

Cover30	Chair's Report & PR	Meds - Internet	RaPSS Update
Working with others	Conferences	Media - Mens Health	Members News etc

A shift in our awareness

Margaret Brunskill attended a media awareness seminar at the Palace Hotel, Manchester on March 21st. The trainer was Terry Williams, Media in Mind and Shift Stigma North West media co-ordinator.

Terry was a speaker at our POPYRUS AGM in 2004. The main issue was the importance of working with the local media and what we, as members of POPYRUS, could do – such as monitoring the media, building relationships with journalists and letter writing. Other items discussed were writing a press release, handling an interview, and – very importantly – what to do if things go wrong.

The seminar was a good learning experience.

I was invited to stay on for the business meeting which followed.

This was a meeting of the Shift Stigma North West Advisory Group to discuss the outcomes of the project and the way forward.

On 25th March I attended the National Union of Journalists Annual Conference at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. There was a Shift Stigma display stand where we were able to publicise POPYRUS and also plenty of networking opportunities. The purpose of the stand was to inform journalists about the Shift Stigma Campaign both nationally and in the North West.

I appreciated the opportunity to be involved in both events and would like to thank Terry Williams for his continued interest and support of POPYRUS.

POPYRUS' Media

Guidelines are available from the office or can be downloaded from our website. We strongly recommend that you read these before becoming involved with the media.

If you would like a free copy of the HAYNES BRAIN MANUAL - a very useful book particularly for young men - please send a stamped addressed envelope to our office. The envelope needs to be 9"by12" and the postage is £3.49. Any further contributions, of course, would be gratefully received.

(See below)

Joint suicide prevention network launch

The South East Development Centre (SEDC) held a Conference in London in March 2006 to launch their Suicide Prevention/Mental Health Promotion Network. They wished to raise awareness that much more could be done in the region to promote mental health and prevent suicide. They detailed a number of recommendations for national, regional and local bodies to action and a full report is available from the SEDC (01256 3769394).

The Conference also offered the opportunity for Dr. Philip Brooks and Dr Martin Anderson to update on suicide statistics in the area and to draw attention to some of the developments taking place throughout the country in mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

Several of the projects that have been funded through the Centre also offered progress reports. Three of them were grouped under the heading of Hard to Reach groups and included No Limits, providing a centre in Southampton and targeting young men between 16 and 25. A second Hard to Reach group were the young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender population in Brighton and support was being offered to them as part of the Mindout Campaign combating the stigma attached to mental ill-health. In West Sussex figures have shown that the highest rise in the suicide rate is amongst men over the age of 40. This reflects the ageing population in this county resulting in a focus on them by it's Suicide Prevention group.

The Conference heard of the comprehensive protocols in A&E for following up on those making suicide attempts, put in place by the Guildford and Waverley PCT. Finally there was an update on the roll-out training programme, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills) on offer to a wide group of people who may find themselves in a situation where they could intervene to attempt to prevent a suicide.

The SEDC have decided no longer to hold meetings of their Suicide Prevention group as its members were too widely scattered over a large area but to set up the Network to keep all those who were part of it informed of developments and progress in the area

Andrea Linell

Mind your head

The third week of June was NMHW. This important event is in it's 7th year and this year it focused on mental wellbeing. It is organised by the Mens' Health Forum - a charity set up in 1994 to promote the health of men and boys in England and Wales, and has won awards for reaching men with essential health information, acknowledging that men in general do not like going to see their GP.

Of the various events held during the week, POPYRUS, as a partner and sponsor, was particularly involved in a major conference entitled "MIND YOUR HEAD" which was held at the Wembley Conference Centre. Our patron, David Heathcoat-Amory MP, chaired a workshop on suicide prevention and our trustee

Angela Robinson was one of the two guest speakers.

We also contributed to the HAYNES BRAIN MANUAL – particularly to the section on suicide and suicide prevention. This marvellous manual is produced by Haynes at cost and is produced along the same lines as their car manuals. It contains authoritative information on mental wellbeing written in a most amusing and readable style. Mens Health Forum and Haynes must be congratulated on the production of their various manuals over the last 6 years – each highlighting different aspects of mens' health.

Finally, trustee Anita Sutcliffe representing POPYRUS, attended the All Party Group on Mens Health at the House of Commons.



Angela Robinson (left) and Anita Sutcliffe

This was a useful week in particular for raising the awareness of mens' mental health problems, and the need for men to be able to ask for help in the various aspects of the lives.

Lincoln Lawley

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