

OSMHN Newsletter 16 (Summer 2009)

Welcome to Issue 16 of the OSMHN Newsletter. This issue is packed with interesting articles, training opportunities and useful resources. The next OSMHN workshop on 'Mental Health Problems in Male Students' on Friday 20th November is flagged up so, although it is too early to book, please make a note of the date in your diary. We also have a summary of the last OSMHN workshop on 'Eating Disorders' and news of the updated version of the OSMHN website at the new address: <http://www.osmhn.org.uk>

Thanks to those of you who have contributed short articles to the newsletter. If you have something that you would like to share with the network for example, a group, workshop or training course that you have either attended or run please let us know about it. Or you may have come across a mental health issue which you think needs addressing in Higher Education or Further Education - some practice or policy - that you think may have a positive or negative impact on the mental health of students. If there are issues you would like to know more about and would like to see articles on please also let us know.

Email: osmhn@brookes.ac.uk with your contributions.

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Mental Health Problems in Male Students - Friday 20th
November 2009 12.00-5.00

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1. Mental Health Problems in Male Students

Oxford Student Mental Health Network
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN MALE STUDENTS
Friday 20th November 2009
12.00-5.00
Oxford Brookes University
Buckley Building

As male students are more reluctant to seek professional help from their GP or to use psychiatric services, it is very important that academic staff and support services a) have an awareness of ways of promoting general mental well-being b) know when to be concerned and c) are aware of ways of supporting male students to seek professional support.

Who will facilitate the workshop?

Colin Murphy is a Counsellor at Westminster University. The university was seeing problems in the male student population in terms of retention, alcohol/drug use, aggressive behaviour and some small instances of suicide and a very low referral rate from male students to the Counselling Service. Through a targeted campaign called 'Big Boys Don't Cry - Real Men Ask for Help', the Counselling service saw a small rise in the number of men self-referring. This increased usage of the Counselling service enabled it to challenge the university's own concept of masculinity and what was needed to effectively support its male students.

What is the workshop about?

The workshop will be very interactive using film clips from a John Wayne Western, case studies, group activities and discussions to explore:

- Images of masculinity and male vulnerability
- Barriers to men seeking help such as, gender socialisation, shame and embarrassment, stigma and issues of denial
- Use of alcohol/drugs and high risk activities
- Prevention strategies such as developing 'emotional literacy' and good mental health generally
- Different patterns of men and women seeking support
- Helping men to access support especially at critical points in their university life and of alleviating academic stress and worries

Please bring your own case examples and questions to the workshop.

We are not taking bookings yet but we will email you a booking form in due course.

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2. SUMMARY OF LAST OSMHN WORKSHOP: **EATING DISORDERS WORKSHOP**

27TH February 2009

Dr Rebecca Murphy (Clinical Psychologist) and Suzanne Straebl (Research Psychologist) from the Centre for Research on Eating Disorders, University of Oxford facilitated the workshop.

Part 1: 'Understanding Eating Disorders' included:

- Definition and classification of different Eating Disorders including, Anorexia, Bulimia and Eating Disorders not otherwise specified
- Clinical features - signs and symptoms
- Distribution of Eating Disorders in the general population
- Main risk factors

Part 2: 'How to Intervene?' considered:

- Development and course
- Common complaints
- Evidence -based treatments such as, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy
- Practical advice on how to offer support, including knowing your own boundaries
- **The clear message was to encourage the student to go to their GP who can assess the problem, make a judgement about the help needed and is a gateway to other services**

Additional Resources

- Eating Disorders Association
<http://www.b-eat.co.uk>
- British Nutrition Foundation
<http://www.nutrition.org.uk>

Handouts

Please contact osmhn@brookes.ac.uk to request a handout. Please include the address where you would like the handout sent.



3. A NEW WEBSITE FOR OSMHN

<http://www.osmhn.org.uk>

If you haven't visited our website lately, it is worth taking a look. Following consultation with the Steering Group and wider network, the OSMHN website has been redesigned and has a new location (see link above).

The content remains the same; separated into categories for students, HE/FE staff, healthcare staff and those with an interest in student mental health research. However, we have tried to simplify the presentation of the content. Details about forthcoming and previous workshops can now be quickly accessed via a tab on the home page and users of the site can get an instant overview of recent news without delving too deeply into its pages. A search facility has also been added to enable users to find the information they need more quickly and easily.

