

YOUR VOICE

In Sheffield Mental Health

A magazine for users, carers and professionals

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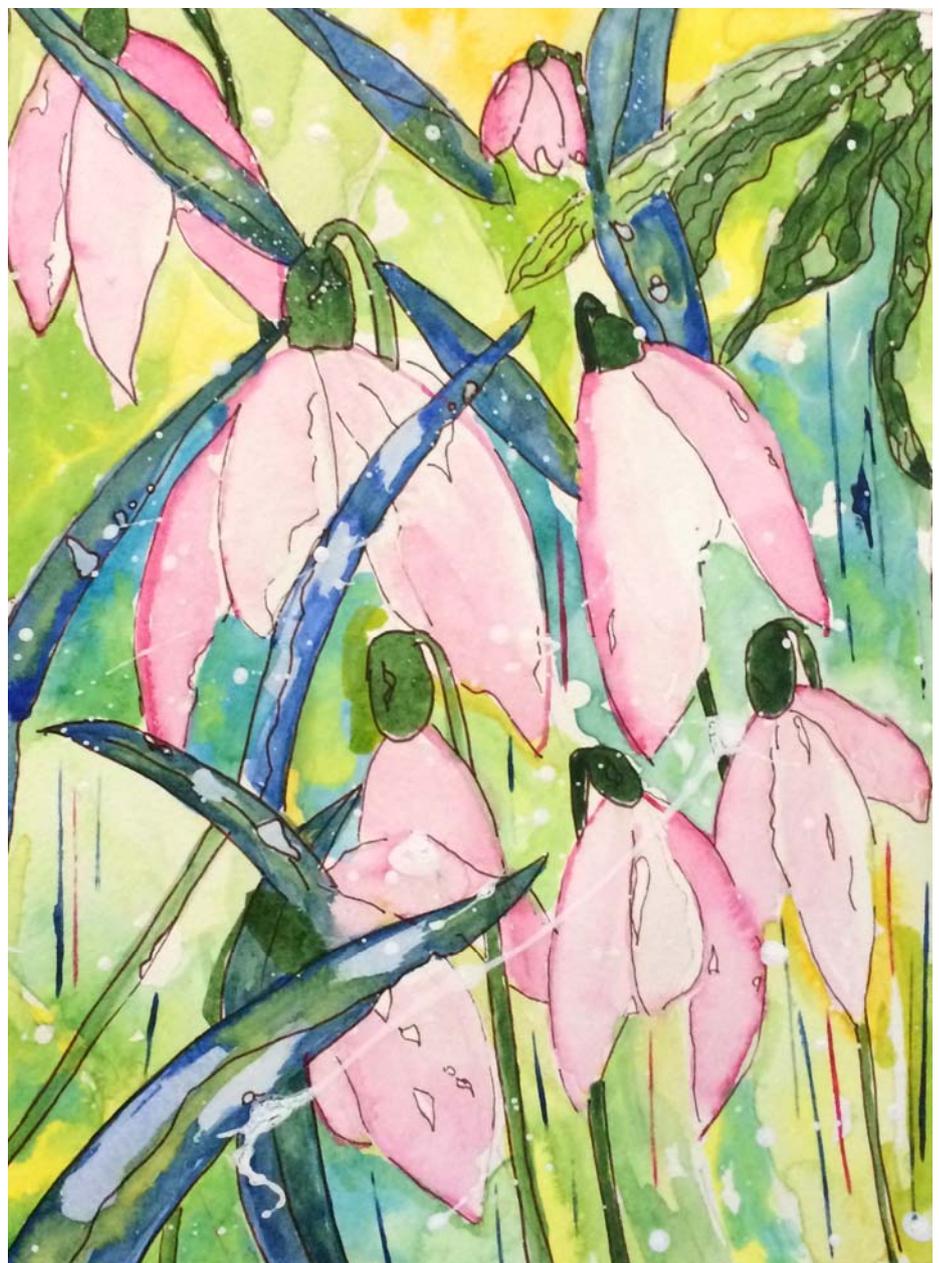
The therapeutic benefits of painting and drawing

By Joanna Shevlin

I started drawing two or three years ago when I was unwell. I find painting and drawing can be really distracting from illness. It takes your mind off things that might be troubling you and it's very relaxing. When I'm focusing on a picture, it just seems to flow and I find myself drifting off into it. One night when I couldn't sleep I even got up at 4 am to do some painting.

I attend one-to-one sessions at Bank Street Arts and about 6 weeks ago I started a local art class. It was nerve-racking at first because of meeting new people but once you get into it you learn from each other and comment on each other's work. Painting in class motivates me to carry on with it at home. It also keeps me busy and helps to break up the day.

I really enjoy drawing. It gives me a sense of achievement and confidence. I'm proud of how far I've come and I'm learning all the time. This painting is one of the first watercolour paintings I've ever done. I began with pencil drawings of animals and now I'm learning different techniques and skills. Next I'm going to try a still life of fruit in oils. I'm looking forward to seeing how I get on. To anyone who's thinking about doing art to improve their wellbeing, I'd definitely recommend giving it a go.



