

Being Alongside

Spring 2017

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Constant amid change

**We visit our Croydon offshoot
—still there providing stability
and spiritual sustenance**

INSIDE...

**Coping with dual diagnosis
Jean Vanier's challenging compassion
plus news, poetry and listings**

**AGM 7th May
See page 6!**

Being Alongside Spring 2017

Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

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Patrons: Professor Andrew Sims, The Reverend Canon Roger Royle

Being Alongside is the working name for the Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health, a Christian-based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the UK. It welcomes and encourages people whatever their faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, BA / APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage 'being alongside' people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

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APPEAL FOR SUBMISSIONS

***Being Alongside* magazine needs your news, views and offers of content.**

Even the briefest item can be of interest to other readers, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with the editor by phone, email or post (see above). It doesn't matter if you've never written for publication before. It's the ideas that matter.

If there's something you want to share, please get writing!

Origination by Being Alongside / APCMH

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation

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What's the difference?



In this issue we're featuring Croydon APCMH, one of this organisation's longest-running and

most active offshoots.

While I was finding out about the Croydon group, it struck me that many of the services that it offers—drop-ins, creative writing, art, meditation, welfare advice and so on—are also provided locally in similar form by another, much larger charity, whose staff and volunteers are, like those of Croydon APCMH, kind and loving people, but which happens to be secular.

Like all Being Alongside / APCMH branches and affiliates, Croydon APCMH welcomes people of all faiths and none. It doesn't evangelise. And although it has some resources of its own, its core costs and a selection of its services are funded by public sector grants.

So, what makes to-all-intents-and-purposes secular services provided by a religiously inspired organisation different? What's being offered that people couldn't get elsewhere? And, if the funding is public, why shouldn't such services be incorporated within a larger, secular organisation with opportunities for greater economies of scale?

You'll find some answers in the article, I hope. Other answers, I think, are only to be found in the experience of members and volunteers. And I don't know where you'd fit that in a spreadsheet.

Trevor Parsons

IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS

4

Including a progress report from our newest affiliated group in Notts; a 30th anniversary summertime celebration at our Forest Hill branch; a website revamp; and details of our 2017 annual general meeting

FEATURE

8

CONSISTENTLY CROYDON

We visit Croydon APCMH, still there providing friendship and support to all comers, three decades on

POETRY

16

Powerful words by Naomi Kay Lee about her other family, and by Frances Jessup about God

DUAL DIAGNOSIS

18

Reflections by Sean Kennedy on living with a dual diagnosis of addiction and mental health issues PLUS an intro to the Dual Diagnosis Anonymous movement

JOURNAL

21

THE RADICAL PEACEMAKER

In our concluding excerpts from Jamie Summers' retreat diary, we find him challenged by the extent of Jean Vanier's generosity of spirit

LISTINGS

24

Places to go to find help, support and companionship, not to mention plenty of tea and biscuits and even the odd square meal

Arnold has strong first six months

OUR newest affiliated group, Arnold Methodist Church Mental Health Befriending and Support Group, has made an excellent start, succeeding in its aim of providing local people affected by mental health difficulties with a friendly place to go for information, help and companionship.

The Nottinghamshire-based group started its Friday drop-in on 5th August last year, and more than 300 people have visited since then, many of them attending regularly.

"It has taken off in ways we couldn't have dreamed," says Sue Clayton, who initiated the group and co-ordinates it day to day.

"There's a fantastic atmosphere at the drop-in. I am absolutely thrilled

"It has taken off in ways we couldn't have dreamed"

to be part of this and to see the difference it is making."

The new group is doing its best to gather as much feedback as possible, both from visitors and volunteers.

"We always request comments and suggestions from our visitors," Sue says. "I'm heartened that the comments written in our visitor feedback book have been so positive. Visitors have made a lot of suggestions, and many of these ideas have been implemented."

"We also continually ask for feedback from our volunteers, and we always hold appraisal meetings after our weekly drop-ins to look at our progress, talk about any issues

that may have arisen and discuss how we can improve," she adds.

The format of the drop-in follows a pattern that will be familiar to many who have attended and assisted with similar initiatives—a friendly and personal welcome, with refreshments such as tea, coffee, biscuits, cakes, and hot soup and a roll on offer.

As well as chatting with volunteers and other visitors, people can amuse themselves with a variety of games, and materials are available for art and crafts—and there's even a sewing machine.

Various useful publications are also made available for visitors to read, comprising information about all the voluntary and professional organisations which offer help for people with mental health problems and their carers in the local area. This has enabled the group to signpost several visitors to specialist services such as eating disorders clinic and recovery college.

A number of speakers have also given talks on various aspects of mental health at the drop-in.

A series of training events has been arranged in May and June for volunteers so that they can increase their knowledge and awareness of the range of mental health issues and thereby provide as informed and sensitive a service as possible to drop-in visitors. Several volunteers have also been booked on an external course on pastoral care.

Evaluation of the group's work is



The weekly drop-in has proven to be popular, with over 300 individuals having attended so far, many of them regularly

being done in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County Council's Co-Production Network, using a standardised 'measuring tool' which helps establish how well organisations are progressing. The group has completed its first evaluation using this tool, and will repeat the exercise every six months.

"Council officers were very pleased with our progress," says Sue, "and we are already using the results from the evaluation to apply for further funding to enable us to enhance the service we provide to our visitors."

The Arnold group is hosting a networking event in March, also in conjunction with the Co-Production Network, to bring together all the local voluntary mental health groups in Nottinghamshire with a view to sharing ideas and expertise.

As well as receiving funding from Arnold Methodist Church itself, and other Christian organisations, the group has received grants from its local authorities. A musical event was

also held at a local community centre to raise funds.

Sue stresses how grateful they are for the seed funding which was provided to the group by BA / APCMH to help cover setup costs.

The drop-in welcomes everyone, of course, whether or not they have a religious affiliation. But the Christian essence of the group is there to be seen not only in its actions but also in the Christian resources which are on display, the prayer request box, and the offer of a private room for people requesting prayer ministry.

