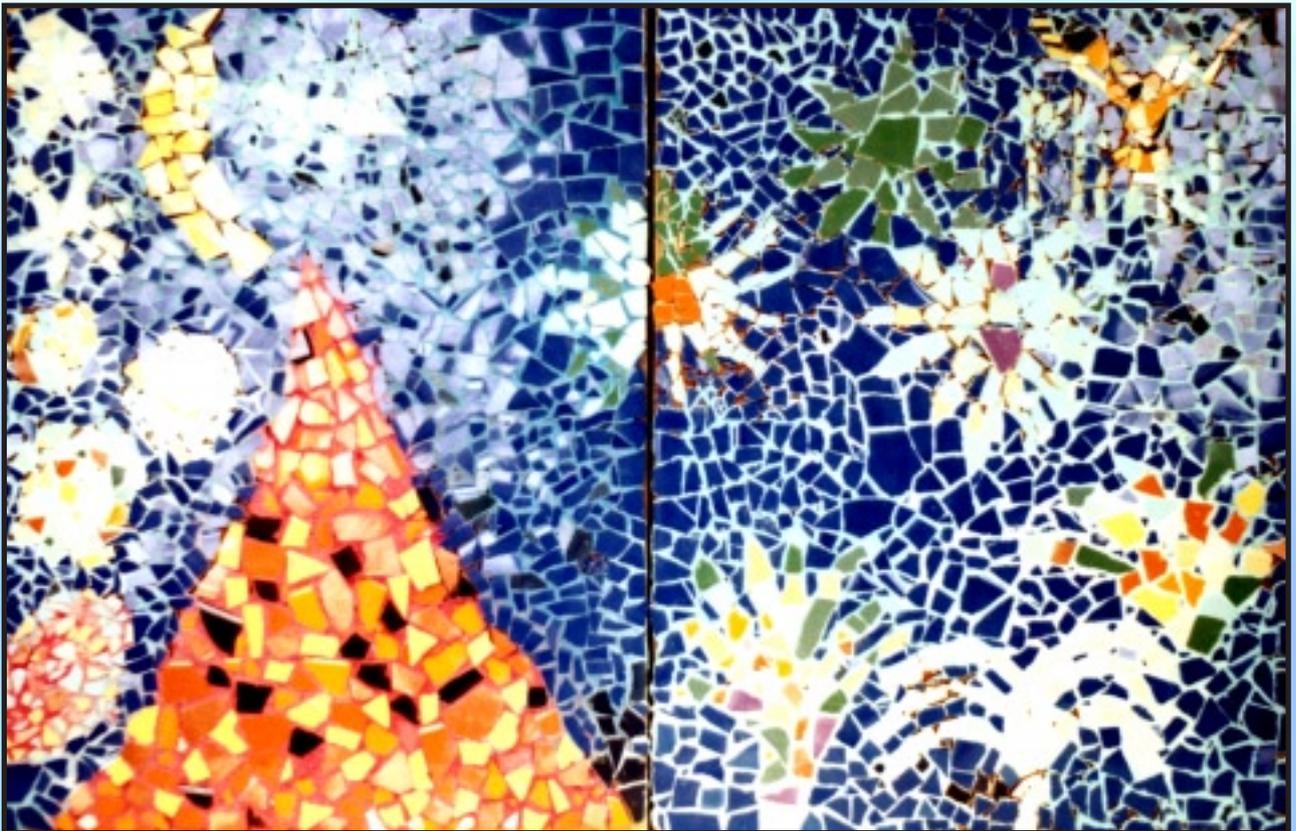



Mind
in Manchester

Mind To Mind Project Report



Mosaic produced by members of
The Mind To Mind Project

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Mosaic produced by members of

The Mind To Mind Project

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The National Lottery Charities Board



NATIONAL
LOTTERY
CHARITIES
BOARD

Introduction

Mind in Manchester aims to “promote the preservation of mental health and to relieve or assist in the relief of people with mental health problems.” Mind in Manchester is a user led membership organisation, with decisions on policy and strategy made by an Executive Committee elected from the membership.

