

aspire **2**



# Mental Pressure

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## Mental Health Helplines

### Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk  
0845 769 7555

### Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk  
0300222 1122

### Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk  
08444 775 774

### Cruse Bereavement Care

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk  
0844 477 9400

### Bipolar UK

www.bipolaruk.org.uk  
0333 323 3880

### CALM

www.thecalmzone.net

### Depression Alliance

www.depressionalliance.org

### BEAT

www.b-eat.co.uk  
0800 801 0711

### Gamblers Anonymous

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk  
0845 769 7555

### Mencap

www.mencap.org.uk  
0808 808 1111

### Men's Health Forum

www.menshealthforum.org.uk  
020 7922 7908

### Mental Health Foundation

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

### Mind

www.mind.org.uk  
0300 123 3393

### Narcotics Anonymous

www.ukna.org  
0300 999 1212

### No Panic

www.nopanic.org.uk  
0844 967 4848

### NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk  
0808 800 5000

### OCD Action

www.ocdaction.org.uk  
0845 390 6232

### OCD UK

www.ocduk.org  
0845 1203778

### PAPYRUS

Young Suicide Prevention Charity  
www.papyrus-uk.org  
0800 068 4141

### Family Lives

www.familylives.org.uk  
0808 800 2222

### Relate

www.relate.org.uk  
0300 100 1234

### Refuge

www.refuge.org.uk  
0808 802 5544

### Rethink Mental Illness

www.rethink.org  
0300 5000 927

### Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk  
116 123

### Sane

www.sane.org.uk  
sanemail@org.uk  
0845 767 8000

### Shout

www.giveusashout.org  
Text SHOUT to 85258

### Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org  
0808 168 9111

### Young Minds

www.youngminds.org.uk  
0808 802 5544

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## An introduction to Aspire2

Welcome to the first online mental health digital newspaper provided by Aspire2. Over the last few months our dedicated and professional team have been working extremely hard in order for us to reach this privileged stage and deliver, on time, one of our company's goals. We are all extremely proud and honoured to provide this newspaper as a service and we hope you have an excellent read.

Aspire2 will provide a range of media services and events that will give a voice to service users and providers, charities and organisations, those affected by mental health and the general public. We will promote better services, aspire to help reduce social stigma and exclusion, signpost treatment and services and provide society an opportunity to understand the vast and complex issues surrounding mental health in the UK.

Our mission is to work in partnership with national and local mental health charities and organisations by reporting on their excellent and dedicated work through a range of media services, including our social media presence, our website, events we have organised and, of course, this newspaper.

Regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, religion or social status, mental health has no boundaries or limitations. It is embedded in the fabric of every section of society, it is within every person's personality, and it is the one common goal that society shares universally and unequivocally.

At Aspire2, we passionately believe that our media services and events can make a positive difference, and we're aspiring to champion national and local

You can find out more about us at [www.aspire2.org.uk](http://www.aspire2.org.uk) and our social media channels:



causes and ultimately give service users a national voice.

Every year in the UK, 6,000 people take their own lives – approximately 17 per day. While mental health awareness is slowly improving in the UK, it isn't where it needs to be yet. Around one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year and more than 20% of people in England have had suicidal thoughts. These statistics simply have to improve, and that's why we're here.

Our mission and values are clear and our professional team, service user led, are dedicated to the belief that our media services and events can make a positive difference to mental health and society as a whole.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you find our debut publication engaging and interesting.

### The Aspire2 Team

Aspire2 Mental Health Media and Events is based in York. It is registered with Companies House as a Ltd Company but is set to become a Community Interest Company (CIC).

This edition of the newspaper is digital only but in December 2019 we are aiming to print our first hard-copy edition.

If you would like to find out more about Aspire2, enquire about advertising or if you wish to contribute editorial content, please get in touch at: [support@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:support@aspire2.org.uk) or [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)

# We support...



If you would like your mental health charity to appear here, contact Peter at [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)



Hi everyone! I'm Tiegan, I'm the Social Media and Marketing Executive at Aspire2!

Each month I'll be giving updates on the work I do at Aspire2 and spreading the inspiring stories and amazing work of our brand ambassadors.

If you'd like to get involved as a brand ambassador, email me on: [Tiegan@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:Tiegan@aspire2.org.uk)

Since starting my role with Aspire2, I have been promoting the work we do and increasing our following on social media.

I reach out to people to create more awareness of the company and general mental health. I feel that social media can be a cruel place at times, so hopefully I inspire our followers and sign post people to services that will benefit them.

I couldn't be happier in the work I do, especially knowing that it's going to have a positive impact on people.

I recruit brand ambassadors who are as passionate about mental health as I am; it's lovely to see how many people want to get involved and share their own stories!

If you think you have what it takes to become a brand ambassador feel free to contact any of our social media pages or email me at: [tiegan@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:tiegan@aspire2.org.uk)

### Tiegan's quote of the month

**DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF**

Follow us on social media!



