

Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

NEWSLETTER

March 1997

Editorial

Although the numbers at the Annual General Meeting in November were relatively low, there was still a great feeling that the work going on in the branches is lively and wonderfully supportive to so many sufferers. Perhaps, more significantly, the message of our Association - that Churches have tremendous resources, and responsibilities, for mentally-ill people - is being picked up in many places. For example we hear that a brand new pack has come out of the Catholic Church in the north-east called **"I'm Not an Illness"**. We have more and more requests for conferences and seminars in which members of local churches can begin to share and explore what they can do to help; David Walters, our voluntary Development Officer, is extremely busy following up all these contacts. Pam Freeman, our Secretary, is a Trustee on the newly-formed Federation of Smaller Mental Health Agencies, and it is encouraging to know that they have obtained a substantial Lottery Grant to promote their efforts; many of these smaller groups arise out of the entrepreneurial activity of church-empowered individuals and communities.

Both the Secretary of the Guild of Health, Antonia Lynn, and the Director of the Churches' Council for Health and Healing, Professor Rachel Rosser, bring a mental health perspective to their roles, so that these two long-standing organisations are keen to help to promote a greater awareness of the need for community support to people with mental health problems. Partnership is a somewhat hackneyed word these days, but it does express what APCMH needs to create to be more effective in a wider arena.

So the Presence of God in the form of understanding friends or supportive clubs or parishioners who are more aware of the "Strangers in the Pew" (to quote the title of Roger Grainger's excellent book) is slowly becoming more obvious and real for those who in the past have felt so alienated, and mentally-ill people are beginning to be more included in the normal community life of neighbourhood and church. At the same time, the churches themselves are more open and available to people who do not have any overt faith or church commitment.

APCMH is all about extending the network of love and support to INCLUDE people who suffer from the darkness and anguish of severe suffering. A Sunday Live programme recently had a carer of a teenage daughter who had suffered mental illness at the age of 14, and she was able to explain her situation to a vast audience. People are beginning to LISTEN. We hope that sometime soon there will be a special Service on Sunday TV which will be attuned to the needs of mentally-ill people and their families. We are lobbying for this.

Jeremy Boutwood
Chair, National Committee

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

DO MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS UNDERSTAND THE ETHOS OF PASTORAL CARE?

A User's perspective on meeting with them?

"More time - more listening - more individuality. PLEASE".

In my experience as a User of Mental Health Services one of the core issues to cause me both irritation and frustration is the way the dialogue in regular meetings with professionals is really a monologue on my part with no feedback on theirs.

It appears to me that professionals are trained to restrain themselves from comment and feedback. They present as people with limited interest in the user. I ask myself as to whether they walk at street level where the real issues of life are present and have to be handled. You sense that in the eyes of the professional you are unstable and do not warrant the level of respect you observe to be shown as a person. If only professionals, who are responsible for the needs of the mentally ill, could show more empathy, compassion and a quality of pastoral care which is so urgently needed by those experiencing the traumas of mental health problems.

It would be a refreshing experience not to be treated with a 'blanket' medication but for the professional to see the user as an individual with his or her own qualities. The only way to avoid a 'blanket' diagnosis by the professional is for the professional to adopt an 'active' listening role so that individual needs may be addressed and matched to the individual's qualities. This enhances the knowledge of both user and professional. This is the only way that the user's problems may be identified and addressed. What has brought the user to the present day, the turmoil, trauma and cause of breakdown need to be addressed. Unless analysed to the full little understanding at an individual level can be attained and therefore help is not able to be offered of a positive nature.

Due to the professional's overload there has to be a certain victimisation of the individual's needs. There is considerable time space between appointments and no time allowed for the professional to review the notes so a façade has to be built. Professionals believe you are adequately and well supplied with treatment and do not really reflect on their medical practice to identify the effects of their attitude. Without sufficient time being allocated to express the issues surrounding mental illness, and these issues by their nature are complex, and therefore require time for exploration, for the appropriate level of help to be offered. The user feels a sense of urgency for the appointment which the professional never feels. Therefore they are inclined to lack empathy and sympathy.

