



Carers in Mind

Issue 23, August 2011

cracking up!



How can you make jokes about people wanting to take their own lives? This was comedian John Ryan's challenge in "Cracking Up", a comedy show about mental health.

John was asked by Surrey NHS Primary Care Trust if he would be interested in bringing some stand-up to a production they were developing about suicide, depression and anxiety.

"Humour is powerful," says the show's producer, Maya Twardzicki.

"You can communicate with an audience effectively if you make them laugh. People are reluctant to talk about mental health, but comedy can grab their attention."

Luckily, John was excited by the idea, "Mental health is one of the great taboos in society. It is something we fear. I like the idea of

pushing that boundary."

Importance of the pub. One of the main threads running through this stand-up is the need for people to talk to each other and share their problems. John tells a true story of his friend Dave, who tried to commit suicide. However, on the way to the shops to buy the music he decided he wanted to die to, he bumped into a friend.

Reluctantly he went to the pub and they chatted. John says: "He went, he had a drink, and he never killed himself. They reckon there are two reasons why he never killed himself - one is because he talked to someone. The second reason is because he went to the pub, and that's why men should go to the pub girls - because it is stopping us killing ourselves."

Less judgemental. While Gareth's honesty and courage initially shocks the audience - who at first are a little unsure

Come along to watch 'cracking up!' to celebrate World Mental Health Day October 10th in Richmond.

if they should be laughing at such sensitive material - it gains their trust and attention, and for many, proves to be one of most memorable parts of the show.

The comedy has toured across London and the south east with audiences responding well to the mix of laughter and thought-provoking comment.

"I hope people walk away with a better understanding of mental health, perhaps a little less judgemental and a little more empathy for someone they might meet who has challenging issues to deal with," says Gareth.

Free tickets will be available from Carers in Mind. This show is sponsored by NHS Richmond, LBRuT & RB Mind.

With huge thanks to the sponsors and to Peter Marks for all his hard work in making this show happen.

During our lifetime most of us will either be a carer or know someone who is. Being a carer is not always something you choose to do – it can happen to you suddenly or more slowly over time. It can be very rewarding but also frustrating, difficult and lonely. Being a carer can impact on your relationships, health, education and employment opportunities.

The 2010-13 Richmond upon Thames Carers Strategy has been developed in partnership with carers, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, NHS Richmond and local carer focused voluntary sector organisations.

With the publication of the National Carers' Strategy 'Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the Carers Strategy' carers more than ever before are being put at the forefront of the local community. In Richmond upon Thames, we are committed to ensuring that carers are supported and that their role is recognised and valued by the services provided for them and those they care for. This strategy demonstrates our commitment to carers and responds to the invaluable feedback we regularly receive from carers at the annual carers' conference, carers' forum, from the carers' survey and other engagement activities. It gives direction for developing local support and services for carers over the next two years.

We are confident that through this strategy, we will bring continued improvements in the quality of life, health and well being of carers living and caring in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

This is a multi-agency strategy for carers in Richmond upon Thames. It demonstrates the achievements from our last strategy and sets out our agenda for carers over the next two years.

The strategy aims to make significant progress towards achieving the following outcomes over the next two years:

- ★ Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to integrated and personalised services;
- ★ Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role;
- ★ Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role;
- ★ Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity;

Richmond Carers Strategy 2010-13

- ★ Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring roles and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods.

Over the last twelve months, we have gathered feedback from and listened to carers across the borough. The key messages are:

- ★ Carers need better access to information and services for carers and for the person they care for.
- ★ Carers need flexible respite and breaks from caring and help with duties in the home.
- ★ Carers value consistency of care and efficiency from health services.
- ★ Carers would benefit from improved communication and coordination between primary,

secondary health care and social care to avoid duplication of information and effort.

- ★ Carers find accessing carers assessments frustrating because of the poor identification of need and lack of services/support that follow.

This strategy shows how partners in Richmond upon Thames intend to support carers and will inform the plans of health, social care, education and other services across the borough.

(The above extracts are from the 2010-13 Carers Strategy which can be seen in full on the LBRuT website.)

The 2010-13 Carers Strategy includes actions specifically for mental health carers for the first time. These actions were included following your feedback during the *Looking for Solutions Together 2010* consultation.

