

Viewpoint trainers invited to Greece!

As a service user trainer, when Sue Hahn, senior lecturer in the Recovery Centre at the University of Hertfordshire, told me that an article we had written together about working in partnership in training was going to be published in 'A Life in the Day' journal, I was over the moon. I would never have dreamed that this could lead to us being invited to Greece as the key speakers at a conference on mental health this May. The event was organised by Kaleidoscope, a social enterprise promoting economic and social integration of people who are

disadvantaged by disabilities. Many thanks to Maria who arranged the funding for our visit and made us so welcome!

We visited social enterprises, a psychiatric hospital and met many people trying to strengthen the service user movement over there. Our general impression was that Greece is at least 25 years behind us in terms of services, service user rights and general attitudes to mental illness. The idea that service users could be responsible for training police recruits astounded them and the thought of professionals

working so closely together with service users was unheard of.

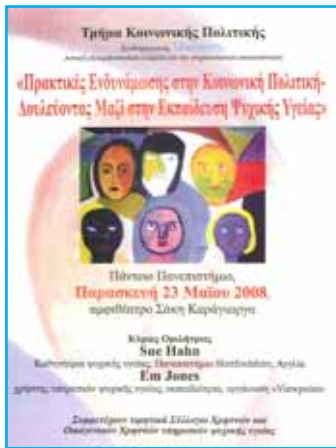
Our presentation was well received and they were impressed by the work of Viewpoint and the university. It was wonderful to have service users at the conference and to be able to answer their questions and make contacts that will hopefully allow us to be involved in helping them develop something in the future. One of the most encouraging comments I heard during the trip was from a PhD student at Panteion University who said that he had been inspired to organise a conference purely for service users. This trip has been one of the highlights of my life both professionally and personally and it is something that I will never forget.

Em Jones

'Em was a wonderful ambassador for Viewpoint and service user training in general and the people we met were amazed that we truly work in partnership. Such was the interest in our work that the Minister for Public Health (who attended the conference) asked if we would be prepared to either do some work in Greece or invite mental health staff from Greece to the UK to learn more.'

'The trip was a success – long live our partnership!'

Sue Hahn



L to R: Olga, Panteion University, Sue, Em, Menelaos, PhD student, Maria and Zoe, Kaleidoscope

Challenging Stigma



Mental Health Media, Mind, Rethink and the Institute of Psychiatry have been awarded £18 million from the Big Lottery Fund and Comic Relief to run a programme of local projects and a national campaign to counter discrimination against people who experience mental ill health.

Here in Hertfordshire, Viewpoint facilitated a consultation with 12 service users who described how they experience stigma and discrimination from family, friends and neighbours, work colleagues

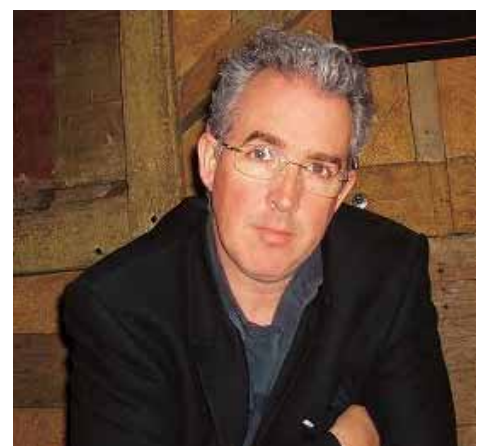
and health professionals. Many suggestions were made about how to tackle their attitude and behaviour including education and training, better communication and an understanding that mental illness can happen to anyone and is part of life. The anti-stigma campaign will be launched fully in January 2009. For more details contact Moving People
Tel 020 8215 2356
email info@movingpeople.org.uk
www.movingpeople.org.uk

Welcome to new Head of Personality Disorder Service

‘On behalf of service users, we would like to welcome Timothy Acton who will take up the position of head of the new service for people with personality disorders this summer. Service users, myself included, were involved in the recruitment process and are very happy with his appointment. Timothy will bring sensitivity, a wealth of experience, a strong research background, a genuine feel for service user involvement and strong leadership qualities to this fledgling service. Service users will continue to be integral to the recruitment of the rest of the team.’ Chris Munt, Viewpoint Chair

‘I am looking forward very much to taking up the post of Head of Personality Disorder Services in Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT). It is a wonderful opportunity to help develop services for a client group whose needs are often as poorly understood as they are addressed in the NHS. HPFT and local service commissioners have made a substantial commitment by establishing this team, and I will do my utmost to work with service users, colleagues and others to make it conspicuously successful.’

