

FIRST WORD

Welcome to the July edition of PLUSpoint - a quick turnaround this month following staff summer holidays. The increasing submissions help a lot in getting the newsletter together and the diversity of writing and views makes for more interesting reading too.

This month's poem should strike a chord for those of you who are helped by helping others. Emily Dickinson shows the value of 'being there' in a person's hour of need. It reminds us that something simple like a smile, a knowing touch to the arm, or similar kind gesture can mean so much to someone who is suffering. A lovely poem to take away and do something positive with.

The preferred bidder for the New Murray Royal Hospital has been announced at last which thankfully takes the pressure off those 'sworn to secrecy' during the competitive tendering stage. We can now look forward to working with 'Taycare' in creating a new hospital which encompasses their 3 key values, 'Light, Recovery and Space'. A big thanks to Jackie, John and Jeff, PLUS volunteers, who worked so hard on the clinical user groups and to all of those who contributed their views.

Shared Risk: Redefining Safety

When I was a patient in the mental health system, I heard the language of safety a lot; was I safe?, was I going to be safe, would I contract for safety, etc. etc. Through these questions, safety came to mean that I was simply agreeing not to do anything to hurt myself or someone else. But what did that leave me with? Frankly, the more safety questions I got, the less I felt reliant on my own abilities to take care of myself. So instead of feeling safe in the world, I felt like a time bomb that could go off at any time. It also left my clinical relationships with a huge power discrepancy. For example, if I told the truth and was feeling like hurting myself or someone else, the practitioner would feel obliged to make secure arrangements on my behalf.

If I lied, I might have all the power, but keeping a secret only made things worse. I've had to re-think what safety in my own life means, and it doesn't mean simply agreeing to keep myself out of harm's way! Real safety happens for me in the context of culturally respectful, mutually responsible and trusting relationships. It happens when I'm in relationships where we don't judge or make assumptions about each other. It happens when someone trusts/believes in me (even when they're uncomfortable). Only then I am able to take risks that eventually provide a revolutionary shift in my worldview. This is how we can begin to redefine safety and talk about shared risk in peer support. The way we get there is proactive rather than reactive. For example, we can talk about what will help the relationship feel safe for both of us in the first contact conversation. We acknowledge (out loud) the extent of our "bottom lines," and then we figure out together what we will do, should we get to that edge. We talk about how we each are likely to react when we feel untrusting or disconnected. We begin to pave the way for negotiating the relationship during potentially difficult situations. But most importantly we talk about power, what it's like to lose it, abuse it and or balance it. It may be necessary to talk about power imbalances again and again while struggling together to own what we feel, what we see, and what we need. These are the kinds of conversations that allow both people to take risks and grow. These are the kinds of conversations that can lead to fundamentally different ways of thinking about help.

Shery Mead

Helplines

Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87
Depression Alliance Scotland	0845 123 23 20
Samaritans	08457 909090
Cruse Bereavement Care	0844 477 9400
Saneline	08457 678000
Eating Disorders Association	0845 6341414
Mental Health Out of Hours	08454242424
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	0844 561 6855

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Bidder Announced for New MRH

NHS Tayside, along with the participating North of Scotland NHS Board areas, have appointed **Taycare** as the Preferred Bidder to build the new mental health developments across Tayside on the 26th June. The new hospital at the Murray Royal site in Perth will provide high quality facilities for inpatients, out-patients and day patients from across Tayside, together with a new medium secure care clinic which will take patients from the whole of the North of Scotland. Construction work is scheduled to begin next spring, with the new hospital opening in 2012.

The design includes individual en-suite bedrooms for all patients, and day spaces with views of the grounds and the countryside beyond. The external spaces will comprise courtyards and gardens. Landscaping is an important part of the project and there will also be opportunities for patients to get involved in developing some of these outside spaces. There will be activity spaces for arts and sports. A number of events are being prepared to let patients and their carers, staff and the local community see the designs and meet the winning bidder including exhibitions and an Open Day.

The new hospital won't occupy the whole site so NHS Tayside has set up a group representing the local community and users and carers to look at all the options for the remaining land and buildings and to report on these to the Board. The buildings include the main building and the chapel, which are both listed and, therefore, cannot be altered without permission, and also Gilgal. The group held its first meeting on 2 July and should finalise its report early in 2010.

PLUS volunteer Jackie Proctor is representing PLUS at the Surplus Land Group. Members will be updated on this via the monthly meetings in the Gateway, Perth.

'Move Ahead' to Creative Writing

'Move Ahead' day service have secured funding from NHS Tayside Endowments to run a 12 week of Creative Writing Workshop. The sessions will be held every Tuesday from 8th September 2009 in Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The workshops will be driven by the interests of those attending, but may include journaling, writing from memory, prose, dialogue, writing about places and writing from objects.

