mental illness
fellowship victoria

Dr Nicholson wows crowd at Bruce Woodcock Memorial Lecture 2010

This year's Bruce Woodcock Memorial Lecture was a moving and uplifting affair as MI Fellowship explored the theme of families and mental illness.

Opening proceeding was a half-hour reading from the award-winning play *Inside Out*, where actors Benn Welford and Valerie Bader nailed their portrayal of a young man and his mother coming to terms with schizophrenia and its impact on their relationship. Many of the carers and people with a mental illness present felt that the script had been lifted from their own lives and more than one audience felt a little emotional by the time the reading came to an end.

A full theatrical performance of *Inside Out* will be staged in October as part of Mental Health Week.

Next came Dr Joanne Nicholson's presentation where she argued that family is the context where mental health recovery takes place. Dr Nicholson spoke passionately and personably about the need for mental health services to take a whole-of-family approach when working with people with a mental illness.

She also showed evidence from her own team's work at the University of Massachusetts that supporting people with a mental illness in their family roles actually improved the mental health outcomes of people participating in their programs.

Following Dr Nicholson's applause, Robyn, who is a carer and a Well Ways Duo coordinator got up to relate her own experiences in a caring role and how her involvement in the pilot program for Well Ways Duo had helped her understand how essential the family dynamic is.

Rounding came a series of insightful questions from the audience which ultimately led to a short impassioned speech from MI Fellowship President Rob Knowles about his disappointment in the Federal Government's chronic underfunding of mental health services and the flow-on effect that that has had.

Check back on this site soon, we hope to have photos and video footage of Dr Nicholson's presentation online shortly.

http://www.mifellowship.org/index.shtml