

**SURG**

# **Newsletter**

**For All Mental Health Service Users/Avoiders/Survivors**

**Winter 2007/2008**

Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the SURG (Service Users Reference Group) Newsletter.

We have decided to have a go at producing a newsletter to:

- Enable mental health service user and groups to express their thoughts and ideas about their difficulties/treatment, etc.
- Pass information around the mental health service user community in the old Avon area; Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES), Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

The newsletter will be produced quarterly and we welcome contributions from individuals and groups (please see below for ideas/details).

If contributions are sent in by the deadline at the end of the newsletter the editorial group will then be able to prepare for the next issue. Contributions can be anonymous in the newsletter (if you wish) but please can you add some contact details for us in case of any problems, e.g items may need to be edited due to lack of space. Thanks.

The editorial group welcomes any suggestions you might have for developing the newsletter.

## **About SURG**

SURG is The Service User Reference Group. It is made up of representatives of service user/survivor groups from Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES). The aims of SURG are to

- Promote meaningful user empowerment and involvement.
- Provide quality information on national and local mental health issues and services.
- Raise shared issues with mental health service managers and staff.
- Share ideas with each other about what helps.
- Provide mutual support and encouragement to those who seek to improve the services offered to people who experience mental distress.

***Are you a service user and would you like to have a poem, picture, letter, book/play review etc published in future editions of this newsletter?***

***Do you run or attend a service user/survivor group and would like to add diary dates, contribute an article etc to this newsletter?***

***If you would like to contribute then please send articles to:***

***Postal address:***

***SURG Newsletter, c/o Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ***

***Email: [surgadmin@bristolmind.org.uk](mailto:surgadmin@bristolmind.org.uk)***

***Telephone enquiries can be made to the SURG number which is:***

***0776 530 7134***

***(Weekdays 11am-1pm, answerphone at other times)***

***Contributions for the next issue to be received by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008***

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007 was World Mental Health Day and many events were held over this period by organisations/service user groups etc. One event was the Recovery Conference on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at Redwood Lodge which was supported by Second Step, SUN, SURG and Bristol PCT. Here is a personal review of that day.**

### **Recovery Conference October 10<sup>th</sup> 2007 at Redwood Lodge**

Recovery is not necessarily people completely overcoming their difficulties; it is more about individuals finding a quality of life that is meaningful and acceptable to them.

These were the views of Shery Mead, a trainer and speaker from the US, together with Glenn Roberts from Devon was a main speaker at this event. As a service user herself Shery firmly believes in peer support, relationships with others for support that are equal and share expertise, respect etc.

To back up such recovery concepts, the day continued with a series of workshops on areas such as WRAP, peer support, supported employment, reclaiming life stories, solution focussed communication, direct payments and stigma and discrimination.

The day ended with a panel of Bristol Managers and commissioners responding to questions mainly about how things can be changed in practice as a result of days like this.

I left the day greatly inspired and with hope but also with nagging questions about services in the Bristol area.

Do services respond to wellness (helping us to move forward) or do they respond to illness (maintaining where we are at)?

Do we and the services look at our futures and have plans for where we might like to be e.g. in one years time?

Are resources put in to help us move forward or are resources mostly crisis management?

Does support move away because we are happy in the place we are at and don't need them any more or are they removed because there are not enough resources to be shared around?

Lots of food for thought.

Iola Davies, October 2007.

**What do you think? Let us know and we will include your opinions in the next Newsletter.  
(You can remain anonymous if you wish)**

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### **Stepping Out**

New production from Stepping Out Theatre 10 years old this year, Bristol's award-winning mental health theatre company goes from strength to strength. It is now far and away the most successful and productive mental health theatre company in the country with over twenty successful productions involving hundreds of local service users.

They have two productions coming up soon. Firstly 'The Demon Box' a play about the painter Richard Dadd who spent most of his life in asylums. This will be running for two weeks at the Alma Tavern Theatre in Bristol 13 – 24<sup>th</sup> November. Performances are at 8.30pm and tickets are free to people using and in mental health, drug and alcohol services. Just contact

the company on numbers below. Next year sees a revival of one of their most popular productions 'Seven Go Mad in Thebes!'

The play will be performed for two weeks in April in Bristol and Cardiff. And we want you on stage!

We are particularly interested in having people who may not have performed with us before.

If you are interested in getting involved in this or any other Stepping Out activity – including our regular play trips and social evenings, then contact the Development Worker, Steve Hennessy on 0117 983 2790 or 0779 098 0688 or you can email: [\*\*steve.hy@blueyonder.co.uk\*\*](mailto:steve.hy@blueyonder.co.uk).

## Calendar of Weekly Service User/Survivor Group Meetings

### Monday:

**Changes Mutual Support Group** – Changes is a user led mutual support group for anybody suffering from mental distress living in and around Bristol. They meet at Bristol Mind, 6.45pm-9pm.

Call 0798 958 4524 Leave your name and number and someone will call you back for further info.

### Tuesday:

**Bristol Mind Advocacy Drop In** – At Bristol Mind between 11am-2pm.

Call 0117 980 0376 for further info.