We hope that you will find the new site an improvement. Whatever your views, we would welcome your feedback or suggestions. Please contact osmhn@brookes.ac.uk with your comments.



4. The Role of Mentoring At Oxford Brookes University

Karen Jenkins

There are business networks in Oxford offering 'coaching and mentoring', volunteer organisations and charities in Oxford offering 'counselling and mentoring' and schools of further and higher education in Oxford offering 'peer support and mentoring'. New members of staff and alumni of Oxford's two universities are also offered 'mentoring'. Each of these might have something in common with the Student Mentoring Programme

at Oxford Brookes University that I co-ordinated, but all mentoring programmes are necessarily unique.

Mentoring is a word that describes a particular type of relationship. It is a functional relationship intended to allow a person who is starting out in a field of business or study or in any unfamiliar venture to be supported by a person with some knowledge, expertise or experience within the organisation, industry or school in which the learning is taking place. To be successful the concept not only includes a relationship between a student of something and a recognised expert at something but it also needs to tailor itself to the goals, values and complexity of the host organisation.

Having said all that, I'm happy to tell you about the The Student Mentoring Programme for Students with Mental Health Disabilities at Oxford Brookes University.

Students referred to the Mentoring Service will have mental health issues, chronic medical conditions or another disability that makes them quite vulnerable to the effects of stress. This is apparent particularly in regard to exams, submitting complicated papers or projects but can be less obvious within the general ebb and flow of campus life. Mentored students can have a range of problems related to the disabling condition, from the subtle to the obvious. The Mentors each have recognised professional qualifications and experience in mental health counselling and membership in BACP, UKCP or other accrediting body. They work directly with students to support their studies and assist them in achieving their goals. At Oxford Brookes University, this is a student guided process, in that the student is able to ask for help with any issue, educational, social or personal that impacts on their experience in education.

Regular Mentor/ Student meetings are held within Oxford Brookes University generally once a week in a confidential setting arranged through the Student Disability Service. Mentors are expected to monitor the general progress of the students throughout the years as they complete their modular requirements. Whilst students can request a change to another Mentor for a variety of reasons, most students seem to prefer to see the same Mentor throughout.

Mentors can help students develop and maintain sound study strategies. This might involve a variety of skills such as listening, organising and coaching. At times mentoring involves seeking answers from the academic

staff. Sometimes it even means educating the educators about a student with different needs and helping to arrange for 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that teaching, learning and assessments are sensitive to the student's individual needs.

Many hours are spent with some students just listening to their problems and being available for them within what might feel an impersonal, confusing and overwhelming place.

Some mental health conditions can affect a student's ability to concentrate, others can prevent concentration and still others can keep a student from participating in classes and projects. A thoughtful Mentor can be very creative in helping students overcome these difficulties.

The Mentoring Programme offers a separate service within the Student Disability Service but is supported by the whole department.

Mentors have access to and are encouraged to utilise the Advisory staff for relevant information sharing, practical advice and assistance in understanding how University procedure and student funding impacts our clients.

The programme co-ordinator discusses prospective students for mentoring with the proposed Mentor in order to minimise any potential for conflict but after that, the Mentor-Student relationship is held as confidential and maintained independently.

Most students are referred to the Mentoring Programme by their Disabled Student Adviser. Each student who declares a disability to the University is assigned to a specific Adviser who takes a complete history and has access to the student's medical certification and other forms of assessment in order to develop an individual support plan. The Disability Advisers help students to know what support is available throughout the University and can act on behalf of students, arranging for them necessary equipment, special access or accommodation, and for adjustments to teaching, learning and assessments within the University. Advisers ensure that medical certificates are on file for a student where needed within the University system, for example with the exam board, library, and academic staff.

Many students with disabilities are determined to be independent and

never or only rarely utilise the broad shoulder of their Adviser, sticking mainly to practical issues. If the student wants more ongoing support, or is funded for mentoring or if the Adviser feels that seeking such funding would be helpful for the student, the student would ordinarily be referred to the mentoring programme.

The Student Disability Service at Oxford Brookes University provides a very wide variety of services and staff in order to support our students.

There is specialised mentoring in place for students with Asperger Syndrome, a Study Skills Service for students with dyslexia and an extensive Support Worker Scheme.

Beyond our Department, Counselling Services are available to all Oxford Brookes University students with or without Disabilities.