"We currently have a trainee minister on placement at our church," Sue adds. "She says she has gained a great deal of knowledge and experience from helping at the drop-in service which will be invaluable to her future ministry."

"We know this is definitely the Lord at work, because so many doors have been opened to us. Our minister Neil has remarked on that as well. It really has exceeded all expectations."

Annual general meeting to be held on Sunday 7th May

ALL MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS of Being Alongside / APCMH are invited and heartily encouraged to come to our annual general meeting which will take place at 3pm on Sunday 7th May 2017 at St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, London NW1 6NJ.

The customary reports on the year's activities will be presented, including a retiring report by our chairman, Jamie Summers, who has signalled his intention to take stand aside this year after three years' diligent and passionate service.

The chair is far from being the only post that will need filling at the AGM, with vacancies also open for trustees

of the charity and for non-trustee members of the national committee.

We urge members to consider standing for these posts so that you can bring your ideas and energy to the task we set ourselves 31 years ago, of promoting spiritual values and support in mental health.



Love was gift enough

THE RECENT NUPTIALS of our chairman Jamie Summers and Ella Majchrzakowska were a joyous occasion, shared by many members, supporters and friends of BA / APCMH.

Rather than receive gifts themselves, the happy couple generously asked their guests to donate cash to our charity instead.

The result is a substantial boost to our funds of around £1,700. So our best wishes to Ella and Jamie, and many thanks to all who gave!



Forest Hill plans 30th anniversary celebration

OUR FOREST HILL BRANCH celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and is having a summer party to mark the milestone.

Founded as the Dulwich & Forest Hill branch in 1987, this was our first London support group, and initially met at the Platform One youth project next to Forest Hill railway station.

Now based at St Saviour's, Brockley Rise, the weekly Forest Hill drop-in has been a model of continuity, offering regular support and information to people affected by emotional and psychological distress or mental health problems, without fanfare but also without fail for 30 years.

"Our drop-in has survived not by being grand, or over-ambitious," according to founder members Gail and Nick Cotton. "It has survived

because of the continued support of local people and local churches, because it meets a need in the local area and because members and volunteers want it to continue."

"It has also lasted because of the commitment and love of our volunteers, because human friendship is the key to what we do and how we do it."

Forest Hill APCMH extends a warm invitation to all friends and supporters of Being Alongside / APCMH to come and celebrate the branch's 30th anniversary at a special summer party on Wednesday 26th July 2017 from 6pm to 9pm at its usual venue: St Saviour's Church Hall, Brockley Rise, London SE23 1JN.

All are welcome!

Website overhauled



BEING ALONGSIDE now looks equally at home on the smaller screens of mobiles and tablets as on the larger screens of full-size computers.

This is because we have moved our website

over to Wordpress, an up-to-date and very widely used open-source system for publishing on the Web.

We have migrated the content which was on the previous version of the site, and created sections for news, events and local groups. The past few years' *Being Alongside* magazines are available to download.

Some recent news items from the

magazine have been added to the news section, and the intention is to scan and upload a selection of our newsletters going back to the first edition, dated December 1987.

One of the big advantages of the new system is that more than one person can add material to the site.

We are very grateful to the Manchester-based company 34SP, which is generously hosting our website for free.

Please do have a look at the updated site and give us your feedback.

beingalongside.org.uk



Consistently Croydon

Trevor Parsons finds Croydon APCMH still providing friendship, support ... and continuity, three decades on

THE CRANES ARE UP AGAIN OVER CROYDON, as politicians charge a new generation of planners with the task of providing places to live, work and play in a borough that's long been the butt of jokes for the ugliness of its post-war rebuilding, but which now hosts the UK's fastest-growing regional economy.

Costed at £5.25 billion, Croydon's regeneration plans are huge in scale, and the pace of change here is as fast as anywhere in the over-heated South East. The population has jumped more than ten per cent since the turn of the century, and even the technology firms are now said to be quitting hyper-trendy Shoreditch in favour of Croydon.

Yet away from the gleaming new office blocks and luxurious designer apartments of central Croydon, everyday life in the surrounding estates and suburbs continues much as before, and people's need for acceptance and support continues too.

Croydon Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health was set up in 1988—several economic booms and crashes ago—and has been working consistently since then to be alongside people who might otherwise feel isolated, lonely and forgotten because of their mental health issues.

Here's how we reported the launch of our Croydon group back in 1988

Regional Round-Up

Croydon. The first meeting of APCMH in Croydon was held on April 27 and was attended by thirty one people, including representatives from local churches, mental health voluntary groups and the statutory services. Rev. Noel Walters chaired and opened the meeting by describing his work as a hospital and community chaplain in the Croydon area. Jane Lindon then described the founding and early days of the Association. She went on to highlight the needs of mentally ill people and their relatives. After the coffee break, Dennis Murray spoke about the work and services offered by APCMH which was followed by questions from the floor. Those present agreed to convene a steering committee and meet again in the near future. A letter of thanks and appreciation was sent to the Archdeacon of Croydon for the use of St Matthew's House. The Croydon Advertiser reported the meeting in full.

Croydon APCMH provides perhaps the most extensive array of services and activities of any offshoot of Being Alongside / APCMH, past or present. There are four drop-ins each week—The Rainbow in South Croydon on Mondays, the Women's Group at St Mildred's church centre in Addiscombe on Tuesdays, The Open Door at Norbury on Fridays, and The Bridge on Sundays also at St Mildred's, which is Croydon APCMH's base.

There are also two weekly afternoon workshops—a creative writing group on Tuesdays and an art group on Fridays, both at St Mildred's.

On Mondays at the same venue there is a wellbeing workshop, at which people can benefit from activities like meditation and mindfulness; and on Friday mornings there is a spirituality group which starts with a service of Holy Communion and moves to an informal discussion group that looks at ways in which to manage our spiritual journey through life.