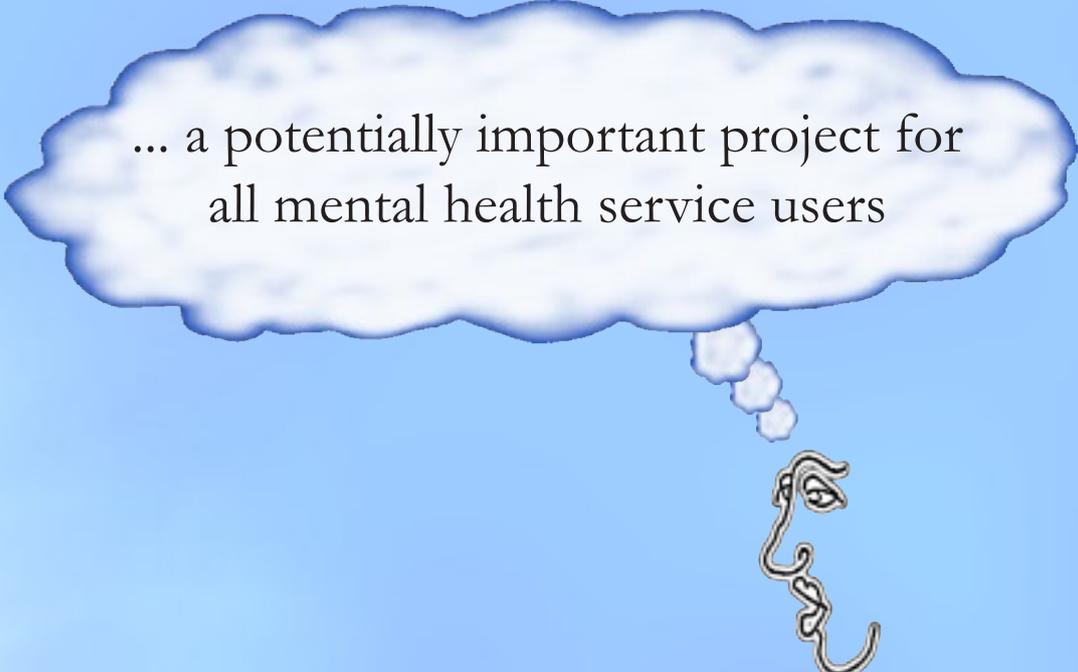
Promoting volunteering to improve mental health and helping in the return to paid employment has been central to the work of Mind in Manchester. Mind in Manchester identified that people with mental health problems are often discriminated against when volunteering and that voluntary organisations cannot provide the level of support and training needed. The Mind To Mind Project was a pilot project that was set up to help those people with more severe and enduring mental health difficulties.

The aims of the project were used as a starting point. There was a continually evolving process as the human resources of the paid workers and Executive Committee members changed, having a consequent effect on the project.

The project went through three distinct phases:-

- (1) The first year of the project involved a larger number of participants volunteering for existing Mind services.
- (2) The second year of the project emphasised a group aspect with the Mind To Mind space being a venue where people on the project met and got involved in a variety of activities. Also people were linked to provide mutual support, or were supported directly by the Project Development Worker.
- (3) The third year was a period where resources were focused on individuals. There was no group element to the project and all support for individuals came from the Project Development worker.

This report has been written without a conclusion. This is to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions.



... a potentially important project for
all mental health service users

Year One 1998

At the end of 1997 Mind in Manchester Ltd. secured a three year funding grant from the National Lottery Charities Board and the Mind To Mind Project began in January 1998. At that time Mind in Manchester offered a variety of services including a Helpline, an Information Service and a counselling service.

One of the aims of the project was to develop it as independent from Mind in Manchester, user led and managed by those people directly involved in the project.

