



**Transforming
health and social care**
in Kent and Medway

Saving Lives – Suicide Prevention Innovation Fund

Evaluation of 2018/19 funding

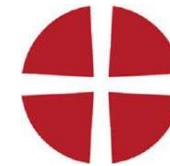
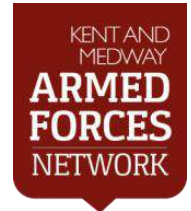
Hollie Brennan, Suicide Prevention Project Support Officer, SuicidePrevention@kent.gov.uk

Transforming health and social care in Kent and Medway is a partnership of all the NHS organisations in Kent and Medway, Kent County Council and Medway Council. We are working together to develop and deliver the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for our area.





MADE WITH



Maidstone and Mid-Kent



North West Kent
COUNTRYSIDE
protect / explore / enjoy



Fund overview

The Saving Lives Suicide Prevention Innovation Fund was launched in November 2018. Its aim was to fund new or emerging programmes with innovative ideas designed to prevent suicides, save lives and reduce self harm across Kent and Medway.

Over two rounds of funding we received a total of 80 applications of which we were able to fund 29 projects totalling £108k in grants. The majority of projects ran from November 2018 – March 2019, despite this short timescale over 1,000 people have been reached and over 400 of those people weren't already known to the organisations.

The projects covered a wide range of activities including arts projects, research, awareness raising and film production. There was lots of learning for each of the organisations involved and common themes which ran across the fund.

Common themes emerging from project evaluations

- Don't shy away from talking about suicide – people want to talk but aren't sure how to start the conversation.
- Peer support works – projects reported that people with lived experience benefitted from the opportunity to meet and work with people who had experiences similar to their own.
- Engaging with people with lived experience takes longer than you think to establish relationships and isn't always consistent.
- The arts are a powerful tool as is engaging in outdoor activities, especially spending time in green spaces.
- Suicide and self-harm aren't stand alone issues.
- Coproduction is key – participants were more likely to engage when they had helped to design the programme.

These key themes were often linked to views from project managers about sustainability and growth which should be explored in the next iteration of the suicide prevention fund along with seeking out new innovations.

The summaries in this report were taken from the project self evaluations and they have not been independently evaluated.



Addaction – Mind and Body for Higher Education

This was a scoping exercise to review the potential implementation of the Mind and Body programme in to Higher Education.



Objectives

The key objective of the project was to review how Mind and Body could effectively be delivered in the University/Higher Education setting and what potential adaptations would be required. This was to be explored as a co-production exercise with an emphasis on participation to explore and gain this information.

Impact

All professionals were prepared to support the development and delivery of Mind and Body within their university. The exercise has provided the Universities with an insight into the processes and content offered by external agencies (Addaction). The project has given a voice to students to help inform the direction and development of specific programmes of delivery within university. Identified by all those engaged with this project the need for a focussed early intervention programme within higher education for self harm.

Lessons learnt

Despite the students being more mature and having increased life experiences there was still a feeling of being unable to express their emotions and talk about their own personal mental well being. An overriding fear of being seen as weak and not coping and the impact this could have on their university chances, feedback to alleviate this was seen to be having external specialist services coming in to the university rather than in houses and university linked. Due to the size and diversity within higher education settings the initial screening and selection for any programme would be complex and have challenges. The focus groups gave insight into how these challenges could be overcome to achieve the maximum number of survey completions, including suggesting we run a small pilot programme prior to arranging a full programme. The scheduling of a programme would need careful consideration to reduce difficulties for students to attend regular sessions.

Unintended consequences

As a result of the work carried out with students it encouraged self reflection, including identifying trigger points for emotional distress. Led to participants becoming more aware of the wider network of student support available at the university. For the professionals involved in the scoping exercise it highlighted a gap in the current support and provision for students regarding self harm behaviours. It also highlighted the lack of focussed, early intervention, group based support available currently within universities.



Addaction – Mind and Body for Higher Education

This was a scoping exercise to review the potential implementation of the Mind and Body programme in to Higher Education.



Key themes from focus groups

Are there any key times at university which are triggering for emotional distress?

- Transition periods were a prevalent theme throughout these discussions (these included; after Christmas – first time back after a period of going home and returning in September after the long summer break)
- Exam and deadline stress was also a common theme (this was reported to be particularly heightened just before the Christmas break and around April)
- Relationships and isolation were discussed at length (this was reported to be most difficult in the first or second month of university)

Which elements of Mind and Body did you find beneficial?

- It's helpful to talk to someone
- Learning coping methods to help when you are struggling with your emotions
- Realising that you are not alone, the group element of mind and body is really helpful
- One to one sessions were particularly helpful, it helped you explore your personal difficulties in more depth
- Peer support outside of the groups was helpful
- Because we were identified through a survey, students didn't have to ask for support, they didn't have to take the first step

Which emotions do you think that students are currently struggling with the most?

- **Anxiety**- Reported to be triggered by a variety of things and accentuated by low self esteem
- **Stress**- Reported to be triggered by exam and deadline workload
- **Loneliness**- This was reported to be triggered by homesickness and difficulties and the ability to build and maintain relationships



Addaction – Mindspace Project

youngaddaction

A mental health space designed by young people on the Mind and Body self-harm reduction programme.

Objectives

We have created dedicated spaces to support young people with their wellbeing in three separate schools across the county; one in North, West and East Kent. All of these spaces have been designed by young people (YP) with the aim of creating a safe, familiar space that can be used when they feel the need to have some time out to calm down and look after their wellbeing.

Impact

The YP involved have gained a real sense of empowerment and ownership which in hand increases their self esteem. Being involved in the process from start to finish makes them feel valued and listened to. They have a real sense of pride knowing they have created a space to help themselves and other YP. The space is forever adapting and the resources in the room encourage YP to be creative and decorate the space. Therefore this feeling of ownership can be shared with those who have already accessed the space and by those who will access it in the future. The space encourages YP to discuss their feelings and emotions and share ideas on how to manage these. This in hand reduces stigma associated with mental health and isolation. Through use of the room YP can create new friendships and strengthen their support networks.

Lessons learnt

As expected from the start, it has proven vital to have school staff on board and to agree parameters of the of room. We've had to apply a flexible approach as each school has agreed slightly different boundaries of the room depending on their policies and procedures, e.g. whether the room needs to be staffed at all times etc.

Unintended consequences

Schools have been very thankful and supportive from the start. One school commented that they have been trying to create a similar space like this for ages but had been struggling to get funding. Another of our MAB Practitioners quoted that "In terms of reasons why I felt the school needed this space; they give brilliant support to students but are often strained in terms of space and resources. It is apparent they go out of their own way to provide soothing items for students including puzzles and colouring books but are clearly stretched in terms of what they can provide. This space will allow students to access the resources the school cannot otherwise provide and allow students to self support in the space when other young people may be speaking with pastoral workers in neighbouring rooms."



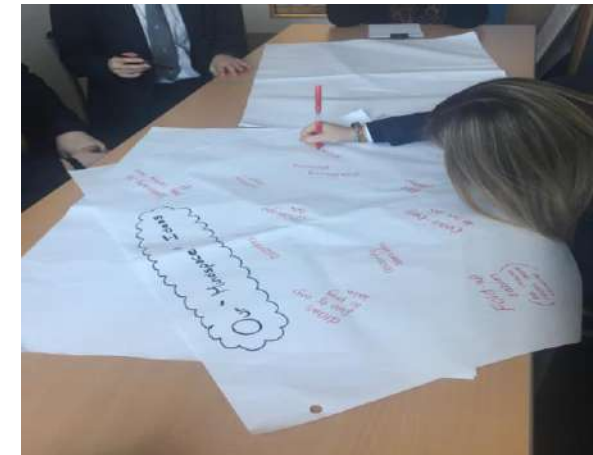
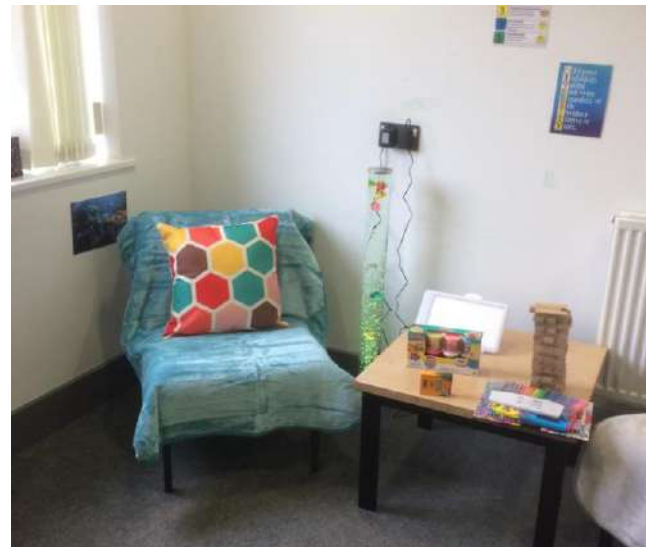
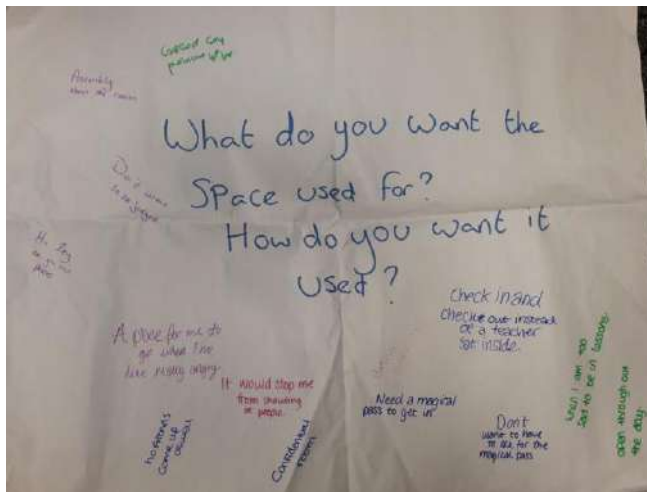
Addaction – Mindspace Project

youngaddaction

A mental health space designed by young people on the Mind and Body self-harm reduction programme.

