

Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

Newsletter

December 1996

Editorial

IT was wonderful to see so many friends and colleagues at the service on 20th October at Southwark Cathedral. Bishop Sykes unfortunately had flu but The Provost Colin Slee very ably read Bishop Sykes sermon which was very inspiring. Copies will be available for 50p to cover photo-copying and postage from our new address:

APCMH

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26 Queen Anne Street
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We are very grateful to the Guild of Health for allowing us to have an office on their premises and we are praying that funding will become available for the office and for a training/development worker.

The Chairman and Committee wish all our friends and colleagues a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Pam Freeman Secretary

NEWS!

I have details of a Certificate in Interpersonal Skills for Volunteers through Distance hearing - free for anyone who has been out of paid employment for a year. Please apply to me for details for 1997 courses if you are interested.

Pam Freeman

The National Federation of Smaller Mental Health Agencies is established due very largely to Tony Heyes the Company Secretary. The office is in Birmingham as anticipated. For further details please contact: Jo Aherne

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Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health
An Association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives
Registered Charity No: 327532

CAMDEN FLEXICARE

Pam Freeman writes:

On a visit to an Open Evening at The Crypt, Holy Cross Centre, where Julian Hopwood and his team are doing an invaluable job with people in need, I was very impressed with a new scheme funded by Camden Flexicare that provides practical and social support at home for people with major mental health problems.

I think this is very important and it would be a great relief for sufferers and relatives if more schemes like this were developed.

For further information please contact Malcolm Shimmon 0171 278 4708.

The following is an extract from Camden Flexicare Brochure:

Camden Flexicare is a new service funded by Camden Social Services and managed by the Holy Cross Centre Trust.

We aim to help people with mental health problems in Camden cope with the ordinary day-to-day tasks and demands of independent living. As such we offer an alternative to residential care. We work with people who wish to live alone but are vulnerable and have support needs which cannot be met by Day Centre, Hospital or other statutory services.

The help we offer is both practical and social.

Help with shopping, cleaning or budgeting can be vital for someone's survival in independent accommodation.

Also having regular contact with a carer will provide companionship where the greatest risk to a person's mental health may stem from isolation.

The service can be arranged, usually as part of a care package, with the aim of.....

- reducing the likelihood of a hospital admission or a breakdown in living arrangements;
- facilitating a discharge home from hospital;
- supporting a move from temporary to permanent accommodation.

The service comprises a full-time Coordinator and 20 Flexicarers who usually work with only one client each. This enables us to offer a very individual service.

In matching carers with clients we consider compatibility of age, gender, ethnicity and interests. The success of the relationship can be a vital factor in the client accepting and benefiting from the service.

We individually negotiate the duration and number of weekly visits with client and referrer. The nature of the help will depend on what each client wants, needs and is willing to accept.

Flexicarers can arrange their visits in the evenings and weekends as well as in normal working hours according to the client's wishes and other commitments - helping clients access other services or develop new interests can be an important part of the work.

People receiving the service can also be linked in to the day services available at the Holy Cross Centre.

To support their work with clients Flexicarers receive regular supervision and training. Their role includes liaising with their client's key worker and attending case conferences when required.

Flexicarers are recruited on the basis of their care skills and experience and employed sessionally.

A Break Away from Waterloo

Waterloo Breakaway operates from St John's Church, and works closely with North Lambeth Day Centre in the crypt to provide a change of scene from Waterloo for the homeless. Its fundraising has been modest but last summer we were able to arrange eight enjoyable day trips away from London and a larger, more ambitious programme is under way for this year. What I would like to tell you about here is just one special project - a five-day stay in Devon this July being planned for eight homeless people. And a lot of work is being done by the group themselves.