Timothy Acton



Timothy Acton

Remembering Vanessa



Maddy and Vanessa

If I had a problem Vanessa would know instinctively how I felt, which helped me to recognise that validating my emotions would enable me to come up with my own solutions. I miss her so much. Maddy

Vanessa Phillip was a key member of our Viewpoint Training Group and was a source of strength and inspiration to us all. She died of cancer on 9th April 2008 and is sorely missed.

Staff members Helen O'Sullivan and Tracy Kinsella, who support the Training Group, miss Vanessa's kindness and the way she engaged with course members in a non-judgmental and inclusive manner.

'I personally found Vanessa very supportive when I first started out at Viewpoint,' says Helen. 'She was always concerned not just for the training group but for me as individual as well.'

Vanessa spearheaded the development of a new user led course, 'Promoting Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace'.

'She was a real achiever who worked hard at dispelling stigma and discrimination and was always very motivated,' says Tracy.

'She had a lot of integrity and shared her knowledge and expertise generously with staff, carers and service users.' Fellow trainer, Lucy Johnston recalls first meeting Vanessa on a training day. 'We had the opportunity to share with the group an object that had helped our recovery. Vanessa brought in a packet of seeds and spoke of her recovery as growing like a plant. I have

remembered this from 2 years ago and, when I feel low, I can look at flowers and trees and reflect on my own growth. I thank Vanessa for this powerful tool to use in my recovery journey.'

'Not only was she an inspiration to us all but a wonderful friend with a great sense of humour,' says Em Jones.

Vanessa also touched the lives of many people through the Cheshunt Depression Group which she founded in 2004. A member pays tribute to her:

'Joining Cheshunt Depression Group and getting to know Vanessa has gradually enabled me to think differently, share ideas and explore new opportunities. When I first went to the group, I was very low, barely able to speak or cope, feeling isolated, hopeless and overwhelmed by everyday life. After a few weeks I asked Vanessa how she managed to find the strength to continue running the group and campaigning, despite struggling herself with depression. Her answer was, 'Hope ... hope that services would eventually improve for people suffering in Cheshunt and this part of Hertfordshire.' I was impressed by Vanessa's belief that there were always new possibilities to look for and her determination not to give up. She promoted the concept of recovery from many different angles.

I was also amazed at the network of relationships Vanessa fostered with people from outside the group as well, who were then willing to support the development of the service provision, so much needed in this area.

Vanessa is very much missed but it is hoped that her legacy will still improve the lives of many people.'

*It was Vanessa's wish that the Cheshunt Depression Group would continue and there are many people committed to ensure that it does. The new number for **Cheshunt Depression Group** is **07522455129** and Lyn will give you further details.*

Grants in Vanessa's name

In the last edition of the newsletter, we reported that we are setting up a fund to help service users to further their personal development. This is all thanks to Lucy Johnston, a service user trainer, who held a fundraising dinner and gave Viewpoint a generous donation. She has agreed that once

the fund is fully established, grants will be given in Vanessa Phillip's name to honour her contribution to Viewpoint and the Training Group. We intend to hold further fundraising events, including quizzes and a cricket match next summer, with the aim of establishing sufficient funds to enable service users to be awarded grants to develop their opportunities through further training and development.

No Smoking in Mental Health Units

From July 1st 2008, the full effect of the smoke free law for mental health NHS trusts and private hospitals will be in place. This means it will be illegal to smoke in enclosed areas which will impact upon service users whilst in any trust owned accommodation. There will no longer be smoking rooms for inpatient facilities; the designated place to smoke will be in outside smoking shelters.

Whilst service users are in hospital, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT) says that stopping service users smoking is not the aim during acute mental illness. However, staff must work in partnership with service users to take an active and reasonable approach to maintain a smoke free environment and comply with the law.

Service users will be given advice and support to reduce the amount they smoke

through nicotine replacement therapy to manage cravings. HPFT is advising staff to consider discussing with service users about giving up smoking at the pre-discharge planning stage and to form links with GPs, community staff and associated smoking cessation services.

Andrew Cashmore HPFT Tel **01727 811888**

QUITLINE: 0800 00 22 00 email stopsmoking@quit.org.uk www.quit.org.uk

If you are a smoker and become an inpatient after 1st July, you are welcome to let us know how the implementation of the new law by HPFT affects you. Call our office on **01707 328014**.

