

Bristol Mind Spring 2009 Newsletter



Welcome to our spring

Newsletter — when this newsletter was started it was still definitely winter but now (19th March) Spring has arrived. We will be issuing the Newsletter on a quarterly basis and welcome your news, views and input.

We have started a User Group Forum – for organisations that use the 35 Old Market Street premises. Our next meeting will be on 29th April at 12.30pm.

You may know that Rosie Davies, the Bristol Mind Outreach Research Co-ordinator, finished her project last autumn and she has written a short summary of the aims and findings of the project for this newsletter. Rosie is now enjoying a well-deserved break before deciding on her next career move. We wish her success but miss her calming presence in the office.

To continue on the research theme for this newsletter we asked OPM (the Office for Public Management - www.opm.co.uk) who conducted some interviews here at the end of last year if they could tell us more about this project—their contribution is overleaf.

Nick Hanlon from Social Anxiety South West has reported on how the group he co-ordinates may be able to help people who experience anxiety in social situations. Thanks for this information Nick.

Pat Diango, Office Co-ordinator and Suzanne Pearson, Chair BRISTOL MIND

Study findings describe what outreach services should offer for people with a range of needs

Bristol Mind has completed a large service-user-led research study exploring how both NHS and voluntary sector services can best support people with serious mental health problems who get labelled as 'hard to engage'.

This study found that almost everyone wanted help focused on the problems they saw as most important. For some it was difficult to access help

when they were ill and could not face staff or get to appointments. Both assertive outreach¹ services provided by the NHS and voluntary outreach services were seen as better than other kinds of services.

Flexible, reliable and consistent relationships with staff were really important. Many wanted informal relationships where staff felt like friends, but others wanted staff to be more professional.

Participants wanted help with a lot of different things. Help with housing and money was most important. Almost everyone wanted informal emotional support from staff. Some wanted more access to talking therapies but many people did not want this.

Emphasis on prescribed medication was a significant issue for many people. However, some people wanted medication or knew it was necessary. Nonetheless, it was often an important reason that people disconnected from mental health services.

Other things that got in the way of people accessing services were having drug or alcohol problems; intrusive and controlling services; and being sectioned, forcibly medicated and having inpatient stays.

The research included a focus on people from black and minority ethnic groups. On the whole people from these groups raised similar issues and felt that most outreach staff were respectful. However, Gypsies and Travellers were not accessing either NHS or voluntary services other than GP's. People from these communities did raise different issues and were particularly excluded.

This project was funded by the Big Lottery Fund. More information is available from Bristol Mind.

Rosie Davies, January 2009

¹ In outreach services staff go out to meet service users in their homes or in other places in their neighbourhood rather than people having to attend appointments. Services which work in an 'assertive' way will keep trying to meet up with service users and to build good relationships

Research project into disabled people's experiences of violence, harassment and abuse

In November last year some people from Bristol Mind took part in interviews for a research project looking at the experiences of people across Great Britain who have been the victims of targeted violence, harassment and abuse. The research is being carried out for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which is a national organisation that aims to eliminate discrimination and protect people's human rights. This research is being done because there is evidence that shows that people with learning disabilities and people who use mental health services are more likely to be victims of violence, harassment or abuse.

Targeted violence, harassment and abuse can include things like bullying, violent crime, having things stolen or having property vandalised, verbal harassment or name calling.

By doing interviews with people who have had these sorts of experiences we have been able to find out what happened to them, whether anybody was told about what was happening and whether anything was done by different agencies such as the police, healthcare staff or voluntary sector organisations if they knew what was happening. Hearing about these things directly from people means that the Equality and Human Rights Commission will be able to campaign and effect change to improve people's lives.

The research is coming to an end now and the findings will be available later on in the year. We will be in touch with Bristol MIND when the report is published. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this research please email Chloe Cook at ccook@opm.co.uk

Thank you to everyone from Bristol MIND who gave up some of their time to speak to us.

If you would like to speak to someone confidentially about any experiences of violence, harassment and abuse call Bristol Victim Support on 0845 45 66 099

DON'T FORGET Bristol Mind Mental Health First Aid Training - a two day course we are holding in April, June/July, October 2009 and January 2010. For more information see our website - www.bristolmind.org.uk there are reduced prices for people on low income who receive mental health support and/or are from an unfunded self-help group.



Social Anxiety West Support Group

If you feel unable to speak to people, worry about shaking, blushing or sweating, or experience anxiety in social situations then you may be experiencing social anxiety disorder. Typically, you will also have excessive concern about negative criticisms from others, experience high levels of self-consciousness, and may have other anxiety symptoms such as increased heart rate, palpitations, feeling faint or nausea. If this describes you then you are not alone.

Approximately 7% of the population suffer with high levels of social anxiety that affect their day-to-day lives leaving them feeling stuck, scared and lonely.

Our support groups allow you to make contact with and gain support from other people who understand what you are going through. We also provide information on how to overcome your social anxiety and social opportunities to help you build up your confidence, make new friends and expand your social activities. If social anxiety is affecting your life and you wish to meet with people who understand in a confidential environment while building up your confidence then please turn up to one of our sessions. They are tailored to be sensitive to the needs of people with social anxiety and there is no pressure to take part in any activity if you do not wish to.

Sessions are run every Thursday (except last Thursday of the month), 7-9pm at Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street Bristol, BS2 0EZ (please go through the iron gate and ring the door bell). We also run a monthly women only group on the last Saturday of the month, 2-4pm at the same address. Please just turn up, no prior notice is required. An optional £2 donation is requested at the end of sessions. If you wish to find out more information first then we will be happy to answer your questions.

Email: email@sawest.org

Web: www.sawest.org

Tel: 01172307735

Nick Hanlon

We hope that each group using the Bristol Mind office premises will write something about their activities for future newsletters. Please contact Pat Diango if you would like to produce information for our next newsletter which will be issued in May (tel. 0117 980 0370 or admin@bristolmind.org.uk)