“Wow, I really love this, it is going to help me destress when I am struggling with my anxiety.”

“These bean bags are so comfy, I feel really safe and happy in here.”



“What a fabulous room – the students are so lucky to have this, it will make a huge difference to their emotional wellbeing.”



Armed Forces Network

Development and delivery of bespoke Armed Forces suicide prevention courses



Objectives

- The development of a number of bespoke Armed Forces Suicide Prevention Courses.
- Course material, testing and peer reviewing of the course including members from the Armed Forces Community.
- Engagement with Senior Military Personnel to enable/assist with the rollout of training.
- Inclusion of bespoke training to fit in with the Regular, Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers annual training programmes over the next year.
- Sharing of the Fact Sheet and Action Card.
- The programme will continue outside of the funding from KCC so there will be further return against this initial investment.

Impact

This programme is linked with two other programmes of work, at both National and Sussex STP levels. The foundations have been set and have been tested with 250 people most from the AFC and the rest are those who help this community. Those who have undertaken the workshops/courses have feedback that it has given them the confidence to ask the question and take appropriate action.

Unintended consequences

A mental health crisis button has been added to the Forces Connect South East App. This is an App for the Armed Forces Community and professionals to signpost service users and professionals to relevant services.



Armed Forces Network

Development and delivery of bespoke Armed Forces suicide prevention courses

KENT AND
MEDWAY
**ARMED
FORCES**
NETWORK

ARMED
FORCES
NETWORK

Ex-Armed Forces in Kent and Medway

Pathways for Mental Health

Click on an organisation to be directed to its website



Still in service / transitioning?

[Military Departments of Community Mental Health \(DCMH\)](#)

Joint NHS and MOD service for serving personnel that also provides support for 6 months after discharge. Located in large garrisons with links to community services.

Advice and Support

[Big White Wall](#)

A free online service for anyone with mental health difficulties (including serving personnel, veterans and their families) to talk about what's troubling them. The service is completely anonymous. Trained professionals are online 24/7. Promotes self-management of mental wellbeing.

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#)

Can provide support to Military families following bereavement, including practical information, dealing with the media and what support can be expected from the Military after a death in Service. Offices across Kent and Medway Helpline 0844 477 9400

[Rethink Mental Illness](#)

Helps everyone affected by severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, recover a better quality of life. National Advice Service - 0300 5000 927 10:00 to 13:00, Mon-Fri, advice@rethink.org

[Mental Health & Money Advice](#)

Online support with clear, practical advice and support for people experiencing issues with mental health and money.

Phone Support

[Mental Health Matters](#)

Offers national, around the clock support through our Housing, Community, Employment, Talking Therapies and Helpline

Statutory Provision

Defence Medical Services' Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme – Offers a full mental health assessment at closest [Department of Community Mental Health \(DCMH\)](#) by a consultant psychiatrist to anyone who has seen operational service since 1982 or Reservists who have been on operations since 2003. Treatment is offered to those whose mental health is attributable to their service. Referral is primarily via a GP. DCMH Colchester, Merville Barracks, Colchester, CO2 7UT 0800 032 6258

NHS Mental healthcare for veterans Services available to veterans in the NHS can be found on the [NHS Choices website](#).

[London and South East Region Veterans Mental Health Service](#)

Providing specialist armed forces mental health services across the South East Coast. Providers can access this service for specialist advice. Tel: 020 3317 6818

Kent and Medway PT (KMPT)

Single point of access for mental health care whether urgent, secondary care There is an understanding of the armed forces community
[Single Point of access for Mental Health](#)
0300 222 0123 (24hrs)

On Line Service [Live it well](#)

On line service to help people connect with support in their local communities and is designed to promote better wellbeing and mental health for all of the residents in Kent and Medway. Booking forms and access to IAPT Services.

Military Charity Programmes and Courses

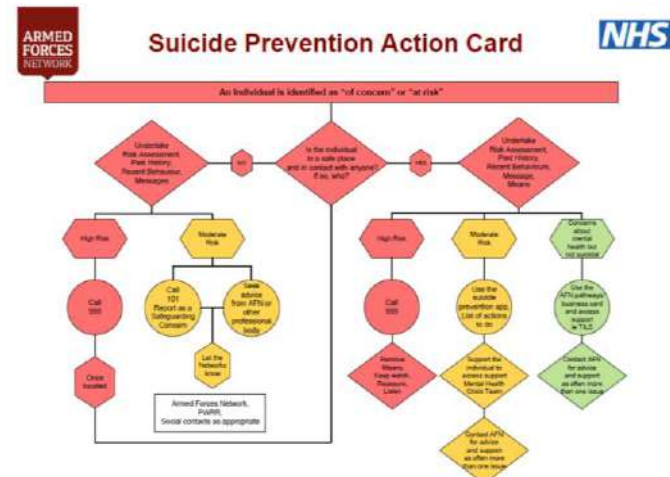
[Combat Stress](#)

[Kent and Medway Armed Forces Network](#)

The Network has been set up to improve standards of NHS Healthcare for Service and ex-Service personnel. A wide range of organisations ensure the health needs of the local Armed Forces community and veterans are being met and considered across local health services. The Network trains Armed Forces Champions that understand the nature of service life and embed knowledge in their organisation about the Armed Forces, raise awareness of issues affecting personnel and support clients from the Armed Forces community.
09:00-17:00 Mon-Fri, 01273 403693

NHS Counselling and Therapy IAPT – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies - NHS programme specialist staff provide talking therapies and self-help courses to help with common mental health difficulties such as stress, anxiety and depression. They are a Primary Care Psychological Service and will risk assess patients. Includes Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Counselling, Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR), and Couples Counselling.
[Addaction \(S\)](#)
[Dover Counselling Centre](#) (SKC, T) 01304 204123
[Faversham Counselling Services](#) (S, A) 01795 59479902
[Medway Talking Therapies'](#) 0300 029 3000
[Insight Health Care](#) (S, SKC, A, T, CC, DGS) 0300 555 5555
[Ipsa](#) (WK) (Psychology Online) 01954 230066
[North Kent Mind](#) (DGS) 01322 291380
[Psicon](#) (CC) 01227 479902

A parent (who is from a military family) at a school with significant numbers of military children was supported by a head teacher who had done one of our courses where suicide prevention was taught. Using the knowledge gained from the course, the head teacher intervened and stayed with the “at risk” parent by walking round the school with them listening to them and providing support until the ambulance arrived.



Canterbury Christ Church University – Training video for HE and FE settings



Using the university community to develop a suicide prevention training video which can be shared across all HE and FE settings in Kent and Medway.

Objectives

To produce a suicide awareness training video for use in HE and FE settings.

Impact

The process of making the film has involved students with lived experience at all stages. This model of co-production has been welcomed by the students directly involved, but also by the Mental Health Framework group at CCCU. The project has helped to illustrate how co-production can be successfully employed in the university. It will serve as an illustration of how we can work with students to produce relevant and useful content in relation to mental health and suicide awareness.

Lessons learnt

It is valuable to involve students with lived experience at all stages of the work. Co-production can be an effective way to create mental health and suicide awareness resources.

Unintended consequences

The project has given impetus to co-production approaches at CCCU. As part of the recent Mental Health Framework roll-out, the video was discussed at launch events at the Canterbury and Medway campuses. The positive experience of the students involved, and the high-quality nature of the film, has generated interest in how co-creation and co-production might work in other ways across the university.



Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells & District – Understanding young people with suicidal thoughts caused by debt



Research into how to support young people in debt, and the impact debt has on their mental health.

Objectives

To better understand how we can reach, engage and support young people

- To evaluate the use of digital channels to communicate with young people
- To forge valuable long term links with mental health charities and organisations
- For our staff and volunteers to have a greater understanding of the barriers young people face when accessing advice
- To establish next steps required to ensure our service meets the needs of all our clients.

Impact

We have forged links with local organisations and gained valuable insights into young people and how they approach advice. We have set out a plan for next steps which will be based on evidence.

Lessons learnt

It is difficult to achieve high numbers of responses with an online survey.



Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells & District – Understanding young people with suicidal thoughts caused by debt



Research into how to support young people in debt, and the impact debt has on their mental health.

Proposals for next steps

Secure commitment from staff and trustees

- Develop staff and volunteer training session to increase awareness of the specific needs of young people.

Look at how to design our service to meet the needs of young people

- Use technology to improve access to our service and introduce wider use of email and webchat.

Find partners and build relationships with youth agencies

- Develop a fast-track referral programme for local agencies to ensure that when a young person with problems has been identified they can be seen by an adviser with minimum delay.

Promote the service

- Use an outreach programme to raise awareness of our service.

Involve young people

- Recruit more young people as volunteers for Citizens Advice by promoting the benefits of volunteering and liaising directly with schools and colleges.

Engaging Young People

Full report
March 2019



Dads Unlimited – 1:1 Mentoring Service



Mentoring dads through family breakdown, and associated mental health problems, as well as self harm / suicidal ideation, emotional / domestic abuse; in order to facilitate healthy and positive co-parenting relationships.

Objectives

- 1) To reduce the number of men contemplating suicide / self-harming.
- 2) To provide a safe and confidential service to support those men going through family breakdown.
- 3) To improve the mental health of those seeking help from our service.
- 4) To support those men who are also seeing a deterioration in their mental health due to parental conflict / emotional and domestic abuse incl. gaslighting crimes.
- 5) To reduce parental conflict.
- 6) To raise awareness of this particular group of men as vulnerable.

