

Past editions of PLUSPoint can be downloaded from our website at www.plusperth.co.uk

FIRST WORD

Feb 3rd, the 1st day of Chinese New Year 2011 - The Year of the Rabbit. Rabbits are supposed to be inspiring but said to bring periods of calm reflection too. Well that sounds like a good piece of advice to me. Although well versed with the inspiring bit - I see that as getting on and doing the daily tasks and projects to meet your aims and objectives- we seem to be less at home sitting back, taking stock and quietly reflecting on the work achieved. But also more importantly why PLUS exists in the first place.



The mission statement for PLUS is:

"To improve the lives of people living in P&K who experience mental distress and to promote more positive public attitudes towards mental health and to those suffering mental illness".

Are the things that we are doing as an organisation working towards, or fulfilling our mission? That's the question we need to keep asking ourselves. Our mission statement can also inspire us to keep going when things are particularly challenging or when reassurance that we are on the right path is sought. It brings us together in a united purpose and provides a single voice for our 200+ members and volunteers.

Whether or not you buy into Chinese folklore the beginning of a new year seems a good place to remind ourselves of what is the difference we are trying to make.

And to add, I'm sure it's the case that we personally need to have periods of calm to effectively deal with the trials and tribulations of life. Same goes for running a mental health charity. Ying and yang and all that - balance. (That's easy to say but often hard to achieve). Hopefully you will find a good balance of informative, reflective and inspiring pieces of news, articles and creative writing in this first newsletter of the New Year(s)!

Breathing Space Day Campaign



PLUS provided information at various venues around Perth & Kinross on Breathing Space Day 1st Feb as part of a joint effort to raise awareness of Breathing Space a national phone line to give help to those experiencing mental distress. The information was available at stands at Scottish and Southern Electricity, P&K Pullar House and Whitefriars offices, P&K Libraries, Perth Royal Infirmary and Murray Royal Hospital. The stand at AK Bell Library was manned by volunteers of PLUS for part of the day. Both Samaritans and Breathing Space encourage people not just to phone in the case of emergencies but to contact them at the early stages of emotional upset to prevent things getting worse.

The Tidal Model - The Story



Pictured: Workshop participants with Phil Barker (right).

Last week I attended an excellent two-day workshop on "An Appreciation of the Tidal Model" delivered by the charismatic and intelligent Phil Barker and Poppy Buchanan-Barker. Starting with the notions that: life cannot be controlled; change is constant and that everyone is as unique as their fingerprint. We then set out on a fascinating journey through the process of the Tidal Model. By using the easily-accessible metaphor of water and ordinary language - as opposed to professional jargon, the Tidal Model recognises that recovery is as simple as getting going again when one's life is on the rocks. The power of story is also emphasised as the first step to recovery is reclaiming your own story.

At the start of the workshop all participants were given a warning that the following two days "may seriously change the way you think, feel and act" and I can confidently say that Phil and Poppy certainly lived up to their ambitious expectations!

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
Pet Bereavement Support Service	0800 096 6606
Support Line (8.30am - 8.30pm)	

PLUS

77 Canal Street, Perth PH2 8JJ Tel.: 01738 626242 Email: plusperth@msn.com

www.plusperth.co.uk

Scottish Charity SC040271 Company No. SC354220

Upcoming Conferences

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Welfare Reform and the Employability Pathway

Tuesday 22 February 2011, Vine Venue, Dunfermline, FREE

The aim of the conference is to provide some national and local perspectives on the future challenges for employability and skills within the context of Welfare Reform.

Keynote Speakers are: Will Hutton, Executive Vice Chair of the Work Foundation, the most influential voice on work, employment and organisation issues in the UK.

Frances Wood, Head of Employability and Tackling Poverty Division, Scottish Government.

Contact Mary McPherson, Development Services Phone 08451 555555 (Ext 447105) mary.macpherson@ffe.gov.uk

Making a Difference – Improving Health and Wellbeing for Young People

Tuesday 1st March 2011, 10.00am to 4.30pm £65 (£45 AYHP members), Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

The UK charity 'Association for Young People's Health' (AYPH) will host its first event in Scotland. The one-day conference will focus on young people's health needs.

The main focus of the event will be 'reducing health inequalities and promoting resilience amongst young people'.

For more information and to book a place please go to: www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk Telephone: 0207 022 1885.

LOCAL CONFERENCES

Recovery: Evidence, Stigma and You

Tuesday 15 February 2011, 10.00am to 16.00pm, Salutation Hotel

Do you have an interest in recovery and the impact of stigma on recovery journeys? Would like to share ideas and learn more? Then this event is for you.