The grant application described the project as; "A project about empowering people with mental health problems. The focus will be on people with severe mental health problems. Support would be provided to develop a new service that takes referrals from people who want to share their experiences of mental health problems with other people with similar experiences". People were supported to volunteer for existing Mind services including the Helpline, a pilot Advocacy Service and the Information Service.

The support took the form of individually tailored "on the job" training, internal training courses, external training courses and informal individual and group supervision.

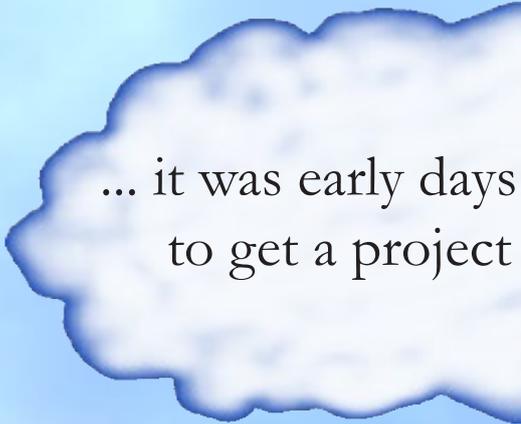
The project enabled Mind in Manchester to recruit almost forty volunteers and run two basic Mental Health Awareness courses. The emphasis of the project at this stage of its development was to have people who had experience of mental health difficulties working side by side with people who did not have this experience. This allowed both groups of people to learn from each other.



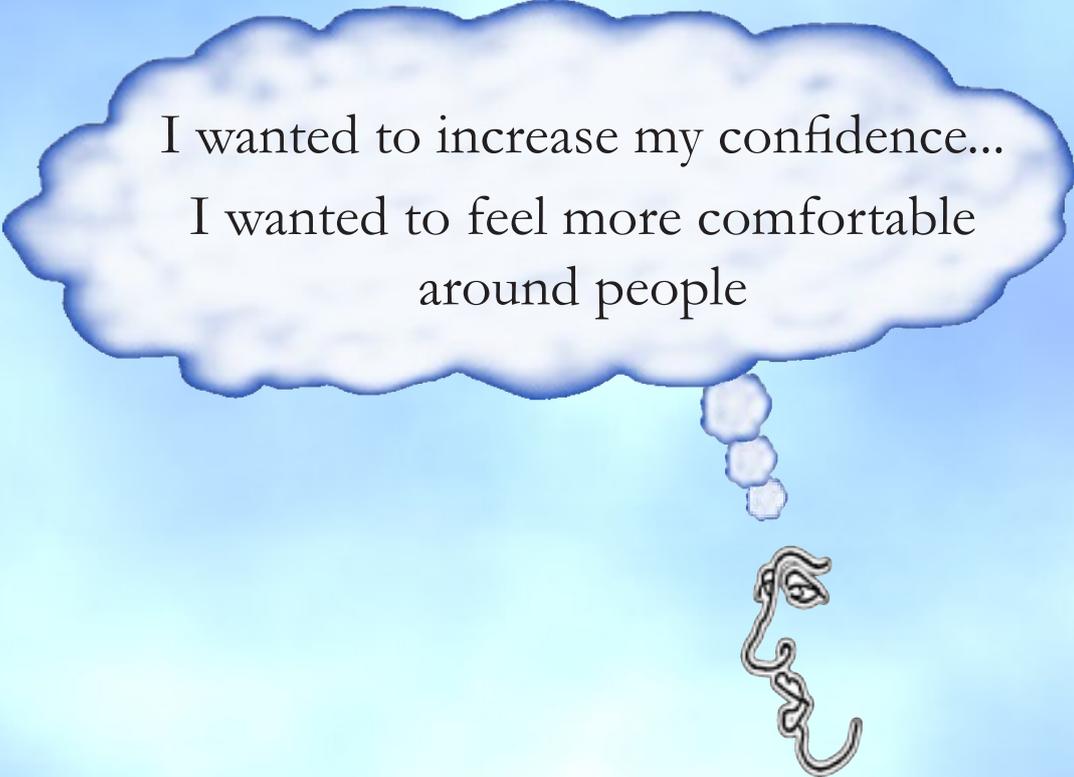
I've met some



The training was
useful



... it was early days
to get a project



I wanted to increase my confidence...
I wanted to feel more comfortable
around people