A watercolour painting of snowdrops by Joanna Shevlin

Editorial

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This edition features news of the new Mental Health Taskforce put together to develop a five year strategy for mental health in England. The taskforce seems keen to involve people who are passionate about improving mental health services and would welcome the contributions of service users, carers and professionals.

We highlight a number of other opportunities for people who want to use their experience of mental health issues to help others. There are details of a world-wide video campaign that challenges the silence that can exist around mental health by asking people to share messages of reassurance with others that it can and does get better; the opportunity to write a Recovery Letter about your own experience of depression to show others that they are not alone; and an invitation from Self Injury Support to people with a mobile phone and experience of having used self-harm to get involved in developing an app for people who self-harm.

We include details of the new NHS Mental Health Apps Library which has been developed to make it easier for people to find safe and trusted apps to help manage their health. If you have used a mental health app, why not write and tell us what it was like and how it did - or didn't - help.

Our regular profile item features Caroline Elwood-Stokes, founder of Football's Awareness of Depression Football Community (FAD FC), who talks about recovery after a long-term period of depression triggered by the loss of her football career.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition. If you are interested in sharing your experience of mental health and recovery with **Your Voice** readers, we'd really like to hear from you.

Justine Morrison

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Acknowledgements: We would like to acknowledge the input that the Sheffield mental health community makes to the ongoing success of **Your Voice**. Sheffield City Council provides our core funding. Our greatest debt of gratitude is reserved for all of our contributors and readers – we wouldn't exist without you.

New opportunities to make a difference in Sheffield mental health

Do you want to help shape services and be part of the Service Users Engagement Group?

The Service Users Engagement Group (SUSEG) is a new group being set up to help Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust (SHSC) to:

- Help improve the quality of service user experience and improve ways we ask people about the services they use;
- Help improve the quality of all services SHSC offer;
- Help staff and service users work together; and
- Make sure that service users are involved in designing services that meet their needs, by collaborating with staff at all levels including the Board of Directors to develop new ways of working

We are looking for service users or carers to work with staff in one of the four project areas listed below:

- Making sure that all service user and carer voices and experiences are heard;

- Looking at better ways of staff, service users and carers working together;
- Developing peer support across the organisation; and
- Changing the way we work so that service users and carers are involved in all aspects of their care (this is known as the 'Recovery' principle).

There would be a minimum time commitment of two hours per month required to attend a meeting and a little bit of time for reading meeting papers beforehand or telling us what you think by telephone, email or in writing. Whichever is best for you!

If you are interested in being part of SUSEG, contact Tania Taylor at:

Tel: 0114 0114 271 8905
Email: tania.taylor@shsc.nhs.uk
SHSC NHS Foundation Trust
FAO SUEMU
Old Fulwood House
S10 3TG

Do you have experience within a secure mental health setting?

I am a student at Sheffield Hallam University studying for my Masters in Occupational Therapy. I am currently recruiting participants to take part in my research which is looking into the experiences of individuals who have had previous experience within a secure mental health setting. The focus of the research will be to explore which occupations were meaningful to you during this time and also if these activities have supported you since discharge.

As a participant you will need to take part in a one-to-one interview, which is expected to last around 45 minutes. The researcher will reimburse your travel expenses and provide you with a free drink for your time. If you would like to take part or require more information, please contact me at:

Email: rebeccasresearch@outlook.com

Young carers entitlement to an assessment

On 1st April, the Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015 came into force, giving all young carers under the age of 18 the right to an assessment. Anyone working with young people, or their parents, who identifies a child taking on a caring role should now offer an assessment.

A group of young carers working with Sheffield City Council have developed a form for workers to use with young carers to assess their needs.

Any agencies that come into contact with young people who may have caring responsibilities can download the assessment form and complete it. To find out more or download an assessment form, please visit.

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/carers/youngcarers.html>

How to promote youth-friendly mental health and wellbeing services

This 'How to' guide is one of a series designed to bring together learning from the five year Right Here programme initiated by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Mental Health Foundation to support the mental wellbeing of young people aged 16 - 25.

This particular guide is aimed at those delivering mental health and wellbeing services for young people aged 16 - 25. It has been written to help services address the specific needs of this age group and tackle some of the barriers which prevent them from accessing traditional mental health services. To download the guide, please visit:

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/right-here-how-to-guide-four/>

New Mental Health Taskforce launched

The Mental Health Taskforce, launched in March, brings together health and care leaders and experts in the field, including people using services, to lead a programme of work to develop a new five year national strategy for mental health, for people of all ages across England.

To develop the strategy, the taskforce will explore the variation in access to and quality of mental health services across England; look at outcomes for people who are and aren't able to access services and also consider ways to tackle the prevention of mental health problems. The views of people with mental health problems and their families and carers will be vital to this, as are the views of staff. The taskforce will ensure that people with personal experiences of mental ill health are engaged consistently in the delivery, monitoring and governance of the plan alongside other stakeholders with specific knowledge and interest.