I find my intelligence to be my greatest asset in managing my illness. Sadly, on occasions, in regular meetings, it has been ridiculed and invalidated.

Where it is likely, in addition to mental illness, you get poverty, unemployment, bad accommodation, bedsits, family breakup and violence in your life experience you bring to your regular meetings a very different set of criteria from the professional who finds it difficult to empathise in this situation when there is so little experience of similar events in their life.

Although this may be the extremity of suffering the professionals will fail in their duty if they are not able to take this on board.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY CARE

By Daphne Cowan - Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary

Part One

The term "Community Care" has nowadays come to mean programmes initiated by the Government to transfer the care of people as far as possible out of institutions and into "the community". These programmes apply to all sorts of hospital care, but we will focus here on the care of people suffering from emotional or psychological illnesses.

Churches have been active in this field long before Government "Community Care" began. For generations, people have seen churches as places of succour and refuge. There were priests before there were psychiatrists.

And even in more recent times, when the closure of the large mental hospitals began, some churches started to act before the Health and Social Services people had got their act together. A notable example is St Paul's Church in Lorrimore Square, in Walworth. In 1987, the vicar of St Paul's, the Rev Graham Shawe, appalled by the number of people in the streets around his church, who seemed to have nowhere to go and no one to care for them, had a bold vision which at that time seemed impossible. Today, the Lorrimore Centre is a thriving place offering services of all sorts for ex-psychiatric patients. These services include a drop-in, short-term accommodation, an outreach team and a counselling service. The Centre is open for several hours on five days of the week. There are two flats for crisis intervention, or for rehabilitation after hospital discharge.

As the Community Care planners got organised in the Maudsley Hospital, and in the Southwark Social Services Department, mental health teams began to form, and sites were chosen outside the hospital to implement the programme of meeting the needs of people who had been discharged from the Maudsley and Bethlehem into "the community".

The first of these centres to be established was the Ivydale Centre in Ivydale Road, Nunhead. The Centre was staffed by Social Services, but there was also a medical team with doctors and nurses housed there.

The Maudsley Chaplain, then the Rev John Foskett, had a vision too. He saw that the Church leaders in the Nunhead area had an extensive knowledge of the area, its promises and its problems. But they were not mental health professionals and they were uncertain of their abilities. So John Foskett began to organise meetings between Church leaders and the mental health professionals working at the Ivydale Centre.

The most useful outcome of these meetings was that Church leaders were able to meet face to face with mental health professionals; were able to ask advice about what they should do when someone appeared at the Vicarage door in a highly disturbed state, or when a family faced a crisis with a mentally ill member. They could write down emergency numbers and know that if they telephoned for advice they would be answered by someone they had met, and who would be helpful. They could also specify topics in mental health about which they needed more knowledge and understanding and which professionals could then address in mini-seminars.

The object of all this was to forge links between different aspects of community care - the Churches as community carers and the professional carers. It was to break down the high walls between church people and professionals, just as the high walls were being broken down between the psychiatric hospitals and the world outside.

To put it in very simple words, the Church leaders had to learn that the professionals were not the fount of all wisdom and knowledge, and the professionals had to learn that Church leaders had a lot to contribute to the care of people.

(I have to say that this has not happened completely yet - we have to keep re-educating both sides, especially as mental health professionals seem to be always on the move and new people come in their place).

About seven years ago a group of Churches in the Peckham area got together to share their concerns over the huge number of unemployed people in the Council estates of the area. They set up PECAN - the Peckham Evangelical Churches Action Network - with the specific aim of reaching people who were excluded or ignored by other programmes, and helping them to overcome the barriers to employment and self esteem. They began to run Employment Preparation Courses and these then gave rise to English language courses and Literacy Courses. How do they find their clients? Well - in what to me is an amazing feat - they knock on the doors of 20,000 flats in Peckham each year and they also recruit at Unemployment Benefit Offices. In the first five years they trained over 1,240 people, about half of whom went on to get jobs. Inevitably, some of the people they recruited were people who had suffered from a mental illness, and some of these were unable to cope and dropped out of the courses. PECAN's attitude is: "We believe that those who have mental health problems can work again and so we treat them as unemployed and not mentally ill. We want to encourage those recovering from mental health problems to see that work, whether paid or voluntary, is a viable option".