nice people



and it takes time
off the ground

This year was a year of great change for Mind in Manchester. The Mindline pilot scheme ran from August 1998 until March 1999. This project attempted to combine the Information Service and Helpline so as to provide information and emotional support five days a week. Mind also ran an Advocacy Development Project and a Mental Health IT Project which both finished early in 1999. The Mental Health IT Project was an innovative project that enabled mental health service users to develop IT skills in a safe supportive environment. Participants of the Mind To Mind Project were involved in all of the above projects.

A project advisory group was formed by the volunteers to advise on the development of the project. This was supported by the paid workers and feedback was passed on to the Executive Committee.

At the start of 1999 the Executive Committee made the decision to reduce the number of services that it was offering. The impact of this was that the number of volunteering opportunities for Mind To Mind participants was greatly reduced. Also at this time the decision was taken to change the emphasis of the Mind To Mind Project so as to allow the participants on the project more intensive one to one support.

A number of the project participants formed a support group that met externally from Mind in Manchester. This allowed them to support each other mutually through what was a difficult time for both Mind To Mind participants and Mind in Manchester.

Year Two 1999

The project was re-launched in June 1999 with eight participants, including previous Mind To Mind participants. There were two main themes, part of the project was the development of a regular group meeting called the Mind To Mind space. The Mind To Mind space was a venue where people on the project could meet and get involved in a variety of group activities of their choice.

The activities included drama work, creative drawing, making a mosaic and short walks around the Manchester area. The drama work enabled participants to develop enough self confidence to ask their psychiatrist to reduce the amount of medication that they were taking. All of the activities allowed people from the project to meet other people in a similar situation, share experiences and learn from each other. The Mind To Mind space was also used as a venue where the participants could get involved in the decisions that affected the project.

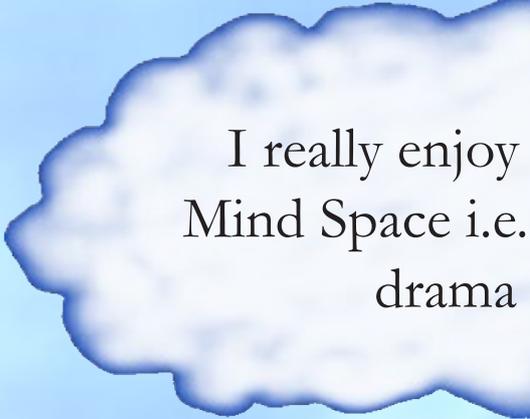
This replaced the Project Advisory Group and allowed all participants to have a say on how the project developed.

The other aspect of the project was to enable people with mental health difficulties to provide and receive support from each other. This was achieved by creating and maintaining a framework within which people could benefit from mutual support.

Four people on the project took part in intensive training which enabled them to feel confident enough to take the lead role in mutual support. Once the training was completed, people were linked to provide mutual support. One pair initially got involved in social activities, these included visiting the cinema, cafes and going for short walks. As the confidence of the person primarily receiving support grew he then felt able to go on a computer course.

Another person was supported to work on the Information service by answering telephone calls and responding to information requests either by letter, fax or telephone.

As all the participants of the project had in some way suffered from severe and enduring mental health difficulties there was a continual process of checking what sort of support they required from Mind in Manchester. It was decided that group supervision facilitated by an external supervisor for those participants taking a lead role in the mutual support would be beneficial. This was an opportunity for participants to offer each other support. In addition, all participants of the project would receive regular one to one support from the Project Development Worker.



I really enjoy
Mind Space i.e.
drama



The shutting
group meetings
blow

the Mind To
walking, art,
...