Skydive update

In the last newsletter, I described how my husband and I were going to do a skydive to raise public awareness for the **Hertfordshire Postnatal Illness Support**



Charlotte and Skydive Instructor

charity. Well, we did it and have raised over £1,600! Thank you to all our supporters! For more details please contact Charlotte Wilmer-Barbrook on **01727 826627** or www.postnatalillness.co.uk Further support at The Association for Post-Natal Illness Tel: **0207 386 0868** www.apni.org



Postnatal Illness

A One Day Workshop on 15th November 2008

The workshop explores the physical and psychological preparation required for future pregnancies following postnatal illness.

Charlotte Wilmer-Barbrook Tel: **01727 826627** www.postnatalillnesscounselling.co.uk

Working Holiday



St Paul's clients with the National Trust at Ashridge March 2008

This was a very therapeutic break with good food, fresh air, lots of hard work, and best of all, good company. It is an interesting exercise to stand back and see how the group dynamic worked with a collection of people of different ages (most, half my age!) and at different levels of recovery from their mental problems.

Everything was so positive. Everyone, yes, everyone was up at 7am or very soon after to sit round the table to a hearty cooked breakfast. Interestingly, there was little need to set up a rota. Everyone mucked in and took their turns at helping out. A little arm twisting was required with one lad who wasn't too keen on washing up!

After all preparing our packed lunches, there was a little free time before being transported to the work sites. As a group, we were congratulated by Anna and Lawrence, the National Trust wardens, for exceeding their expectations in the amount of raking, pitch forking, and gorse clearance completed. I could not keep up with the younger ones at first and was seen prostrate on the hillside a few times wondering how I'd do a full day the

next day.

At 4ish was a welcome return to Base Camp and an even more welcome hot shower. Meal preparation caused a lot of laughter. We ate good wholesome food and the camaraderie round the table was great. Amazing what fun you can have when there's no TV! People shared their experiences and friendships were struck, and everyone went home uplifted by the experience.

A huge thank you to Mavis for all the organisation and the shopping. She had already led this type of break before and had already seen the benefits first hand. Thanks also to John Williams, her assistant, who worked like a trouper and kept us laughing. I would love to do another such break and be willing to help. I hope there would be staff willing to leave their home comforts for a few days to enable this to happen again. The National Trust wardens are very happy to have us!

Alison Dodd - St Pauls client for 10 years

Service users' influence commissioning

As part of Viewpoint's work, we are working hard to improve service user involvement in commissioning. This will enable our members to influence what services are provided and by whom. At the latest Joint Commissioning Partnership Board (JCPB) meeting in April, our chair Chris Munt was co-opted as a service user representative to ensure that users' views are fully considered by the commissioners. This is a positive step forward and we will be looking to increase the number of people influencing this area over the coming year.

As a result of the service user survey



quality and experience of acute care and access to psychological therapies will all be tackled and we need your experience to improve them. All three priorities were

we conducted last year, 3 main themes have been identified as priorities for Viewpoint and its members to work on. Issues around the Care Programme Approach (CPA), the

accepted by the JCPB and the next stage is to develop ways of measuring improvements according to users and carers before working on the solutions. Carers have highlighted an additional priority around carer assessments and we will also be supporting this issue.

The next JCPB briefing, which is an opportunity for you to give your views directly to commissioners is on Thursday 10th July 7-9 pm at the Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Garden City. If you want to find out more, visit www.hertsdirect.org/jointcommissioning or contact Viewpoint on 01707 328014. Viewpoint staff are very happy to meet up with anyone who would like some moral support at the meeting.

New ways to feed back

Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT) has introduced a new system of gathering service users' views. It's called the Patient Experience Tracker (PET) system which is like an electronic questionnaire. There are five questions on a key pad and you press the appropriate answer key. The information is sent via a telephone line to a central data server owned by the company which developed the system, Dr Foster Intelligence ©. The information is analysed and the

company sends reports back to HPFT. The PET units do not ask for personal details so service users can fill them in anonymously.

HPFT has bought 20 units and are reviewing whether they are a useful way of gathering feed-back. At the moment, they can be found in the reception areas in community mental health centres and on selected inpatient wards. Information posters will be used to show the actions that have been taken in response to the feedback received. For

further information please contact Kate Spokes, PET Project coordinator,

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Head Office, Tel: 01727 897926.