To inform decisions about priorities for the new strategy, the taskforce will seek the views and expertise of people with personal experience of mental health problems and professionals alongside reviewing clinical and economic evidence. People who are passionate about improving mental health services will be able to give their views on what works well, what doesn't and how we can tackle some of the challenges – including the stigma that too frequently prevents people accessing the help they need.

Full details of how people will be able to give their views will be published shortly. In the meantime, any initial thoughts or suggestions can be emailed to:

Email: england.mhtaskforce@nhs.net

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/mh-taskforce/>

NSUN launch Members' Manifesto

The National Survivor User Network (NSUN) is an independent service user/survivor led and controlled charity that connects people with lived experience of mental distress to give us a stronger voice in shaping policy and services. With the general election approaching on the 7th May, NSUN has produced a Members' Manifesto based on what our members have told us.

Our manifesto calls on the next government to:

- Make the principle of 'nothing about us without us' a reality through effective and meaningful involvement in all aspects of our lives.
- Reform the Mental Health Act 2007 to make it fully compliant with human rights legislation and ensure that people with lived experience of mental distress are not harmed or abused by restrictive practice.
- Provide alternatives to medication, and reflect the social model of disability, in better person-centred support.
- Ensure access to timely and appropriate resources and support.
- Meet the needs of people with lived experience of mental distress from marginalised communities.
- Address the injustice and harm that have been caused by cuts to public funding and changes to the benefits system.
- Recognise and invest in research and training initiatives that are service user-controlled/ user-led.

To read the full Manifesto visit:
<http://www.nsun.org.uk/>

Do you own a mobile phone? Have you used self-harm?

Self Injury Support and Cardiff University would like to invite you to work with them on the development of a phone and web app for people who use self-harm. We believe that the best people to design and develop this app are the people who have experience of self-harm.

We want to gather as many ideas in as many ways as possible. This will include having workshops and an online forum. You don't need to know about technology – just bring your ideas and opinions.

We can cover reasonable travel expenses and want to get the views and ideas of a range of people with experience of self-harm from all ages, genders and backgrounds!

For more information, please contact Naomi at:

Tel: 0117 927 9600

Email:

naomisalisbury@selfinjurysupport.org.uk

NHS Mental Health Apps Library

NHS England has launched a ground breaking initiative to help treat depression and anxiety and improve access to psychological therapies by unveiling the first ever directory of NHS-endorsed digital mental health services. The Mental Health Apps Library features online tools, resources and apps that have a proven record of effectiveness in improving mental health outcomes.

www.england.nhs.uk/2015/03/24/mh-apps-library/

Supporting the Sheffield - Gulu Mental Health Partnership

Giselle Brook reports on last year's fundraising sports day and invites SHSC service users and staff to get involved



The winning rounders team representing the CERT Team

Last September we held a sports day that raised over £250 for the Sheffield - Gulu Partnership. Despite rain on the day the event went ahead in true Gulu style and kicked off with a warm-up by Virgin Active, which was more of a boot camp!

Five-a-side footie was clearly a favourite and was brought together beautifully by Clive Clarke and Dr Simon Mullins. Congratulations to 'Tony's Heroes', the winning football team. The rounders players showed true grit and took the match outside despite the weather.

Congratulations also to the newly established CERT Team (Community Enhancing Recovery Team) for winning 20:18 and commiserations to the runners up. Emma from Virgin Active delivered the Find your Fierce African tribal dance class, which was lively to say the least and enjoyed by all!

A heartfelt 'thank you' from our Gulu Partners and the Sheffield - Gulu Team for making this event a

success. Thank you also to Virgin Active for their collaboration and the many people across the Trust who offered support. We hope that this will become an annual event and hope to have a football tournament in early June. This will coincide with this year's Commonwealth Fellows being in Sheffield. We welcome anyone who is interested in taking part this year to make contact with either myself, Kim Parker or Greg Harrison.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities for staff and service users within the Sheffield - Gulu Partnership, ranging from supporting the Commonwealth Fellows when they are in Sheffield, marketing, administration, fundraising, event management and IT along with many more. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either:

Email: giselle.brook@shsc.nhs.uk

Email: greg.harrison@shsc.nhs.uk

Email: kim.parker@shsc.nhs.uk

Vacancies at No Panic Sheffield

No Panic Sheffield supports and helps people to overcome anxiety problems. Anxiety is something we all experience from time to time. Some people are overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and it prevents them from performing every day tasks and activities. This has a negative effect on their lives and on their happiness.

We are looking for volunteer group facilitators for our two established self-help groups which are held in the city centre fortnightly on Thursday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Group facilitators help members manage their feelings of anxiety and related behaviours using techniques based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Members are encouraged to develop positive ways of thinking and to find ways to manage their anxiety so that they can regain control of their lives.

We are looking for people with good interpersonal skills, and a good understanding of working in a mental health setting, or people who have suffered from and overcome anxiety problems. We provide full training and monthly supervision.