Places are **FREE** to members of the Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium. For more information and to book a place contact Linda Swift on 0141 226 1662 or email linda.swift@sdrconsortium

5th Annual Trellis Conference, Perth Concert Hall Gardening - The Original "Feel Good" Activity

Tuesday 15 March 2011, 9.30am, Perth Concert Hall

Come along to the Trellis Conference. Trellis is the national Scottish charity that supports, promotes, and develops the use of horticulture to improve health, well-being and life opportunities for all.

Cost £50 per person, contact info@trellisScotland.org.uk or 01738 624348 for details.

Public Service Reform and Long Term Conditions: Working with People; Building Communities

Tuesday 22 March 2011, 9.45am to 4.30pm, Perth Concert Hall

This conference has been designed to be of interest to; People living with long term conditions, unpaid carers, local and national decision makers and service planners from the third, statutory and private sectors.

Call 0141 404 0231 for more info and to book a place.

Forthcoming Workshops

Solution Focused Approaches

Cupar Old Parish Centre, Fife

Monday 28th February & Tuesday 1st March 2011, 9.30am to 4.30pm

A 2 day free workshop for people with experience of mental health problems and their carers.

Steve Smith, Lecturer in Mental Health, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Health and Social Care, **Robert Gordon University**, Aberdeen, is the facilitator. The solution focused approach aims to explore the problems people present with, not from the point of view of how these problems originate and how they are maintained, but from the position of exploring solutions and how they operate. It will be an opportunity for participants to practise solution oriented interactions in a safe environment.

Contact Peer Support Fife to book a free place. H 01334 656341 M 07981 397570.

NATIONAL NEWS

CHANGES AHEAD FOR SCOTLAND?

The idea of measuring happiness or wellbeing has been part of the counter-culture agenda for many years. It now seems that David Cameron has picked up the idea - all credit to him. But more significant for Scotland is Alex Salmond's recent recruitment of Noble Prize-winner Joe Stiglitz as an economic adviser - a man with a huge international reputation. Stiglitz chairs a commission for the French Govt which is looking for alternatives to GDP (gross domestic product). Watch this space!

THE THIRD SECTOR – A KEY ROLE IN DELIVERING A HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

A key role in delivering a healthier Scotland is a report, published on 15 November last year, demonstrating opportunities for the NHS, and national and local government to work more efficiently with the third sector to maximise effectiveness.

The third sector already makes a significant contribution to improving the way Scotland's health and care needs are met but often comes up against barriers when working with the statutory sector **Contact Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation (SCVO)** for a copy.

GOOGLE LAUNCHES SAMARITANS HELPLINE DISPLAY FOR 'SUICIDE SEARCH'

Google has launched a link-up with Samaritans, displaying the charity's helpline number in response to UK search queries relating to suicide.

ONE STOP SHOP FOR SCOTTISH FUNDING

www.fundingscotland.com is a new website providing a one-stop shop for Scottish funding and aims to make applying for funding in Scotland quicker and easier.

PLUS CONFERENCE REPORT:

Tayside Learning and Education Day for Suicide Awareness and Prevention. 25th January

Two PLUS delegates attended a suicide prevention event chaired by Professor Tony Wells, Chief Executive of NHS Tayside at the PRI on Tues 25th January. The seminar looked at what we should be 'doing better' in response to the cluster of young people taking their own lives in Tayside last year: what were the lessons learned.

Caroline Morrison gave an excellent presentation about the impact on herself following the loss of her son to suicide. Her response to the term suicide prevention was that it should be called life promotion which many people in the audience seemed to agree with. She wanted to help others in a similar situation as she found there was very little support for her and her family following her sons death. She herself had contemplated suicide many times as a result of the family tragedy.

During the seminar we found out that the ripple effect of people affected by a single suicide can extend to as many as 3,000 people and that China is the only country where women outnumber men in taking their lives.

As far as lessons learned there was strong agreement that working with the media, and not against them, could bring more positive results. Some of the horrendous newspaper reporting during the cluster of young suicides in Bridgend, Wales in 2008 had a tremendously negative impact on the community and may have contributed to subsequent deaths. The Samaritans tried to build relationships with the reporters in an opportunity to educate media professionals as most had little experience of suicide but a directive from the local authority prohibiting contact with the media initially created a barrier to this.

One other factor acknowledged by most of those present was, far from being something which could be achieved in isolation, the task of reducing suicide should be driven forward involving all sectors as equal partners: the voluntary, public and private sector alongside 'experts' in the community needed to take time to understand and respect each others roles and speak to one another more: work together better.

With such a serious and universal issue as this there is no greater need for us to be all in this together.