On a more mundane but still for many absolutely essential level, Croydon APCMH also offers a small welfare support service, supporting members and others who are experiencing difficulties with correspondence, contacting local services, or dealing with benefit problems.

The spirituality group is led by the Reverend Canon Andrew Wilson, who is currently vice-chair of Croydon APCMH and has been involved almost from the start. "Back in 1988," says Andrew, "people including Norah Croft of MIND were motivated to do something about spiritual and pastoral care. APCMH had come up on the scene, and Dennis Murray who was the original worker for APCMH came and did a training course in Croydon. So that's when I began to be involved." This coincided with Andrew's move to become chaplain at Warlingham Park Hospital, which was then Croydon's mental health unit, after 18 years working in South London parishes.

"We started with one drop-in, in South Croydon on Monday evenings, and things developed gradually from there. We started the Friday drop-in in the northern part of the borough, and we adopted a little group who were already running a drop-in called The Bridge in Norwood."



FEATURE CROYDON APCMH

"Then we gradually began to think about broadening the programme," says Andrew. "One of our service users, Margaret, had left a legacy to us, and that's when we began to think about creative and wellbeing groups. Margaret had been an evacuee during the war, and had been deprived of a proper education, so she really wanted other people to benefit from learning and increasing their skills, which is why she wanted to leave the money to us."

"I was one of the first community mental health chaplains," continues Andrew. "Some trusts created community mental health chaplains to further the work of supporting people as they moved out of long-term institutional care. So that was my remit originally. Until pretty much the end of my days in the trust I spent half my week in the hospital but half my week also in the community. And that's where APCMH became a wonderful accompaniment to my work, and I was always very involved with it."

The continuity of Croydon APCMH's work is striking, with activities carrying on in similar form for decades, often with the same people involved. "We've got original volunteers and indeed original members," says Andrew.

Andrew points out that this continuity is very valuable for members. "I think it's good because some people who may become unwell or feel they need more support and haven't used our services for a long time come back, and we're still there. That continuity and reliability is such an important thing for people in their lives, isn't it?"

"Some of our volunteers are of course getting on in years now," adds Andrew. "Some are having to look after grandchildren and so on. But at our last volunteer training group we had about ten volunteers, which makes me very hopeful. Lucky as we are to have such loyal, long-standing volunteers, they won't be here forever, and we have to bring new people on."



Millie Reid, Croydon APCMH's project co-ordinator

Recruiting and training volunteers is one of the many tasks which fall to Millie Reid, Croydon APCMH's very dedicated project co-ordinator, whom I met in the organisation's small office at St Mildred's. A member of the New Testament Church of God in Brixton, Millie has a background in social work, both as a practitioner working with children and families and as a college lecturer in the subject. She has run various organisations specialising in the fields of social work, disability and mental health, including Lambeth Welfare and Southwark MIND, and continues to teach mental health awareness at university level, giving the perspective of service users and carers.

In between fielding phone calls from would-be volunteers, and from an organisation which helps people into volunteering, Millie talks about staffing, and echoes Andrew's points about how important volunteers are to the group.

"We do have some paid facilitators thanks to a grant from the South London and Maudsley Trust (SLAM)—one facilitator for the art group, one for the creative writing group, and one who does mindfulness on a Monday. But most of the staffing is done by volunteers. We're always looking for new volunteers, because we lose people. Sometimes people find jobs, sometimes they move away, and unfortunately also sometimes also people pass away."

"The main funding we have had in recent years has come jointly from Croydon Council and Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, which is part of the NHS. That's approximately £26,000 a year to cover the three out-of-hours drop-ins plus core costs, ie part-time salaries for myself and Deborah our administrator, and light, heat etc. We are also looking at other sources which fund mental health projects, but they tend to have very specific criteria. For example, the last one I looked at was all about transition, so for people who were leaving care and situations like that. And the truth is our people aren't necessarily in that situation. So it gets more difficult, with the general reduction in funding availability and the trusts changing their criteria."

"Also, in the context in which we are in Croydon, we're a little charity. Our turnover is thousands. Yet we are in a similar space to organisations like MIND, who have I forget how many millions of turnover, and can afford to have a dedicated team doing fundraising. Debbie was saying to me, if only you could dedicate a month or two just for fundraising..."

But I can't because there are all the other things I need to be doing."

The concerns around funding are confirmed by Andrew: "In the old days we would often get funding for three years. Now it's much more hand to mouth. A lot of waiting for decisions. And it's not just our charity, but lots of other local charities are really uncertain about whether they will get funding for the next year. We are already eating into our reserves, and we're thinking, how long can we continue to sustain what we do?"

"Continuity and reliability is such an important thing for people in their lives, isn't it?"

Andrew Wilson

One of the aspects that differentiate Croydon APCMH from many other service providers is its policy towards how people can come into contact with the organisation. Most other providers require people to be referred to them by a care co-ordinator, a support worker, or a GP.

"Our process is open access," says Millie. "People come because they want to come. Not because they're told they have to attend. And because it's open access, people tend to turn up as and when they like. They might think, oh, it's Monday, I feel like some mindfulness, or, look, it's Friday, I feel like doing some art. So you never know how many people are going to come."

Andrew concurs: "Some of our members just go to one drop-in or one group. But others go to several, as they prefer. It's pick and choose. All of our different activities are open to everybody."

“Our process is open access. People come because they want to come. Not because they’re told they have to attend”

Millie Reid

The open access policy is one of Croydon APCMH's strengths, and is a practical embodiment of the organisation's Christian founding ethics. But it can sometimes make things harder than they might otherwise be.

“One of the things about us not requiring referrals is that you can get some people whose behaviour can be very challenging,” says Millie. “It can be very difficult. This open policy means that sometimes we have people who have been rejected by other services, and they come to us, and their behaviour can be very up and down. Sometimes they’re OK and sometimes they’re not, and it can even be

rather depressing for other members and for staff and volunteers as well. But we persist with people, even though it can be difficult. Sometimes I have to help the volunteers ride some of it out, you know.”