Counsellors see students by individual appointment. The Service normally offers short-term work, of perhaps four to six sessions. The counsellors also offer courses and workshops addressing common issues, such as stress management, assertiveness or personal effectiveness.

For some students who have declared a mental health condition, counselling may be a first port of call but for others it is an uncomfortable reminder of an unwanted difference.

Mentoring is in place to help normalise the University experience for students who have the desire and ability to create a better future for themselves. We try to foster independence while at the same time being realistic in our approach. Mentors are chosen because they understand the likely difficulties that the students in our programme might have and because they can give positive, affirming support throughout what would be a hard slog through University for the even most gifted and able among us.

If you would like to know more about this programme please feel free to contact: Linda Francis, Head of Student Disabilities Services 01865 484650

Karen Jenkins was the previous Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator at Oxford Brookes University.

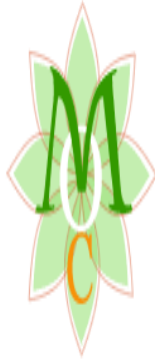
5. Oxford Mindfulness Centre

Researchers at the newly founded Oxford Mindfulness Centre, part of the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, have recently begun a large study comparing the benefits of two psychological (non-drug) treatments for depression which have been designed to help people who have been depressed in the past to stay well. One of these treatments, 'Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy' (MBCT), combines traditional cognitive therapy with training in mindfulness meditation. The other treatment is called Cognitive Psycho-education (CPE) and teaches the same skills but without requiring people to learn to meditate.

Recent research has shown that training in mindfulness meditation can halve the chances of depression returning in people who have suffered many episodes of depression in the past and can even be as effective as continuing to take antidepressants. The current research is looking at whether it is the meditation aspect of the therapy which helps, or just the group based discussions about being more mindful.

People who have suffered from repeated episodes of depression, have felt suicidal in the past, and are now feeling well can contact Adele at the Staying Well research team for more information, either by calling 08000 836130 (freephone) or 01865 226468 (landline) or by emailing recruiters@staying-well.org.uk. There is also more information on the study website www.staying-well.org.

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6. Using Meditation to beat Depression

Researchers at the newly founded Oxford Mindfulness Centre, part of the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, are conducting exciting research to explore how the ancient practice of meditation may be combined with modern psychological therapy to help reduce risk of clinical depression. Recent research has shown that training in mindfulness meditation through an approach called "mindfulness-based cognitive therapy" (MBCT) can halve the chances of depression returning in people who have suffered many episodes of depression in the past and can even be as effective as continuing to take antidepressants.

Participants taking the course learn a number of different types of meditation over the 8 weekly classes and receive education on depression and how to prevent relapse. A participant who has taken the MBCT course in Oxford and featured on the recent BBC TV programme 'Alternative Therapies' said "I've been on medication for about 10 years and this is the first time I have been able to drop as low as I have, and I'm on lower than what's the normal lowest dose right now and to come down as far as I have is just amazing to me!". Class teachers say that one way that the treatment benefits people is helping them to live more in the moment, rather than be caught up in upsetting memories from the past or worries about the future. Carol, another participant from the programme who had suffered from recurrent depression said "It (MBCT) has stopped me from just living in my head with my thoughts and has given me a much better picture of what it's like to be alive."

The mindfulness programme has been adapted especially for people who are currently feeling well but feel vulnerable to becoming depressed again in the future and is equally suitable for people who are still taking antidepressants and those who are not. Researchers are now examining whether MBCT can be used to prevent recurrences of more severe,

suicidal depression. The "Staying Well After Depression" study will also look in more detail at which aspects of the programme are most helpful, by comparing Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy with another treatment, called Cognitive Psycho-Education. This treatment, which is based on tried and tested Cognitive Therapy for depression, teaches the same skills as the mindfulness programme but does not require people to learn to meditate. The researchers expect both types of class to be helpful, but everyone is different and they are very interested to see who benefits most from learning through mindfulness meditation and who prefers the "chalk and talk" approach.

The first set of classes for this trial is currently underway and the feedback from participants in both groups has been very positive. The researchers are now hoping to contact people in the Bicester/Swindon / Reading / Wantage / Banbury / Abingdon area who think they might be also interested in taking part. The classes are not suitable for everyone, and require considerable effort, but they also have the potential to bring about great change. Professor Mark Williams, who developed the treatment said 'We are on the brink of discovering really important things about how people can learn to stay well after depression. Our aim is to help people to find long-term freedom from the daily battle with their moods'.