Impact

The funding has allowed for the bandwidth of the 1:1 mentoring to be expanded, thus allowing for more men to access the service. There are now 120 men being mentored of which 7% have reported having suicidal thoughts and a further 16% have used illegal drugs or abused alcohol which are known contributors to poor mental health.

Lessons learnt

It has become clear to us that our 1:1 Mentoring Service is in very high demand; and that we can evidence a demonstration of this need. The issue will be that for future plans to expand the service, we must take into account these high caseloads and Supervision Counselling for our staff – and to look to have permanent number of minimum posts to meet this demand.

Unintended Consequences

Having expanded our capacity due to this valuable funding, we quickly became over-come with an increase in demand, which we have since found it very hard to cope with; so much so, that we must now think of either 'wait-listing' clients or contemplate limiting the service within the boundaries we had previously. Either option is not preferable for us, as we believe that if a person is going to reach out for help, and they are presenting with suicidal ideation or self-harming – and we cannot see them, or worse place them on to a waiting list – we believe this could be a significant risk.



Dads Unlimited – 1:1 Mentoring Service

Mentoring dads through family breakdown, and associated mental health problems, as well as self harm / suicidal ideation, emotional / domestic abuse; in order to facilitate healthy and positive co-parenting relationships.

51% of those receiving 1:1 mentoring were referred to talking therapies 85% said they benefitted from therapy with 78% engaging in all the sessions.

“When I used the service it was very much a one to one with the same person throughout – I think this is important.”

Because of the referral to other services by Dads Unlimited *“have more understanding and realising you are not alone”*

Because of Dads Unlimited *“I wouldn’t of made it through such a mentally and physically challenging time without the team and support.”*



Found In Music – Folkestone Music Town

Using hip hop to target men from high risk groups in Folkestone.



Objectives

- To attract at-risk males age 16 – 45, create a safe space and community for them to express themselves in, feel they have a voice and give them the confidence and skills to get up and perform.
- To raise awareness of the Release the Pressure and facilitate a wider discussion on mental health across Folkestone.

Impact

The project has had an extremely important impact on many young men who feel isolated and unable to communicate. This has brought them together to feel part of a safe inclusive non-judgemental community and able to have an outlet to express themselves. We know some of the attendees plan to keep meeting up for hip hop nights and other socials off the back of this project. Some of the young guys were non-verbal and excruciatingly shy and really came alive with the microphone in their hand and beats in the background. It demonstrated the power of music and community. They told us events like this gave them something to live for and look forward to. And it gave them a voice.

Lessons learnt

Live events were extremely successful in terms of attracting the target audience. There were barriers in attracting people to attending the workshop because of lack of confidence and motivation of those at-risk men. The location of the studio also created a barrier as it's slightly out of central Folkestone and people didn't have a car or funds to get a bus and it was too far to walk.

Unintended consequences

It wasn't exclusively young men who came out; it was an 80:20 male : female split. One of the workshops attracted a 50 something year old women with mental health issues. The live hip hop events were mainly men attendee wise, but there were a number of female attendees too who said the events were really important to them be it them as individuals or them coming to support a male in their lives. A reminder that we are all part of a network even when feeling alone and music is often a glue that brings us together.



Found In Music – Folkestone Music Town

Using hip hop to target men from high risk groups in Folkestone.



HELLFIRE CORNER PRESENTS **BACKWARDS MAN**
Saturday 30th March 8PM - 2AM

Space Bar Folkestone

BACKWARD SUN

Reminisce

ZEN SAY

SIMON SKUMBAGOZ

OCO

BILLY WHITE

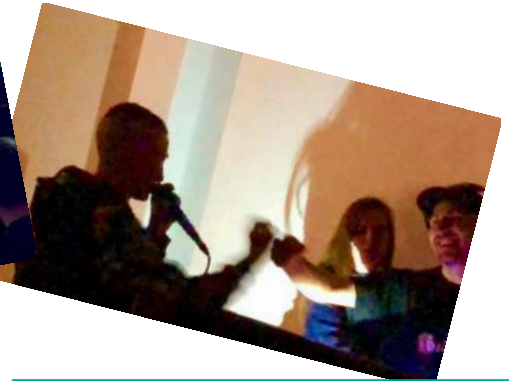
ALSO FEATURING
DJ 2GT - DJ Kee - King Bracket

THE GRAPPLE
LIVE GRAFFITI RAFFLE

£5 Tickets via eventbrite

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

Feeling the pressure? Don't suffer in silence. 0800 107 0160 releasethepressure.uk



“He has problems communicating and feels isolated and depressed. Music is the only thing that brings him out of his shell. Having stood on the side-line for the first half of the event looking anxious he took the mic and rapped a series of hip-hop verses he had written. He told us this was the proudest moment of his life”

“He loved being able to perform some of the lyrics he had written and said he had been waiting to get so many emotions and troubles off his chest. This was a valuable outlet and release for him. He said hip hop gives him a sense of purpose and will keep him out of trouble. He is looking forward to attending more hip hop nights in Folkestone now.”



Grassroots Suicide Prevention – Real Talk CYP



Developing a Real Talk Suicide Prevention Workshop for Children & Young People in Kent & Medway (in collaboration with Therapy Partners)

Objectives

The objective was the evolution and extension of Grassroots existing Real Talk workshop, with the aim of better engaging children and young people in the community. The existing Real Talk workshop has been developed by Grassroots as an introduction to suicide prevention, with the aim of reaching the wider community, and focusing on groups who would not access traditional training options. While the workshop has been well received by participants, Grassroots is committed to its ongoing development, and has identified a need to develop a young people and schools focused version of the workshop.

Impact

Feedback from the Invicta School Real Talk was generally very positive, with many participants commenting on the benefit of its open, honest, informative and helpful approach to suicide prevention. Constructive feedback was very much invited, and themes included the need for a longer session, more information about specific mental health conditions, and a desire for a smaller group size.

Lessons learnt

Estimating the timescales of working with schools can be challenging, due to their many competing priorities. Constructive feedback, as above, confirms our initial concerns around the size of the group and length of the session – however, on balance, it still feels like it was the right to run the session in this way, given the restrictions on working with schools.



Grassroots Suicide Prevention – Real Talk CYP



Developing a Real Talk Suicide Prevention Workshop for Children & Young People in Kent & Medway (in collaboration with Therapy Partners)

What aspects of Real Talk were most helpful to you?

- *“Thinking about why we don’t talk about suicide, what prevents us.”*
- *“Helping to initiate conversations about suicide, and to remove the stigma associate with this topic.”*
- *“The fact that ‘anyone’ may prevent a suicide.”*

Why would you recommend Real Talk to others?

- *“It’s very important to feel supported and to learn how to support others.”*
- *“People need to be more aware of the increase in suicide and how they can be of help.”*
- *“It’s essential. That simple.”*



Gravesend Methodist Church and Community Centre – Preventing Suicide through Drama



10 week drama project on the subject of mental health working with homeless and vulnerable people.

Objectives

To provide lunch for about 10 people a week and explore with participants feelings of suicide through their stories of homelessness through drama activities to give a voice to homeless people whose mental health may lead to suicide.

Impact

It gave all the participants a voice and an opportunity for that voice to be listened to. Homeless people rarely feel they have a voice so now through sharing the drama hopefully those who can help improve the mental health of these members of our community will really appreciate this need to be heard. Weekly lunches helped everyone who came. They felt part of a group with a purpose. The afternoon sessions in which they were able to explore their issues as part of a group helped them to understand their own feelings and to relate to others in the group.

Lessons learnt

Be as open as possible to the changing needs and moods of participants. Be prepared to change the activities at short notice if needed. Spend more time initially to discover what approaches would be best for everyone and have several activities available each session. Allow participants to be actively involved in all aspects of the project.

Unintended consequences

We hadn't anticipated that participants would have liked to prepare their own food and be an active part of that part of the project. As a result, we have introduced a new project which meets this need.



Gravesend Methodist Church and Community Centre – Preventing Suicide through Drama

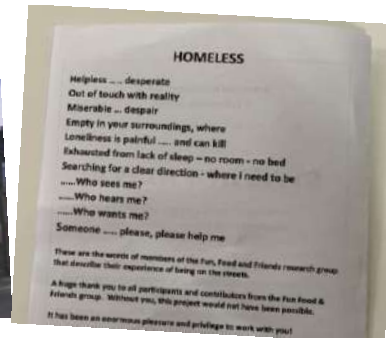


10 week drama project on the subject of mental health working with homeless and vulnerable people.

“This was really enlightening for me it really hit home to hear what I had been through explored through one of the characters. It was very emotional and I feel it gave other people who were not homeless a chance to understand just what it is like to be in that predicament. The leaders ... listened to what I had to say... They understood and enabled me to look for new ways to go forward. The afternoon sessions allowed us to take part in activities which explored our feelings which help me feel good about myself. I was very upset one afternoon but left feeling much better. To know that someone listens really helps take away the feeling that I’m standing in a room screaming but no-one has heard me. I left feeling much more positive”.



“The experience was both painful and a privilege. I learned so much about the courage of the men and women who attended the project. Our research not only captured the sequence of events that resulted in homelessness but the emotional journeys that gave rise to deepest feelings of despair and desperation which led to the desire to end their lives. I felt extremely honoured to be able to portray participants’ experiences in the final performance piece. I was also very moved when, after our performance, the participants hugged us and expressed their gratitude that their stories had been told.”



Intra Arts Ltd – Wave Project

An arts club for young people at risk of self-harm and suicide aged 15-24.