There may be a distinctive ethos at work in Croydon APCMH, but that doesn't mean that it sets itself apart from its peers. The group has strong bonds and deep roots in the locality, forged through from decades of relationship-building, as well as through the nitty gritty of daily work.

“We are very much part of the faith community,” says Millie, “so we have links with the Croydon Churches Forum. Last year they included us as one of the 40 organisations they encouraged people to pray for during Lent. So we’ve arrived! And we have a long history of direct involvement with individual churches. For instance one of the things my predecessor Sue Albery did was to help a church in Purley set up a women's group and train their volunteers. So when we have our volunteer training, volunteers from that church group can come along to our training as well. And we are available to do mental health awareness with churches.”

“There are quite a lot of people that come to us via the churches, both service users and volunteers. We are open to people of all faiths and none, so we have got amongst our volunteers a selection of denominations, Muslim and Hindu included. And some who don't have any beliefs at all.”

Croydon APCMH's historic connection with the local branch of MIND is also active today, thanks to Croydon APCMH's welfare support project. Millie explains that the project was set up as a result of listening to members who were voicing their fears about what was going to happen to them, having to go to medicals, and dealing with changes that were happening to their benefits. By working together with staff from MIND, who are geared up to provide specialist support around tribunals and appeals, Croydon APCMH was recently able to help one of its members who was going through a tribunal. “And I'm very glad to say they won,” says Millie.

“We also work very much with a local service user group called Hear Us. *[Hear Us has an really excellent magazine. See link at the end of this article. Ed.]*



*Creative expression is
unleashed at the Friday art
and Tuesday writing groups*

They have a monthly forum, and invite different speakers. A couple of months back they invited us, and I went along with some of the people who use our services to talk about what we can offer."

Another local organisation Millie has recently worked with is Off The Record, which provides counselling and other types of support to young people, with a strong focus on reaching black and minority ethnic communities in order to raise awareness and challenge stigma. "They approached us because they wanted to develop a training programme with local churches to work with young people on issues including mental health, drug abuse and sexual health. So I helped them develop a course."

Another way Croydon APCMH has reached out to the wider community recently was by running a one-day conference last October called 'Compassion, Mind and Spirit'. The event set out to explore how spirituality and faith communities can work to create mental well-being, and to challenge the stigma and ignorance that keeps people isolated and vulnerable. The event took place at St John The Evangelist Church in Upper Norwood, with a keynote address given by Dr Deji Ayonrinde, a consultant psychiatrist at the South London and Maudsley Trust. "We invited people from all churches and other faith groups," says Andrew, "and there was a good response. We were full to the gunwales! So we're hoping to further that."

"We began the conference by showing 'Hard To Believe', which is a video made by MIND in Croydon, in which we and other faith groups were featured." 'Hard To Believe' tells the story of three service users, looking at how their spirituality was perceived by mental health services, and the role that spirituality has played as part of their recovery. It explores how mental health

FEATURE CROYDON APCMH

services can work better to meet people's spiritual needs and also how faith communities can develop a better understanding of mental health problems.

"The video exposes the lack of understanding about the need for people's spiritual needs to be cared for," says Andrew, adding: "I think this increasingly important. A lot of mental health chaplaincies are really stretched. My own trust certainly has been. You wonder what the future of mental health chaplaincy will be, really. It's a big question. There's the question of funding the posts, of course. But also of finding people who are aware enough of needs. It's about the standard of applicants, really. We really do need to increase people's education about the spiritual needs of people with mental health problems, and address that nationally."

"For me, it's clear—and increasingly secular research in the mental health field about spirituality confirms this—that it is this search for meaning and identity that's basic to our recovery and to our wellbeing. We need to look at those questions for ourselves about what is the direction for my life? Research is telling us that this is not a luxury. This is the basic thing that all human beings need."

Andrew speaks with warmth about the spirituality group which he leads every week at St Mildred's. "We have a Eucharist on a Friday morning to which anyone can come. As an example of that, we have a liberal Jewish woman who comes every week without fail. So it's a very open service. After that we have coffee, and then we will discuss some topic, which will have a spiritual theme to it, but on a very broad basis. We have a very diverse group of people who attend, including service users, carers, and people who just hear about it and come to it. And we also have people who are training for churches' ministry who come on placement. In fact, a couple of them have come back and joined me in running the group sometimes."



*A meditation session
at the Monday
wellbeing group*

"We've just sadly lost one of our lovely old members, Vera, who was a midwife in the East End of London. She came to our spirituality group simply because she couldn't feel comfortable in a big Sunday morning service. So she found us and adopted us and we adopted her, and she became very much part of the group. And of course she had a huge experience of life. She was a wonderful person to share things with. So it's those sort of things which make it so rich. The openness and diversity of the group is really important."

"We sometimes use a poem or a picture as a starting point. For instance we've used some wonderful work by Michael Cook, who is an artist who interprets spiritual themes, and by the writer Rosalind O'Melia, with whom he collaborates. We've used two of their books of paintings and poetry as material on which to base the group's discussions. And we've used all sorts of other means to think about things."

"It is this search for meaning and identity that's basic to our recovery and to our wellbeing"

Originally a branch of Being Alongside/APCMH, Croydon APCMH became an entirely independent charity some years ago, with the national organisation's blessing and encouragement. With 'APCMH' in its name, and its logo of embracing hands, Croydon's origins in the national association couldn't be clearer. Naturally its focus is overwhelmingly on the local level, but Andrew thinks that it is important for local groups not to underestimate the importance of activity at the national level.

"APCMH started off as a great burst of energy coming out from the centre. That was bound to change, with a lot more local activity. But it did mean a growing away of local branches from the national association in some ways.