Hi! My name is Katie, I live in Staffordshire, England and I am a brand ambassador for Aspire2.

I decided that I wanted to promote positivity with use of inspirational quotes and images.

Over the last year, I have been battling with anxiety and depression. The last few months have been up and down. I have been fighting a tough battle on a daily basis, which eventually resulted in me having to have some time away from work.

I now have over 1500 followers, and my page continues to grow daily. I write the majority of quotes myself, based on my emotions and surroundings and I also often take my own photographs.

In June 2019, I decided to start an Instagram account about positive mental health. My theory was that sharing my story and promoting positivity would help me with my recovery, as well as helping others with their own personal battles.

I hope that [@mrsspositivemind](#) will continue to grow, and help others who are struggling to feel inspired.

Additionally, I thought I could use my skills as a registered nurse working in mental health and learning disabilities, to influence others.

Aspire2 approached me and asked if I would be interested in becoming a brand ambassador. I was excited to get involved with such an amazing service, promoting good mental health and offering support to people in need.

Combining my own mental health battle with my skill set, I started [@mrsspositivemind](#).

I promote Aspire2 on my Instagram page and offer support to our followers. I am looking forward to a bright future working with Aspire2 and supporting the service to grow further.

Follow Katie's journey on Instagram!



Aspire2 Ambassador of the month!

[@mrsspositivemind](#)

## Working Together to Prevent Suicide

**2019 marks the 17th World Suicide Prevention Day. First recognised in 2003, it takes place on September 10th each year.**

Every year suicide is among the top 20 leading causes of death across the globe, contributing to over 800,000 deaths, equivalent to one suicide every 40 seconds.

These staggering statistics are so much more than a number. Every life lost represents someone's partner, child, parent, friend or colleague. A recent study suggests that for each suicide, approximately 135 people suffer in some way, which amounts to 108 million people per year who are impacted by suicidal behaviour.

Suicide prevention remains a universal challenge. For every suicide, 25 people make an attempt and many more have serious thoughts of it.



We can all make a difference. There are many things we can do on WSPD to prevent suicidal behaviour. Whether it's raising awareness of the issue, educating yourself and others, showing compassion for someone who is in distress, or by questioning the stigma attached to suicide, you could save a life.

### Ways to take part in WSPD 2019

On Tuesday 10th September 2019, you can join with us and many others worldwide who are playing a part in suicide prevention.

Show your support by taking part in the annual IASP Cycle Around the Globe. From 10th September to 10th October we'll collectively cycle the globe (40,075km or 24,900 miles). The purpose is to raise awareness of the risks of suicide and raise funds to support prevention activities.

You can also take part in the 'Light a Candle' event, where participants light a candle near a widow at 8pm on September 10th as a symbol of support for suicide prevention.

To find out more about WSPD and the associated events, visit:

[www.iasp.info/wspd2019/](http://www.iasp.info/wspd2019/)

## Help for suicidal thoughts

If you're feeling like you want to die, it's important to tell someone.

Help and support is available right now if you need it. You don't have to struggle with difficult feelings alone.

### Phone a helpline

These free helplines are there to help when you're feeling down or desperate.

Unless it says otherwise, they're open 24 hours a day, every day.

### Samaritans – for everyone

Call 116 123

Email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

### Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Call 0800 58 58 58 – 5pm to midnight every day.

### Papyrus – for people under 35

Call 0800 068 41 41 – Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm, weekends 2pm to 10pm, bank holidays 2pm to 5pm  
Text 07786 209697

Email [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

### Childline – for children and young people under 19

Call 0800 1111 – the number won't show up on your phone bill

### The Silver Line – for older people

Call 0800 4 70 80 90

Talk to someone you trust  
Let family or friends know what's going on for you. They may be able to offer support and help keep you safe.

There's no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings – starting the conversation is what's important.

## IMPORTANT

Is your life in danger?

If you have seriously harmed yourself – for example, by taking a drug overdose – call 999 for an ambulance or go straight to A&E.

Or ask someone else to call 999 or take you to A&E.

For more information visit:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/suicide](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/suicide)

## Further failure at Middlesbrough mental health unit forces closure



**A 17-year-old girl has died at Middlesbrough's West Lane Hospital, just months after the death of another 17-year-old girl while in care at the centre. As a result, the centre will close.**

The believed suicide of Christine Harnett was reported in June and Police have now began investigating the death of Nadia Sharif, 17, who had autism and mental health issues. She had been in care for four years.

Her father Hakeel Sharif says his daughter should have had 24 hours care and the hospital is "not safe for the kids."

It has now been announced that the centre will close, following months of intense scrutiny. In March it was announced that 13 members of staff at the hospital would face disciplinary proceedings over alleged ill-treatment of patients. Before this, 20 workers including those 13 at the centre were suspended over claims that they used "non-approved" techniques.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated Middlesbrough's West Lane Hospital as inadequate and concluded that patients were at high risk of "avoidable harm."