We also have a vacancy for a Fundraising and Training administrator, which is a paid 7 hours per week role. The closing date for applications for this post is the end of May. Recruitment for the volunteer vacancies is ongoing. If you are interested in either of these roles, please contact Anne Dargue at:

Email: nopanicssheffield@gmail.com

No Panic Sheffield AGM

Our AGM is at 6 pm on 20th May at the Quaker Meeting House, James Street. The meeting is open to all members and people interested in No Panic Sheffield.

Your Profiles

Caroline Elwood-Stokes talks about severe depression triggered by the loss of her football career, how counselling helped and why she founded Football's Awareness of Depression Football Community



What brought you into contact with mental health services?

I'd been into football from when I saw Gary Lineker playing when I was 9 years old. I said to my sister, wow, he's good! I want to be like him. I walked down to the Sheffield Wednesday ground, which was 10 minutes from my house, and asked them about playing football. They said, it's on a Wednesday at 6 o'clock and that were it; I started playing for Sheffield Wednesday girls' team. I played for them for a few seasons, then I went to Sheffield United. It sounds a bit big-headed but I was better than what they provided for so, at nearly 16, I went to Rotherham United and I played for them.

Just as I was about to play for England, about 19 years ago, I lost my football career. I spiralled into depression which was so severe that I was self-harming, drinking, burning myself, taking overdoses; everything you can think of I was doing. All that went on in total silence for about 16 years up until

about 3 years ago when I finally got help from my GP.

What was your experience of mental health services?

I actually wrote my GP a letter because by this point I'd cut myself off from society and I wouldn't go out of the house. I wrote this letter to my GP explaining everything that had happened, what I was doing, that I was drinking. He phoned me up and he said come into the surgery and we'll talk. I said, well, no, because I'm scared of going out of the house. I asked him to come to the house and he said, no I'm not doing that, come to the surgery. In hindsight, it's the best thing he could have done because it got me out of the house eventually. He was brilliant but he didn't understand why I was so depressed and why football had affected me so much so I had to explain over several hours of going to see him.

My GP was amazing. First he talked me through medications and then he suggested bereavement

counselling. I know that might sound daft but it was a loss – the loss of my career. So I went through counselling which I was a bit sceptical about. In fact, I only went to one or two sessions and I thought this is not for me. I felt daft talking about everything. So I didn't go after two sessions. But then, a few months later, I got some blood results back and they showed the early signs of liver damage. I thought I've got to stop, things have got to change. I told my GP about it. He referred me back to counselling and that time I took to it. It really helped, I changed a lot.

Counselling got me back into football. Just being able to talk about it really helped. Sixteen years is a long, long time to bottle things up. It helped being able to finally talk about it and the counsellor understood, or she came across that she understood, what I was going through. It was about being able to do that and face what I couldn't face all them years ago. I finally returned to football. I felt able to return back.

What projects, or work, are you involved in today?

In late 2012, after I'd had counselling, I decided I wanted to put something back into football by trying to support footballers who have gone through, or are going through, what I went through. I researched mental health and football and I was surprised at how many deaths and suicides there were amongst footballers. I decided to set up Football's Awareness of Depression Football Community (FAD FC) which provides support to footballers who are experiencing mental health issues, including referrals to counsellors if they need it, or a chaplain if that's a route they want to go down. Through FAD FC we also run football sessions for people who are experiencing mental health issues.

FAD FC is for all footballers, from professional football down to grassroots. I've supported footballers in all sorts of different situations, which has really opened my eyes. I had assumed that footballers loved what they did and that's why they became professional footballers so I was surprised when I find out this wasn't always the case. The mental health issues I've come across include depression and a big issue is alcohol. Pressures on footballers can be anything from stress about whether a contract's going to be renewed, worries that they're going to be dropped, to tensions at home, family issues, splitting with a partner – anything really.

FAD FC has got branches in England, Wales, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Mexico, Indonesia, and India. We've grown by talking to people and friends on Facebook, building up relationships, explaining to them what's going on with FAD FC, and why I set it up. The branches in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya are doing amazing. I think because of issues like poverty, they fully understood the mental health stuff and have really taken it on board and run with it.

I write books. In 2013, I launched 'A Guide to Positive Mental Health', which is about promoting positive mental health in sport, particularly in football. It includes stories about footballers who've had mental health issues and touches on the Hillsborough disaster. All the proceeds from the book are donated to FAD FC.

I'm an ambassador for Sheffield and Hallamshire County FA Inclusion Advisory Group, which

basically is about putting ideas forward on how they can include awareness of mental health issues within football. I sit on the board of the UK Minifootball Association (UKMA), which is the governing body of 5/6/7-a-side football in the UK. I've just become a motivational speaker.



What is your proudest achievement?

I run football sessions for mental health inpatients and I think working with them makes me most proud. We meet and play football for an hour every week. I run two football teams which are feeder teams for the NHS which means I encourage mental health inpatients to come along to football training on a Friday and then, to encourage them to remain in the community when they leave hospital, come and play matches on a Sunday.

Is there anyone in mental health you particularly admire?

