forms in the ward seems to take hours, so I joke and laugh. But my laughter sounds false and tinny in my ears. I'm still anxious, but I'll be the model patient, idle my days away, sleep whenever I choose, pop pills, have my blood pressure take every few hours and inevitably pretend I'm okay. Heinz leaves and I'm alone.

Supper arrives and is finished, visiting hours come and go, and then Dr. "J" arrives, stays a while and departs. And I sleep. Morning - 05h30am, lights on, pills handed out, blood pressure is taken and I get a nice cup of coffee and a rusk to start my day. A new patient exuberantly chats away to all and sundry. Really... at this time in the morning! When all I want to do is try and doze until breakfast is served. Remarkably for a hospital, their food is tasty and there's sufficient.

My therapist, Shernaaz Vally, arrives. I remember her from my previous sojourn and relate well to her. So I'm really pleased. We immediately pick up where we left off and make great inroads into so many of my past issues. Shernaaz is patient, kind and intuitive and makes me look at things differently, shedding light on past experiences that have been too painful and emotional to address. My tears are cathartic and the heaviness I'm feeling seems so much lighter to endure. During my time in hospital Shernaaz has a group session and teaches us relaxation and breathing techniques. A very valuable exercise to all those who are stressed and anxious.

We have no sooner finished and Dr "J" arrives, we have our talk as we will do most mornings or evenings. Dr. "J" has such a pleasant "bedside manner." In hospital I see a very different person to the person I see in his rooms; a gentler, more caring side comes to the fore, "Dr. J's" the best but still not someone to toy with. Beside his daily visits, Dr. "J" spends evenings with me and his other patients, giving talks and showing ADHD related movies, and then there's "the supper" when Dr "J" invites us to a nearby restaurant where we share good "yummy" food and good company for a few hours.

On my first morning, Dr. "J" introduces me to Devon, who promptly hands me a schedule of activities that I **must** attend, I'm told. "Oh, Yeah?" This doesn't co-inside with my plans, I feel my hackles rise. I don't like being told what to do and after all, "I'm sick", I think to myself. "I'll participate in whatever takes my fancy." However Devon is very persuasive and when I look again I'm an active, willing participant in all planned activities. Devon, is Dr. "J's" Patient Liaison Advisor, for want of a better title. Poor Devon also has his work cut out and at times, I really have to take pity on him, as he has to goad, wheedle and gently bully us out of bed in the morning, or at other times during the day, while attempting to encourage unwilling souls to participate in group sessions, amongst all the grunts, groans and moans. Meanwhile he has to handle all the complaints and attend to all our queries, etc. Fortunately Devon has a sense of humour, even though he gets a lot of unnecessary criticism while trying to keep up with all the demanding patients, including myself. As a result we never get round to starting our days with ADHD exercises, but maybe a good brisk walk around the hospital grounds would be a better option as we are all at very different levels of fitness. Mine are non-existent.

Then off to Occupational Therapy we all trot. We are introduced to Modise Mogotsi and his assistant, Thandi Turi, who will work with us the greater part of these sessions. The initial therapy sessions are informative, even though I'm not quite sure why I'm drawing pictures and what the actual outcome is supposed to be. The playing of games is great fun, however, this became very repetitive as new patients are introduced and we get to repeat drawings/play games without new material being introduced to the group. In Thandi's defence though, as a group of ADHD, headstrong adults, we more often than not hijack the sessions as discussions became pretty intense at times, despite Thandi's attempt to bring them back to the core focus. One concern that I have though is the participation of young patients (Pre - teens) in the same group discussion group as us adults. Most of our issues raised and discussed have been exacerbated with age, and are far worse and at greater exaggerated levels than these young persons have experienced or know of, and I'm fearful of the possible negative connotations it could have on

these growing minds. I suggest to Thandi that the youngsters possibly having separate or individual sessions to prevent this. Our Group agree.

Mogotsi teaches us Tai Chi during his two sessions with us. What a fun way to exercise. Despite being very unfit, fumbling my feet and tripping myself up, I feel my muscles working in ways they never have and these sessions are well received and can be longer and I wonder whether these exercises can be done outside in the sun where there's more room to manoeuvre and we get our daily dose of vitamin D would be more beneficial. I must Heinz to bring my Tracksuit.

Relationship Coaching with Nicki Horahne is next and is really great, even though time spent with her is limited. As we revealed issues that are close to the heart, a great dealing of understanding of specific life situations are addressed and the ability to look at the bigger picture revealed, with lots of group participation taking place during both sessions. The floor is open and the group shares experiences and give positive input.

Sessions with Evolved Life Coach, Louise Little prove to be "Ah Ha" moments and even life changing for myself and many of our group. Her sessions develop into major in-depth group discussions and I personally discover how destructive my thought patterns and behaviour has become and how changing bad habits can be achieved by just changing one's thought patterns. Louise has the patience of Job and is able to reach even the youngest person in the group in a positive, beneficial way. Group interactive discussions enhance the encounter and everyone gains.

ADHD Life Coach, Stacy Timke is very informative and thought provoking, but I believe I could have benefitted more with a second session.

The dieticians talk on nutrition was generalised and could have been more informative regarding the specific dietary requirements of ADHD sufferers or possibly what makes up a low GI diet. Unfortunately this session did not get the target group's attention and a lot horsing around (and neighing) took place.

Physio with Nizaam is amazing. He definitely has gifted hands and all my knots and aches start fading as he applies pressure to just the right places. His concern is well received as he even arranges a special orthopaedic mattress for me as I have had back surgery and my current bed isn't conducive, not to mention the care he gives my dislocated ankle during this time, which he keeps well strapped up with strict instructions to rest my foot. I don't argue....he's bigger than me.

My 11 days in hospital are finally over and Dr. "J" tells me that I may go home. I don't really want to. I feel safe here, and will I cope. But I know that during my stay I have built up a solid group of contacts to assist me in dealing with various aspects of my depression and ADHD; various people specialised in fields that I can call on, if necessary. Amongst these, are a group of patients that I have met and exchanged contact details with, who will share my high days and low days and understand where I am on my journey.

And then just a telephone call away, there's **always Dr."J"**

Carol-Marie Paetzold, June 2011

P.S. I never did get all the sleep I intended having or experienced being bored, I was kept far too occupied.