Objectives

Run 6 creative workshops Feb – April, with members aged 15-24, all reporting social anxiety, and a range of other issues contributing to their suicidal thoughts (e.g. LGBTQ, autism). Activities included screen printing, badge making, zine making, creating a spring themed window display with digitally cut vinyl stickers at INTRA and bookbinding. The aim of the workshops is to achieve improved feelings within the group of self-worth, reduced incidents of self-harm, reduced occurrences of intrusive or destructive thoughts, improved confidence, and increased belief that they can cope with life.

Impact

Young people with raised risk of suicide experienced a safe, fun environment, have been able to express themselves, make friends (reportedly very difficult otherwise), build their confidence and have something positive to look forward to. The public were very willing and helpful in sharing information about the project, they were glad it was happening. Increased Intra Arts and the workshop leaders' experience and confidence in working with young people.

Lessons learnt

- We recognised the value of working with young people as paid assistants on the project, as they are able to sit with the group and maintain support while not making the group members feel self conscious. They can also stimulate conversation naturally during activities. Allowing some invited friends can also be useful.
- The amount of time it took to recruit participants and plan the way the group ran took much longer than anticipated. It took a while to build but has grown into a strong core. We've added more planning / admin time for a funding bid just submitted. We found the group really liked getting texts a day or two before each meeting, to remind them of it happening and so they knew what the activity was. The mixture of Tuesday nights and Sunday afternoons worked for most participants.

Unintended consequences

Parents bringing their children to the meetings got to meet each other and chat, bringing a level of support for each other. Awareness of INTRA's work increased with health and wellbeing, educational, and youth groups making connections with us. The group was offered other opportunities such as exhibitions of their work, increasing their sense of achievement.



Intra Arts Ltd – Wave Project

An arts club for young people at risk of self-harm and suicide aged 15-24.



An 18 year old girl with ADHD, ASD, anxiety, self harm issues and suicidal thoughts, who has taken overdoses and was in a mental health care facility at the start of Wave and was feeling very anxious about her discharge date. When discharged in February, Wave was the first thing that got her out of the house. She was very quiet at the first session, her confidence grew over the next couple of sessions and she asked if she could bring a friend who had been supportive to her, the friend helped her to integrate to the group even more. She has reported being really excited to attend, and really likes getting the text updates. Wave has taken her out of her comfort zone and it has been good for her to see that she can get on with people she doesn't know.



A 23 year old girl, referred by APM Chatham as she is NEET. She suffers from social anxiety and has had suicidal thoughts. She attended 5 sessions and was pleased to find that the age gap between her and other members was not a barrier to having conversations and getting on with people. She says Wave has been something consistent in her life, something to look forward to and a place where she finds it easier to have meaningful conversations with people. She has talked with the group about her attempts to find work.



Involve Kent – Volunteer for Wellbeing – Support Volunteering



Supported DIY and Gardening volunteering project for those facing barriers into mainstream volunteering, including disability, mental health or previous convictions.

Objectives

Increase the confidence, self-esteem and independence of those at high risk of suicide through taking part in activities. They will feel more connected to their community and their peers through social interaction. We hope they will report feeling less anxious through focusing on learning new skills and gain a more positive outlook. There will be an improvement in their mental health and well-being; increase in happiness, reduction in loneliness, and depression. 63% of the volunteers are in high risk groups and/or have disclosed suicidal thoughts to us.

Impact

The Mental Health Information session and Social events have made it clear this topic is not taboo at Involve which has a long term impact on vulnerable beneficiaries' confidence to speak up about feelings, ask questions and ask for support. Beneficiaries have learnt skills that they can take into mainstream volunteering and/or paid work in the future. Beneficiaries have made meaningful social connections, found sources of support, a sense of purpose and self-worth which will have a positive impact on how they view potential opportunities and their future.

Lessons learnt

When talking to a volunteer about their experience volunteering with Involve, they noted that their mental health is often worse in the winter, and that they struggle to stay engaged in activities. This conversation along with our own knowledge that volunteers drop off in the winter months has led to discussions about developing a specific winter programme that focuses on mental health, wellbeing and developing resilience for the colder months. We are looking to run this as part of the Get Involved and Shed projects as an additional support to the volunteers taking part in those activities, many of whom are at risk from suicide.



Involve Kent – Volunteer for Wellbeing – Support Volunteering



Supported DIY and Gardening volunteering project for those facing barriers into mainstream volunteering, including disability, mental health or previous convictions.



D decided to join after meeting with a member of staff who he said was friendly and described the environment as a sanctuary to access when feeling overwhelmed. D says that his mental health is still very turbulent and does change day to day but volunteering has had a positive effect. He says that with age his mental health has got worse, and had he not been volunteering, he would have struggled to manage it. D has enjoyed receiving information and support from Involve and says that he would not have known about these services had it not been for the volunteer social and forum events. He found the Mental Health Afternoon really useful and liked being able to ask questions to the services. He has since used the Release the Pressure helpline and carries the card with the phone number on with him in case he needs someone to talk to.

M has a long history of mental health conditions and says that volunteering helps him to manage day to day life and that if he wasn't volunteering he would sit at home all day every day, resulting in poor mental health. M enjoys the camaraderie of volunteering with other volunteers who are in a similar situation to himself and has formed many friendships through volunteering. He also enjoys helping those in the community who have 'had a tough time'. He recalls that one of his favourite moments was helping a couple whose garden was completely overgrown, and neither one could maintain it due to poor physical and mental health. The team were able to completely clear the garden and he felt humbled when the gentleman thanked him for making the garden useable again – a small action for some but this made a big impact to the couple in their home.



Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust – Best Foot Forward Group

A peer support group for older people with anxiety and depression.

Objectives

Provide an ongoing, easily accessible group for older people with depression and anxiety to feel they can belong to, gain support and reduce social isolation which would in turn improve their mental health and risk of suicide. Long term groups such as this, with the focus on relapse prevention and sustaining good mental health usually falls within the remit of the voluntary sector rather than secondary mental health services but as there were no other organisations running anything like this in the local area, it was felt important to the people using and those providing mental health care, to resolve this unmet need.

Impact

Providing an opportunity for older people with anxiety and depression to meet with people experiencing similar conditions and start to socialise again through structured and supported activity has seen wonderful results. It has been instrumental in reducing the stigma of mental health and encouraging people to join in other community activities, outside of the group. Members have seen a reduced need for professional input and more able to take a lead in managing their own mental health.

Lessons learnt

The project was launched with a simple plan and facilitators ensured this was a joint venture between staff and service users. As a result, all group members are committed to the success of the group and I believe this has been key to the positive outcomes to date.

Unintended consequences

- The group members have build social networks out side of the group structure and have bonded in a way that was not expected or planned. They are incredibly supportive to each other and have developed a 'cinema group' by frequently going to the local cinema on the same day each week.
- We have had a couple of people wanting to attend but felt too anxious to come alone so brought their spouses. Although they had originally planned to just come until their partner felt comfortable, they enjoyed the group so much they have also continued to attend. This has added an additional dimension to the group that we hadn't envisaged – it has allowed support for carers and added to the sense of cohesion. Moving forward, we hope other carers of people living with anxiety and depression will feel able to join their partners if this helps both their improved well being and mental health.



Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust – Best Foot Forward Group

A peer support group for older people with anxiety and depression.

A had experienced depression for most of her life but with life changes and recent events, this had become unmanageable for A and she took an attempt on her life. Attending the group has allowed A to not feel as though she was on her own, that she is not the only person having such difficult thoughts and feelings and this has given her the strength to carry on and start to build her life back again. A has made friends through the group and feels she has people she can spend time to whether she is feeling up or down in her mood, and this has helped her to remain well. She has recently started in a volunteer role and is now more confident and hopeful for the future.

D has experienced social anxiety for many years now. This had left her feeling that life was not worth living and perpetuated the low mood and anxiety. Although D wanted to attend the group, her fears made this difficult so facilitators encouraged her to come when she felt able but not to put too much pressure on her advised that attendance each session was not essential and that we would share the timetable of activities so she could pick those that she would feel more comfortable doing. Initially D attended infrequently and was welcomed and supported each time she came. Over time, the consistency of the group, the support and the warmth of the members has helped D to feel more confident socialising and this has been reflected in her increased attendance and chatting within the group.



Kent Community Health NHS Trust – Promoting self-management of self-harm



Kent Community Health
NHS Foundation Trust

People with personal experience to develop information and practical advice for others being treated for self-harm in acute general settings

Objectives

The objective was to provide supportive information to people who self-harm at the point of them accessing urgent care services. This included promoting self-management and education around reducing risks associated with future harm. This information was written predominantly by patients, for patients and includes personal experience with practical advice. The project aimed to be service user led and has incorporated their views, sharing supportive techniques from those who have self-harmed. Professional input was used to steer the project and help in the compilation while keeping the service user view at the forefront.

Impact

It has been a valuable experience working alongside service users and managing personal opinions and viewpoints but also being inclusive in representing others' contributions. Individuals have benefitted from feeling as though they are doing something helpful for others and feel proud of this.

Lessons learnt

The booklet content was very much driven by the service users, I recognised as the project progressed the need to be able to balance view points and negative experiences so that this did not have a negative or resentful influence on the content. Managing different perspectives and contributions was challenging at times and highlighted for any future work the need for high level communication and people management skills.

Unintended consequences

The difficulty with the project has been the length of time that the processing in the Trust Communications department has required and due to changes a lot of user testing and feedback is essential to ensure the finished project is accurate and suitable for purpose.



Kent Community Health NHS Trust – Promoting self-management of self-harm

People with personal experience to develop information and practical advice for others being treated for self-harm in acute general settings

She described how it gave her a focus as she was feeling at a particular low point and having created a goal for herself, to produce this work was something she reported as being helpful to her too. She has delighted in doing this and is very keen to have some finished copies to visually represent the final achievement and also to share with those close to her to help them see both her creativity being used in a positive way for others and to highlight the issue of self-harm.