We have been planning this for some time. Just for a moment, though, I think back to the excitement of Waterloo Breakaway. This is its challenge to our views of homelessness. I meet many people who never consider homelessness includes an entitlement to a break. Some of the less positive comments include: 'Well, I could do with a break myself they are *always* on holiday, aren't they?' and 'I thought that what they needed was somewhere to live'. I often have to persuade good, sensible people that having a break from one's everyday situation is important for folk not possessing a secure address - let alone a suitcase! Perhaps in our personal quest for the elusive 'Feelgood Factor' we forget about the universal right to a break.

Not surprisingly even some people who are homeless feel that they have not earned a holiday. Conversely, and not unlike other slices of society, other homeless express a desire for Tenerife - for at least a fortnight and with £200 a day to spend! One of my first 'meetings' with a group at the Day Centre was over ill assorted mugs of tea. When I mentioned the holiday idea, Joey - outspoken but deserving respect - thanked me for the offer, told me he found it too strange to accept and turned his chair the other way. Simultaneously he appointed Ray as the spokesperson. Ray continued to brood over the tabloid headlines, stared at the sports page and listened intently. One of the ladies there squeezed my shoulder and booked a week at Butlins! 'But not with this lot!' Joey returned to the conversation when a male recidivist insisted on a stay at Holloway and Joey restored order. 'Well, perhaps it *would* be nice to have a week away'.

Our meetings continued and a group has emerged. And members of the group gain strength by supporting one another. 'Will they want to know I'm HIV?... Will there be others staying there?... Can you and I share a room?' The group also gains strength by censuring the extreme: 'Can I have my own jacuzzi?... Oh, but why not The Hilton?' And so on. We are good at laughing at ourselves and that in itself is a healing aspect. What comes out too is the need for contact and friendship - even when some of the homeless are found somewhere to live they get lonely because they are not given care and support.

We have now got a date for our July break away - and a location. We are staying at a Toc H residential centre in Devon. Self-catering might prove interesting - especially if our supermarket begging produces only dented cans of soup and yesterday's bread rolls. But already people have been so generous and our fundraising generally has had quite a boost this year. Meanwhile our group has started a savings club, one member has said he'd be chef in Devon and all the group are writing letters to supermarkets. Another aspect - transport - is being sympathetically considered by AMEC/Balfour Beatty.

The other day Richard Truss, St John's vicar, and I sat chatting about how we could expand the scheme. Already I have been given a room at St John's to use as an office but wouldn't it be lovely also to develop here the Alternative Travel Agency? Because they are people who would not dream of going into one of the High Street agencies... And we were not only thinking of the homeless. Research has started on a scheme to include other needy groups which could possibly include carers, older people, mothers and babies...

The summer has been arriving in fits and starts. Hopefully we will all get to use the buckets, spades and sunblock. Thankfully at least eight of our homeless people have something to plan for and fondly look back on.

Mac Downes is Volunteer Project Co-ordinator and can be reached at St John's, Waterloo (0171 928 2003) if you would like to know more about the scheme.

Pam Freeman writes: The Waterloo Breakaway Group on which I represent APCMH as a trustee are sending a group away this year and Mac is working hard to make it possible.

The research project is going well and seven main groups of people in need in the Waterloo area have been identified. Findings will be published in the Autumn/Winter.

Give Us Your Tools, Lord

Give us your tools, Lord, of wisdom, of compassion,
of humility, gentleness and patience.

We would not force the lock of long kept secrets, but with the oil of concern loosen the rust of dismay and resentment, and with permission ease the screws of fear from their holding and release the distress for Your healing.

We would not hammer humanity's already battered vulnerability but only the chains that bind.

We would not chisel living flesh, but only remove with gentleness the grime that hides the beauty of the grain of uniqueness.

Lord, if we need to pull out nails of anguish, driven deep by another's thoughtlessness - help us to be quick in sensitivity to draw them straight and not tear the dusty frame.

Help us to dovetail and to mitre until our corners are so joined that the union is invisible and Your building is complete.

