

**Hearing
Voices**

Page 1-2

Local News

Theresa May

Angela Mc.

Page 5-6

**Med. Student
Training**

Page 3

General

Interest

WLDAS

Page 6-7

**Health &
Wellbeing**

LGBT.

Liv. Parkrun.

Page 4

Useful

Contacts

Page 7-8

February



Hearing Voices

Hearing voices is a relatively common experience affecting around 3-10% of the general population. It does not mean that you necessarily are suffering from a mental illness. You may hear people talking to you or about you and voices can be either positive or negative; what is being said may be pleasant and comforting or it may be extremely distressing. The voices themselves exist only in your mind but can still feel frighteningly real and can take on many forms, for example a particular accent, may be male or female and may whisper or shout. Indeed there may be several voices talking at the same time. You may have periods when you do not hear these voices or you may hear them all the time. Hearing voices can impact significantly on your quality of life and isolate you from the people around you. It can make it difficult to feel good about yourself and can lead to other problems including lack of sleep and suicide. Hearing voices is often viewed as a way of

coping with difficult emotions or a traumatic experience such as childhood trauma (called Disassociation). There are many things that can lead to hearing voices or can make them worse. These include stress/anxiety, drugs/alcohol or a serious physical illness. You may hear voices as part of a diagnosed mental health condition; with a diagnosis of schizophrenia 9 in ten sufferers hear voices. 8 in 10 people with bipolar disorder also experience voices.

Many people may find coping with voices easy if they are positive and therefore they don't seek any support or help. It is so important that you tell someone if they are affecting your day to day life and are struggling to cope. Your GP will be able to tell you of treatment options available. This usually will include antipsychotic medication and talking therapies, such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioural therapy). Medication aims to eliminate voices completely or to lessen them, however there may be side effects. Additional medication may also need to be taken as a result. Talking therapies may allow you to understand the underlying cause of your voices and how to manage them. Taking control of your voices and learning how to distract yourself is so important in improving your life. Activities such as listening to music/reading household tasks or exercise may prove helpful. It is also important to take care of yourself; eating well and having a good sleep pattern. Relaxation techniques/breathing exercises may also help. CBT can be used alongside mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, reflexology or aromatherapy.

Hearing Voices self Help

For many, joining a self-help group can really help in managing your voices. You will have the opportunity to share experiences in a confidential and safe environment. This peer support can be extremely beneficial. There is a hearing voices group at Strathbrock Partnership centre, Broxburn, West Lothian each Thursday from 1.30pm – 2.30pm. A referral process is required for this service. This can be from Advocacy, GP, Social Work or your Psychiatrist.

There are many helplines you can contact for help and support. These include;

Breathing space 0800 83 85 87

Child line 24hr Helpline 0800 11 11 (including families/carers)

Samaritans 24hr Helpline on 08457 90 90 90

Rethink Advice Line 0300 5000 927 mon-fri 10-1pm



On the Hearing Voices Network website you can access a new online forum where you can share your own experience of hearing voices with others. If you are looking for information you can download a variety of free booklets (topics include how to manage voices at night and books aimed at young people and families and carers) Additional resources include books, pamphlets and leaflets which you can order on the website. You will also have access to Audio, Films and videos. There are useful links to other relevant websites.



Mental Health Advocacy Project

West Lothian

MEDICAL STUDENT TRAINING

Review January 2017

In the past four years MHAP (Mental Health Advocacy Project) has continued to have an important role in the education of medical students in particular but also other groups such as student nurses and other medical staff and voluntary groups. Feedback continues to be extremely positive highlighting that this training is both valuable and successful for those taking part. Jim Watson, a retired mental health nurse is a volunteer who is responsible for organising the training sessions and offers support to volunteer speakers during sessions. He has a wealth of experience in this field. At the moment there are 8 volunteer service users who give students an insight into what it is like to be diagnosed with a mental illness and their journey through mental health services in West Lothian. Services discussed may include Hospital Admissions (St. John's Hospital Wards 1 and Ward 17), ACAST (Acute Care and Support Team), MHAP (Mental health Advocacy Project), COT team (Community Outreach Team), Day services.

Support notes are provided to volunteers to offer guidance in telling their story. Wherever possible two volunteers take part in each session with one having more experience. This has worked really well allowing the less confident volunteer to participate successfully. The sessions themselves continue to last around 1 hr and offer a relaxed, informal atmosphere. There have been usually 2-6 students. Every session is different and the questions asked by students will not be the same. How the volunteer is feeling on a particular day is also a factor. Students are actively encouraged to ask questions.