One of the contributing service users had been through a difficult period which had led to a significant cycle of self-harm. Until this time she had been managing very well and had a period of not harming very often. The inclusion of many issues around the topic of self-harm from people who have personal knowledge has been a positive experience in that all members feel they have been able to do something positive and useful. For this service user in particular this has been empowering.



Living Words – Living Warriors



Working with individuals from Folkestone who got close but did not ultimately complete on suicide to write down their words about the moment they chose to live.

Objectives

Living Warriors is all about exploring why people who got close, did not ultimately complete on suicide. Living Words will work with individuals from Folkestone, using our deep and authentic Listen Out Loud methodology, to write down their words about the moment they chose to live. This profound and affirming project will: enable individuals to co-create their own book of words around this moment and to share their words with others; provide data for the NHS around this issue; take individuals' words out to the public to raise awareness, challenge stigma and promote debate; explore the size of potential for our methodology within this sector.

Impact

- Relationships were formed both within the three groups and whole group, as well as between participants and writers.
- Participants felt heard, in different ways to at any other time in their lives. All participants had received therapy at some point in their life – from minimum 6 week CBT to decades under psychiatrists.
- People felt they had not looked at this event in their life in detail before, even those who had been in therapy for a long time. It was discussed that we get past the 'event' or 'non-event' and then we focus on moving forward, not on that exact moment.

Lessons learnt

It was much easier than expected to fill the spaces on this project. Given the extremely tight turnaround time we did not want to 'advertise' as we did not have capacity to respond to all enquiries according to our policies.

People do not tell the truth when a suicidal attempt/feeling has been very recent. In future we need to meet the potential participants in person prior to the project. On the first day of the project participants filled in 'Project Agreement' forms which outlined each participants' responsibility for self-care. Perhaps we need a pre-project form to be completed when we have a longer run in to a project, if we were to continue.

Unintended consequences

One of the songs that we created is to be released on iTunes/Spotify etc on 14th May – as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. This was unintended but the song is catchy and emotive and we want to share it with as many people as possible.



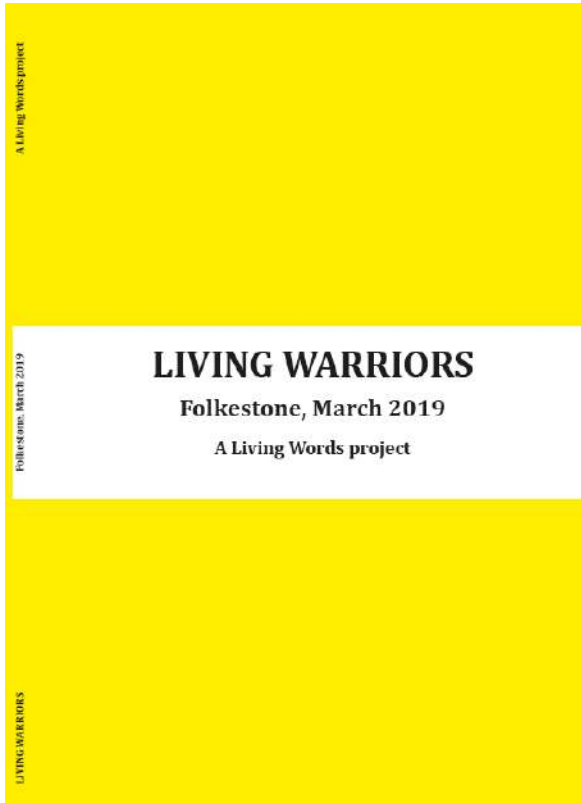
Living Words – Living Warriors

Working with individuals from Folkestone who got close but did not ultimately complete on suicide to write down their words about the moment they chose to live.



“This has helped me more that I thought it would... To talk and share with everyone and hear I’m not alone in how I felt is a comfort. This has been an amazing experience.”

“she said this was better than any therapy she had ever had. The opportunity to write down the things that were in her head and read them back. It was a chance to take the thoughts out of her head and then make sense of them when on a page in front of her. She could read them over and over and begin to understand what she was thinking and why.”



““The project has helped me to realise what I am capable of and that giving up is not an option... I now know that I am not alone.”

“I have been seen at last and definitely heard... AT last at 47 years old I have at last been seen – ugly bits and kind bits – the whole of me – not parts here and there, all of me”



Made With + - Steve – a film to save men from suicide

MADE WITH +

This film was sparked by the suicide of the Director's childhood best friend Steve Yates.

Objectives

Save one life. Save one man from taking his own life. Save one family, on set of friends from feeling the pain we felt. The film explores why men are at high risk of suicide, talks to inspirational people who are confronting the stigma and tries to offer ways for men to prevent mental ill health.

Impact

The film maker has already received feedback that the film has already changed lives and had encouraged men to seek help.

Lessons learnt

Following this production of this film the director has been approached to make similar films about children and young people and those working in the food industry. The lesson which he will take into possible future projects will be from the feedback received about the tone of the documentary being very solution focused.

Unintended consequences

Through the process of making the film it became apparent there is a need for safe spaces for men to talk and this led to the development of Talk Club. A website and a starter guide have been developed.



Made With + - Steve – a film to save men from suicide

MADE WITH +

This film was sparked by the suicide of the Director's childhood best friend Steve Yates.



This project has been amazingly draining, difficult and hard. But it's also been fantastic, inspiring and humbling. And I believe deep in my heart that it will save lives.

In fact it already has.

His name is Paul, his wife and children still have normal lives because of this film. He told me that.



STEVE - A documentary to help men battle depression.

Like This Page · 22 March ·

We've been receiving warm messages of congratulations from all over the world, on last night's Premiere of "Steve". For all the people who couldn't make it and have asked how did it go? 300 person standing ovation is how it went. Thank you to everyone who came. We really appreciate your support.



Maidstone and Mid-Kent Mind – Recovery Action Planning (RAP)



RAP sessions with vulnerable people to set stepping stone targets and boost self confidence.

Objectives

6 weeks of one to one recovery action plan appointments aimed at reducing suicide risk and individual goal setting to improve wellbeing for 6 people. Areas covered: managing mental health, physical health and self-care, life skill, social networks, volunteering/ work, relationships, addictive/ challenging behaviour, responsibilities, identity and self-esteem, aspirations. Each session was tailored to the individuals need for example, safety plans if feeling suicidal, self-harm reduction etc.

Impact

The outcomes in Ashford and Maidstone have been positive and all service users who attended and completed their sessions have shown improvement and reduction in risk.

Lessons learnt

People in high level of crisis need to be provided support for the crisis first, possibly over a couple of weeks before attending RAPS as we faced difficulties with the commitment to the 6 weeks as they struggled with motivation or felt they were not ready to progress. Having only the 6 weeks of session was not enough to effectively work with someone in crisis, the support would need to be provided over a period of time. For people in crisis we would need to be working with the service users in step-down programme for further recovery. For example:

- Provide initial crisis support at the café – to help with self-harm/ suicidal thoughts / suicidal idealization/ what is relevant to the service users crisis.
- 6 weeks of Recovery action plan – more proactive and goal setting focused to help the individual in managing mental health, physical health and self-care, life skill, social networks, volunteering/ work, relationships, addictive/ challenging behaviour, responsibilities, identity and self-esteem, aspirations.
- Courses, groups and Check in session– Move on the courses such as coping with life, work and wellbeing, other relevant courses to help future recovery. A check in session to see how recovery is going.



Maidstone and Mid-Kent Mind – Recovery Action Planning (RAP)



RAP sessions with vulnerable people to set stepping stone targets and boost self confidence.

Prior to completing RAPs, the service user had a very negative outlook and has previously attempted suicide. The service user completing the RAPs had started with particularly negative scores. An area that showed significant improvement was self-confidence and self-esteem improving scores from a 5 to a 9, setting a personal goal to keep a record on a weekly basis of the positive comments made towards her and read through them when she is feeling negative. Scores were maintained or improved throughout all areas of the recovery action plan and the service user now has a noticeably more positive outlook on day to day events. As a result, her relationships with her family has improved and is feeling more confident in herself.

She has been a regular attendee at the crisis café attending 34 times since the café opened and often found herself attending A&E, self-harming or attempting suicide. The Recovery action plans were the next step for her to learn more positive coping skills to help with future prevention/ management of crisis'. Overall this process worked well for her as she is using the crisis service less but knows the services is available if she needs it. To further her recovery, she is now volunteering and continues to practice her positive coping skills, attends art and social groups and has completed a self esteem course. She is thinking about the future and what she would like to do as a job and working towards this. She has stopped self-harming as a coping mechanism and has less thoughts of hurting herself or attempting suicide.



Maidstone Early Help – Parkwood Youth Club



Working with Kent Music to help young people create a piece of music around mental health

Objectives

Improve young people's self-esteem and to raise awareness around mental health in general as well as increased knowledge of their own mental health. The sessions were split between sessions with Kent Music to create their song around mental health. They spoke about PTSD, depression, bullying and anxiety. They chose to base their song on these mental health illnesses. They were split into sub groups with one creating the lyrics and another creating the music. This session really enables the young people to discuss the impact of mental health on their lives. At the end of the session we created a story board for the video.

Sessions with Addaction were arranged to talk to the young people about mental health and the support they can offer and explore what they thought mental health was and spoke about anxiety and depression.

Impact

The young people were talking about their mental health and felt comfortable to share their experiences with others. They were supporting each other with the activities teaching key skills such as playing chords on a guitar and encouraging each other to sing. Since doing this project, it has enabled the young people to get support from Early Help for their mental health. They have felt more comfortable to talk to the workers about their feelings.