In mental health, I can't think of anybody but outside of mental health there's Steve Judge, triathlete and two-time world champion paratriathlete. Steve had

a car crash in 2002 and doctors had to battle to save his life before they could save his legs. He was told he may never walk again but through sheer determination and commitment he learnt to walk and then to run and within a few years he was a world champion. Steve's just become a patron of FAD FC.

He approached us after a radio interview I did last December and we just took it from there. He came along to watch my team play and he really inspired them. Steve's somebody I definitely admire.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

I'd encourage anybody who is experiencing mental health issues to speak out. Today my motto is speak out, speak loud, don't suffer in silence. If just one person speaks out about their mental health or goes to their GP I'd be happy. Unfortunately, I didn't get help sooner because I felt as though people wouldn't understand why football affected a female so

much. I think, back then, 20 years ago, female football wasn't as established as it is now. I suppose I was proved right really when my doctor didn't understand at first. However, I think everything happens for a reason. Losing my career didn't ruin my life, it just changed the direction of my life. If it hadn't have happened I wouldn't have met all the inpatients or my players from my teams.

FAD DC is currently looking for people who are interested in taking part in walking football sessions. For more information, please contact Caroline at:

Email: chairperson@fadfc.org.uk
Website: <http://www.fadfc.org.uk/>

'A Guide to Positive Mental Health' is available from Amazon.

The Odyssey (or what I learned at school)

A mental health worker reflects that school days are not necessarily the happiest days of your life

Education is commonly presented as a route to self-improvement and a way of making sense of the world. It's rare to recognise the malign function of the education system, which is concerned with the creation and persecution of misfits who struggle to overcome the harm that has been done to them.

I was an extraordinarily intelligent child. I was renowned for mischief and inventive self-expression. I was loved by my fellow students and played an active part in the creation of a caring and nurturing school environment. I passed my eleven-plus at the age of 10 and doubtlessly enjoyed a long summer break solidifying fraternal bonds with my peers.

Problems began on my first day at grammar school. It was far away and difficult to get to and my journey hadn't been properly planned. Not only did I feel first day nerves, but I also worried if I would get there on time. And I'd obviously missed some kind of vital instruction before I arrived, which made it difficult to grasp the instructions that followed.

It soon became apparent that the majority of my classmates had gone to the same primary school. The few people who had arrived from elsewhere fitted in by virtue of their middle-class manners. I was the only one who did not conform to the template. And so I was hounded mercilessly by a hierarchical elite, degraded by its leaders and mocked by aspiring underlings seeking the favour of their overlords.

I was bullied physically and mentally on the grounds of my ugliness, dimness, working class background, the place I lived, what my parents did and my relative poverty. None of my teachers intervened and many of them were

happy to join in with the persecution.

I sought refuge in sport. I became a good cross country runner. I was in the school cricket team, but the elite hierarchy operated here as well, so I was reduced to making up the numbers. And these strategies were ineffective, so I took to riding on the underground all day.

Eventually, I was given a pass covering a journey of one stop on the Central Line. And I conceived of the idea of using my officially granted access to the underground to make epic journeys from West Ruislip to Epping and back to my home station, which I discovered took roughly the same time as a day at school.

Not surprisingly, my education suffered. I was absent from school for much of the time that should have been devoted to establishing foundation skills that would have enabled me to prosper in my later school career. It took a long time for the school authorities to respond to my truancy and their response was woefully inadequate.

I don't know how many times I made the journey from West Ruislip to Epping. Looking back, it feels like I made one single epic voyage. And what did I do as I travelled? What did I think of? How did I occupy my time?

I devoted myself to the lessons that authority is unreliable, that power is an avenue for cruelty, that the group is something to be avoided, and that the measures that one takes to avoid persecution do not bring happiness but rather constitute another form of pain, sadness and anxiety.

And it persuaded me that memory is a source of unhappiness to be countered by the attempt to forget.

The Recovery Letters

The Recovery Letters is a website which publishes letters from people recovering from depression, addressed to those currently going through the experience. The letters are intended to try and alleviate some of the pain of depression, to make the loneliness slightly more bearable and above all to give hope that people can recover.

To read the Recovery Letters, or to find out how to submit one of your own, please visit:

<http://therecoveryletters.com/>

It Gets Brighter video campaign

It Gets Brighter is a new international video campaign that collects and features short video messages of hope from people living with a mental health issue, and those who support them. The idea is to give people who are struggling with mental health issues the reassurance and hope that it can and will get brighter.

It Gets Brighter believes that expressing what's happening in our heads is better than suppressing it, and that mental health challenges do not define us. Everyone who has experienced a mental health challenge is invited to join them in ending the silence and empowering young people to seek out the help and support that can lead to recovery.