The mental health carers specific actions included in the full borough strategy are to:

- ★ Provide up to date and accessible information and advice including a mental health carers handbook.
- ★ Increase carer support planning, family skills work and confidentiality training for mental health professionals.
- ★ Implement the recommendations from Acute Care Programme's The Triangle of Care on the acute mental health ward.
- ★ Increase the number of advance directives used within mental health services.
- ★ Co-produce systems to monitor the identification of carers and the delivery & outcomes of services for mental health carers and their experience of services for the person they care for.

In addition to these specific actions, there is a full action plan for mental health carers available from Carer in Mind. This action plan is being monitored through the Richmond Mental Health Carers Development Group. If you would like more information please get in touch.

Developing a New Local Rehabilitation Model

Mental Health rehabilitation services have historically been provided to Richmond patients in three NHS facilities run by South West London & St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust (SWLStG) at Southbank House (closed April 2011), Rose Lodge and Riverside Lodge. Each unit has its own admission criteria and focuses on a slightly different client group.

Rose Lodge has now been identified for closure and Riverside Lodge is currently under review. In order to plan appropriately and minimise the number of future moves for patients NHS commissioners have agreed that there will be no new admissions to these services with immediate effect. The NHS Richmond Borough Team will work closely with SWLSTG, carers and services users to ensure that the discharge planning process for future clients remains effective while new services are developed.

Rose Lodge

As part of a long term strategy NHS Kingston has been identifying more community based rehabilitation providers with the result that their usage of Rose Lodge has reduced considerably over the past two years. NHS Kingston is now signalling its intention to stop commissioning this service from September 2011. NHS Richmond cannot continue the service with referrals from its own resources

and therefore NHS Kingston's decision will result in closure of the service. NHS Richmond is working closely with patients and their carers, family and friends to find suitable alternative accommodation for them. Of the 10 Richmond patients currently at Rose Lodge, five already have

discharge plans in place. The other patients have had their needs assessed and meetings with alternative providers with the involvement of their carers will start over the summer to look at potential moves into new services.



Riverside Lodge

Riverside Lodge is based on the Barnes Hospital site and has been included in the current review of services on this site including the only other in-patient service, for older people. It is therefore necessary to look at whether it would be safe and viable to run a stand alone rehabilitation ward on the site. Clients at Riverside Lodge are being assessed to establish their current needs. If the service is to close then moves would take place before the end of March 2012.

As part of the adult mental health strategy work the NHS Richmond Borough Team is taking this opportunity to review the rehabilitation services for Richmond upon Thames.

Between September 2011 and March 2012 it will work with the Adult Mental Health Strategy Group to develop a new local rehabilitation model to provide more community based rehabilitation services which give people greater flexibility to lead more independent fulfilling, less institutionalised lives. There will be opportunities for carers to be involved in this work and the NHS Richmond Borough Team will work closely with Carers in Mind to do this.

For more information please contact the Mental Health Commissioning Team on 020 8973 3000.

Do you have experience of local rehabilitation services?

Let us know if you would like to be involved in this part of the local mental health strategy and we will keep you updated on any opportunities to work on the development of the local plans for a rehabilitation model.

Opportunities to Shape Services (OSS) is a new register for carers, families and

friends who are interested in becoming involved with local service development. It was launched by Carers in Mind at the *Looking for Solutions Together 2011* mental health carers consultation in partnership with local commissioners and service providers.

If you would like to be kept informed of the opportunities available to you, please make sure we know you are interested so we can contact you. If you would like a copy of the OSS leaflet, please get in touch with us at Carers in Mind.

Sane is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month and, to mark the occasion, it will be continuing the fight to beat the taboos surrounding mental illness by producing larger-than-life size sculptures of dogs that its founder and chief executive, Marjorie Wallace, hopes will be sponsored by companies, schools and individuals and put in prominent positions up and down the country.

The campaign has attracted the support of celebrities who have suffered from depression, including Rory Bremner, Stephen Fry and Ray Davies, and each dog will have a specially designed coat.

"The black dog has been used as a metaphor for depression from classical mythology through medieval folklore to Churchill. It acts as a symbol to externalise moods and thoughts that are difficult to communicate," said Wallace.