This project has brought together the older and younger children of the group closer together. It has caused the young people to come closer and work together as a team. Without this project we do not believe this cohesion wouldn't of happened before.

Unintended Consequences

Young people have been more open around their own mental health experiences. They have expressed thoughts of social anxiety, suicide and stress.

This project has led us to run a further 6 weeks focusing on mental health. We have discovered young people who we thought weren't suffering are.

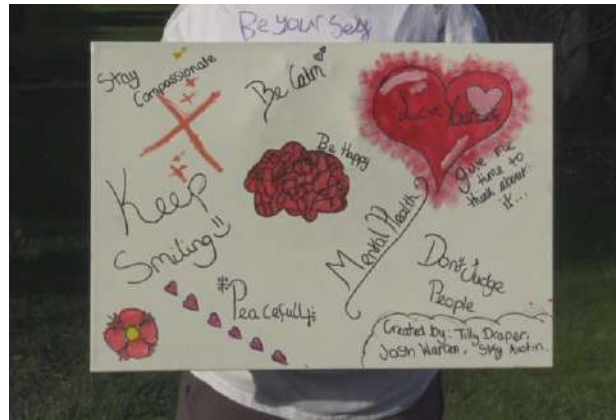
The young people are wanting to go on a residential which would really boost their self-esteem and confidence.



Maidstone Early Help – Parkwood Youth Club



Working with Kent Music to help young people create a piece of music around mental health



Medway Diversity Forum – Every Live Matters



Working with BAME young people in Medway to create a suicide prevention campaign.

Objectives

Working with young people from the BAME community to raise awareness of suicide and self-harm and mental health issues associated with them and designing suicide prevention poster and banner pen to be distributed to schools and communities.

Impact

- The young people have realised that they can play a role in preventing suicidal behaviour, whether by being more open about the issue to raise awareness, fight stigma, by looking out for and providing support to vulnerable individuals by signposting them to services mentioned in the campaign.
- One of the most important outcomes has been that 2 of the participants who are experiencing mental health issues and stigma due to their sexual orientation want to now make a short film on how mental health affects young people in their everyday lives. MDF is trying to seek funding and work with other charities to enable this to come to fruition.

Lessons learnt

The young people participants came up with the lots of ideas for next steps including: Have some mental health experts go to schools and educate teens on what anxiety and depression is, what it looks like, how it feels, and the signs that someone might have mental health issues. There is still a lot of people who don't understand the terms, make jokes about it and approach this topic in such an insensitive way. Even though there is a lot more awareness about depression and anxiety, especially in this generation, these terms are still thrown around loosely, without people understanding the severity of these issues. They are simply uninformed on the details of these problems and how to approach them.

Unintended consequences

The knowledge that young people do not get the support required from their schools and know who to approach when they are experiencing mental health issues. Building a relationship with Victory Academy School in Chatham, their support and the student engagement has been vital.



Medway Diversity Forum – Every Life Matters

Working with BAME young people in Medway to create a suicide prevention campaign.



“Belonging to LGBTQ+ and migrant community.... I was able to open up to group of people who understand what I've gone through and for them to relate or understand has helped me not feel alone and more acceptable to the society we live in right now.”

“This project has helped me understand that mental health issues can affect anyone and that it is important to check up on your family and friends. Hearing first hand from some of the people in the group how mental health issues affected them and how they did not know what support services are out there was an eye-opener for me.”



North West Kent Countryside Partnership – Ecology Island



North West Kent
COUNTRYSIDE
protect / explore / enjoy

Working with North Kent Mind to provide nature-based interventions for people with MH conditions

Objectives

16 sessions of the Natural Ways to Wellbeing at Ecology Island project were delivered between Jan and March 2019. Each session was facilitated by a member of staff from NWKCP, and a member of staff from North Kent Mind. Participants (who are experiencing mental health issues and have been referred into the project) took part in a range of nature-based activities including natural crafts, habitat management, litter picking, wildlife ID, bird box making and more. Their wellbeing was monitored before, during and after via WEMWBS.

Impact

The group has come together as a bonded unit; relationships have been formed that exceed the Monday morning session (participants have been on cinema trips and walks together; one pair even went on holiday together) and there is a sense of mutual understanding and support among the group.

The impact of this on individuals has been to reduce feelings of social isolation and provide them with a weekly period free from stigma. Participants have commented that they feel happy there, listened to and valued.

Lessons learnt

Participants have commented that sometimes at mental health groups you can feel that they are inventing jobs for you to keep you busy, but never at Ecology Island. Having discovered how important it is for the group to feel that they are making a difference, we'd also like to link with other projects that need practical helpers, especially when the Ecology Island site is not in need of work. For example, the group are going to do some weeding for nearby Hall Place's community garden in April, and possibly help the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership clear the old Dartford Gunpowder Mill site of scrub later in 2019.

Unintended consequences

The positive impact on wildlife was an unintended consequence, and this has in turn reinforced the positive outcomes on the group's mental health.

Comments made by participants regarding the positive effect this project has had on their physical health have highlighted another unintended positive consequence, which has again reinforced the positive outcomes on the group's mental health.



North West Kent Countryside Partnership – Ecology Island



North West Kent
COUNTRYSIDE
protect / explore / enjoy

Working with North Kent Mind to provide nature-based interventions for people with MH conditions

When he joined the project, Bob was suffering from depression. He says it was not a good time; he didn't want to get out of bed and needed something to do with all the time that was stretching out in front of him.

“Ecology Island was a breath of fresh air. It makes me feel good, makes getting up on a Monday morning worthwhile. I have met new people and learnt things – now I can tell a sparrow from a blue tit. I enjoy my Mondays and feel a new zest for life, it gives me something to do. I enjoy the different things we do - making things, clearing brambles, going for walks. I feel wanted.”

Bob tells us that he feels that Ecology Island has helped his physical health as well as mental, becoming more active on a regular basis.

“I'm achieving things, so it makes me feel better, makes me feel good”.

Bob has become somewhat of a mentor to other participants, showing them how to build bird boxes and sharing experience in a quietly confident way. He has formed close relationships with other members and now socialises with some of them outside of the project.

Nicole suffers from bad anxiety which at its worst stops her from leaving the house and from living a fulfilling life. Nicole joined the Ecology Island group in summer 2018 when she was suffering particularly badly.

Since then she has found acceptance within the group and has come out of her shell to become a valued member of the project. Nicole says, “People in this group are a lot more understanding than elsewhere and I have made friends. When I am there, I feel like I am at peace because being outside is relaxing. I feel it is helping with my anxiety a lot.”



Northfleet Early Help – Horses for Health

A programme to reduce self-harm and increase self-esteem amongst young people at risk of self-harm (working with Squirrels Riding Centre).

Objectives

A 12-week programme to support young people to reduce self-harm and suicidal thoughts and to increase explore and raise young people's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy and ensure that young people gain the support to improve their opportunities and emotional wellbeing.

Impact

All young people fully engaged in the programme amongst the many outcomes there was clear improvement in self-esteem, confidence, interaction with others, emotional wellbeing and ability to self-reflect. Following the programme the young people's ability to recognise behaviours that need improvement and access support to change behaviours had increased.

All participants gained basic first aid qualification from the British Red Cross and a British horse-riding society certificates in stable skills and horse riding.

Lessons learnt

- Greater time re Prep and for the course to run over a longer timeframe
- The ability to continue to be flexible across the programme to the needs of the young people and have a third worker to support young people as and if needed on a 1-2-1 basis.

Unintended consequences

- Improved relationships with referral schools and local agencies.
- Young people planning to continue to access the Riding school and continue with their activity after this project has finished and are keen to support others at Northfleet youth hub and exploring Volunteering opportunities here.



Northfleet Early Help – Horses for Health

A programme to reduce self-harm and increase self-esteem amongst young people at risk of self-harm (working with Squirrels Riding Centre).

B is a young female aged 15 She is a lovely girl but was unhappy in school and struggled. She was struggling academically. She also struggles with low self-esteem and confidence. The school has stated that she has selective mutism and did not express how she feels. By the end of the programme B was a chatterbox; she confident in riding a horse, she was engaging with her peers and staff at the riding school and staff from the project.

A was really quiet and always keep herself apart from the group for the first 2/3 sessions. By the end of the twelve-week programme, A was a very active member of the group; she was confident in expressing herself; she was confident in taking photos and videos; she was confident riding a horse on her own. The school stated that they could see a difference in her as she was more talkative, engaging better with her learning and engaging better with her peers and adults. During the session to celebrate the success of the participant, A stood up in front of parents, peers, referrers and staff and said how much she has enjoyed being part of the group and having a group of friends.

Parents comments

- Has helped my daughter manage her anger; has given her strategies to stop self-harming; has improved her confidence.
- My daughter is so much happier since she started this Horses 4 health course. This really helped her mental health.
- My daughter has been a changed girl. Thank you so much. She has come out of herself and has better social skills.
- My daughter has been so much happier. She has really enjoyed the experience, her confidence has grown. So has her smile.



"I have learnt to let my emotions out in a better way."



Samaritans of Maidstone and Weald – Reaching Out To Men

The logo for Samaritans, featuring the word "SAMARITANS" in white capital letters on a green rectangular background.

An outreach project using sports clubs to take support messages to men.

Objectives

To make contact and set up a dialogue with various sporting venues, gyms and sports clubs in an effort to raise awareness particularly to men about our service and to help reduce the stigma of seeking help for emotional problems. We aimed to raise awareness amongst the staff of these venues to encourage stronger listening skills and raise awareness of recognising those at risk of suicide.