To watch the videos, or to find out how to create and share your own message of what helps make it brighter for you, visit the website at:

<http://www.itgetsbrighter.org/>

Beyond the Gloaming

Psychiatrist Brendan Murphy explores childhood trauma in the first instalment of a fantasy series set in Sheffield in 1973

I read incessantly as a child, and writing was a natural progression. I wrote regularly from nine, including a fledgling fantasy novel that came to nothing, bobbins the lot of it. After slaughtering poetry as a teenager, I buried myself in medicine and academic psychiatry for years before resurfacing in an artists' commune in Italy. Inspired by Ulysses, I tried my hand at stream of consciousness writing, but the results were utter drivel. I switched to autobiographical reflections, playing with form and consciousness in the context of trauma and early memories. Reflecting on this dredged up a lot of stuff for me, a lot of pain, a lot of guilt. As luck would have it, rather than thrusting me into

reading and I longed to recreate that rare and noble alchemy compressed between the covers of a children's book. I'd been dipping in and out of Celtic mythology for years, hoping to write a series of novels around it. The storylines came easily and I had plotted out all six books before starting on the first. I wanted to write rip-roaring adventures like the ones I'd loved as a child, but as a youth psychiatrist I also wished to portray a number of other things: the loneliness of childhood trauma, how children deal with grief, the forces acting on the moral and psychological landscape of a child turning teenager, and the soothing power of dissociation and dreams.



Brendan Murphy

woeful catharsis, it led me to writing a book on the history of football. I'd been pretty ordinary at it at school in Sheffield, the lack of this important cachet rendered even more crucial given that the city was the home of football, possessing the oldest club in the world, Sheffield FC. At the time, the Club's 150th anniversary was approaching, so to coincide I decided to write a book on the development of football in Victorian England, 'From Sheffield With Love'.

I then turned to the fantasy series I'd been flirting with. As a lonely child I'd found joy in the magical world of

The books not only pay homage to Celtic mythology, they are also an allegory of the Irish troubles, something I was painfully aware of growing up in an Irish family in Sheffield during the 60s and 70s. But there is far more besides; there are ghosts and gobbleratches, hunkypunks and barguest, mechanical fireworks and quizzing glasses, night rainbows, a whodunit. I sincerely hope the books are as corrosive to melancholia for the reader as they were for the writer.

'Beyond the Gloaming' is available as a paperback or ebook. For details visit: <http://www.hibernauts.com/shop/>

Schizophrenia diagnosis

Service user NVQ Trudge questions its legitimacy

'Mad' and 'schizophrenic' are terms adopted into common language. Used as adjectives or nouns, they invalidate whoever is their subject. Schizophrenia however is a set of diagnostic criteria employed by psychiatrists. The overarching effect of the diagnosis is to separate a troubled/troubling person from the 'normal' majority of the population. The stigma of being labelled 'schizophrenic' arguably makes it one of the most damaging things that can happen to a person.

Introducing their Campaign for the Abolition of the Schizophrenia Label in 2007, Paul Hammersley and Terence McLaughlin wrote: "The idea that schizophrenia can be viewed as a specific, genetically determined, biologically driven, brain disease has been based on bad science and social control since its inception".

Questioning the diagnosis' reliability Hammersley and McLaughlin wrote: "Test-retest analysis is as low as 37%; and in 1970 when 194 British and 134 American psychiatrists were asked to provide a diagnosis on the basis of a case description, 69% of the Americans diagnosed schizophrenia whilst only 2% of the British did so."

In 2002, to remove the stigma associated with the term, the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology renamed the condition Integration Disorder. It is defined not as a specific illness but as a syndrome based on a stress vulnerability model, with many different causes, symptoms and outcomes.

My question to mental health professionals and others is what do you think? Please send your comments to [Your Voice](#).

The author would like to thank Asylum magazine as a source for this article: www.asylumonline.net

Your Reviews

Service user Steve on 'Tales from the Madhouse: An Insider Critique of Psychiatric Services' by Gary Sidley
(PCCS Books ISBN 978-1-906254-75-9)

'Tales from the Madhouse' is written by Gary Sidley, a man who worked in statutory mental health services in both clinical and management guises for over 30 years. To those familiar with the output of PCCS books it will come as no surprise that this addition to their range is highly critical of what the author perceives as the dominant biomedical model, which he believes militates against more holistic understanding and amelioration of human distress.

Sidley employs a simple but effective technique whereby each chapter comprises two distinct parts. The first provides an overview of the topic in hand; the second is biographical/case study whereby Sidley draws from his own work experience examples that relate to that topic. For example, in the opening chapter he gives a brief account of how the medical profession achieved pre-eminence in the sphere of mental health, and then provides an account of his nurse training in an old style asylum, and how the largely biomedical approach informed work practice.

Sidley targets for criticism a host of perceived weaknesses in the current mental health system. One chapter is devoted to debunking the

idea that mental illness is an illness like any other. He goes over the evidence for and against whether mental illness is caused by abnormal brain chemistry, or the result of psychological traumas experienced in life. Ultimately he believes far too much emphasis goes on the former which tends to justify the use of medications with heavy side effects.

Supporters of the biomedical approach have argued that if mental illness was understood through the prism of faulty brain chemistry then stigma toward service users would rapidly diminish. However, many have disputed this and Sidley adds to the critique. He suggests it can lead to passivity and dull acceptance of their condition in service users, and negativity with regard to any potential recovery.

