

**SURG**

# Newsletter

Spring  
2008

*For All Service Users/Avoiders/Survivors*

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the SURG (Service Users Reference Group) Newsletter. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the feedback from our 1<sup>st</sup> edition of our newsletter, and we hope all subsequent Newsletters continue to be as informative as possible in the following ways:

- 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 continue to be produced quarterly and we welcome contributions from individuals and groups (please see below for ideas/details).

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If contributions are sent in by the deadline of 16 May 2008 the editorial group will then be able to prepare for the summer 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.

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Sadly, Bristol Mind will be losing Jeff Walker, Director, at the end of March. Due to the funding for Jeff's post coming to an end, he unfortunately is having to be made redundant.

Jeff has been with Bristol Mind for several years in various roles, having started as a volunteer and progressing to director. He has made a huge contribution to many service user groups across Bristol and the surrounding area either by having an active role in helping them with evolving or supporting them from behind the scenes and we hope he will continue with all the good work that he has contributed to. We wish Jeff our sincere best wishes in whatever his future brings.

***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 contribute an article 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 inquiries can be made to the SURG no which is:***

***07765 307 134***

***(Weekdays, 11am – 1pm)***

***Contributions for the next issue to be received by 30<sup>th</sup> May 2008***

### **Mental Health Advocacy in South Gloucestershire**

Advocacy Services at The Care Forum provides free advocacy support for people who use mental health services in South Gloucestershire (age 18 – 65). We work with fully trained advocates who listen to you, help clarify your issues and discuss with you how you would like to see your situation resolved. Advocates can help you with letters, attend ICPA meetings, ward rounds and mental health tribunals. Issues an advocate may be able to help you with include: medication, sectioning, staff, community services, complaints, benefits, housing and employment. In situations when an advocate is not able to help, we try everything to provide our clients with relevant information and/or signpost them on to other services.

Advocacy clients have commented that they found it helpful to have someone on their side, someone who is independent of the hospital and Social Services.

How to refer: you can refer yourself or be referred by someone else.

If you would like to know more about the service, receive some brochures or make a referral, please contact:

**Tatjana Lisson**

**Mental Health Advocate**

**Advocacy Services at The Care Forum**

**The Vassall Centre**

**Gill Avenue**

**Fishponds**

**Bristol**

**BS16 2QQ,**

**Telephone: 0117 958 9331**

**Email: [tatjanalisson@thecareforum.org.uk](mailto:tatjanalisson@thecareforum.org.uk)**

### **Parkway Breathing Place**

#### **Make space for nature – Improve the environment for wildlife and people**

Parkway Breathing Place is a project that is being developed around Brookland Hall Inner City Mental Health Team base.

They have done some flower planting on the car park triangle, but will not be putting in a pond due to health and safety considerations. Bluetits and other birds visit, and the Parkway Breathing Place project have put up nest boxes and feeders. A semicircular bench is being installed around the copper beech tree.

If you would like to help, please contact:

**Pauline Markovits**

**Telephone: 0117 924 8124**

**Email: [pauline.markovits@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pauline.markovits@blueyonder.co.uk)**

### **MDF The Bipolar Organisation: Bristol Self-Help Group**

The purpose of this friendly group is to support people diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression) and those affected by the illness, ie Carers/Supporters, to meet and share information. We have a library at each meeting, publish a Newsletter three times a year for our members, organise speakers, have regular social events, trips and workshops.

The group meets at Trinity Church, Hotwells every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the Month (except on Bank holidays – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday). We begin at 7.30pm and finish by 10pm.

If you would like more information, please contact:

**Erica on 07934 403 901**

**Or**

**The National MDF office on 0845 434 9776**

### **SISH Workshops**

The SISH workshops started in response to people attending the Self-Injury support group wanting a space to talk about issues, but also wanting to try out more creative ideas of looking after themselves. It all seemed a bit much to try and do both things within the confines of a 2 hour support group, so the idea of having separate 'activity' sessions came about. This developed into the Good Mental Health Workshops, both for people whom self-injury is an issue, but also for people supporting them and others interested in the subject.

Since 2006 when the workshops started, the numbers attending has increased at a steady rate. We now have on average about 15 people at each workshop.

The Workshops are held on the first Saturday of each month at Bristol Mind offices. Workshops can be booked in advance, or people can turn up on the day. Both men and women, people who self-injure and their friends, carers or supporters are welcome to attend. Each Workshop is led by a specialist practitioner in the field and provides information and a 'taster' of a creative way of promoting good mental health, especially in relation to people who have personal experience of self-injury, or provide support to someone who self-injures. In addition to the specialist workshop leader, a SISH group facilitator attends each workshop on a rota basis, in order to ensure the emotional safety of the group.