Students may want to prepare specific questions for their training session and will know more about what to expect. Jim in response to feedback from students has continued to aim to organise sessions for medical students so that they take place at the start of their psychiatric placement at St. John's Hospital. Students are early in their training and will not have had any experience of engaging with Psychiatric patients. As a result it is hoped that they will be able to relate to their patients better during their placement

Volunteers can be extremely nervous about telling their experiences about becoming unwell as it is a very upsetting time of their lives. Service users are motivated by the knowledge that telling their journey through illness and recovery they may help out other patients in the future. It was also important that more novel therapies should be included in training sessions where possible, for example Avatar therapy and Open dialogue for Schizophrenia. All volunteers have valued greatly their experience and want to continue to be involved with the project in the future.

Health & Wellbeing

LGBT health & Wellbeing



LGBT Health and Wellbeing supports the LGBT communities within Scotland. It offers advice and a variety of support services, including mental health support. These services are offered in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Fife. Individual counselling is offered as well as a range of activities designed to promote mental health and wellbeing. The

January – March 2017 programme is now available on the website at www.lgbthealth.org.uk Monthly groups include the confidence café; McDonald Road library Edinburgh and LGBT Space- based at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, which is for people who access mental health services. Contact Alison for more information on these groups on 0131 652 3283 or email alison@lgbthealth.org.uk On the 11th and 12th February is an Art Therapy weekend workshop from 11am-5p on both days. You will learn to use Art materials and gentle movement to explore the significance of the start and end of our lives. Booking is essential visit www.tinyurl.com/therapyweekend.

Also in February is an event focusing on mad studies. This session will cover what this relatively new field of study means and why it is so important to us. People who have experienced mental health issues are welcome to attend. To book visit www.tinyurl.com/madstudieslgbt

A new monthly art group will be starting this year from April-September which will take place on the 2nd Wed of each month. The aim is to have the same people to come every month. If you are interested you need to register at www.tinyurl.com/artmattersLGBT.

Livingston Parkrun



Livingston Parkrun is a weekly free 5km Timed run which takes place every Saturday at 9.30am. The run starts at Almondvale Park, Almondvale Stadium Road, Livingston. You need to register before you attend visit www.Parkrun.org.uk All abilities are welcome, just go at your own pace. This event is run exclusively by volunteers. If you would like to volunteer yourself you can email Livingstonhelpers@parkrun.com .

Following the run everyone is invited for coffee at the Topiary café in the Klondyke Garden centre.

On the website you can access course information. There is a news section which you should check over winter in case the event is cancelled due to icy conditions. There is a results table for everyone taking part which includes event history and first finishers. There is also an online shop for buying Parkrun merchandise.

Local news

Theresa May- new plans for mental health support



1 in four people will have a mental illness at some point in their life. This costs the government £105 billion each year. It is also recognised that over half of these problems begin by the age of 14yrs and 75% by 18yrs. The Prime Minister has recognised that people with a mental disorder at the moment are not getting the support that they need. Often they become critically unwell before a patient seeks professional help. Theresa May aims to remove the “Social injustice” which exists at the moment and create a “shared society” where she will transform services in our schools, workplaces and communities. She wants to change the way we think about mental illness and to view it with as equal importance as our physical wellbeing.

Some of the Prime Ministers new support plans announced on the 9th January;

- Offer First Aid training in Mental Health in secondary schools whereby links to NHS mental health staff will be improved.
- Employers and organisations will receive additional training in how to support staff affected by mental illness.
- Community support will be improved with a £15 million investment in care such as crisis cafes and community clinics rather than in visiting your GP or attending A & E.
- £67.7 million will be invested in a new digital mental health package whereby you can check any symptoms which you have and access digital therapy.
- The “health debt form” will be reviewed. At the moment people are charged £300 by their GP for documentation to prove to debt collectors they have mental health issues.

Angela McCrimmon wins Award

Mental health Champion Angela has been awarded the First Local Hero Award 2017. This is in recognition of her work in mental health, helping others with Bipolar disorder, a condition which she has suffered from for nearly 20 years. Angela was nominated by her close friend Brenda: The centre and West Lothian Courier then chose Angela for this award. Her friend says;

“She is a great listener, carer and friend who despite her own issues which she still has to deal with, she always has time to help others.”

Angela is a published author, her new book is Can you hear me now? Angela has a very close relationship with The Mental



Health Advocacy project and everyone is extremely proud. Angela also volunteers in a befriending project locally working with people with learning and mental health difficulties. Angela is so excited and honoured to receive this award.

