

**Independent Collective
Advocacy
Mental Health News
June 2014**



EAST LOTHIAN

**A Sense of Belonging
Taking Stock Event**

What Happened?

A troupe of CAPS staff and a group of people we work with went to the 'Taking Stock' event about the Lothian Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy called 'A Sense of Belonging' on the 15th of May 2014.

It was great to see so many people who know what it's like to use mental health services speak at the event. This made it more real, more interesting and more powerful.

Lauren, Caroline, Kenny and Lin presented what was said at the 'People's Conference'. They did a brilliant job and it was well received. To find out some of the things that were said see page 2.

We also screened the film 'Seen but not Heard', made by people with lived experience of eating disorders. Niamh and Maeve presented the film and informed people about what they think needs done.

There are now many more people who want to set up screenings to see this film.

We heard from Dianna and Eric from Community Voices who talked about 'self carers' and what it is like for people who don't have any-one in their lives and are living in a society where it is assumed that you do.

CAPS also contributed to an independent advocacy workshop with AdvoCard at the event. People who are involved in the Voices of Advocacy Project spoke at this workshop.

Another workshop that CAPS did was about the course being held at Queen Margaret University called Mad People's History and Identity. Elspeth and Clare spoke about their experience teaching the course. See page 6 for an update on this project.

We would like to say a big thank-you to everyone who gave up their time, braved the stage and contributed to the event. It set a tone and made a big difference to the atmosphere and made it interesting and relevant. Well done everyone!

The People's Conference

On the 25th of April 2014 CAPS held The People's Conference at Queen Margaret University for people to look at the Lothian Mental Health Strategy. 22 people from across Lothian came. The following groups gave talks about their projects:

1. Haddington Community Hub
2. Pink Ladies First
3. LGBT Health and Wellbeing Demonstration Project
4. UNITed Eating Disorder Peer Support Group
5. Community Voices, Self Carers

Veronica from Haddington Community Hub gave a powerful talk about how people who still meet at Tyne Park get no support from the Council or NHS. The group that meet there are in danger of having no where else to go once the building is sold. Veronica highlighted the importance of drop-ins and asked why it is considered a good thing in some parts of Lothian and not others.

After the talks there were four activities based on the four areas of the mental health strategy which are:

1. Embedding Recovery
2. Building Social Capital and Wellbeing
3. Tackling Inequalities
4. Improving Services

This is a very brief description of some of the things that were said.

Embedding Recovery

We asked people how they felt about recovery, this is some of the things that were said:

- There is too much blame and pressure on the individual. There is an assumption that there is something wrong with you.
- The word recovery has various definitions and it is becoming meaningless. It's individual but recovery is often limited and generalised. Some people feel misunderstood and frustrated
- Advocacy and Peer support is important in recovery. Some people feel supported and grateful.

Building Social Capital and Wellbeing

These are some of the things people said were needed to feel confident, involved and connected to the community:

- Funding and support to set up peer support groups for specific issues eg self-care, borderline personality disorder, people who identify as LGBT, eating disorders, bullying prevention etc.
- Funding for drop-in centres, recovery hubs and crisis centres throughout the Lothians.
- Groups for different faiths and secular groups.
- Political campaigning on Welfare Reform.
- More opportunities to volunteer without being penalised by the DWP and Job Centre Plus who assume

that being able to volunteer one day a week with a huge amount of support equals "fit for work".

- More help and support to volunteer in general.
- Training for people with mental health issues.
- Support to help keep us in employment and more understanding employers.
- The ability to return to work on a trial basis so you're not penalised financially.

Tackling Inequalities

These are the things that people said made them feel unequal in life.

- Having mental health and physical health problems.
- Being over 60.
- Missing appointments and not being able to access services because you don't meet the criteria.
- Having an eating disorder especially if you are a man.
- Identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.



Improving Services

This is what was said around the topic of improving services:

- More safe places to go, drop-ins, peer support groups and specific peer support groups.