Patient Feedback	
Did the staff treat you with respect and dignity?	Yes, Sometimes, No
Did the staff clearly explain the purpose and side-effects of your medication?	Yes, No, Not applicable
Were the available activities helpful/therapeutic?	Yes, No, Unavailable
How safe did you feel during your stay?	Very safe, Quite safe, Not safe at all
Overall, how would you rate the care you received?	Excellent, Good, Poor

Thank you for your feedback

The guilt has gone

I never saw the point of just drinking two glasses of wine. I drank to forget, to lose myself, to fall into oblivion. I drank and drank until I blacked out. It was never a case of just two glasses for me.

I think it began when I was a child. My parents were strict but loving with a strong faith in God. I never felt that I could live up to their expectations in the way that my elder sister did. I never felt that I fitted in but it was more than that. Something within me wasn't right.

As a family, we socialised a lot and alcohol was always around. It was when I was 13 that I first got so drunk I blacked out. I couldn't remember what had happened but I liked the feeling that all my troubles had disappeared and that, at last, I fitted in.

From then on, I began to drink regularly and I always drank to excess. When I was in my twenties, people thought I was a right laugh when I had had a few drinks too many.

The one time I cut back was when my partner and I went travelling in Europe. It was such a wonderful experience that I didn't need to drink as much. When we came back, I fell pregnant and I didn't drink at all and felt marvellous. However, after the birth, I felt very, very low and I remember sitting in hospital, with all the curtains closed so that I couldn't see the sunshine, and a nurse came in, pulled them back and told me to pull myself together. I couldn't cope and cried all the time.

I started drinking again after I'd stopped breast feeding. I adored my baby but I felt empty inside. As soon as he fell asleep at night, I picked up a bottle. The shame and sickness the next morning were unbearable.

I thought that if my partner married me, everything would be all right but he never asked me and, in the end, I left him. Four years of drinking later, I met another drinker who promised me the world and, after five months, we got married. What I fell in love with was a lifestyle. I was with someone who drank more than me and who 'allowed' me to drink.

By then I was drinking 3 and a half bottles of wine several times a week. I was taking my son to school stinking of alcohol, having kept him awake at night playing loud music. He would beg me not to buy any more drink. I did try to get help but I wasn't honest with my GP who

prescribed me anti-depressants without knowing the extent of my drink problem.

All the time I was functioning in black out. My relationship became abusive but I felt I deserved the beatings, even when I ended up in hospital. I used to go on binges and wake up not knowing where I was, what I had done or who I was with. I was terrified and full of shame and guilt the whole time. I didn't believe I was an alcoholic though.

My family still loved me although I had driven away many of my friends. I truly believe that you can only get better once you have hit rock bottom. Until you reach that point, no-one can say anything that will make any difference.

My rock bottom came the third time I ended up in a police cell and social services came to take my son away. I hated the police officer in charge with a vengeance but he actually saved my life. By that time, I was on a waiting list to see an alcohol counsellor but he told me not to wait but go straight to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). I did and I haven't drunk since my first meeting.



My parents took me in and I finally admitted that I could no longer live the way I had been doing. Their love and care saved me and helped me to reaffirm my belief in God. It helps to believe in something 'higher' than you, whether it's a religious belief or a belief in the support of other people because you can't beat the power of alcohol on your own. The thing is not how much or what you drink but the effect alcohol has on you.

The AA has taught me how to live without alcohol. I couldn't believe there were other people like me there. I'm gradually getting back my self esteem and confidence. I no longer have to cope with the guilt and hangovers. I'm not perfect but I am trying to live my life the best that I can and now I can help other people too. I left my husband and have changed my whole social network. I try not to hurt

people or let them down. Life can still be hard but I can cope with it with a clear head.

In the AA you're treated as an ill person, getting well. If you think of yourself as a bad person, the guilt means that you will never get better. I will always be an alcoholic but I am a recovering sober alcoholic and I live one day at a time.

And my son? He is the best thing in my life. His father looked after him until I was well enough to do so and now we have a wonderful relationship. He had to grow up too soon and every day I used to say sorry to him. When he was 8, he said, 'You don't have to say sorry anymore. Every day you don't drink, you are saying sorry to me.'

Before I came into the AA, I couldn't imagine a life without drink and I was so filled with fear, as I had been all my life. Now I cannot imagine a life with drink!