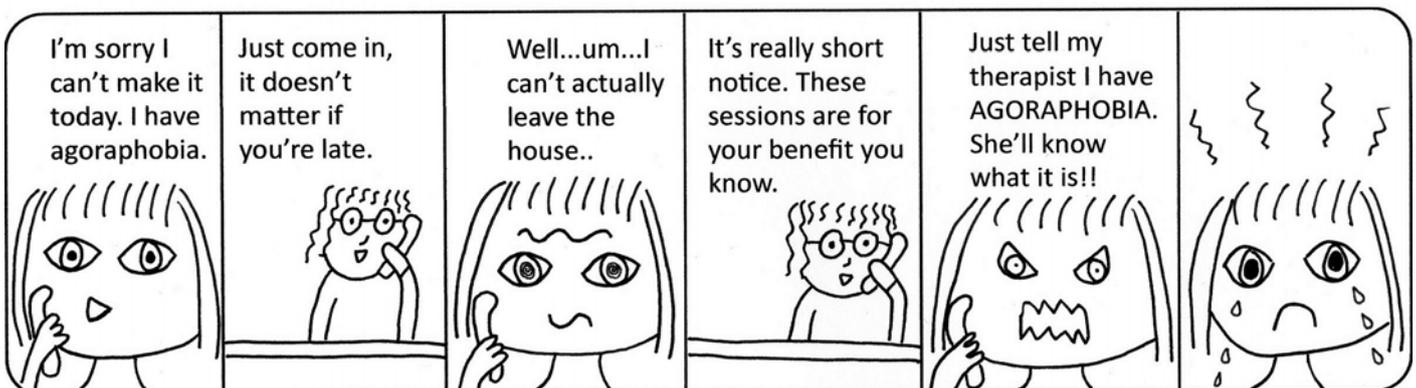
Risk aversion is another area where Sidley expresses frustration with the current system. He provides a very moving case example whereby a service user with a conviction decades ago gets caught up in a Kafkaesque nightmare of bureaucracy and having spent many months trying to get consent to do some voluntary work in a Trust, finally gives up on the idea, and has the negative loop of passivity reinforced.

Sidley believes the attempt to move toward recovery orientated practice is likely to be stymied by the dominant biomedical approach, pointing out how progressive approaches in the past, such as Zubin and Spring's stress vulnerability model, have been 'colonised' by bio-psychiatry at the expense of the social and psychological. Sidley worries that the strength of bio-psychiatry, and the corrosive influence of the pharmaceutical companies, will make progressive change hard to achieve.

Sidley outlines a number of ways mental health services may become more humanistic in approach. He advocates a more nuanced view of how medications work, influenced by Joanna Moncrieff, whereby medications are not dismissed, or seen to be silver bullets to a diseased brain, but agents that replace one abnormal state with another. Other suggestions include greater use of peer workers, and more enlightened legislation.

Overall I found this book interesting and a worthy addition to the field. It provides an insider account and critique that seems congruent and nuanced. On the debit side it attempts to cover large areas of debate at a rapid pace, and there were times I would have preferred a less 'scatter-gun' approach. However, with the references provided it allows the reader to seek out more detailed works if they so wish.

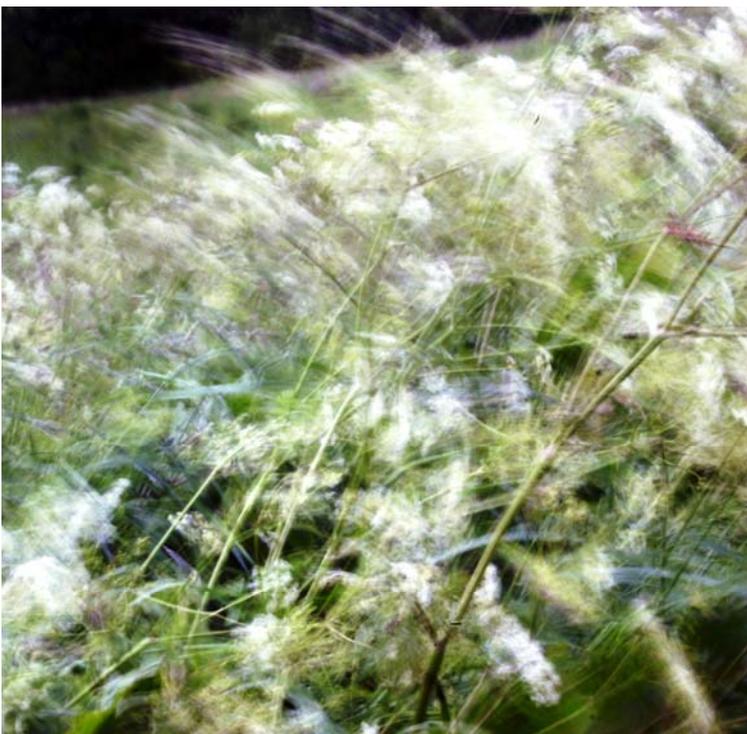
adventures in counselling : ringing the receptionist by it snipped my heart