- Psychiatrists need to listen and stop over medicating people.
- Hospital is harder to get into. There needs to be out of hours, outreach, crisis and prevention services based on people's needs not professionals hours.
- Wards are not good at picking up on physical health issues.
- There needs to be better links and more co-ordination with community and hospital services. Everyone should have a proper care package.
- There is support out there but you have to know about it.
- There needs to be more support for part time working or self employment. More flexibility needs to be built into the benefits system
- Funding cuts have reduced the quality of services. Services seem in competition. There needs to be long term funding for security and continuity of care.
- More training courses about mental illnesses run by people with lived experience.
- We need a more holistic approach.

There is a lot more work to be done. This is just a snap shot of what was said and there will be a report out soon.

If you would like a copy of the report, are interested in becoming involved or just want to keep updated on what's happening contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 273 5116 or email donna@capsadvocacy.org.



People have often told CAPS that they want people with lived experience to train and educate people on mental health. Read on and find out about LEARN a new project that will do just that.

What is the Lothian Education and Recovery Network (LEARN)?

LEARN is a new partnership between the Lothian Recovery Network (LRN), CAPS and NHS Lothian. LEARN will deliver free, recovery focussed, experience led mental health and wellbeing training and workshops across Lothian.

What is LEARN about?

LEARN is committed to the values of recovery and to our training programme being delivered by people with lived experience of mental health issues working together with people who use and work in mental health services.

What are LEARN Values?

Initially LEARN will deliver three recovery and experience led courses including 'Realising Recovery', 'Wellness Recovery Action Plan' (WRAP) and 'Much More than a Label'. LEARN will look at opportunities to build on these courses and develop new training.

A Senior Educator, Jane Rubens, will oversee the training programme. Part Time Educators will be employed to deliver the programme alongside NHS educators. All Educators will be employed on fixed hour contracts so that they will have a regular, predictable income. There will also be opportunities for volunteers to be involved in lots of ways in the delivery of the programme.

LEARN's values fit with "A Sense of Belonging" - Lothian's Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2011 – 2016. It sets out a clear vision, principles and approach for how the public, people with lived and living experience of mental health issues, people who use services, carers, the 3rd sector, the four local authorities and NHS Lothian, will work together across Lothian to improve mental health and wellbeing for people of all ages and ensure that the services delivered in Lothian have an ethos of recovery embedded within them.

A strong recovery focussed, experience led training programme is essential to making sure that recovery is central to the services councils, NHS Lothian and the 3rd sector provide. LEARN will draw on rich life experience, recovery values and working in partnership to deliver mental health and well being training that can make a real difference.

For more information, contact Jane Rubens at CAPS on 0131 273 5116 or email Janer@capsadvocacy.org.

Mad People's History and Identity course

CAPS Oor Mad History project has just finished working with Queen Margaret University to deliver the very first "Mad People's History and Identity" course. This is the first of its kind in Europe, so a real moment in history! 15 students were registered on the course, which was 6 weeks long. Topics covered included "What is Madness?", history of treatments and confinement, mental health and activism and also identity, gender, sexuality and madness.

There was lots of discussion during the weeks of the course, each topic could be a course in itself! What a great group of students! We will be learning from the feedback given to us from these first students, to help shape and develop the course in the future. Here are some things that people said about the course -

"I didn't think university was for people like me"

"I'm passionate and want to learn more about mad people's history and mad studies"

"It's increased my confidence"

"So proud of being able to do this"

"I had nowhere to go before, apart from the day hospital. It's so good this is here"

To find out more contact Kirsten at CAPS

Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival

Members of the dynamic group at CAPS planning events for the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival have been finalising their programme.

There's lots going on this year. We are part of a big collaborative exhibition which will be in lots of different venues, including Summerhall and Ocean Terminal shopping centre. We are pleased to announce that this year the ceilidh will be in partnership with the Ceilidh Club at Summerhall and will be on Tuesday 7 October, so get your dancing shoes ready for that.

Ralph is organising another Open Mic Night with performances from singers, songwriters, poets and comics. This year, it'll be held at Contact Point, so we're all looking forward to a great night

Jo MacFarlane and Allan Beveridge are putting on another event and Jo is also launching her new book "Skydiving for Beginners" on Saturday 11 October in the Café at Summerhall.