**Bristol Hearing Voices Group** – Hearing Voices groups are typically, a number of people who share the experience of hearing voices, coming together to help and support each other. They meet at Bristol Mind, 3pm-4.30pm.

Call 0789 423 0207 (answer phone) Tim/Glenn @ Grove Rd: 0117 973 5142 for further info.

**SISH (Self Injury Self Help)** – Group for Women who self-injure. They meet at Bristol Mind, 7pm-9pm. Call 07788 142 999 for details.

### Wednesday:

**Battle Against Tranquillisers (BAT)** – The group offers mutual support to help anyone who wishes to consider the level of benzodiazepines etc. they take or to come off these tranquillisers. There is no pressure as we encourage clients to be in charge of their own withdrawal. We also welcome family, friends and carers who might like more information. They meet at Bristol Mind, 6.30pm-8pm.

Call 0117 966 3629 or 0117 965 3463 9am-8pm for further info.

**The Hartcliffe and Withywood Support Groups** – Self help user support group run by volunteers for people who suffer from mental illness in any form. They meet at Amelia Nutt Clinic, Withywood, Bristol, 1.30pm-3.30pm.

Call 0117 902 3790 for further info.

### Friday:

**The Hartcliffe and Withywood Support Groups** – Self help user support group run by volunteers for people who suffer from mental illness in any form. They meet at Amelia Nutt Clinic, Withywood, Bristol, 10am-12 noon.

Call 0117 902 3790 for further info.

**Changes Mutual Support Group** - Meet Windmill Hill Community Centre, Vivian Street, Windmill Hill, BS3 4LW. 11am to 1pm - Please turn up by about 10.50 for a prompt start.

**Self Harm Anonymous** – Meet at the BRI, 7.30pm-8.30pm. Contact Details: Give us a call if you'd like any more information, so we can answer any questions, give directions if needed and know to expect you! Gen: 0771 433 7258, Natalie: 0770 443 3949, Kali: 0786 505 807.

### Saturday:

**User Drop In** – For service users. Meets at Windmill Hill City Farm, Bedminster, 11am-2pm.

Call 0788 791 3129 for further info.

**If you attend a group that you think service users/survivors will be interested in, please contact the SURG administrator (details on the front of this Newsletter)**

## Dates for your Diaries

### **SISH Workshops:**

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007 Emotional Freedom      Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2008, Anxiety Management  
Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 Play Therapy              Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2008 Finding Your Inner Voice  
£4 (waged)    £2 (unwaged) All workshops are held at Bristol Mind, between 10.30am and 1pm (women and men welcome). Contact SISH on: 0778 814 2999 or email: [sishbristol@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sishbristol@yahoo.co.uk) for further info.

**Kaleidoscope:** A mental health service user group which also welcomes carers, this is a progressive self help, lobbying and consultation group. Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2.30pm – 4.30pm at Nailsea Youth House, also Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Dec at Clevedon Town Council Office (AWP – Play Your Part Consultation and Christmas buffet). Contact: 01275 853 960 or email [mentalhealth.kal@btinternet.com](mailto:mentalhealth.kal@btinternet.com) for further info.

**SUN (Southmead and North Bristol User Network):** This is a campaign and support group. Members need not have attended Southmead Hospital or be located in the Southmead Ward.

Tues 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 1pm – 3pm and Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> Dec (Christmas get together) 12pm – 4pm at Bristol Mind  
Contact SUN: 0776 530 7134 or email: [sun@bristolmind.org.uk](mailto:sun@bristolmind.org.uk) for further information.

**BSN (Bristol Survivors Network):** An information and campaigning network run by users and ex-users of Mental Health services. Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 6.30pm – 8.30 at Bristol Mind. Socials held once a month. Contact: 0117 924 8124 or 0117 923 1796 (daytime only).

**Patients Council:** Open to all survivors/service users whether they have been to hospital or not. Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November at Susan Britton Wills Centre, General Hospital, Bristol. Contact: 0117 919 5619 (answerphone message checked weekly).

### **And finally.....**

In July 2007 Bristol Mind moved offices from Cheltenham Road to Old Market but unfortunately they were unable to keep their telephone numbers. Below are Bristol Mind's new address and telephone numbers.

**Bristol Mind**  
**35 Old Market Street**  
**Old Market**  
**Bristol**  
**BS2 0EZ**

#### **Admin**

Admin Office: 0117 980 0370, Fax: 0117 929 7644,  
Director: 0117 980 0373

#### **Mindline**

Mindline: 0117 980 0381 (admin only),  
Mindline Helpline: Wed-Sun 0808 808 0330 (Wed-Sun 8pm-Midnight)

#### **Advocacy**

Outreach Advocacy: (Tuesday Drop In) 0117 980 0376  
Inpatient Advocacy: 0117 980 0375  
Prison and Secure Unit Advocacy: 0117 980 0386 (also welfare/housing advocacy)  
BME Advocacy: 0117 980 0389  
IMCA: 0117 980 0371

#### **Research**

Assertive Outreach: 0117 980 0380  
UFM: 0117 980 0388

## **Disclaimer**

**The views in this mailing are not necessarily the views of SURG**

**Please remember to send in anything that we can use in future Newsletters to the SURG Administrator, the details are at the front of this Newsletter**