Impact

It continues to raise awareness of the high incidence of male suicide, particularly in the 40-45 age bracket and has concentrated minds on working together to help get the message across that help is available and it is nothing to be ashamed of by reaching out for this help.

Lessons learnt

That it takes time to build up trust and confidence in what we can offer, so a softly softly approach has been adopted. There are no fast fixes but working with groups such as we have been doing I feel confident will reap dividends over future years.

Unintended consequences

We have made a great many contacts and are working together with more groups than before...that we weren't even aware existed before this project. It has been particularly enlightening to see how much groups want to be involved and help reduce the incidence of suicide within our society.



Samaritans of Maidstone and Weald – Reaching Out To Men

The logo for Samaritans, featuring the word "SAMARITANS" in white, uppercase letters on a green rectangular background.

An outreach project using sports clubs to take support messages to men.

Our Outreach volunteers were made aware of a local village who had recently lost a member through suicide. One of the villagers had seen us at a sporting venue and contacted us following that encounter.

We gave a short talk to approximately 50 people around improving listening skills and what to look out for when people were suffering low emotional health. Afterwards we were available for people to speak confidentially following the meeting.

One particular gentleman approached our volunteer and was able to have a long and productive talk about how he was having suicidal thoughts. This was the first time he had managed to open up to anyone and talk about his innermost thoughts.

Several other people had noticed from afar that he was talking and said to our volunteers how relieved they felt that he had opened up and how they felt more confident now about being able to talk to him themselves and were far more aware of how to be a better listener than before the meeting.



SpeakUpCIC – Bridge the Gap

A peer support network via phone and social networking for SpeakUpCIC service user members.



Objectives

9 'Befriending Buddies' have been fully trained who are SpeakUpCIC service user members who provide one-to-one support via phone and face-to-face. The 'Buddies' are the experts by experience because they have 'been there' so have a natural empathy and understanding. Their role is to provide the friendly helping hand and listening ear, with the aim of encouraging and supporting people to re-engage to help reduce loneliness and isolation and to prevent people reaching crisis point.

Facilitation of a Mental Health Awareness Event – Listen Up III – held on 26 February. The event included information sharing regarding MH provision and support and promoted the 'Bridge the Gap' project, Release the Pressure and the Suicide Prevention Programme. A Listening Exercise also took place during the event which highlighted the need (and effectiveness) of peer support in relation to supporting people who are experiencing a crisis.

Impact

We are delighted that the project is proving very successful in relation to meeting its objectives and we are happy with the impact and outcomes so far. Not only are the beneficiaries (who are all SpeakUpCIC service user members) benefitting from the 'helping hand' support provided by the Befriending Buddies, but the Buddies themselves are reporting that they are benefitting from the opportunity to help and support others – which is helping to make them feel valued. We feel that another important element is that the project was developed with service user members and is peer support led. Again, this is empowering for the members who have been involved in the development stage and those who are involved in the delivery.

Lessons learnt

From our experience, projects that are developed 'by the people for the people' and incorporate peer support are generally the most affective and we feel that Bridge the Gap is a very good example of this ethos and practice.

Unintended consequences

In addition to the initial aims and objectives being met – another element has now developed within the Befriending Buddy role. When a new person becomes a member of SpeakUpCIC they are linked with a Befriending Buddy - if they wish. The Buddy then helps them to gain confidence by accompanying them to groups and activities to support them to become integrated and meet new people etc. This 'helping hand' support has already supported several new members.



SpeakUpCIC – Bridge the Gap

A peer support network via phone and social networking for SpeakUpCIC service user members.



Befriending Buddies

AP had been regularly attending weekly groups in Deal and Thanet but in December began missing sessions. AP used to be accompanied by his wife who supported him as necessary. Concerned about him missing the sessions and aware that he had a history of self-harm, Kay contacted his wife and was advised that they had sadly separated. A Buddy who was known to AP was then duly linked with him and given his telephone number (with AP's consent). The Buddy telephoned AP who advised that he was struggling to cope without the support of his wife and was starting to feel lonely and cut off, hence his not attending group sessions. The Buddy arranged to meet with AP prior to a group session and AP was then accompanied into the group to help him re-connect. Once he was through the door and seated with some people he knew, he relaxed and was able to join in the session. The Buddy continued to support AP to attend further sessions until he felt confident enough to attend on his own. AP was also encouraged to join the social networking support group and has found this very supportive. We are pleased to report that AP is now attending group sessions regularly and has also begun attending another group, having met new people and found new interests.



Stepping Out

Offering relaxed, scenic, sociable walks & lunch to families bereaved by suicide and other at risk individuals, in association with the Kent Ramblers & SOBS.

Objectives

- To encourage relaxation with no stresses or pressures. To offer the chance talk or not to talk, allowing people to engage with others on the walk - both carers and those they care for - all of whom would have empathy with their story.
- To gradually build trust of people affected by suicide/self-harm to grow the project by word of mouth and publicity.
- To help bond as a group, feel part of a team, to build a sense of purpose and inclusion.
- To have fun.
- To help address physical, mental and emotional health issues - something walking through green spaces in good company has an almost magical ability to do.

Impact

- We feel it has opened a door for many people who may have felt a great reluctance to go on adventures or be sociable again.
- That any sense of fear or stigma will hopefully have been swept away.
- That you are not alone, if you have your own struggles and challenges.
- That laughter, fun and a sense of belonging is possible - even when it has seemed so remote.
- That you may talk freely about someone in the family who has died if you so wish - there is no judgement only interest and empathy.

Lessons learnt

- You can't do without Bernard, our mascot caring cockapoo, for breaking the ice in social settings.
- Leeds Castle and Canterbury walks were both chosen by members of SOBS - so it is valuable to consult the participants themselves rather than impose the venues.
- There is a widely-acknowledged issue with male suicide in Kent - and so setting up a walking football event that might attract middle-aged/older men who may be suffering from isolation/mental health issues is a priority.

Unintended consequences

The new links we have forged with the Samaritans was an unexpected consequence but a wonderful one — and hopefully will lead to a valuable partnership.



Stepping Out

Offering relaxed, scenic, sociable walks & lunch to families bereaved by suicide and other at risk individuals, in association with the Kent Ramblers & SOBS.

The feedback has been really positive. One person said the Leeds Castle Walk was the best day they'd had out since they had been bereaved. Because we withdraw, we isolate ourselves once someone has died through suicide. You tend to not try new things. You withdraw from life a little bit. That's why it's such a big step for them to go out. You don't mix. You don't socialise. But they had - all of them - had a really pleasant day on the walk. They were talking about it at our group meeting in the evening. It was a really successful day. They would all be encouraged to do it again. They all got a lot from the day.

They all seemed a little bit lighter at the end of the day. Walking in the outdoors, being with people who made them feel comfortable.



Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SoBS)

Supporting family and friends that are left behind with specialist peer support



Objectives

Hold monthly support groups in Thanet for those bereaved by suicide and raise awareness of SoBS through local fayres and mental health events.

Impact

I never really ask people their views on the group as it's their group. The fact that people come each month let's me know that SoBS is needed in Thanet, we just need to keep letting people know we are here.

Lessons learnt

It's hard! People need us and return each month for support. The reach of the group needs to expand to cover other areas and support people to attend by arranging transport for those who don't drive.

Unintended Consequences

A few members have attended walks with Stepping Out, which has led to exploring local walks for Thanet people once a month in addition to the monthly groups



The Activity Box – Seeing the light through creativity



Supporting adults with mental health conditions through creative activities

Objectives

To provide a safe non-judgemental and welcoming warm environment within a community setting where they can come and express themselves, reducing tension, stress levels and even boosting confidence and happier emotions. A lot of the arts and crafts learnt can be continued at home ensuring continuity is there after the 10-week programme has completed. They can carry on with some of their crafts or return to us on a self-funding basis.

Impact

Without sounding big headed but the project has been a huge success. The clients have engaged and clients are seen to be helping themselves, building friendships in our community setting and trying. Our positivity jars have been reported to us as being really beneficial as this boosts their self-confidence and esteem. The jars have ignited passion and brought happiness plus laughter to many. Some whom have struggled to smile about anything in a long while have regained their smiles and ability to hold their heads up in pride.

Lessons learnt

With one client who expressed that she may 'flip out' on bad days, we were unsure as to how bad this could get and to ensure safety of herself and others in the setting, seated her near an exit and on every session removed potentially harmful apparatus. From this we are looking into safety training for staff and boosting our education and understanding of mental health conditions.

Unintended consequences

One client assisted us with a school when they attended, she was DBS checked and we had her by our side helping 57 children who attended the studio. It boosted her confidence and it's something she can add to her cv for her early years' education course. We are happy to help, and the result was fantastic, she thrived and it was a confidence boost she needed.



The Activity Box – Seeing the light through creativity



Supporting adults with mental health conditions through creative activities



Young lady had trouble with self-esteem and engaging with her child, failing marriage and suicidal thoughts. Through out the course and differing crafts taught, her self confidence and esteem has exceeded above what all of us would have expected. She was taught crafts that she could do with her son and openly admitted that without our support she wouldn't have a relationship with him. She states that from her sessions it has given her the motivation to wash dress and get out of the house. Our biggest compliment was that she verbalised that she hasn't had one suicidal thought whilst with us or on the course and stated "the activity box has made my world"



Older lady, isolated with poor mobility. From her sessions with us we have built her self esteem and confidence in herself and abilities. She has lots of new skills which she is carting on with at home giving her focus and purpose and is now looking now at volunteering in a charity setting. From being in the studio she has made friendships and will be joining us regularly on the workshops we are setting up for clients past and present to maintain their social skills and wellbeing.





Therapy Partners – Head Stuff

An interactive workshop to help with children and young people's emotional regulation around exams using drama and CBT techniques.