General

West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service (WLDAS)



The WLDAS was set up in 1985 with the aim to reduce harm caused by drugs, alcohol and tobacco for individuals and families in the West Lothian community. A wide range of services are offered including Information and support, Prevention Education and Training and Counselling and support. You can telephone the office for advice on drugs, alcohol or tobacco issues; tel 01506 430 225. They will also signpost to other services. On the website you can find details of drop in clinics taking place around West Lothian at www.wldas.com. There is also an extensive range of leaflets on drugs, alcohol and tobacco. This is funded by the local authority at the moment. . In light of this new role staff have had alcohol and drug awareness training and to raise awareness of advocacy staff have also had meetings with substance misuse workers in West Lothian. In addition MHAP is now a member of the West Lothian Alcohol and drug partnership.

WLDAS offer Prevention, education and training on a range of topics to many groups and agencies, including Healthcare professionals, Social Work staff and teaching staff. Monthly student days are held around the topic of substance misuse; induction training for employers is offered on alcohol, drug and tobacco use. There are also Alcohol Brief Intervention training days for professionals and volunteers; tobacco education for prim 6 and 7 pupils in local schools; WLDAS is also involved in Health promotion days.

WLDAS offers a family liaison service which offers one to one intensive support for families and aims to increase knowledge of addiction and associated destructive behaviours. WLDAS also has a family support group where people have the opportunity to share experiences around topics of excess drinking and drug taking. The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7pm in St. John's Hospital, Howden, Livingston. No appointment required. Contact Tricia Moran; tel 07795 200 263. Relaxation therapies are also offered.

WLDAS has a Moving on Service which is offered to offenders and vulnerable adults over 25yrs who are struggling with their drug and alcohol use. Clients may be in hospital, custody or prison. This service offers Rehabilitation, mentoring and education, counselling, CBT, group work, motivational interviews and brief interventions.

There is a Family Recovery Service which is provided by WLDAS and Circle Scotland. This service offers support, guidance and help for young people and their families affected by parental substance misuse. The service focuses on recovery and families may have to deal with offending behaviour and mental health problems due to alcohol/drug use. A family member may also have parenting difficulties.

Outreach services are provided which offer information, advice and support and works in partnership with other agencies, aiming to work more effectively. Referrals are accepted from agencies and young people themselves. To refer a young person tel 01506 430 225. An assessment will be carried out as soon as possible. Once this is accepted a keyworker will be allocated and a care plan for support produced. For a family seeking help or to refer a family contact Circle; tel 01506 653360 or Email info@circlescotland.org For more information see the website www.circlescotland.org/west-lothian.aspx

Grief Matters is a new service for those who are bereaved which is funded by Children in Need. It is for individuals who have had an unexpected or sudden loss. Counselling and support is provided for 12-18 year olds. Bereavement awareness training is also available for those who work with young people. To refer a young person tel 01506 430 225 or Email tam.burnett@wldas.org

Cloud 9 is a project that helps young people to stop smoking. It offers advice and ongoing support from trained staff. Also opportunity for peer support; individual appointments; Nicotine replacement prescriptions arranged; stress management; education and health promotion.

There is a Cloud9 App available on the website. Features include discovering how much money you have saved, tips and facts about smoking. You can download it as an Android App from Google play or from windows phone store. Also available as a web App.

Weed@WLDAS is a cannabis App offering advice information and support. (Device options available same as the Cloud App).

Useful Contacts

Breathing Space
Telephone: 0800 83 85 87
Website: www.breathingspace.scot

Child line
Telephone: 0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

Circle Scotland
Telephone 0131 552 0305
Website: www.circle.scot

LGBT Health & Wellbeing
Telephone: 0300 123 25 23
Website: www.lgbthealth.org.uk
Email: admin@lgbthealth.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness
Telephone: 0300 5000 927
Website: www.rethink.org

Samaritans
Telephone: 116 123
Website: www.samaritans.org
Email: jo@samaritans.org

Scotland-hearing Voices Network
Telephone: 01382 223 023
Website: www.hearingvoices.org
Email: Christine.brown2@nhs.net

WLDAS
Telephone: 01506 430 225
Website: www.wldas.com
Email: enquiries@wldas.com

If you have any ideas you think would be of interest for future newsletters or if you just need to ask any questions please phone or e mail advocacy. The help will be very much appreciated! Thanks.

Mental Health Advocacy Project West Lothian SCIO. Mental health Resource centre, Strathbrock Partnership Centre, 189a West Main Street, Broxburn, West Lothian, EH52 5LH [Tel:\(01506\) 857230](tel:01506857230) F: (01506 852954) Email:

admin@mhap.org.uk

Mental Health Advocacy Project (West Lothian) is a Scottish incorporated Charitable Organisation

This newsletter was produced by Claire. I am a service user with a severe and enduring mental health problem. I currently am a volunteer with the Advocacy project in Broxburn and produce this newsletter for them. I am also a member of the reps group and service users forum that advocacy runs. I am also a member of their Management Committee.