Links

Croydon APCMH

apcmhcroydon.co.uk

St Mildred's

stmildredschurch.org.uk

Mind in Croydon

mindincroydon.org.uk

Croydon Voluntary Action

cvalive.org.uk

Hear Us (service user group)
hear-us.org

Hard to Believe (DVD)
mindincroydon.org.uk/hard-to-believe.asp

and I think that's sad. We should be able to do more stuff together. I noticed at the 30th anniversary last year that not many of our people came to share in that at the cathedral. That reflects a lack of awareness of the association, and I think we ought to do more about increasing that. We need to remember that actually national activity and action is so important—especially now, with funding being a bit of a nightmare for those who are offering funded services. Anything we can do to encourage and support one another is really important.

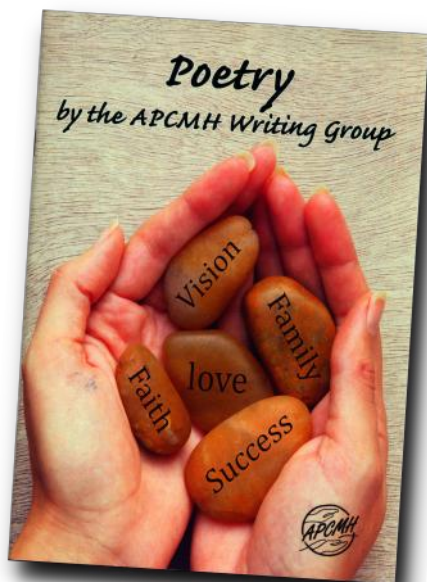
"Of course our focus is bound to be local. But the risk is that then we forget that this is a national need and a national awareness campaign. It's really important that we support one another on a wider basis."

POETRY

'APCMH', by Naomi Kay Lee

I belong to a family
A family of four.
We are all equal,
Mother, father, son and daughter.
We don't always agree,
Often we don't agree
But we all care about each other
And when the chips are down we all pull together.

I belong to another family,
A family of one hundred and fifty.
We are all equal,
Mothers, fathers, sons and daughters
All interchangeable.
We don't always agree,
Often we don't agree
But we all care about each other
And when the chips are down we all pull together.



The above is one of 28 poems by 17 writers in *Poetry by the APCMH Writing Group*, a collection recently produced by Croydon APCMH.

The writing group meets every Tuesday between 2.15pm and 4.15pm at St Mildred's Community Centre, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, CR0 7EB

No previous experience is necessary. All are encouraged to come along and get creative.

Will you be born? Will you accept my gift?

What gift?

The gift of Life.

I don't know. What's the catch?

You can have it taken away any time

Any time?

Yes any time. You won't know when although you may guess.

What's it for?

To love. To praise me.

I don't know. I'm not sure, especially as you can take it back any time.

You will know. You will be born. You will love me.

Why ask me then?

For the sake of appearances.

You will know. You will be born. You will love me.

Why?

Because you are part of me.

Oh God!

'God's Prayer' by Frances Jessup

DUAL DIAGNOSIS

Sean Kennedy reflects on living with the dual diagnosis of addiction and mental health issues

I AM A PERSON THAT THIRSTS AFTER 'RECOVERY'

and yet periodically I sabotage my recovery and enter into substance misuse addictive tendencies.

I was recently at a 12-step meeting and I found myself sharing sore vulnerabilities after a recent relapse, and then feeling 'got at' when someone appeared to smirk as I was sharing about something intimate. This person then went on to share about how his eyes have been opened as he keeps away from drug misuse, and I found myself unable to sleep that night.

I share this because it's so common. All people, at times, are misunderstood and I myself, like this man (whom I faced) am prone to acts of self-righteousness.

I am grateful for the 12-step fellowship and it does help even though it hurts a lot. I suppose I am having to learn that 'recovery' does involve 'abstinence' but if that is as far as it goes then I believe life will remain unfulfilled—a state I've been in.

God has commanded me/us to love, care and offer support to others who are vulnerable, and to love oneself. And this is a life-long process which I have good and bad days with.

I suppose recovery from mental ill health and addiction is not easy and I'm prone to over-reacting when other people, or myself, don't live up to my unwholesome perfectionistic tendencies—(a symptom of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, which I'm in recovery from).

But I trust good times will come when I can learn to wait and not look to project or punish anyone for my own discomfort and perceived grievances from others.

I am a kind, caring lovable child of God and I can trust that no matter how badly I believe I'm performing at times — God can and will use me.

I am sure that many people with a 'dual diagnosis' have felt like an outsider at NA, AA and other 12-step fellowships which address addiction without the need to acknowledge mental ill health.

You will be pleased to know that a fellow sufferer named John, with support, heads up a 12-step fellowship called Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (DDA) which is a growing fellowship of people, like myself, who suffer with a dual diagnosis but have a passion to recover.

At present the meetings are mainly focussed around central and west London but I/we have a desire/passion for more people to receive support and get the help that mainstream 12-step fellowships are not trained to offer. I hope that this 12-step dual diagnosis fellowship will grow and develop and your prayers are appreciated for this.

The Five Extra Steps of Dual Diagnosis Anonymous

1. We admitted that we had a mental illness, in addition to our substance abuse, and we accepted our dual diagnosis.
2. We became willing to accept help for both of these diseases.
3. We have understood the importance of medication, clinical interventions and therapies, and we have accepted the need for sobriety from alcohol and abstinence from all non-prescribed drugs in our programme.
4. We came to believe that when our own efforts were re-combined with the help of others in the fellowship of Dual Diagnosis Anonymous, and God, as we understood Him, we would develop healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles.
5. We continued to follow the Dual Diagnosis Anonymous Recovery Programme of the 12 Steps Plus 5 and we maintained healthy drug and alcohol free lifestyles, and helped others.



DUAL DIAGNOSIS

About Dual Diagnosis Anonymous

The Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (DDA) movement was founded in 1996 in the United States by Vietnam War veteran Corbett Monica, who wanted to create an alternative for dually diagnosed people who felt that they didn't fit in to the established 12-step support groups. He believed that blending the philosophy of the social model of recovery with the clinical philosophy of the medical model would make a big difference in successful treatment.