People who have suffered from repeated episodes of depression, have felt suicidal in the past, and are now feeling well can contact Adele at the Staying Well research team for more information, either by calling 08000 836130 (free phone) or 01865 226468 (landline) or by emailing recruiters@staying-well.org.uk. There is also more information on the study website www.staying-well.org.



7. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

MONTH IN MIND - AUGUST 2009

**The Month in Mind Bulletin can be found at
<http://www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk/>**

The bulletin includes information on the following:

- Men's Discussion Group at Mind in Wantage

- Welfare Benefits for Better Mental Health
- Mind Centres across Oxfordshire including 'The Late Shift - After Work Service promoting well being in a relaxing and supportive environment'
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Taster Day - Introduction to the Skills and Methods

Headspace at The Mill (A Drop-in service for Students Feeling the Pressure)

The Mill,
46 Cowley Road,
Oxford.
OX4 1HZ
(01865) 263758
themill@oxfordshire-mind.org.uk
Open: Tues- 7pm-9.30pm

8. Other Training, Workshops and Continuing Professional Development Opportunities

Information about courses is provided as a service. OSMHN is not involved in the running or the quality assessment of the courses included in the newsletter.

Relate Training

LIFE AFTER THE BREAK

An eight-week course for people coming to terms with the ending of a relationship.

The end of a relationship or marriage can be a difficult and painful experience. It can leave you feeling confused, lonely and lacking in confidence in yourself and the future. Feelings of betrayal, guilt or rejection are common. Anger, sadness and confusion are often intense. Moving forward can be hard when trust, self-confidence and self-esteem have been shaken.

In these eight weekly sessions we look at how relationships work and why they sometimes go wrong. We consider ways of managing our own needs as well as those of family and friends, and of increasing the skills and

confidence needed to build new relationships in the future. You will meet men and women in similar situations, have the chance to share experiences in a confidential group and make new friends.

Course aims

To help people understand and deal with the emotions and feelings they are experiencing.

To increase understanding of how and why relationships begin and why they sometimes end.

To help develop confidence and a better foundation for forming and sustaining future relationships.

To provide an opportunity for people working through similar experiences to share and learn together.

Date and venue

Relate Oxfordshire will be running an eight-week course on Wednesday evenings starting on 29th April 2009, at our offices at 33 Iffley Road, Oxford. The sessions will commence at 7pm each evening and will finish at 9pm. There will be a short break when tea and coffee and biscuits will be provided.

Cost

The cost of the course is £135 for the eight sessions and this fee is payable when reserving a place on the course. We have a small number of places at reduced cost for those people who would benefit from the course but are unable to afford the full fee. Please telephone for details.

To make a booking

If you would like a chance to discuss the course further, please telephone Mandy Blair or Maureen Buy at Relate on Oxford 242960.

If you would like to reserve a place on this course, please complete the booking form below and return it to:

Relate Oxfordshire 33 Iffley Road Oxford OX4 1EA

BOOKING FORM

I wish to apply for a place on the Life After the Break course.

Course details

Course date

Venue

Your details

Surname

First name

Title

Address

.....

Telephone

Email

It would be helpful if you could tell us how or where you heard about the course.

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Payment

* I enclose a cheque for £135 made payable to Relate Oxfordshire.

* I would like to apply for a place at a reduced fee.

[* Delete as applicable.]

Cancellation Fee

Cancellation with more than 28 days notice...Full refund

Cancellation between 14 and 28 days notice...50% of the fee

Cancellation less than 14 days notice... 100% of the fee

Signed

Date

Registered Charity Number 1071567

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**HIDDEN PAIN - SELF-INJURY AND PEOPLE WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES - ONE DAY CONFERENCE**

We are running a one-day conference presenting the findings of a three-year research study looking at self-injury and people with learning disabilities. This conference will be of interest to people with learning disabilities and professionals and family/carers supporting people with learning disabilities in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors.