There will be no charge for the workshops open to people living in Perth and Kinross who have experience of mental health difficulties.

**For further information contact Pam Lamond on
01738 562403**

A Gothic Tale

Eleanor Nisbet handed in this 'shockingly' good short story which she wrote recently at one of the Plus creative writing sessions in Soutar House. Read on if you like to be scared!!!



Do you drive through or do you stop?

There is a strength and pull here, you stop.

Just to savour the atmosphere... but the dark regions behind the church repel you. The old man standing in the threshold smiles, inviting you into his world. He walks ahead of you both, talking but watching for your reactions.

"There was a house over there which belonged to a musician but since his death, thankfully we no longer hear his music", and the old man gives a shiver.

You know you want to stay and listen to him but also want to run away. You all go on through tangled bushes bending and swaying before you.

You look back at your wife for reassurance but shockingly she has aged and doesn't return your look but shares smiles with the old man. You panic but she forces you on. There is a chill in the air, you wonder if you are dreaming but know that you are kidding yourself.

She pauses and embraces you but the pain is terrible. On releasing you she smiles as she holds aloft your heart. You feel the life blood oozing from you but with a touch she stems it and pushes you onwards.

Eventually you all reach a wild garden and they stop. Faces in the flowers leer at you. This is HELL but a living HELL. What do they want with you? What is happening to you? It dawns on you that they are from another time and need your death. They are driven and evil and fear exists in them and you. By your death their spirits will find peace and salvation.

The sun still shines but offers no heat.

The garden is silent.

No birds sing.

No bees hum.

No butterflies flutter.

You cry out but are not heard. Is this your end? Is this it?

There is good and evil in all worlds, please let the good show itself.

A haunting melody is heard. A beautiful plaintive song, a song of life. You look around and realise your tormentors are writhing on the ground with their hands over their ears.

There is light, there is peace.

It's like the musician is holding a hand out to you. You take his hand and walk away from your nightmare. All is normal. There is your car, your mobile, your sandwiches. BUT.

She is not there.

E. Nisbet

NATIONAL NEWS

Recovery in the Holy Land

Ron Coleman & Karen Taylor of Scotland based Working to Recovery were recently in Palestine, where they worked with nurses from Bethlehem. Karen said; "Recovery is firmly on the agenda, there are a passionate group of recovery nurses, OT's, a social worker & a psychiatrist who are really making a difference. They would match any recovery teams working here in the UK, with a fraction of resources & very little family support in some circumstances".

Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health New Chief Executive

SDC recently announced the appointment of Hilary Campbell as its new Chief Executive.. She succeeds Dr Allyson McCollam who stepped down in April. Founded in 1997, SDC is a unique not-for-profit organisation operating in Scotland and beyond to improve mental health and wellbeing. For more information on SDC, visit www.sdcmh.org.uk.

Updated Information on Confidentiality and Health Records

Health Rights Information Scotland (HRIS) has recently updated their information leaflets 'How to see your health records', 'Confidentiality – it's your right' and 'Confidentiality – your rights' which is aimed at young people. These leaflets tell patients how the NHS protects their personal health information, and of their right to see their health records. The new Leaflets will be available via PLUS shortly.

'100 Ways to Support Recovery'

A Guide for Mental Health Professionals. The mental health charity, Rethink, have published a new guide for mental health professionals that outlines 100 ways to support recovery. It identifies 100 ways in which people working across the mental health sector can support the recovery of people with mental health problems.

The author, Dr Mike Slade, says: "Recovery is an idea which has developed out of the experience of people living with, and beyond, mental illness. The mental health system already helps many people to live meaningful and purposeful lives, but we can do better."

To order a hard copy for £5.00 or, alternatively, download a free copy, visit: http://www.mentalhealthshop.org/products/rethink_publications/100_ways_to_support.html

Hate Crime Bill Passes:

The Scottish Parliament unanimously passed Green MSP Patrick Harvie's Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill on the 10th June. The bill tackles homophobic, transphobic and anti-disabled hate crime, and will make sure such crimes are taken as seriously as racist and religious hate crime, as they are in England and Wales.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Seeing the rather sad case of Susan Boyle and the death of Michael Jackson, certainly seem to suggest that if you miss a part of your growing-up, you may be more disposed to later physical or mental illnesses. Bullying is a case in point, lack of schooling due to an illness in school days, or child prodigies being pushed to do the one thing they do well instead of having a "rounded" education. As I understand it, we are born with all the brain cells we need and they die off as things are learnt in order. If you miss say English or Arithmetic it is very difficult to teach it later in life and "out of order" as it were. However we are taught that no matter how bad a thing is, we must look to see if any good things come out of it. Perhaps in these cases, giving people a glimpse into just one type of mental illness is no bad thing.