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous Ltd was set up last year as a company limited by guarantee with the aim of providing support to people in the UK who have co-occurring mental health and addiction problems. Aside from its recovery programme, the organisation also holds workshops and meetings that cover each step in the programme and include topic-based discussions.

DDA UK acts as a peer support group for people who experience the effects of drug or alcohol problems, as well as mental health issues.

Its groups follow a '12 Step + 5' programme, which addresses substance misuse and mental health at the same time.

DDA is there to offer hope, support, fellowship and recovery to those with a dual diagnosis.

Professionals and family members are welcome at DDA meetings (listed below), and all discussions are confidential.

Website: www.ddauk.org

Contact: info@ddauk.org / 07702 510110



Weekly schedule of meetings

Mondays, 7.00pm

Oasis Centre, The Old Coach House, 103A Devonport Rd, London W12 8PB

Tuesdays, 7.00pm

South Kensington & Chelsea Mental Health Centre, 1 Nightingale Place, London SW10 9NG

Wednesdays, 7.30pm

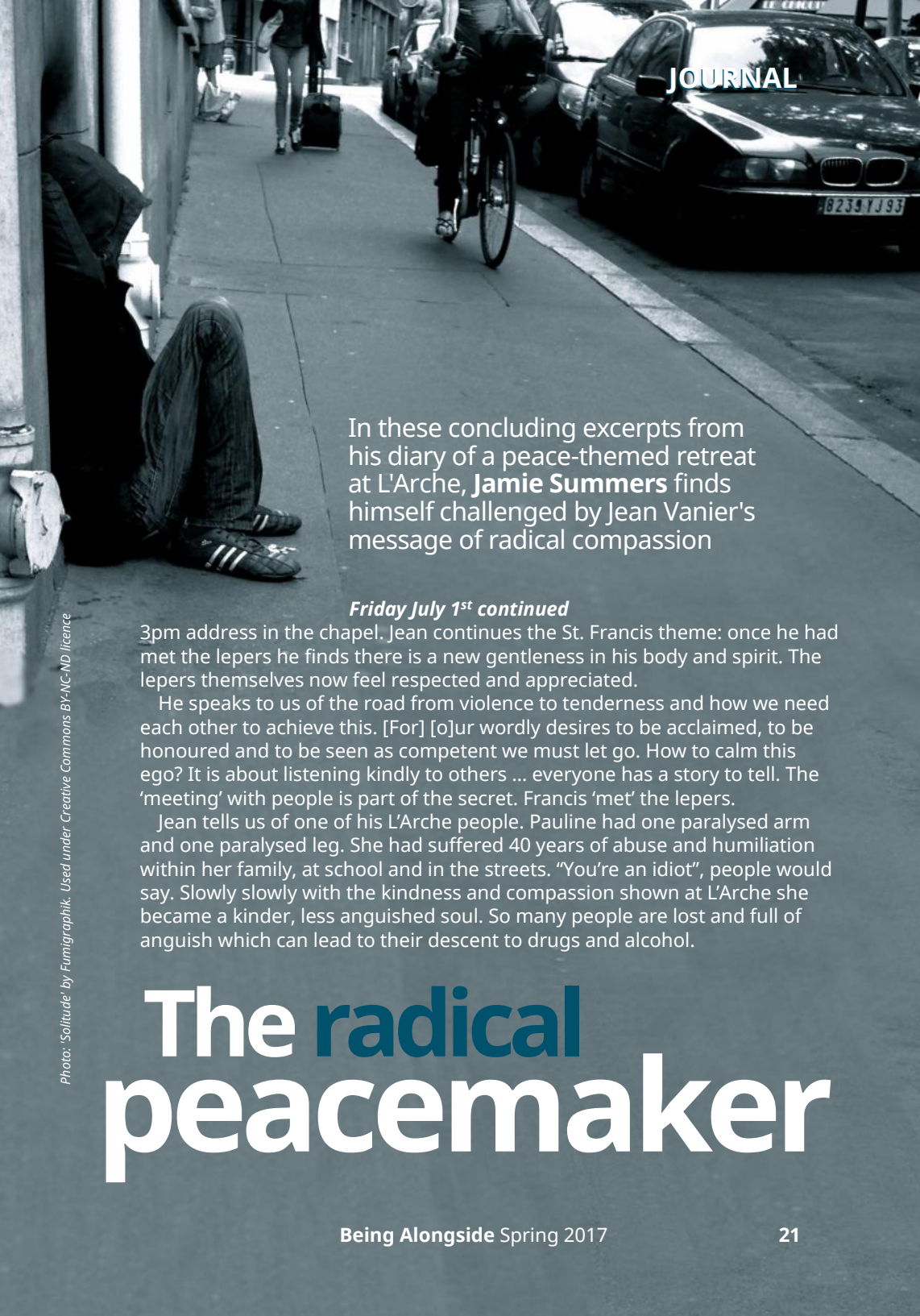
EACH, Vine House, 1 & 2 Factory Yard, Hanwell, London W7 3UG

Fridays, 7.00pm

Oasis Centre, The Old Coach House, 103A Devonport Rd, London W12 8PB

Saturdays, 1.00pm

Ealing Hospital, Mott House, St Bernard's Hospital, Uxbridge Road, Southall UB1 3EU



In these concluding excerpts from his diary of a peace-themed retreat at L'Arche, **Jamie Summers** finds himself challenged by Jean Vanier's message of radical compassion

Friday July 1st continued

3pm address in the chapel. Jean continues the St. Francis theme: once he had met the lepers he finds there is a new gentleness in his body and spirit. The lepers themselves now feel respected and appreciated.

He speaks to us of the road from violence to tenderness and how we need each other to achieve this. [For] [o]ur wordly desires to be acclaimed, to be honoured and to be seen as competent we must let go. How to calm this ego? It is about listening kindly to others ... everyone has a story to tell. The 'meeting' with people is part of the secret. Francis 'met' the lepers.