Marjorie Stemerding - September 1981

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THE OPEN DOOR RAP

By Clive - a member for World Mental Health Day Service

Problems, troubles, or you feel unsure
there's a place to go, it's the Open Door
on a Friday, it's a way to find someone to relate to

If you want to know the time, we'll be there from seven to nine
to talk about the things in life like your wealth, your health
your state of mind, so

Problems, troubles, or you feel unsure
there's a place to go, it's the Open Door
on a Friday, it's a way to find someone to relate to

Come on in and have a chat, a cup of tea and just relax, now
if you need help with what to do, it's a place where people really care for you.

Questions you need, answers true, problems you need solving too;
the Open Door is here to cater, make a friend or bring a neighbour.

Problems, troubles, or you feel unsure, there's a place to go, it's the Open Door
on a Friday, it's a way to find someone to relate to

Bringing back the harmony and the simple things in the community
it's the place you ought to be, the Open Door for you and me.

***THE OPEN DOOR at Norbury Methodist Church, Pollards Hill North NORBURY
EVERY FRIDAY 7 - 9pm***

Martin's Story

LIFE'S PROBLEMS AFTER THE AGE OF TWENTY-SIX

Chapter Three

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST of some of the ways in which obsessional neurosis has materialised over the years when I first had it in 1973.

Obsessional personal hygiene, especially face and hands. Domestic rituals including turning on and off taps a certain number of times. Touching of cutlery a certain number of times and arranging it on plates and tables at special angles designed for a sense of personal security. Sitting in chairs over and over again until a desired number of times has been reached, again for the aim of personal security. Washing up and drying up of crockery and cutlery in a very clean and orderly manner to the point of near perfection, to satisfy a need to do my job worth doing not just well but to the best of my ability, the ideal aim being perfection. Touching and topping virtually everything with which I come into contact many times, often to a pattern of personalized enumeration, again resulting in a feeling of personal security.

Once these rituals are complete I have a feeling of enhanced personal security. If they are not properly completed I have a magnetic compulsion to do so in a very real sense of impending doom. Surprisingly, this sense of impending doom I would not describe as irrational because on many occasions errands have shown that my own security level was too low to be adequate for the dominating demands of people around me, and that by doing these rituals I have restored myself to a higher level of personal security or confidence, an important shield against the onslaughts of the arrogance and venom of other people and of the accidents and injuries of everyday life ranging from, for example, spilling a drink to a fall or collision with an object to an actual assault by another person.

In these ways, my ritualistic obsessions take on a value, a sort of protective shield from danger. Also, on the good side, they can act as a safeguard for the memory. Constant checking is another aspect of them and things which might easily slip the notice of carefree people are brought to my attention and this can sometimes prove very helpful, for example, noticing keys to my flat and front door of my accommodation, thereby preventing a traumatic lock-out situation which can save two nights being locked-out and many pounds in money for bed and breakfast accommodation and other hassles.

Remembering shopping items and favourite TV and radio programmes, which I know I would otherwise have forgotten, has also definitely been due to repeated, if obsessional, mental processes.

Closing Paragraph

This article is incomplete for reasons simpliciter in its title. That is to say in this particular case my accommodation was so noisy and unsuitable that it made reading and writing of any length impossible.

When the York Branch of APCMH was first formed the concept of Care in the Community was barely outlined, but the problems of loneliness, social isolation and stigma, experienced in varying degree and form by people seeking psychiatric help, were easily identifiable.

With the help of a few friends Emmy Burdon had already started her Cracker and Christmas Novelty Workshop in her own home, where young sufferers met for therapeutic work and to socialise. The social aspect was always paramount and for a while expanded by a natural osmosis as carers invited people into their homes or arranged family sized outings.

Those were the golden days and it is perhaps worth noting at this point that to open a branch of APCMH formality is unnecessary - maybe even undesirable. All that is needed are two caring people, an open door, a teapot and a tin of biscuits. Probably we should also add tolerance to smoking but as this is now no longer so actively encouraged in hospital the habit does seem to be on the decline.