Bryan Smith

Hello Everyone,

I've been attending Letham Learning Centre to brush up on my Maths and English skills. I enjoy it very much. The tutor Rosalind is very nice and helpful. I would recommend anyone to go there who needs help. I also go to a book group once a month in Kinross Leisure Centre. It is open to anyone. If interested please contact PLUS for details.

Linda Campbell

Sometimes Its Tough Being a Man

Why is it so tough being a man? As a boy I was taught that as a man you should never cry for that is a sign of weakness. When I was small if I got into a fight and had the audacity to go into the house crying because the local bully had picked on me, my father would smack my ear for crying, and send me back out to face up to the bully and dare not come home till I'd thrashed him, or died in the attempt. I dare say as my father was from tough mining stock it made good sense to him. In time you learned to defend yourself and nobody tries to take liberties with you without knowing the consequences that followed. This is how I grew up and the idiots and "hard-men" left me alone. But, and there is a big but, the outcome of my training for manhood has left me with the inability to cry. I don't see it as a weakness in other men and I respect any man who can show emotion in tears. I only wish it was me. My mother and father have passed away some fifteen years or so but I never shed a tear at either of their funerals and indeed to date I still haven't. The unfortunate thing is that the emotion of tears has been replaced over many years by the emotion of anger which can cause serious problems for me and for my loved ones. Unfortunately I had no patience with my son when he would cry for whatever reason so I suspect that my son sees his father as quite cold hearted and dare I say scary at times. He is now a man himself and we do not have a close relationship which I now deeply regret. I know that he knows that if I had to I would take a bullet for him, but at the same time we are not close, because that would mean we would need to show our emotions to each other and I think we've both buried them too deep to be able to bring them out. The moral of this story is this. We should cherish our children and let them develop their own emotions but be there to support them and never never be judgmental as they will learn their values from you and that can and will affect their lives for years to come.

Jim

LOCAL NEWS

Big Congratulations

To Plus members John Shackley, who recently secured a paid position at Working Links Job Club and to Nancy Millar, who received a "Volunteer of the Year Award 2009" for her work over the past 3 years at Innerpeffray Library. Fabulous news and well done both.

'A Positive Frame of Mind 2009'

PLUS is local host to the 'see me' campaign 'A Positive Frame of Mind 2009', a national photography competition. The competition will help local partners and 'see me' to challenge the stigma and discrimination of mental ill-health by inspiring creativity through photography.

PLUS will hold the local area competition, with winners going forward to the national final, hosted online by 'see me'.

This year's category for entry is 'Be there. Be Yourself'. If you would like to take part in the competition, please contact the office on 01738 626242 and submit your entry before 18th September 2009. PLUS will hold an exhibition of all the entries we receive in October. Details of venue will be released soon.

Visit www.plusperth.co.uk

or log on to www.seemescotland.org/photographyformoreinfo.

PLUS Members Meeting

The next PLUS members meeting will take place at 1.30pm - 3.00pm in the Gallery, the Gateway on Tuesday 4th August. All members welcome.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Group

A new support group for parents of children or adults with an autistic spectrum disorder will take place from 7.00pm - 8.30pm on Jul 30th - Sept 24th - Nov 26th at The Chapterhouse, St. Ninian's Cathedral, North Methven Street.

Contact: Ann Barrett 01250 874730 ann@lorntyglen.org.uk

New Jobs for Perth

A new UK wide fund of some £1bn will support the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people (18 - 24 in unemployment hotspots i.e. North Perth) who have been out of work for a year. The Future Jobs Fund will contribute £6500 for each job created - each job should last at least 6 months and be for at least 25 hours per week. PLUS has been involved with an initial meeting to take further locally.

Wednesday group

The next meeting of the Wed Group is on the 30th July and will be a meal at Wetherspoons. Meet at 6.00pm. Phone John or Mandy to book a place 01738 562303.



Volunteer Street Market

Jenny Duncan, PLUS volunteer, running the PLUS stand at the recent Volunteers Street Market.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

"The concept of mental health service users as a social group - belonging to a particular peer group - has the advantages of identification, mutual understanding and cohesion. But it also has the disadvantage of ghettoisation, exclusion from the wider population and introversion"

William Park

If I Can Stop One Heart from Breaking

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain:
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one lonely person
Into happiness again,
I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily the views of PLUS