Jean tells us of one of his L'Arche people. Pauline had one paralysed arm and one paralysed leg. She had suffered 40 years of abuse and humiliation within her family, at school and in the streets. "You're an idiot", people would say. Slowly slowly with the kindness and compassion shown at L'Arche she became a kinder, less anguished soul. So many people are lost and full of anguish which can lead to their descent to drugs and alcohol.

The radical peacemaker

JOURNAL

Jean now described the story of the Good Samaritan in detail explaining that each of the cast of characters, each labelled individual, is locked behind their respective barriers of prejudice. The Jews look down on the Samaritans, aghast they only believe in the first five books of the Torah and look up to Mount Gezirim rather than Jerusalem. They have nothing in common, nor with the Levite and his legal sensibilities.

But there is a meeting on the part desert road from Jerusalem down to Jericho—a coming together, a moment of communion. And it is an unexpected one. The Jew in trouble is passed by a fellow Jew; it is only the lowly, put-upon Samaritan who comes to his rescue when he is bedraggled by baddies, left in the lurch by the 'ladrones'. God is present when the enemy becomes a friend. This coming together is the crux, like Francis with the Sultan and the lepers.

Aristotle is then invoked by Jean—in 500 B.C. he said you must consume a sack of salt inviting the stranger round for supper. Luke 14 is quoted—you invite the poor, the lame, the disabled and the blind to share your repast and you will be blessed. This is God's message.

An hour had passed quickly.

Jean continues the St. Francis theme: once he had met ^{people} he finds there is a new gentleness in his body and spirit. The lepers themselves now feel respected and appreciated.

He speaks to us of the road from violence to tenderness and how we need each other to achieve this. Our worthy desires to be acclaimed, to be honored and to be seen as competent we must let go. How to calm this ego? It is about listening kindly to others ... everyone has a story to tell. The meeting with people is part of the secret. Francis met the lepers.

Jean tells us of one of his L'Arche people. Pauline had one paralysed arm and one paralysed leg. She had suffered 40 years of abuse and ... + school and



Saturday 2nd July

Jean's afternoon talk centres us on how to be a channel of peace, how to become a disciple of Jesus—a true peacemaker.

We are changed as we meet the different. Change is transformational—be compassionate as my Father is compassionate was Jesus' message. Jean's message is the same ... we all have a need for consolation, look at people with love and kindness. Disarm yourself from the need for superiority.

He surprises me with his generosity of spirit towards some very difficult problems—pray for the jihadists, he says ... they are simply broken kids in a machine of terror, a machine of evil that was Auschwitz. I realise I have far to go on Jean's road, the road of forgiveness that he follows. But forgiveness is at the heart of Jesus' message.

Do not judge. Do not condemn. Lower your walls. Love your enemies equals Gandhi's message of non-violence. Can we forgive Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Pol Pot? Jean seems to be able to but I pass the buck to God for his judgement. I do not have Jean's capacity.

He tells of a recent meaningful encounter with a beggar at the Gare du Nord. *Typique de lui*, he goes up to the young man squatting on the pavement and explains he's very sorry but he has no cash with him so cannot help. The man is happy, however ... "I've been here five hours and no-one has even looked at me. So thank you". Jean is compassion personified.

We all have the capacity for violence at worst—we are all capable of not looking, to push away, to turn away from someone who troubles us. Sometimes we refuse to listen to people who are touching our prejudgements. The 'world' wants us to be people of power. Ergo ... 'my way is better' etc ... showing a lack of patience but...

Blessed are the pure in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Jean once again reflects on the Intercessor / Defender or *Παράκλητος* ... the name of God is "the one who answers the call".

He continues to elucidate our journey to Jesus—the joy of Jesus when he finds the lost sheep. He pulls down the powerful from their thrones and uplifts the humble. There is the...

Mystery of the quiet God, the Mystery of a patient, waiting God who trusts us fully.

Little by little we are discovering the garbage. The end of the journey is when we cry out, "I want you Jesus".

The afternoon session concludes with Jean's advice that to be a channel of peace takes time but that there is a hidden humble God waiting for our cry. Our life is a pilgrimage—everything begins with a cry from the baby at birth and ends with the fundamental cry at death. His closing words are: ***"We welcome people who are different."***

Amen to that.



building which is
from La Ferté
centres around
rooms. Breakfast
break and join
and see all in

To a distant
— they continued
morning prayers to
Jean wrote his
picking up the theme

Jean had approached
listening but then more
Reflecting on his own
he repents the imp
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to him. Sometimes ign
been his perhaps the
gather his year in a
Jailard Jean found his
him to liberate the

Make me a channel
Jean. He sees the need
to describe God's work

DROP-INS

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

Bus: 134, Tube: Tottenham Court Road. Tel 020 7240 0544

Email: church@bloomsbury.org.uk Web: www.bloomsbury.org.uk

Weekday drop-in

Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm

Tea, coffee and biscuits

Saint Marylebone Parish Church

17 Marylebone Rd, London NW1 5LT

Buses: 18, 27, 30, 205, 453, Tube: Baker St, Regents Park

Open Door Café

2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, 2.30pm-4pm

Afternoon tea, short talks, fellowship and conversation. All are welcome.

Contact Jackie Kesses: 020 7935 7315 / jackie.kesses@googlemail.com

Meeting with Coffee

1st and 3rd Fridays in the month, 11am-12.30pm

020 7935 5066 / healing@stmarylebone.org

Methodist Central Hall, Westminster

2nd and 4th Fridays of each month, 2.30pm-4pm

Coffee, tea and sandwiches

Emmanuel Room, Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1P 3JS

(Entrance is via the rear of the building in Matthew Parker Street).

Buses: 11, 24, 148, 211

Tube: St James's Park, Westminster

More info: Deacon Kina on 020 7654 3871

Know of a drop-in session or other service we should be listing? Please tell the editor!



Photo of Methodist Central Hall by Clare Griffiths used under Creative Commons non-commercial no-derivs licence

HELP AT HAND

SANE

0300 304 7000

Every night 6pm - 11pm

Emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Rethink Advice and Information Service

0300 5000 927

Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

Practical help on issues such as the Mental Health Act, community care, welfare benefits, debt, criminal justice and carers' rights. They also offer general help on living with mental illness, medication, care and treatment.