A grateful sober recovering alcoholic

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Alcoholics Anonymous
National Helpline: 0845 769 7555
Calls charged at local rate
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous in Hertfordshire
24 hour help-line
South Hertfordshire: 01923 211122
North Hertfordshire: 01438 747475

For family and friends of alcoholics
AI - Anon Family Groups UK & Eire
Tel: 020 7403 0888
Helpline 10am - 10pm 365 days

Vale House Stabilisation Services

- Non-statutory drug and alcohol agency offering free, caring and confidential help.
- Vale House residential home also offers day and drop-in services.

Tel: 01992 553173
Fax: 01992 509729

The Living Room (Stevenage)
Charity offering free service to assist people experiencing difficulties related to alcohol or drugs and other dependencies
Tel: 01438 355649
Fax: 01438 360098
enquiries@thelivingroom.me.uk www.thelivingroom.me.uk

Joy in sobriety

with my son but, three months after he was born, I developed post natal depression. I was given anti-depressants and saw a psychiatrist every week. However, the depression deepened and I started having panic attacks. I was given valium and became addicted for 10 years, virtually unable to leave the house.

In the meantime, I had a second baby and found it hard to cope with two small children. I cut down on valium and drank vodka instead, increasing to a bottle a day. I started getting deceitful, hiding bottles around the house. My husband would find them and throw them away so I would hide in the park, drinking vodka until



all the money had run out. Sometimes I didn't get as far as the park but would drink a bottle on the street, collapse and get picked up by the police who would tell me to get help.

My husband found a place for me in a work therapy treatment centre but I hated it as I was away from my children and I didn't recognise I'd got a problem. I did try going to AA, mainly to get out of the house, but I'd leave after 20 minutes. Then, we moved area to try for a new start but it didn't work. I would be ok for a couple of weeks and then I'd be down to the off licence again. One time I was so drunk I was hit by a car and ended up in hospital. I begged, borrowed and stole for drink and all the time I felt dead inside. I just wanted to die and I tried to commit suicide several times.

I was put in a treatment centre and was surprised to be told I was a chronic alcoholic. While I was there my daughter

told me she was pregnant and it was then that I decided I needed to change my life. I stayed sober for 7 months but then went on a binge and ended up in hospital with 10 stitches in my head and a bad back. When I came home, my husband bought several crates of vodka and then moved out. I drank solidly for three weeks. At the end, my daughter came round with her new born, my first grand child, and asked me if I'd had enough. I had a choice: to live or die. That was my rock bottom. Something came into me and I chose life.

Then the withdrawal started. I hallucinated all weekend. There were dogs and sheep in the room and people on the ceiling. I was terrified. Monday morning, I called Vale House, which is a service to help people with an addiction problem, and started going there four days a week and seeing a counsellor.

Life is different now and really, really good. I had to change. My husband and I divorced and I went into recovery and now go to AA several times a week. My son lives with me and my daughter is around the corner with another child on the way. This time I can be there for her and help look after my grand children.

Recovery is not taking on too much. I have to look after myself as well. I have gained so much more self knowledge. I stopped taking my antidepressants as I was on antibiotics but fell into a deep depression. I went back to my GP who was very supportive and explained why I needed to continue taking them. I got back on track and now feel lots better. Today I can sit in my own home and watch television without a drink. I have that freedom.

The support of friends and family is very important. My son won't bring friends back to the house to drink 'as that's what a pub is for' and my daughter removes any alcohol when I go round to visit.

I am so grateful for a second chance. The war is over. I can do anything in my life except pick up the first drink. I'm in recovery on a daily basis. There is help out there, if you want it.

A grateful sober recovering alcoholic

Would you like to tell your story of recovery? Call Jacqui on 01707 328014 and, if you don't want to write it, she can do it for you.

Bipolar Disorder: between mania and depression

Since being diagnosed with bipolar disorder a few years ago, I believe I have come a long way from where I was back then. But I keep wondering: how does bipolar disorder affect my day-to-day life?

Well, I have noticed that I still go through phases, alternating periods of excessive physical and mental energy and cycles of small depression. In those moments, I question and doubt myself, worry a lot over small matters. I have a tendency of over-analysing everything, and also lose my temper quite easily. These are the bad times I guess for me. Then come the manic episodes which usually bring happiness, extreme creativity and the urge to do so many things at the same time. I often find myself realising at that stage that I need to take a step back.