There's a workshop called "Is this Love" about the nature of the therapeutic relationship, a letter writing workshop. There are also plans afoot to hold a pop up film night as well. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Kirsten at CAPS on 0131 273 5116 or email kirsten@capsadvocacy.org

See Me Advisory Group

Volunteer Members

'see me' is Scotland's national programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination. They are looking for 6 volunteer members for the programme's new Advisory Group.

See me is specifically looking for people with lived experience of mental health issues or experience of caring for someone with mental health issues.

Group members will contribute their expertise to the overall direction of the programme as well as providing links to key audiences.

They will play the role of a 'critical friend', and provide feedback to the programme lead partners, management and funders on the direction and performance of the programme.

The Advisory Group will meet a minimum of four times yearly and will include the Programme Management team (The Programme Director and senior representatives from the delivery partners MHF and SAMH).

To find out more about the role visit www.seemescotland.org or contact Lydia at see me by emailing Lydia.morrow@seemescotland.org or you can phone her on 0141 530 1111.

See Me Now Conference



'On the 3rd April Donna, Niamh, Mark and I headed to the Dunblane Hydro for See Me's "Where do we go now?" conference. The venue was stunning, the

swimming pool was inviting and the food was delicious. The conference itself was pretty good too.

There were many speakers from various walks of life, people with lived experience, an MSP, someone from the Scottish Human Rights Commission and people from various mental health charities. There were many activities and discussions involving a tool called Ketso. It was useful for recording what we wanted to say but I felt it, along with lack of time, stifled discussion. In the evening there was a Forum Theatre event but many people found it to be too much and very triggering especially at the end of a long day.

The second day consisted mostly of workshops on the themes of change and direction and how we feel about various movements such as Recovery. See Me looks to be moving away from its fluffy anti-stigma line to a more focused human rights stance. They wish to make it clear that discrimination on the basis of mental health or lack of is illegal under UK law. I think this is an interesting direction to take'.

Lauren.

What's the East Lothian Mental Health Planning Group doing?

This group is now meeting every 2 months and is working on actions in the East Lothian Implementation Plan. This was informed by comments and thoughts from a survey a year or so ago.

People said then that there was a real need for a place to go when experiencing a crisis or a high level of distress. I'm pleased to tell you that there is now action happening on this need and a working group is gathering evidence and looking at possibilities. In time a report will be produced and submitted to the new Health and Social Care Board.

If there are any issues you think the East Lothian Joint Mental Health Planning Group should be hearing about and taking some action on, then please get in touch with CAPS. We are always pushing for what people have to say to be properly considered.

Donna Strachan is currently the member of staff who meets with groups in Midlothian and now she will be the person to contact in CAPS about issues in East Lothian too. Please contact Donna if you have anything you want to say about Mental Health Services in East Lothian,- positive, negative, all comments welcome!!

donna@capsadvocacy.org

Before it's a crisis

Here is a short list of phone numbers you can contact for support when most services are closed.

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (6pm-2am)

Samaritans

0845 7 90 90 90

NHS 24

08454 24 24 24

Emergency Social Work Service

0800 731 6969 (out of hours only)

LGBT Helpline

0300 123 2523

Tues & Wed, 12pm—9pm

Independent Advocacy

You can contact **CAPS Individual Advocacy Service** on **0131 273 5118**.
(**Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm**).

CAPS provides one to one (individual) advocacy for East Lothian people in the community and in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

If you get support at home, you may have an "on-call" number to contact staff. If you have contact with the Community Mental Health Team, they may also have given you a number to

CAPS Independent Collective Advocacy in East Lothian

CAPS is an independent advocacy organisation and supports people in East Lothian who use, or have used, mental health services. Collective advocacy is about groups of individuals with a common cause coming together to raise awareness, campaign and influence service planning and provision.

CAPS supports groups in East Lothian to talk about mental health services and other issues. If you or your group would like to meet with CAPS then please call Donna on 0131 273 5116 to arrange a meeting.

For more details about our meetings or to join our mailing list contact CAPS on **(0131) 273 5116** or email donna@capsadvocacy.org

CAPS
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advocacy
The Consultation & Advocacy
Promotion Service

Contact us - Collective Advocacy

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We offer individual advocacy support on a one to one basis to help safeguard your rights, support you to prepare for meetings and to challenge decisions you don't agree with.