This conference will be held in all four countries of the UK. The dates and locations are:

Wednesday 21 October 2009 - The Scottish Storytelling Centre,
EDINBURGH

Wednesday 04 November 2009 - The Cross Lanes Hotel, WREXHAM

Wednesday 11 November 2009 - Hilton Templepatrick, NORTHERN

IRELAND Wednesday 25 November 2009 - Explore @Bristol, BRISTOL

For a booking form please telephone 0117 927 9600 or email it to bcsw@btconnect.com and return it along with a cheque or invoice payment details to:

Bristol Crisis Service for Women
PO Box 654
Bristol
BS99 1XH

web: www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk

The Helpline is completely confidential, and women can speak for up to an hour to a helpline volunteer.

Phone 0117 925 1119, on Friday and Saturday 9pm - 12.30am and on Sunday 6 - 9pm

BRISTOL CRISIS SERVICE FOR WOMEN is listed on www.everyclick.com, the search engine that helps charity. Please go to <http://www.everyclick.com/uk/bristol-crisis-service-for-women/365521/0> to do all your searching. Don't forget to add it to your favourites so you can find it again easily and you can make it your home page by clicking on the link in the top right hand corner of the site. It does not cost us, or you, a penny - so it's a great way to support us everyday.

INSIDE GOVERNMENT: MEN'S HEALTH FORUM UPDATE **- ONE DAY CONFERENCE**

MEN'S HEALTH: ADDRESSING 21ST CENTURY HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Tuesday 22nd September 2009, Central London, 08:40 - 16:20
<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfIxS3JSIxI5tnX>

One of the founding principles of the NHS is universality: free at the point of access and available to all. But is the way in which services are planned, designed, and provided by the NHS failing men? Despite the narrowing gap in life expectancy between men and women, men tend to develop and die from conditions much sooner than women do. Part of the reason for this is that men under the age of 45 years tend to be reluctant to use NHS services regularly. One of the reasons for their reluctance is that NHS services are not specifically tailored to meet men's needs. This forum will provide delegates with the opportunity to discuss and debate national and local policies, strategies, case-studies and initiatives employed by a variety of organisations to improve men's health.

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:

- Mark Davies, Director, Health Inequalities and Partnership, Department of Health - Dr Ian Banks, President, Men's Health Forum - Jeremy Holmes, Chief Executive and Registrar, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

- Alan White, Professor of Men's Health, Leeds Metropolitan University, and Chair of the Trustees, Men's Health Forum
- Nick Partridge, Chair, INVOLVE, and Chief Executive, Terrence Higgins Trust
- Martin Seymour, Principal Consultant, IDeA
- Senior Representative, Health of Men Project, Bradford and Airedale PCT

Book TODAY:

<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfKQ5eD8cnCYpso>

Other forums which may be of interest to you:

Tuesday 15th September 2009, Central London, 08:40 - 16:55
Inside Government's Training and Briefing Symposium - The Health Bill 2009: Creating a National Health Service Fit for the 21st Century
<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfPqvApDU4cKhBg>

Wednesday 21st October 2009, Central London, 08:30 - 16:00
eHealth: Transforming Health and Social Care Services Through Innovations in Technology
<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfRIILiTKUuDdFH>

Forums and events list:

<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfU0VWc9BKMw9K8>

If you would like to know of the rates to attend the above forums, please click the following link:

<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/1NfWj975psB4p5Oz>

For further information, please email enquiries@insidegovernment.co.uk or call 0207 484 5224. Places are limited and early booking is therefore advisable.

There are also a number of limited exhibition sponsorship opportunities available for these forums. Please call on 0207 484 5224 for more details or email enquiries@insidegovernment.co.uk.

9. USEFUL RESOURCES

OBMH Social Networking and Campaigning

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust have a group on Facebook open to anyone (professionals, service users, carers and members of the public) at

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=13664097873>

The group is used to raise awareness of mental health, the Trust and to enable people to have discussions about mental health related topics. You can follow them on Twitter <http://twitter.com/OBMH> and You Tube and watch short films at <http://www.youtube.com/user/NHSobmh> If you would like to know more about the Stamping Out Stigma campaign or the Do the Write Thing campaign you can find out more from the website

<http://www.obmh.nhs.uk/communications/campaigns/default.aspx>

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OSMHN is unable to offer direct support or advice to students, but aims to collaborate with those organisations and services that are involved in supporting students with mental health problems. OSMHN is currently staffed by a part-time Coordinator, Gill Shreir, one day a week who can be contacted at:

OSMHN
Gill Shreir
Student Services
Oxford Brookes University
Headington Campus
Headington Hill
Oxford
OX3 OBP
E-mail osmhn@brookes.ac.uk