The successes and development of Our Celebration - the Cracker Workshop - gradually compelled formality and funding compelled professionalism. The Workshop had been moved out of Emmy's home into a cottage behind the Day Centre H.Q. For a while tea parties were organised at the weekends, but unless the party was connected to some other event - the end of a sponsored walk or a display of work, for example, there was a wrong note. Possibly because the guests no longer felt they were invited into the security of somebody's home yet without the freedom of a drop-in.

Opening an APCMH drop-in was discussed but this idea was gaining momentum among other voluntary organisations and Social Services. Even if we shared premises with one of the former it would involve us in expenses we were not sure we could sustain and we were still short of volunteers. Now we help other enterprises.

We opted for a monthly Saturday afternoon social. St Laurence's church had just refurbished their hall which was clean, light and cheerful, with good kitchen facilities. Hire of the hall came from our funds; we bought rolls and fillings, begged and baked cakes, and hired an entertainer - if we could not get anyone to do it for free. Through the churches we formed a volunteer team of car drivers to fetch and return people who needed help, or we borrowed a minibus.

Now, Paul Botting, the Occupational Therapist who ran the Garden Scheme next door to the Cracker Workshop, took a great interest in that and in the activities and potential of APCMH. He was a member of his PCC at Wheldrake and with the support of his parish priest, Canon John Cockerton, asked us to send a speaker to one of their meetings. This gave us an opportunity to explain our aims and when they next discussed donations from their Charity Fund they included APCMH. They also decided to give us a Saturday afternoon party.

This was a very successful event. We gathered a coach load of guests in York and drove out to Wheldrake where we were welcomed with tea and biscuits. The Entertainment Committee laid on a great cabaret. We were given lovely homemade scones and cakes for tea and finally everyone received a swag bag of sweets and a prayer card to take home. This event has been repeated and enjoyed each time by people who live by themselves or in residential homes and appears to be a very good form of communication.

This summer we took a coach party to Pocklington to visit the Waterlily Garden and feed the residential fish. We were then invited to tea by the congregation of All Saints - the church attended by Jenny Hayes, a carer and member of the York Branch Committee. The church was undergoing some restoration work but we were all able to pack into the church hall for a splendid tea, beautifully served by Jenny and her friends.

On all our outings we bear in mind that our guests are mature adults deemed to be fit to live a more or less independent life in the community, though some have physical frailties which mean that they require help getting about. One outing each year has a more serious content and we bill it as a Pilgrimage. We choose a place that has clear religious connections and set aside part of the afternoon for a short service. Attendance is not compulsory but those people who come are pleased, particularly if they are encouraged to choose the hymns. Those by the Wesley brothers, with good tunes, are often high on the list and the inclusion of, for example, one or two collects from the Book of Common Prayer is also welcome. Perhaps this gives us some insight into the degree of intellectual starvation suffered by many who have passed through the most severe crisis of their illness.

We look forward to hosting the APCMH AGM in York next year when perhaps one item on the agenda could be 'Beyond Scrabble!'

Jillian Merrick York Branch: N.B. We are hoping to hold APCMH AGM in York in the Autumn of 1997.

AFFIRMATION

In May this year, a large number of people gathered together in Lewisham to spend a day with Richard Rohr, a Franciscan Priest of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He was talking about the Kingdom of God and the way that Jesus related to The Society in which we live. As Christians we should see Jesus as our role model and look at the marginalised and edges of society because that is where transformation takes place. Most cultures are ego-centric and idolise those at the top and our worship communities often have too much ritual and sacramentation and not enough sharing of ourselves with others. There often pervades the horrible spirituality of perfectionism. It is essential that we should recognise that happiness is an inside job moving towards simplicity loving our neighbour as ourselves.