Delegates of the event are being asked their views via a questionnaire which will contribute to identifying next steps and focus on future actions. Contact PLUS if you have any thoughts of your own you would like to put forward.

LOCAL NEWS

NEXT PLUS MEMBERS MEETING

The Gateway, North Methven St, Perth is booked on Friday 11 February from 13:30-15:30 for the next PLUS members meeting. The purpose of these monthly meetings is:

- To sustain regular contact with our members in ensuring that the objects and activities of the organisation continue to be led and developed as per the priorities of PLUS members.
- To gather views on issues that our members agree are important and to use this information for the purpose of improving the lives of people with mental health problems.
- To establish a network of wider more generic information exchange between PLUS and its members
- To provide an informal welcoming environment where individuals feel confident in contributing their views openly and putting forward ideas and suggestions to be considered by the rest of the group.
- To facilitate involvement, recovery and citizenship at an individual level.

FOOTBALL COACHING SESSIONS

**Murray Royal Hospital, GRT dept.
begins Tuesday 26th March 4.30-6.30pm**

A 6 week (free) series of football coaching by St Johnstone Community Coaches for people who have used mental health services. Contact PLUS on 01738 626242 for more info or John/Mandy at GRT 01738 562303 to put your name down for a place.

NO SMOKING DAY WALK IN THE PARK

**North Inch, Perth
Sunday 6th March 1.30-3.30pm**

A gentle walk around the North Inch to support No Smoking Day. Taster activities and free refreshments available in Bells Sports Centre and a goody bag and free prize draw for all walkers. Just turn up on the day.

NON-RUNNERS NEEDED ... TO RUN A MARATHON!

Local charity PKAVS with support from personal trainer Steve Bonthron is looking for **complete beginners** to train for Scotland's biggest race - the Edinburgh Marathon (Relay Race)! **The Hairy Haggis Club** will run on Saturday mornings (10am- 11am) on Perth's North Inch. Sessions will teach you correct running techniques and help you find your own running pace. Over 15 weeks, Steve will build your confidence and fitness and match you with other participants so you can take part in the Edinburgh Relay Marathon on 22 May 2011. It's a fun way to develop your fitness, raise funds for PKAVS and achieve a personal goal to be proud of!

To find out more call Helen or Jennie at PKAVS on 01738 567076.

IMPACT OF BENEFIT CHANGES WORKSHOP

**The Gateway, North Methven St, Perth
Thurs 31st March 1.30-4.30pm**

A free workshop for people who have used mental health services to find out more about the recent benefit changes and the possible impact of these. Facilitated by Chris White of SAMH.

WORLD BOOK NIGHT - MARCH 5TH 2011

Need some poetry in your life? Fancy a free book of poems? PLUS has 50 copies of Carol Ann Duffy's "The World's Wife" to give away! This witty, moving and entertaining collection by the Poet Laureate features a cast of characters as diverse as Mrs Midas, Frau Freud and Elvis' twin sister. The last poem, which shows the mythical Persephone returning to earth after a season in hell, encompasses the theme of recovery and offers hope that, after a long, harsh winter, spring must surely follow.

To pick up your free copy simply come along to the PLUS office on Saturday 5th March between 4.30 and 6. First come first served!

PLUS CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES funded by "Choose Life"



Some of the folks who attended the Christmas Gathering.



Keeping busy at the PLUS Activity hub in the city base.

chooselife

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAID:

"I really enjoyed meeting people at the hub – in many cases for the first time. Feeling there was no barriers and no need to explain why you are there."

"If it hadn't been for the hub I would otherwise have been stuck at home feeling very alone and isolated at a time of the year when I feel particularly vulnerable!"

"The so-called 'Festive Season' is a horrible time of the year for myself and many others."

"Sometimes. When the shops close, and Christmas instead of being a joyful time, seems to make me long for normality."

Dear PLUSpoint

My friend and I are relatively new members of PLUS and received our first PLUS newsletter with the Christmas Lunch at the Kinnoull Club invitation in it. We telephoned and said we would like to attend. We Went! And we were made to feel really welcome. Everyone was really friendly and spoke to us, people we had never met before made us feel at ease, when we were really quite nervous about our first time attending a PLUS social event. Plus we had a good time.

Our time with the PLUS group has made my friend and I think. We have already phoned to the office, and are going to go in soon, and hopefully we will be able to volunteer to help out where and when help is needed, in any events coming up this year.

The friendliness we experienced has given us the confidence to do more in the community and hopefully make more people like us aware of what we can do.