Part Two will appear in the next issue.

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BEATITUDES FOR FRIENDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Blessed are you who take time to listen to difficult speech for you help me to know that if I persevere I can be understood;

Blessed are you who never told me to hurry up or took my tasks from me, for I often need time rather than help;

Blessed are you who ask for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult to put my thoughts into words.

Blessed are you who will smile and encourage me to try once more.

Blessed are you who never remind me that today I asked the same question twice.

Blessed are you who respect me and love me just as I am and not I like I wish you were.

Blessed are you who talk to me in public places and ignore the stares of strangers, for in your companionship I find havens of relaxation.

Blessed are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures, for my failures will be outweighed by the times I surprised myself and you.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad to know that you give me reassurances that could never be spoken in words, for you deal with me as God deals with all his children.

Source unknown - Contributed by Evelyn Sumption, Forest Hill.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A letter received following Gordon Taylor's article on "Confidentiality" a subject about which people have differing views.

4 September, 1996

The Secretary
APCMH.

Dear Pam,

COMMENTS ON CONFIDENTIALITY

I am concerned about the article by Gordon Taylor which is printed in this month's newsletter. My concern is that the article seems to lean too far in the direction of restricting important information. I quote "what the clergy, doctors, nurses, counsellors and indeed anyone who may be entrusted with private information, must do is to offer the degree of confidentiality the client wishes". This is simply not good enough as a procession of clients have discovered to their detriment. The last 2-3 years has seen a whole series of inquiry reports following untoward events concerning mentally ill people. The common thread which runs through all of them is communication, or rather the lack of it. Failure to pass important information concerning the client from one professional to another has all too often resulted in a failure of care which has led to a violent incident.

Individuals with a severe mental illness will usually be subject to the Care Programme Approach. This visualises the continuing care of each individual being the responsibility of a team consisting of all the professions and/or organisations which are appropriate to that person's needs. A team cannot function unless all relevant information is in the possession of the team. There have been too many instances in the past of mental health professionals hiding behind the duty of confidentiality. Information has to be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Your contributor seems to have based his comments on the 'New Contract' of 1990 and on NHS guidelines concerning the security of information systems. On 7 March 1996 the Department of Health published guidelines on "The Protection and Use of Patient Information". Mental health practitioners have a duty to be aware of the contents of this paper.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Frank Crowther
DPA, DMA, FCCS, CPFA
District Co-ordinator
National Schizophrenia Fellowship - North Nottinghamshire District

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NEWS - VIEWS

The UK Federation of Smaller Mental Health Agencies has been informed that it will be getting a grant of £89 - 395 from the National Lottery in order to get staff to expand the organisation. This is very exciting news. Ten members, including Jamie Summers and myself attended the House of Commons on January 23rd when the FOCUS Committee organised by The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health gave prizes to small mental health groups that had shown flair and imagination over events on World Mental Health Day.

Marianne Faithfull, who is patron of the homeless project in Waterloo - Waterloo Breakaway, is giving a concert at the centre of the project St John's Church, Waterloo on Friday 11th April. Please contact Pam Freeman on (0181) 764 9725 for ticket details.

Marianne Faithfull meets **Waterloo Breakaway**

Marianne Faithfull,

the One that Got Away from the 60s and Mick Jagger -
but not without falling foul of drugs, homelessness and a squat - has risen again!
Just turned 50, looking a younger woman, she performs her one-woman shows around
the world, and is currently completing a US and Japanese series of concerts.
As her first-ever charity concert, she is to perform her

"20th Century Blues"

at St John's Church, Waterloo, on Friday 11th April 1997 at 7.30 pm.

As usual she's accompanied through her mostly-30s songs
from Kurt Weill, Bertold Brecht, and Noel Coward, by

Paul Trueblood

So why? What has persuaded Marianne to play to an audience without fee, just this once?
It's a new and energetic initiative called **Waterloo Breakaway**,

which arranges for Homeless People to go away on trips -
maybe an afternoon, a weekend, or several days -
and, in one another's company, and through co-operation,
they can find a new beginning, hope, direction: life!