Your Artwork



'Remembering Sailor (Looking out to sea)' by Rose Murphy



'Cow Parsley' by Helgi P

Your Verse

An Admission

I was aerated, out of order,
 over the top, highly pressurised,
 and I swore like a man.
 It hurts to admit as much, I feel shame,
 remembering most of it clearly but not all
 but reluctantly, dragged back to the drama -
 the drama of being suddenly shunned.
 And then the kind police and ambulance crew
 And then the unkind police and unkind staff.
 I was aerated, out of order
 protesting vigorously at my treatment
 and dragged down the corridor like an
 unwelcome animal
 and into the dreaded slammer.
 This time admitted to a worse place
 where forms of torture were routine,
 having to politely beg the loo, a spoon
 and witness cruelty to the helpless
 aggressive hounding cross the corridor
 purple bruises on delicate flesh
 bright blue padded dresses for the suicidal.
 What sense did this admission make?
 I will not admit we needed that.

Anon

A tribute to Adel Ahmed Alawi - former district manager, Yemen Airlines - a best friend and husband, and a wonderful father

You have shared our joys
 And sorrows too
 We have always known
 We could count on you
 Memories that we had shared
 Were so deep and so rare
 You are dearly missed
 May your soul rest in peace

Surtag Hack Knitting group at Ashram

Win a £10 book gift card

Write us a letter or send us your artwork or poetry and you could receive a £10 book gift card. The *Your Voice* editorial group will send the prize to the person who contributes our favourite poem, artwork or letter in each issue - not including items from current members of the *Your Voice* management committee and editorial group. (Angela Hirst receives a gift card for poetry in issue 74).

YOUR NOTICEBOARD

Mind & Body Project courses

Carer's Toolbox course

A 5-week course for anyone who is a carer - explore ways to increase your own personal wellbeing in a supportive group.

Venue: Sheffield Carers Centre

Start date: Friday 15th May

Time: 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

Reading Group

Meet new people, discover good books and improve personal wellbeing. Meets monthly.

Venue: Highfield Library

Start date: Monday 6th July

Time: 10.00 am - 12.00 noon

For further details, or to book a place, please contact:

Tel: 0114 258 4489 ext.108

Email:

mindandbody@sheffieldmind.co.uk

No Panic Sheffield

No Panic Sheffield provides a weekly self-help group for people who have anxiety, panic attacks, OCD, phobias and other anxiety related conditions. Meetings are held on Thursday mornings 10 am – 12 pm one week and Wednesday evenings 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm the following week. All our meetings are facilitated by a trained volunteer who will work with the group to discuss positive ways to manage their anxiety. For more information and dates/location of meetings please visit our website:

www.nopanicssheffield.org.uk

Mental Health Carers Group

For carers of people with mental health problems. The groups meet on the third Thursday of each month, 10.30 am till 12 noon. Dates for forthcoming groups are:

- Thursday 21st May
- Thursday 18th June
- Thursday 16th July

Venue: Sheffield Carers Centre, Concept House, 5 Young Street, S1 4UP.

Booking is not necessary, but if you want to talk to someone in advance, please ring Jan or James:

Tel: 0114 278 8942

Voice Dialogue Workshop

Sheffield Hearing Voices Network presents a 2-day workshop on Voice Dialogue - a specific method developed to explore the world of the Selves, also known as sub-personalities. The workshop is aimed at all mental health workers, criminal justice personnel, third sector agencies and people who experience voices.

Venue: Quaker Meeting House, St. James' Street, Sheffield, S1 2EW

Dates: 10th & 11th June

Time: 9.30 am - 4pm

Facilitators: Dr. Dirk Corstens & Peter Bullimore

Cost: £50 (unwaged/student) & £150 (waged)

To book a place please contact:

Email:

lindawhiting54@yahoo.co.uk

Sheffield Wellbeing Festival

This year's event will take place on Fargate from 10 am - 4 pm on Wednesday 29th July. For information contact:

Email:

mentalhealthweek@sheffieldmind.co.uk

TESS - Text and email support services for girls and young women affected by self-injury

Want to talk but don't want to phone? Text or email us. We are confidential. We won't tell and we won't judge you.

Open Monday - Friday, 7 pm - 9 pm

Text: 0780 047 2908

www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk
(and follow links to email)

SUN:RISE Service User Network

SUN:RISE aims to improve the range of ways that service users can become informed and actively involved with the Trust. Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Forthcoming dates are:

- 13th May
- 10th June
- 8th July
- 12th August

Time: 1 pm – 4 pm

Venue: Conference Room 2, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW.

For further information please contact:

Noelle Riggott

Tel: 0114 271 8789

Email: sun.rise@shsc.nhs.uk

To request, amend or cancel a Your Voice subscription, please contact us at:

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Website: www.yourvoicesheffield.org

Please send contributions for the Summer issue by 29th June 2015