Thank you so very much,
Janet D. Turnbull

"MARTHA ROBINSON" POETRY COMP

Open to all mental health (ex-)service users in the UK Organised by National Perceptions Forum

The winning entries will be published in "Perceptions" Magazine

PRIZES 1st £100 2nd £50 3rd £25. For an entry form please write to: Rachel Brett, Poetry Competition, National Perceptions Forum, Rethink, 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP Or Email: rachel.brett@rethink.org

Deadline for entries Monday 28th February 2011.

Make A New Years Resolution To Boost Your Mental Health

Few of us make a new year's resolution to boost our mental health or protect ourselves against depression – even though depression is commonplace in Scotland. Recent figures show that in 2010 there was a 7.6% rise in the number of prescriptions for antidepressants, with one in 10 Scots thought to be taking them.

January is particularly challenging, emotionally and psychologically. The cold, the short days and the impact of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) – low mood and listlessness thought to be caused by reduced exposure to sunlight – can make the month seem interminable. Self-denial, post-Christmas debt and the ongoing impact of public spending cuts, redundancies and tax rises, don't help. For many people, January is a month to be suffered and endured.

And now for the good news: it doesn't have to be that way. The general, non-specific January doldrums can be addressed, and in remarkably simple ways. Act now to boost your mental health by following these seven golden rules.

Small Steps

Make realistic, progressive goals for the year, starting with small ones. That way you get a sense of accomplishment and success.

Break the cycle of negative thinking

Focus on the things you can do and try to utilise your strengths more in everyday life.

Make plans

Plan things that really enthuse you. Rather than being an empty void, the year ahead should have something to look forward to.

Take exercise – preferably outside

Several scientific studies have shown that exercise helps lift mood, reduce anxiety and improve self-esteem. Besides, there are 10 fewer hours of daylight in mid-January than in mid-June, so it's important to maximise exposure to natural light to combat the effects of SAD.

Enjoy good-mood food

Eat a good breakfast – to prevent swings in blood sugar which can cause irritability and fatigue; include protein with every meal because it contains the essential amino acid tryptophan, which is converted into the brain chemical serotonin, which can be low in people with depression; and drink plenty of water.

Improve your sleep

If you are lying awake worrying about things then, two hours or more before bedtime, write down what's worrying you and what the next step is in resolving it. If it starts bothering you during the night, tell yourself it's in hand. Get up to do some light reading in another room if you've been unable to sleep for more than 15 minutes.

Support others

Giving something for nothing makes you feel good, and it can give you a boost to know that through your efforts someone, somewhere, is getting the benefits of it. If you know someone who is trying to boost their mental or physical health talk to them about how you can help.

For more ways to boost your mental health why not try a free online resources such as www.livinglifetotheull.com (a CBT-based life skills course) and www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk (a range of online self-help resources).

MIND FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.mindfreedom.org> Mind Freedom International is an international coalition of over one hundred grassroots groups and thousands of individual members from fourteen nations. Its stated mission is to protect the rights of people who have been labelled with psychiatric disorders. A majority of MindFreedom members identify themselves as survivors of human rights violations in the mental health system; membership, however, is open to anyone who supports human rights, including mental health professionals, advocates, activists and family members. Mind Freedom has been recognized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a human rights NGO with Consultative Roster Status.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium is an independent charity established to drive and promote recovery for individuals, family members and communities affected by drugs across Scotland.

To help us raise awareness of recovery messages within the Scottish media, we are looking for people who are in recovery from drug use and are willing to speak out about their personal journey of recovery.

We'd like to hear from you if you have experienced drug problems and addiction and have a positive story to tell which shows that recovery is a reality.

You will receive training to prepare you for being interviewed by the media, as well as ongoing support before, during and after all media work.

For an informal chat about whether this opportunity may be right for you, please contact Rebecca Charles, Katrina Muir or Lorraine Alonzi on 0131 561 0435 or email mediavolunteer@smarts.co.uk

AT THE END OF THE DAY

The Pipe

The curly pipe hangs from his mouth
His hands are free to tend the sails
They are small and dextrous
The bowl of the pipe is smooth and warm
Cherry tobacco sweet in the air
Squinting into the sun
Wind in his face
Over the days a sandy beard develops
When tending the foredeck
The pipe goes in the sailing smock pocket
Water rushes by
Slapping noises on the hull
The old gaff yawl heels over in the brisk breeze
His body is braced in the cockpit
Sails strain in the wind
Wooden mast creaks
Seagulls swoop
The curly pipe hangs from his mouth.

Submitted by a contributor to the creative writing group held during the PLUS Christmas Activity Initiative.

Rainbow Day

We start off in darkness
And then on to blue
To purple and orange
And a yellowy hue
Through turquoise and green
And red colour too
As night time approaches
'til day starts anew.

F.O.C.