A small charge (£2 unwaged / £4 waged) is payable towards the cost of the workshop.

Details of the forthcoming Spring/Summer 2008 workshops can be found on the next page of this newsletter.

**Good Mental Health Workshops  
Spring/Summer 2008**

<b>Saturday 5 April</b>	<b>Food and good mental health Helen Wilmot</b>	<p>Explore the important links between the food we eat and how we feel.</p> 
<b>Saturday 10 May</b>	<b>Emotional Well-Being with Homeopathy Nicky Gibney</b>	<p>Learn how homeopathy can help re-balance your mind and emotions to help prevent mental and physical ill health.</p>
<b>Saturday 7 June</b>	<b>Anxiety Management Jill Langford <a href="http://www.jilllangford.co.uk">www.jilllangford.co.uk</a></b>	<p>Learn simple techniques to use in your daily life</p> 
<b>Saturday 5 July</b>	<b>Bring your creativity and a pen! Dawn McHale</b>	<p>Come and explore personal issues and aspects of your unique personality through simple but meaningful writing exercises.</p>
<b>Saturday 2 August</b>	<b>Mindfulness Martin Wells</b>	<p>Mindfulness and grounding meditation to still the mind</p> 
<b>Saturday 6 September</b>	<b>Breathing and Creative Visualisation Janie Mathieson &amp; Fran Digby</b>	<p>Body-mind approach to combating the negative symptoms of stress.</p> 

All workshops held at:  
Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street  
10.30am – 1pm      £4 (waged) £2 (unwaged)

Organised by: SISH (Self Help for Self Injury)  
We welcome ANY ONE at the workshops, women and men,  
self-injury does not have to be a personal issue

For further info contact SISH: 07788 142 999 or email: [sishbristol@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sishbristol@yahoo.co.uk)

# Self-Help Hearing Voices Group

Understanding voice-hearing and intrusive thoughts  
through sharing experiences

Build  
Self-Confidence

Feel Balanced

Overcome  
Confusion



Share Coping  
Strategies

Find  
Companionship

Think  
Positively

Are you challenged with voice hearing and/or intrusive thoughts?  
Come to our weekly group and meet people with similar experiences  
in a friendly and social atmosphere.

Tuesdays 3pm – 4.30pm

***Bristol Mind*, 35 Old Market Street (next door to Martial Arts shop)**

**Mobile: 07912 624 296, or call Tim/Glenn on 0117 973 5142**

Just turn up—no referral necessary  
Feel free to remain quiet or speak to all

## Calendar of Weekly Service User/Survivor Group Meetings

### Monday:

**Bristol & District Tranquilliser Project** – Self help group for anyone having problems with prescribed benzodiazepines, non-benzodiazepine sleeping pills or antidepressants. Run by people with personal experience of taking, and withdrawing from this type of medication. No referral necessary. Group meets at 88 Henleaze Road, Henleaze, Bristol, BS9 4JY, 2pm - 3.30pm. Call **0117 962 8874** for further information.

**Changes Depression 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, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ 6.45pm - 9pm. Call **07989 584 524** Leave your name and number and someone will call you back for further info.

### Tuesday:

**Bristol Mind Advocacy Drop In** – At Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ between 11am - 2pm. Call **0117 980 0376** for further info.

**Bristol & District Tranquilliser Project** – (See Monday). Self help support group meets at Knowle NHS Walk-In Centre, 1.15pm – 2.45pm. Call **0117 962 8874** for further information.

**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 exchange information and learn from each other, They share the same problems and may have similar life situations. They meet at Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ, 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, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ, 7pm -9pm. Call **07788 142 999** for details.

### Wednesday:

**Battle Against Tranquilliser (BAT)** – The groups offer 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, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ, 6.30pm - 8pm. Call **0117 966 3629** or **0117 965 3463** 9am-8pm for further info.

### Thursday:

**Bristol & District Tranquilliser Project** – (See Monday). Self help support group meets at New Brunswick United Reform Church, by medical centre in Southmead, 11.30am – 1pm. Call **0117 62 8874** for further information.

**The West of England Social Anxiety Group (SA West)** – Primary aim is to provide people with social anxiety in the environment, support, social opportunities and information they need to open up about their social anxiety and build their confidence. They meet at Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, 7pm – 9pm. Call Nick Hanlon on **07908 070 036** for further info.