I improved my communication
skills and now feel much more
confident ...

down of
was a real

Recruitment on to the project was ongoing. This was helped by one of the participants designing a specific web page for the Mind To Mind Project.

Two participants who received the training to enable them to take the lead role in mutual support did not feel able to offer this support after the training had finished due to personal reasons. The project was later able to provide support to one of these people in the third year by offering assistance to go shopping.

A personal training allowance was made available to all participants of the project. The money was available for courses, classes, workshops etc. so as to allow people to develop personally on subjects of their choice. A small number of the participants made use of this allowance by going on various courses.

At the end of 1999 the Executive Committee decided to change the emphasis of the project so that it no longer had a group aspect to it. This allowed the resources to be focused completely on individual participants.

It became clear at this stage that those existing participants did not have the resources to develop the project independently from Mind in Manchester. This aim was dropped from the project and the decision was taken not to seek further funding for the project.

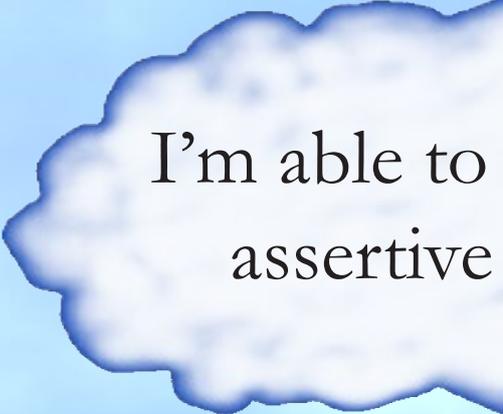
Year Three 2000

During the previous year the group meetings had been successful at establishing a safe space where people felt able to talk with each other and share their experiences. A number of the participants on the project felt that they wanted to continue meeting as a group. Mind in Manchester initially supported these meetings but gradually withdrew support. This allowed the participants to become completely autonomous from Mind in Manchester and they met regularly for a coffee or a drink in Manchester.

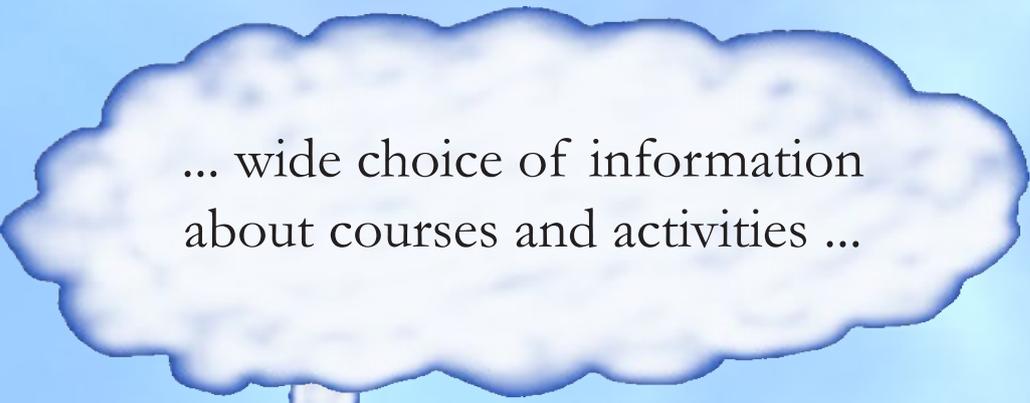
Those participants who had been linked to provide mutual support carried on providing support for each other to enable them to finish their activities. One such activity was a participant finishing a computer course he had started the previous year. Apart from these two participants all participants of the Mind To Mind Project received one to one support directly from the Project Development Worker.

The publicity for the project was changed, including the web site so that it was targeted at people who specifically wanted to get involved in some sort of activity but did not feel able to do this without support. The project tried to target people who had fallen through the net that other support services provided. This involved some outreach work by trying to make face to face contact with potential participants and referrers.

At first recruitment was slow, but as the year progressed and the project built up a good reputation with referrers, there was a steady stream of people joining the project.



I'm able to
assertive



... wide choice of information
about courses and activities ...