As Dr David J Miklowitz says in his book, *'The Bipolar Disorder Survival Guide: What you and your family need to know'*, it's "easy to forget that you have a bio-chemical imbalance and even easier to believe that you never had one in the first place. You start to believe that you had this illness once but that it's now under your control, especially when you have been well for a while." But bipolar symptoms have a way of recurring when you least expect them.

I went through two manic episodes between 2001 and 2004 until I was finally diagnosed with bipolar disorder just after the birth of my son. I guess putting a name on my illness has enabled me to deal with it in a better way. I am now aware of the symptoms and have learnt some "coping" techniques to avoid them recurring which I have set out below.

I have just started cognitive behaviour therapy which is helping me to have a more positive approach to life and control my moods which I feel is another step forward.

Yes, bipolar disorder has changed me, but I am convinced that with the right treatment and the support of your loved ones, you can get better over time. And I do feel that I am recovered to some extent.

Stephanie Contrastin

Tips to manage bipolar disorder

Exercise

Regular exercise can help improve your mood and to sleep better. My advice would be to start slowly on an exercise routine and gradually work up to exercise most of the days of the week.

Eat a healthy diet

Focus on the basics with lots of fruit and vegetables and cut down on fat and sugars.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol and drugs

I am currently trying to give up smoking!

Get a good night's sleep

Being overtired can trigger mania so get into good sleeping habits. Sleeping and getting up at the same time aids relaxation.

Relax

Anxiety triggers mood episodes so make a real effort to relax. Try taking some time for yourself, focusing on something you enjoy doing.

Reduce stress

Ask for help with some of the stressful things in your life at home and work. If your job is proving too much, think about ways of cutting down some of your responsibilities.

Get into a schedule

Sticking to a daily schedule can help control your mood. Incorporate all of the above into a pattern that works for you and try to stick to it every day.

Free Viewpoint Course!

Identifying Your Skills, Building Your Confidence

For people recovering from mental health and /or drug and alcohol issues

Next course will be held in Borehamwood

Starting Autumn 2008

Runs 1 day a week for 6 - 8 weeks

The aim of the course is to:

- Build your self esteem and confidence
- Enable you to gain more control over your life and move on towards a better future
- Set and achieve goals for the future, e.g. getting a job, getting a qualification, becoming more assertive
 - Meet people and feel less isolated

To sign up for this FREE course, contact Tracy or Helen at Viewpoint on 01707 328014 or email info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

Reasonable travel expenses will be paid and lunch is provided.

"All you need is the courage to commit!"

Comments about the last course



Course members Spring 2008

'It was wonderful that every person's opinion, contribution and point of view were valued equally. Additionally, I felt very included and supported throughout the course.'

'Andy and Helen put us at ease immediately and I felt it was never 'them and us' rather that we were working together. I have thoroughly enjoyed the course. We have all helped each other, and not only gained in confidence, but new friendships have materialised as well.' *Liz Snell*

'The course has made me a stronger and more confident person. I did not experience one single 'voice' (auditory hallucination) during this course. This may 'prove' that social inclusion really can help to eradicate (or, at least, alleviate) distressing auditory hallucinations in people with schizophrenia.' *Clare*

'The course has helped me to prepare for an interviewing panel for Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust and I've been asked back!' *Rosie Berry*

'The fact that the group was made up of people with a diverse set of problems only helped to highlight the need and the usefulness of a flexible approach overall and that these differences add to the strength of the lessons learned.' *A. J. Fountain*

THE CONNECT CLUB CHARITY
Linked to HPT
(HERTS PARTNERSHIP TRUST)
Charity No 1088081

Wot Ever Scrap Store

Volunteers needed!

Mon 11am– 3pm Thurs 12pm – 5pm
Sat 10am – 12pm

Help needed with sorting art & scrap materials for the recycling store in Welwyn Garden City. Please call for Olwyn for details on

01707 371719 / 273294

The Connect Club Charity supports those managing a mental health problem
www.connectclub.org.uk



Welwyn Garden City Drop In

Every Tuesday
10am - 12 noon

Come and join us for:

- + Tea, Coffee and Biscuits
- + A relaxed atmosphere
- + Activities
- + A friendly chat

Call Tracy at Mind in Mid Herts on 01727 865070 for more information and details of the venue

Identifying & helping symptoms of psychosis

Things around me seem strange.
I can hear or see things that others can't.
I'm being watched, laughed at, or talked about.
New ideas keep coming in to my mind.
My thoughts are being controlled.
I keep thinking I'm someone else.
I feel my looks or my body is changing.
I feel tense, anxious, restless, afraid.
I can't concentrate or remember things.
I can't sleep as I used to.
I can't face my friends and family anymore.