In my visits to various groups and talking to people who have had mental health problems, one thing has been very clear and that is that we all need affirmation. It is so easy to be in a group and be critical of others but not so easy to recognise the value and worth that they are bringing. If we take the trouble to listen to peoples' stories, to validate them as worthwhile and get alongside them in their pain as well as their joy, we are sharing with them the transforming love of Christ.

Pam Freeman

Reading: Luke 8: 26-37 - The Man who faced Jesus

It is not so very long ago that the mentally ill were treated in our own country in the way that this man in the Gospel story was being treated. He was kept under control, and away from having anything to do with the local community. He was something different, less than human, so to be treated as less than human. There is still a great deal of fear and stigma attached to mental illness. Jesus confronts the 'demons' in this man and sets him free, upsetting the local community in the process! We as Christians must respond to the principle of Care in the Community in a positive way, because in so doing we are recognising as Jesus did that those who suffer from mental illness in any way are made in the image of God and accepted fully by Him as they are. We can do no less.

From Learning, Teaching and Sharing

Stanley Baxter

* * * * *

*Eternal God,
Your Son is healer of our sickness.
We pray for those who are ill in mind
as well as in spirit,
that they may know the power of Christ
to sustain them
and the love of friends to support them.*

Amen.

(Based on a prayer from the Church of Scotland Book of Common Order)

I'M DIFFERENT

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

*It is Sunday Morning, I must get up or must I?
My voices tell me to stay put, I am so very tired
funny that I was in bed all day yesterday.*

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

*I want to praise Jesus. I think you are here with me,
but it is so hard and nobody understands me
because you see I am different.*

THY KINGDOM COME

*I am on my way; but late as usual, the crowd is going in,
I hang back, they frighten me, they do not glance or
smile at me I'm different.*

THY WILL BE DONE

*The welcomer (funny that) glares you're late
keep quiet ... I was only singing "Alleluia!"
praise the Lord! but then I'm different.*

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

*I slip into a seat the occupant looks at me
and moves. I know, I forgot to wash and look unkempt.
A child smiles, his mother pulls him away and mutters
"she's odd, you know".
Lord, is this your will for me? as a child I was taught
we are all God's family, made in His image
but then I'm different.*

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

*I have managed to sit throughout the readings
and the homily, and now it is that wonderful time when
Christ will come to me in Communion
but dare I get up to receive Him? They look at me
and shake their heads I can't help it, this
talking to myself but then I'm different.*

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

*At last I am before the priest; I sway upon my feet
I can see it in their eyes (she's had one too many)
Did they have to take tablets to pluck up the courage to
come in? The Priest, he does not look at me, but yes,
I have received "My Lord and My God". I move towards
the Chalice, our eyes meet, a smile of recognition as she
says "The Blood of Christ" Perhaps I am not so
different all.*

Mental Health & the Diocese.

A Diocesan Consultation group is now well established as part of the Social Welfare Commission. It brings together a cross section of experienced people concerned with the Church's support for the mentally ill, their relatives and carers. Education about mental illness and awareness raising on the accompanying pastoral needs are priorities and a Diocesan Conference is planned for next year. The group is chaired by Jeremy Boutwood, Social Concerns Co-ordinator for Chilworth parish. Jeremy is a social worker from Surrey and national Chairperson of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill.

**O Come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, Born the King of Angels: O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.
A Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

DEADLINE DATE FOR ITEMS All items for inclusion in the next issue by **Thursday 16th January 1997** please.

APCMH is published on behalf of the National Committee; opinions and points of view are those of the contributors only unless stated otherwise.

APCMH's address is: Edward Wilson House, 26 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9LB.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

*....that is a lovely statue, Our Lady looks so cold.
I know, I'll put my scarf around her.
They gasp as I approach her and drape the warmth
around her and her child. She seems to smile at me.
I am pulled back. They do not understand,
I meant no harm.... but I am different.*

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

*I rush out, tears run down my face, the sun is
shining and suddenly I hear a voice
I hear you say "They rejected me"
You and I are not so different
Are we?*

Audrey Pennicott