"We have artists, celebrities and people with mental illness designing coats to brighten the dogs, ready for auction in 2012. We hope the dogs will stimulate new awareness and give people a language to express their inner feelings of anxiety, depression and loneliness. It is easier to say you are having 'a black dog day' or 'the black dog on my shoulder' than it is to say you are depressed."

"The shadow of the black dog touches us all, but it is possible to master mental illness so that it no longer dominates your life. This campaign is to encourage people to learn to live alongside their 'black dog', [and] seek help."

Sane began as a result of the outpouring of public support that

Wallace had received after she wrote a series of newspaper articles in the mid-1980s about what she called the "forgotten illness".

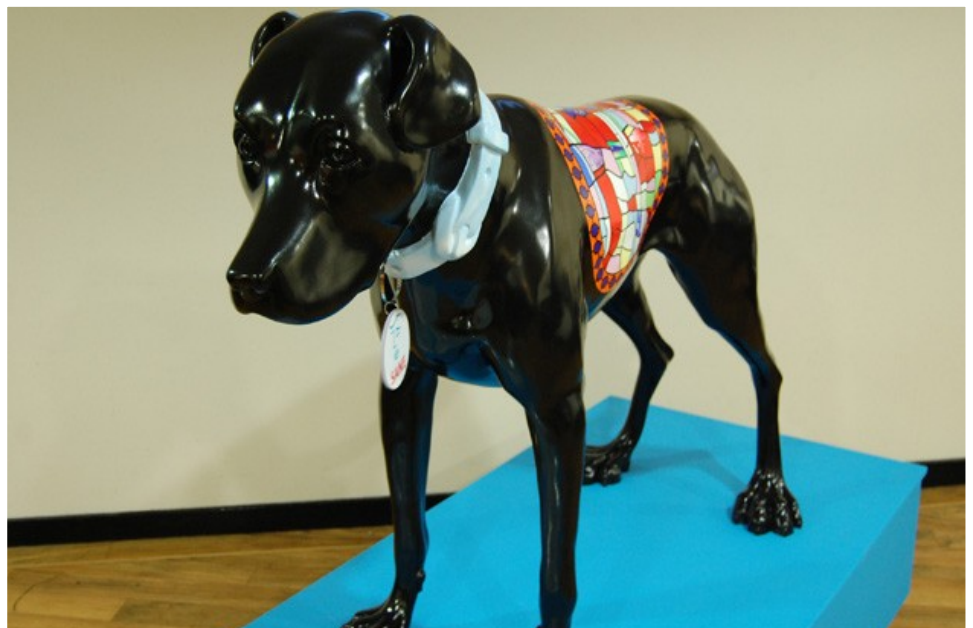
"It was much against the zeitgeist of the times. It was breaking taboos then to talk openly about mental illness; people were often isolated and kept their sufferings secret.

"Now depression is more widely recognised as a condition – often underscoring many others – which can be treated. We and others have campaigned to erase the stigma which has hindered acceptance and knowledge of why some of us are so much more vulnerable than others.

hard to provide compassionate care – the one-on-one relationship of trust on which recovery so often depends. Nor do we provide places of sanctuary for people in crisis: it is a struggle to find a hospital bed or see the same psychiatrist more than once. We also need more support for families, who can find themselves neglected and engulfed by having someone they love face mental illness, with few ways of finding them the help they need. It takes courage and persistence for everyone involved."

It is a theme that is very much welcomed by professionals working

a black dog day...



There has been a sea change in awareness and that has to continue," But Wallace still sees a long fight ahead: "Paradoxically, I think now we are seeing a loss of soul in the psychiatric services. With all the cuts, closures and mergers, it is increasingly

in the field of mental illness, said Professor Guy Goodwin, the head of the Department of Psychiatry at Oxford University. "The work of organisations such as Sane and others to make mental health less of a taboo is absolutely a key part of tackling mental illness.

"It's very important for us because ultimately we need to be treating mental health the way we are treating coronary care: preventively and proactively."

If you would like a copy of the newsletter in large print or you need any help accessing information from the internet - please get in touch.