Group
and social
should be



be a bit more
at times

The resources of the project allowed support to be tailor made to the requirements of each participant, which allowed for a great diversity in what participants could do. This included attending computer courses, a stress management course, a drama course, a self-assertion course, a day work-shop on roles & responsibilities of Management Committees, and a day work-shop on Effective Presentations to Groups.

Participants were also helped to deal with particular issues in their life such as dealing with a solicitor or help with getting out of the house to do some shopping.

Within the Mind office participants were supported to learn various IT skills, to learn telephone skills, to develop research and administration skills, to publish their written work on the Mind in Manchester web site and in Survivors' United Network Newsletter. A high quality 3-fold publicity leaflet was produced for the Information Service.

Each participant was with the Mind To Mind Project for between six and eighteen months. After they left the project they moved on to other activities. These included joining a young men's group, becoming a member of Mind in Manchester's Executive Committee and returning to Mind in Manchester to work for therapeutic earnings. Two participants have applied for the Mind Millennium Awards. Many of the participants carried on to do further courses without support from Mind in Manchester, including a Diploma in Counselling.

As the project approached the end of the third year no new participants were recruited. Those existing participants were supported to move on when the project ended.

meetings
activities
reinstated



Postscript

As with all projects of this nature it can be seen how difficult it is to promote power sharing and user involvement.

Although participants were being supported in their activities, their help contributed in many ways to the running of Mind in Manchester. This project demonstrated that people with severe and enduring mental health issues can contribute in a positive way to the effective running of an organisation.

Mind's experience with the Mind To Mind Project shows that there is a need for services that enable mental health service users to gain confidence and skills through meaningful work and social activities.

In the course of the Mind To Mind Project, Mind in Manchester has learned about the process of supporting people with mental health problems to undertake training or voluntary work, particularly to help other people with similar problems. We have also learned the importance of supporting people to develop their social lives and find satisfying forms of recreation.

Mind in Manchester Ltd. propose to develop services that meet the needs identified above by:-

- Providing information and advice on mental health services to those who currently are unable to access our Information Service
- Developing opportunities for people with an interest in mental health issues, including mental health service users, to gain confidence and skills through voluntary work
- Developing access to social and leisure opportunities
- Making information on benefits more accessible to people suffering from mental distress.

Our Outreach Information Project, currently in development, is designed to meet these objectives.



I got a lot more out
of the project than I
originally expected

Statistics

Year One



As there was no distinction made between Mind To Mind participants and volunteers in the first year it is difficult to show statistical information for year one of the project. During year one there were approximately forty volunteers involved with Mind in Manchester. Between a half and one third were or had been users of mental health services.

Year Two



- Received training to offer support
- Offered support to learn telephone skills
- Took part in several external courses
- Continued into year three
- Became a member of Mind's Executive Committee



- Received training to offer support
- Offered support for social activities and computer courses
- Designed high quality leaflet for Mind
- Continued into year three
- Went on to work for therapeutic earnings



- Received training to offer support
- Received support with social activities
- Continued into year three



- Left the project after the first two months



- Received support for social activities and computer courses
- Continued into year three



- Received training to develop telephone skills



- Received training to offer support
- Went on to do a Diploma in Counselling



- Left the project after the first two months
- Received support to learn computer skills

Year Three



- Received support to learn telephone skills
- Took part in several external courses



- Received support to write articles for publication on the Mind website and mental health publications



- Received support to learn word processing skills
- Took part in several external courses



- Received support to learn administration skills
- Took part in several external courses



- Received support to take part in a computer course and change their name
- Went on to join a young men's group



- Received support to learn IT skills and set up a User Self Help Group



The Mind To Mind Project was funded by the National Lotteries Charities Board from 1998 to 2001 to empower mental health service users to participate in volunteering, social and other activities. This report documents the progress of the project as a learning experience for both participants and Mind in Manchester. It is presented in the participants own words wherever possible, with the reader being invited to draw their own conclusions.