Objectives

The co-production of an **interactive play** with students at The Robert Napier School. To help inspire young people to help themselves with their own emotional regulation, reach out for support if they need it and support their peers. By defining exam stress and the root causes, in turn, helping students understand their emotions and enabling them to regulate their anxiety levels.

Impact

The co-production process has helped pupils explore their emotions and feelings which can help in managing their anxiety. By using a therapeutic frame and creative ways to co-develop the play which will be delivered by young people using their own narratives we aim to reframe exam Anxiety nerves into a more positive use. Its been interesting to see the group of pupils develop positive relationships with each other and experientially learn new strategies to manage anxiety, whilst identifying unhelpful thought processes and reframing new ones.

Lessons learnt

One learning outcome is that we need to allow additional time in the initial school engagement process, and that project plans are important to give a framework particularly with filming times and pupil availability. However its also ok to go off script sometimes as this gave us some rich content.

Unintended consequences

The group bonded really well and were able to talk openly about the experience even the quietest members of the group were given a voice and there understanding of Physiology and Fight/Flight responses and how anxiety can sometimes overwhelm them. It was positive to hear that skills learned were being put to use already in both a school and wider social context. The group have also requested that they would like to become involved in future projects and we have a ready made focus group to help evaluate other work streams and evaluations.



Therapy Partners – Head Stuff

An interactive workshop to help with children and young people's emotional regulation around exams using drama and CBT techniques.



Therapy Partners – R U OK

A partnership between Therapy Partners and Firmin Transport to deliver Suicide Prevention messages to drivers and logistics staff across Kent.



Objectives

Breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health in the transport industry. It is vitally important to address the increasingly worrying male suicide statistics. To do this successfully requires dealing with the problem directly, by engaging with groups of employees who are known to be a potential risk. R U OK is the campaign that has taken the initiative to work with both the transport and construction industries to provide support and training to employees and management.

Impact

Engagement Early engagement via Facebook has been promising as this gives an anonymous way to engage away from the restrictions of peers. Giving out the Release the pressure cards and signposting together with having conversations has gone a long way to help break down the stigma, but a lot of further work could be carried out within this sector.

Lessons learnt

There is still a stigma around mental health especially in the traditional male dominated industries like construction and transport. When engaging with this sector it's important to use appropriate language when engaging with staff. It's down to the stigma but to engage with people it was useful to adapt narratives to include softer phrases. With hindsight and following one from our learning we repositioned this to a discussion on how you can manage your "Stress" with a free coffee voucher for people who attended our 1-2-1 drop-ins and that we wanted feedback on the Release the Pressure Cards that had been given out with their payslips.

Unintended consequences

We have had enquiries from related sectors who operates a transport function but not as their core business for example we had an enquiry from a scaffolding company to help assist their employees, as a consequence we have started discussions with them and this sector is something we could look at in the future.



Therapy Partners – R U OK

A partnership between Therapy Partners and Firmin Transport to deliver Suicide Prevention messages to drivers and logistics staff across Kent.



I met Peter at a transport café in Kent towards the end of February 2019. He was a multi-drop delivery driver working on a self-employed basis delivery mostly online parcels working for a number of companies on a zero hours contract He was originally from Poland and had been in the UK since 2008.

Some mornings he had struggled to get out of bed to go to work but he felt that he had to because if he did not go to work, he did not earn any money and he needed up to support his family. He was worried that he was drinking too much at the weekends and he missed his family in Poland especially his dad. He had feelings that he was a failure as most of his friends were working within the construction sector and he believe they were earning better money than he was.

Peter thanked me for talking to him and he said that he felt listen to and slightly better than when he had arrived at the café. We talked for about 15 minutes as I was conscious that Peter had to do more deliveries, but I did give Peter one of the release the pressure cards together with my telephone number should he need to talk to somebody in the future. About a week later I got a text from him to say that he had called the helpline on a Sunday evening after a particularly difficult weekend as he was fearing going into work next day. He said it had helped and he thanked me for talking to him.



Vault Films UK Ltd – Solitary

A short film (drama) exploring the issue of male suicide



SOLITARY SYNOPSIS

Jack, a man at rock bottom, finds himself in a place he's been many, many times before; flung into a dark, dank, miserable prison cell. After sitting silently on the end of the bed for a little while he hears a man's voice coming from the shadows. But he's not shocked, he was expecting this. The stranger stands up and walk around the room talking to Jack but not showing us his true identity just yet. He tells Jack how he's heard rumours that Jack might be above to cave in to pressure and talk, something Jack denies.

But the stranger isn't convinced. Seemingly out of nowhere his calm measured demeanour changes and he lunges at Jack, grabbing him by the throat and pinning him down on the bed using his other hand to grab the pillow and slam it on to Jack's face, heavily restricting his breathing. The stranger launches into an aggressive threatening lecture about how nobody will believe Jack if he spills the beans, they won't take him seriously, he'll lose the people he loves and his life won't be worth living. He lets him know, in no uncertain terms, that he is already proving to be a huge burden and it would be no skin off their nose if he 'wasn't around' anymore.

We can hear Jack's muffled protests coming from under the pillow and the stranger makes sure that Jack has got the message before finally removing the pillow. Jack's face is a snooty, tear-ridden, slightly bloody mess. He's got the picture. But the stranger needs to be sure. "Look at me!" Jack does. What he sees looking back at him is shocking. It's himself. This is Jack's own brain doing this to himself. He asks one more time just to be certain the message has sunk in. "What are you going to say if they ask?" "Nothing".

The camera moves backwards, through the prison door, winding around the prison corridors at speed until it backs right out of Jack's ear and we find ourselves in Jack's lounge where he is sat, quietly, with his girlfriend. It is this point we realise for sure that this has all taken place in Jack's own mind. The aggression, the suffocating pressure, the crippling fear-inducing threat of discovery. It is a creation inside Jack's own brain. But the feelings are very real for him.

His girlfriend asks him "Jack, please talk to me, what's wrong?"

He gives a little forced half smile and replies, simply "Nothing.....honestly, nothing".

"84 men in the UK take their own life every single week and suicide is the single biggest killer of men in the UK under the age of 45"



Welcome Me As I Am CIC – Suicide prevention and awareness programme for Churches and Faith Communities

Bespoke suicide prevention workshops targeting clergy and faith communities.

Objectives

Raise awareness of faith based issues in suicidal behaviour using 'Meeting me where I am at' a communication model based on the 'comprehend and connect' model.

Impact

Participants welcomed a focus on practical tools and techniques as well as issues concerning faith.

Lessons learnt

There is scope for this type of workshop across other parts of Kent and Medway, already been approached to run this awareness course in Medway. There needs to be increased focus on equality and diversity issues, as people who not conform to traditional values are often those most at risk. Future inclusion on interfaith perspectives, for example suicide seen from a Muslim and Jewish perspective.

Unintended Consequences

The testimony of those whose lives had been touched by suicide was particularly helpful in highlighting the issue.

Arthur is a 70 year old gentleman who attended the Canterbury session. He looked troubled at the beginning of the session and seemed reluctant to talk, I attempted to foster a nurturing atmosphere in which participants felt they had permission to express difficult feelings. During the session he admitted to having attempted suicide twice in recent years. Those around him were very supportive of him and at the end of the session he thanked the whole group, saying that he had derived much support from the group as well as from his own Church Community.



Contact details

Organisation	Website	Email
Addaction	https://sites.google.com/addaction.org.uk/mindandbody	MAB@addaction.org.uk
Armed Forces Network	www.kentandmedwayarmedforcesnetwork.nhs.uk	scdt.admin@nhs.net
Canterbury Christ Church University		ian.marsh@canterbury.ac.uk
Citizens Advice – Tunbridge Wells & District	http://www.twcab.org.uk/	advice@catwd.org.uk
Dads Unlimited	www.dadsunltd.org.uk	support@dadsunltd.org.uk
Found in Music	https://www.foundinmusic.com/	
Grassroots	https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/real_talk.html	office@prevent-suicide.org.uk
Gravesend Methodist Church & Community Centre	http://www.gravesendmethodistchurch.org.uk/	communitycentremanager@gmail.com
Intra Arts	https://intraarts.org/wave-project/	intraarts@gmail.com

Contact details

Organisation	Website	Email
Involve Kent	www.involvekent.org.uk	office@involvekent.org.uk
Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust		
Kent Community Health NHS Trust		jill.whibley@nhs.net
Living Words	www.livingwords.org.uk	info@livingwords.org.uk
Made with +	www.stevedocumentary.com	ben@madewithuk.com
Maidstone & Mid-Kent Mind	www.maidstonemind.org	mindhelp@mmkmind.org.uk
Maidstone Early Help		Katie.Bishop@kent.gov.uk
Medway Diversity Forum	www.medwaydiversityforum.co.uk	office@memf.co.uk
North West Kent Countryside Partnership	www.nwkcp.org/green-spaces/ecology-island	Isabel.Shaw@kent.gov.uk

Contact details

Organisation	Website	Email
Northfleet Early Help		veronique.jacquelin@kent.gov.uk penny.stotesbury@kent.gov.uk
Samaritans of Maidstone & Weald	www.samaritans.org/branches/maidstone	directormaidstone@gmail.com
SpeakUpCIC	www.speakupcic.co.uk	kay@speakupcic.co.uk
Stepping Out	www.carerssteppingout.co.uk/	
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	www.uksobs.org/support-groups/margate	sobs.margate@yahoo.com
The Activity Box	www.theactivitybox.co.uk	activitybox@gmx.co.uk
Therapy Partners	www.therapypartners.co.uk	enquiries@therapypartners.co.uk
Vault Films UK Ltd	www.vaultfilms.co.uk	hello@vaultfilms.co.uk
Welcome Me As I am		welcomemeasiam@gmail.com