### Friday:

**SENSATION (Two Way Street) Drop In** – Two Way Street (Black & Afro Caribbean Group) run a drop in for Black & Afro Caribbean service users/survivors at Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, Bristol, BS2 0EZ, 3pm – 5pm. Call Rachel on **07853 598 174** or Tim on **07780 720 952**

**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: **07714 337 258**, Natalie: **07704 433 949**, Kali: **0786 505 807**.

### Saturday:

**REMIND (User Drop In)** – For service users. Meet at Windmill Hill City Farm, Bedminster, 11am - 2pm. Call Roy on **07887 913 129** for further info.

## Calendar of Monthly Service User/Survivor Group Meetings

**Kaleidoscope:** A mental health service user group which also welcomes carers, this is a progressive self help, lobbying and consultation group. They engage in consultation with statutory and voluntary sectors to help share services we use. Monthly meetings, guest speakers and a chance to access wider mental health arena e.g. training, conferences and an opportunity to engage in lifelong learning, build confidence, overcome social isolation and become empowered in a friendly, supportive environment. Meets 3rd Wednesday of the month in Clevedon or Nailsea.

Call **01275 853 960** or email: [mentalhealth.kal@btinternet.com](mailto:mentalhealth.kal@btinternet.com) for further information.

**BSN (Bristol Survivors Network):** An information network run by users and ex-users of Mental Health services. Meets monthly at Bristol Mind.

Call **Pauline on 0117 924 8124** (daytime only) or **Susan on 0117 923 1796** (daytime only)

**Patients Council:** Open to service users/survivors whether they have been in hospital or not.

Meets last Friday of the month at SBW, Bristol General Hospital, Guinea Street, Bristol.

Call **0117 919 5617** for further information.

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

Meets on a monthly basis on Tuesdays 1pm – 3pm and at Bristol Mind

Call **07765 307 134** or email: [sun@bristolmind.org.uk](mailto:sun@bristolmind.org.uk) for further information.

**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)**

## Useful Websites

[www.bristolmind.org.uk](http://www.bristolmind.org.uk) - Website for Bristol Mind projects and service user/survivor information.

[www.mentalhealthforum.net](http://www.mentalhealthforum.net) - Whether you are experiencing psychological distress, are a friend, partner or relative of someone who is experiencing mental health issues, or if you work in the mental health field - you are most welcome!

The **Mental Health Forum** has grown out of the 1 in 4 Forum, which was started by the Mental Health Foundation in the UK in April 2003 and is now run by Radish Online Limited, a non-profit social enterprise. The 1 in 4 Forum earned a reputation of being a high-quality forum where members could get mutual support while also considering mental health policy and service development issues. It is a tradition that continues with the Mental Health Forum.

The **Mental Health Forum** has started to develop a network of local online mental health forums, started by people in their locality, which will enable members to have the opportunity to make contact with other local people. These local forums will bring together local people involved with mental health issues whether one experiences or has experienced mental health issues, is a friend, relative, parent or carer of someone who has, or is a worker in the mental health field (from support worker to service manager and from nurses to psychologists and psychiatrists) as well as anyone else who has an interest in mental health issues.

[www.comingoff.com](http://www.comingoff.com) - A psychologist once diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia has helped launch a website advising people how to withdraw from psychiatric drugs.



Poems Contributed by Service Users/Avoiders/Survivors

*No one knows how I feel,  
I'm really sick of being ill!  
Feeling sad all the time,  
Many think its such a crime!  
Many nights I lie awake,  
Wishing god to give me a break!  
Waking up to the day ahead,  
I don't even want to get out of bed!  
Going downstairs and seeing everyone fresh and ready for their day,  
I'm lost for words what do I say!  
I know it makes them unhappy to see their loved one so sad,  
But what can I do, I'm feeling so bad!  
I am trying so hard to work through my issues,  
Doctors, counsellors and a box of tissues!  
Many people feel this way,  
So pluck up the courage and have something to say!!!!*

*Contributed by Amy Walker*

*Sitting by my window,  
Rain pouring down outside.  
The loneliness of depression,  
Sometimes I wish that I could hide.*

*The disappointment of life,  
When I am feeling low.  
The tears run down my face,  
The cracks begin to show.*

*The sun begins to shine,  
A rainbow in the sky.  
With your help and support,  
I'm sure that I'll get by!!*

*Contributed by Rachel Greensides*

**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**