Every day the Early Intervention Team works with people between 14 and 35 to help them express their thoughts and feelings and normalise their experiences.

Talk to your doctor about a referral to us because we may be able to help. Or contact us directly and in confidence, by phone or email...

01727 860403 / 01992 705857 emailus2day@yahoo.co.uk

One Voice Watford Community Choir

Come and join a new interfaith,
multi-cultural Choir



No auditions

No need to read music

No previous experience required

CHOIR STARTS

**Thursday 3rd July
7.15pm - 9.15pm**

For more information please phone

01442 - 400535

info@onevoicewatford.com



Supported by Elected Mayor Dorothy Thornhill
Watford Borough Council & Hertfordshire County Council

pace lgbt family & relationships helpline

*Promoting Lesbian and Gay Health
and Well Being*

www.pacehealth.org.uk

PACE
Family Service
34 Hartham Road
London N7 9JL
0808 1807223

The Helpline offers family and relationship support over the phone and email to anyone in the UK who is dealing with issues related to being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Additionally a variety of professional or individual enquiries can be supported.

Call or email for support with any problems you may be experiencing. All calls and correspondence will be treated as strictly confidential, and will be dealt with by an experienced lgbt counsellor.

CALL: 0808 1807223

pacehelpline@pace.dircon.co.uk

Monday 9.30am-12.30pm & Thursday 3.30pm- 6.30pm

We also offer couples counselling & family support. Call the family service at PACE on 020 7700 1323 to make an appointment.

ARE YOU A CURRENT OR PAST USER OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN HERTFORDSHIRE?

Would you like to help improve mental health services in the county? Then Viewpoint would like to hear from you.

Viewpoint exists to empower and support people who use or have used mental health services to be part of the decision making process. We do this by bringing together interested groups and individuals to get involved in the development, provision and monitoring of mental health services. We offer support, training and travel expenses to Viewpoint meetings.

To join Viewpoint, please fill out the slip on the back page and return to us

Viewpoint is a registered charity number 1105423

Just Looking Out of My Window

Just looking out of my window watching people going by. I just see the children playing. With tears in my eye. In the eyes of this world, I'm just some fool. Some think I'm intelligent, this is just so cool. So many projects I want to do. Just like befriending a lonely, friendless child, just like you.

Mental illness just says no.

But with persistence I can, I should just know. I must, I can do this. I know people tell my future is bright to me. It just mustn't be spoilt by anxieties or OCD.

I must not give up. I must pray and fight. Persisting will make my future bright. I must go on fighting. I just must try. Then my life won't just pass me by. I don't want money to do what I want to do. Just love will pull me through.

Cliff Howe

I won't bite!

Speak to me
I won't bite
Or harm old folk
So late by night

I won't jump on children
In your street
Or be dangerous
To those I meet

I won't steal your money
Or want a pat on my head
Just treat me with respect instead

Won't rush around your houses
Just causing a riot
Won't blow up your kettle
Just be quiet

So just be so free
Of your inabilities
To those folk
With disabilities

Cliff Howe

Fairy Princess

I tried to pretend I was a fairy princess,
who never had to feel pain, or loss, or sorrow.
Too late I learned that not to feel the bad meant not to feel,
The sunshine on my face, the happiness of life.
I'd rather feel the good and bad,
than nothingness.

(Author unknown)

Contributed by Clare Wood



'The egg is green'
Artwork by Andy Strowman

'Dealing with mental illness' VIEWPOINT DVD!

Viewpoint has produced a DVD as a training tool for staff who want to gain an insight into mental illness from the perspective of those who use adult mental health services. It plays for 24 minutes and looks at:

- How it feels to experience mental illness
- What helps in the process of developing good mental health
- The way forward to improve mental health services

See the whole person and not just the diagnosis is the message.

If you would like more information about obtaining copies of the DVD, please contact Jacqui Deakin at Viewpoint on 01707 328014 or email jacqui@hertsviewpoint.co.uk



If you would like more information about Viewpoint, contact us on **01707 328014**, or complete the reply slip below and send in an envelope with no need of stamps to Viewpoint, **FREEPOST NAT8850**, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 1BR.

Name: _____

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