YoungMinds Parents Helpline

0808 802 5544 (free from mobiles & landlines)

Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

Confidential support, including information and advice, for those worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Pastoral Care for Carers

01642 865 668 Offered by Margaret through the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

MIND Infoline

0300 123 3393

Mon-Fri 9am-6pm (except bank holidays)

Information on a range of topics including types of mental health problems, where to get help, medication and alternative treatments, and advocacy.

MIND Legal Line

0300 466 6463

Mon-Fri 9am-6pm (except bank holidays)

Legal information and advice covering: mental health, mental capacity, community care, human rights and discrimination/equality.

Anxiety UK

08444 775 774

Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm (except bank holidays)

Advice and information on a range of anxiety disorders and anxiety-related conditions.

OCD Action

0845 390 6232

Help and information for people with OCD.

Samaritans

116 123 (free from both landlines and mobiles)

Talk to Samaritans any time you like, in your own way, and off the record – about whatever's getting to you.

DROP-INS

The Barnabas Drop-In Sessions

at St Paul's Church Centre
5 Rossmore Rd, London NW1 6NJ
(Five mins walk from Marylebone Station;
buses 139 & 189 stop outside).
Tel: 020 7724 8517

Every Monday, 3pm-5pm

Drop in for tea and chat, plus various activities: table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft, poetry reading.

First Wednesday of each month 10.30am-noon

Coffee morning and chat. This session is a more reflective discussion time. An opportunity to share concerns with the group or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment). All welcome.

*Being
Alongside*

*Affiliated to
BA / APCMH*

also at St Paul's
**FoodCycle Marylebone
serving food**

6.30pm every other Weds
Call church centre to check



**✚ ST. PAUL'S ✚
CHURCH CENTRE**

Forest Hill Drop-In

Every Wednesday, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Tea, coffee, snacks and chat.
at St Saviour's Church Hall,
Brockley Rise, London SE23 1JN
(junction with Herschell Road)

*Being
Alongside*

*A branch of
BA / APCMH*

Arnold Methodist Church

MENTAL HEALTH **Befriending** **& Support** **Group**

REFRESHMENTS

SUPPORT

CRAFTS

GAMES

INFORMATION

SIGNPOSTING



Fridays 11am - 2pm

**Arnold Methodist Church, 54 Front Street,
Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 7EL**

For more information please contact Sue Clayton on **07514 775514**

Nottinghamshire Healthcare 
NHS Foundation Trust

amc
ARNOLD METHODIST CHURCH
a good place to meet with God

Gedling 
Borough Council

DROP-INS / BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Croydon APCMH drop-ins apcmhcroydon.co.uk

Affiliated to BA / APCMH

The Bridge

Every Sunday 12.30pm-2.30pm at St Mildred's, Addiscombe

A friendly place to visit on a Sunday afternoon for a chat and refreshments.

Women's Group

Every Tuesday 12pm-2pm at St Mildred's, Addiscombe

Come along and enjoy an informal chat and enjoy a light lunch.

(St Mildred's Community Centre is in Bingham Road, Addiscombe, CR0 7EB.

Nearest tram stop: Addiscombe. Buses 130, 367 and 289)

The Open Door

Every Friday 7pm-9 pm at Norbury Methodist Church, 2a Pollards Hill North, London SW16 4NL

A place to make friends, enjoy an informal chat or play a game such as chess or Scrabble. Buses: The 109 bus from Croydon stops just before Pollards Hill North at Ederline Avenue. Trains: Norbury train station is a 10 minute walk.

The Rainbow

Every Monday 7pm-9 pm at South Croydon Centre, Ledbury Road, CR0 1EP

This is our busiest club and a great place to meet and make friends, enjoy an informal chat or maybe even join in a game of cards, Scrabble or chess.

Buses 60, 166, 312 407 and 466 all stop on South End Road a few minutes walk away. Bus number 468 also stops nearby on Warham Road.

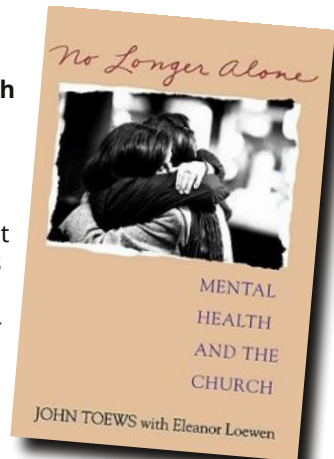
BOOK RECOMMENDATION

No Longer Alone: Mental Health and The Church
by John Toews with Eleanor Loewen
ISBN 978-0-8361-9010-6

David writes...

This book gives some very good pointers to what it means to "Be Alongside". More than that, it shows the essential connection between the Christian faith and wholeness. The author is a Christian psychiatrist. Frank and open about his own encounter with depression, he addresses many areas of mental health from a biblical background. This book promotes group study and application, and acts as a launching pad for on-going avenues of advancement into growth towards wholeness. This both for the Church in its ministry to the world and for individuals.

Available from good bookshops and sites such as Eden.co.uk





BISHOP STEPHEN SYKES MEMORIAL BURSARY

The Bishop Stephen Sykes Memorial Bursary exists to support people who have experienced mental health difficulties and are undertaking further and higher education. Grants of up to £1000 are available.

Application Criteria:

1. The applicant must provide evidence of in-patient psychiatric care and/or outpatient history. We intend to prioritise those with more severe mental health difficulties. However, all applicants will be considered on merit.
2. Applicants should be aged between 25 and 55.
3. The chosen course must hold the status of national accreditation at a nationally accredited college or university and a place must have been obtained prior to application. The course of study may be vocational or academic.

Application forms may be obtained from: mcollins16@sky.com
or by post from:

Marlene Collins, Company Secretary, BA / APCMH
c/o 29 Braxfield Road, London SE4 2AW