Marianne remembers her life dependent on drugs, and thence homelessness; she
sings her 20th Century Blues as her contribution to Waterloo Breakaway.

You can make a contribution and enjoy yourself at the same time!
Buy some tickets and you'll be providing the Homeless with a new beginning:

Ring 0990 321321 Tickets £25 and £15

(calls not more than 10p a minute)

Doors are open from 6pm, and the Church will remain open till 10.30 after the concert,
so you can arrive after work, have a snack and soft drink,
and perhaps buy Marianne's autobiography, CDs and T-shirts;
and view the Exhibition of Work by the Homeless.

The evening has its own very special Master of Ceremonies. Five years ago, *John Bird*
founded the *Big Issue*, a magazine which the Homeless sell to gain some money. John
understands Homelessness from the inside. Come and see him, with his 5-year old *Big*
Issue, introduce the 50-year old Dival

And, if you want Marianne to autograph that book or CD, she'll do it after the show!
It's an evening in a million. Please join us!

COMING SOON

Response: Soon you will see through the tears in your eyes
the grace of the Lord will let you arise.

Soon you will see through the tears in your eyes the
grace of the Lord will let you arise.
Soon you will know in the depths of your soul
the work God has started will soon be made whole.

Soon you will feel in the warmth of your heart,
the seeds have been sown, now the harvest shall start.
Soon you will speak with God's praise on your lips;
of the rock of your faith, that you know never slips.

Soon you will hear in this city of scorn
a chorus of angels to greet the reborn.
Soon you will touch the hem of his cloak,
to heal all your hurt, and break every yoke.

Soon you will shine like a dazzling light,
and seen to be doing the things which are right.
Soon you will sense in the whole of your being
the presence of God, without even seeing.

Soon you will hold your hands up to heaven,
and stand up as one, though the churches are seven.
Soon you will be as still as the night, keep your eyes
on the prize, and your face to the Light.

Soon you will leave your past far behind,
for ever together, one body, one mind.
Soon you'll receive an anointing of grace,
with tears in your eyes, and a smile on your face.

Soon you will tell the world of your joy,
what has been sealed in heaven no hand shall destroy.
Soon you will use the gifts that you guard,
You've waited so long, and struggled so hard.

Soon you will see through the tears in your eyes
the grace of the Lord will let you arise.

'Giovanni' 20th November 93

Words set to music by Rev Andrew Wilson, Community Mental Health
Chaplain in Croydon.

Sung at a service to celebrate World Mental Health Day on Sunday
13th October, 1996, in Croydon Parish Church.

*Lord, in the quietness, reach out and hold me. Draw me gently into your peace.
 And in the loving silence at your heart, attune my ears to hear the sounds I never listen to.
 The harmony that lies in you, the discords in the world you have put me in.
 The laughter and the tears in other people's lives.
 Make me more sensitive to others' needs. Sometimes I hear the words that others speak,
 but fail to grasp their meaning.
 Help me to hear the worry, hidden in a throw-away remark, the fear wrapped in a joke,
 the insecurity behind unbending dogmatism.
 Let me hear the cry for help so casually expressed.
 Help me to listen more, and think, and think, before I speak,
 and then to think again.
 And Lord, teach me to hear sincerity in those who see and say things in a different way.
 Give me the grace not to condemn or criticize, but first to search for common ground, and grasp the
 things that draw us all together,
 not concentrate on what holds us apart.
 Help me to take the richness of another's thought, and hold it, precious as my own.
 Above all, may I hear the gentle echoes of your love, reflected all around me.
 Give me the joy of listening to your voice, the quiet rustle as your arms enfold me.*

(Prayer for W. M. H. Week Service)

Easter Greetings

*The grace and power He gives
 All may receive. Who in this truth believe,
 That JESUS LIVES.*



(This is the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem & the inscription is written on the door)

He is not here, for He is Risen

DEADLINE DATE FOR ITEMS All items for inclusion in the next issue by **Tuesday 13th May 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.

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