Upon speaking to the BBC, a CQC spokesperson said "CQC's priority is always the safety and wellbeing of people using services and has taken this action to ensure they are protected and kept safe from avoidable harm."

11 young people were patients at the centre when the decision to close it was made. Alternative care will be arranged for them as the trust aims to minimise the impact of the closure on the current patients.

Middlesbrough MP Andy McDonald previously said the deaths had raised "serious questions."

The 20 previously mentioned staff were suspended for using techniques for moving patients that were "not in line with Trust policy." The father of Christine Harnett, who died in June, alleged that his daughter was restrained without warning and illegally strip-searched.

It was also recently revealed that 13 of those staff were still working for the trust.

This is believed to be the first time the CQC has closed an NHS children's mental health hospital due to failures.

The findings of the report are set to be released imminently.



### The rise of home schooling

**The BBC has reported a large increase in homeschooling over the past few years, with 48,000 children being home-educated in 2016-17 compared to approximately 34,000 in 2014-15.**

One of the main reasons given by parents are mental health issues and the lack of support schools are providing for their children.

It's a serious responsibility for parents, with risks of further anxiety through isolation and lack of social interaction being a potential disadvantage.

However, if a child has extreme anxiety then homeschooling could be carried out alongside providing mental health support, at least temporarily, in order to ensure they are still accessing education while unable to attend school.

A good way to supplement homeschooling can be to employ an external tutor, particularly one where they can meet with a child in a public space (such as a library) and carry out planned and structured lessons.

It is also important to consider ways children can spend time with their peers, such as enrolling them in local evening and weekend group activities.

**Tips and legal guidance on homeschooling can be found at:**

[www.gov.uk/home-education](http://www.gov.uk/home-education)

# Concerned about dementia?

Call your local helpline today on  
**03300 578592**

Monday-Friday 9am-4pm (excluding bank holidays)



#### Our Services:

- Information & Advice
- Dementia Support Advisors
- Home Visits
- Signposting
- Emotional Support
- A listening ear
- Peer Support
- Social Activities
- Education
- Practical Support
- Weekly wellbeing cafés
- Dementia specialist nurses

**Dementia Forward is North Yorkshire's leading support charity for people living with and affected by dementia.**

We provide a highly responsive, personalised information, advice and signposting service to anyone whose everyday life may be touched by the condition. We achieve this through our experienced team of dementia support advisors, a local helpline, a dementia specialist nurse, home visits, wellbeing activities and educational programmes.

To find out more call our helpline on 03300 578592, email [info@dementiaforward.org.uk](mailto:info@dementiaforward.org.uk) or visit us online at [www.dementiaforward.org.uk](http://www.dementiaforward.org.uk)



Care and Support for Life

Registered Charity no. 1148225

## "Sort out dementia care" – Dame Barbara Windsor's plea to PM

**Former Eastenders actor Dame Barbara Windsor has launched an open letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling for him to act on the social care of people with dementia.**

Dame Barbara, 82, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2014 and she and her husband Scott Mitchell were made ambassadors for Alzheimer's Society recently. They have signed the letter which is set to be delivered to Downing Street in September.

"We're lucky to have amazing support but my heart goes out to the many people who are really struggling to get the care they so desperately need," Dame Barbara said upon the launch of the letter.

"Alzheimer's Society has shown us there is life after dementia, and we want to do our bit to make sure no one faces dementia alone," said Scott, who has taken care of his wife since her diagnosis.

"People who aren't as fortunate to be in the same position as myself and Barbara financially are facing a constant battle to get what they need. I want to do everything I can to help them," he added.

The letter urges the government to take serious action to support those with dementia and their families, with £2.4 billion being requested to improve access to the care that they need.

"Our experience is of a system that too often doesn't care – one that is completely inadequate, unfair, unsustainable and in dire need of more money," the letter says.

"By 2021, a million people in the UK will have dementia. People with dementia and their families often have to spend typical care costs of £100,000, and too many receive inadequate care. Since March 2017 people with dementia have spent more than 1 million unnecessary days stuck in hospital beds, despite

being well enough to go home, at a cost to the NHS of over £400 million," it continues.

Dementia patients also pay a "dementia tax", as treatments for the illness can be up to 15% more expensive than standard social care.

The government vowed two years ago to publish a strategy to end the "dementia betrayal" but the letter outlines that plans have been delayed and immediate investment is needed in an NHS Dementia Fund.

The government responded by saying "we have given local authorities access to nearly £4 billion more dedicated funding for adult social care this year."

"The prime minister has been clear he is committed to fixing the social care system and will outline proposals as soon as possible"

In the meantime, you can help by signing the letter. To add your name visit [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

"We encourage the fantastic UK public to give their support by signing this letter. It's time to end the battle people with dementia and their families are facing across the country," Scott said.



### Take a walk

Alzheimer's Society's Memory Walks could be right up your street – literally!

Dementia charity Alzheimer's Society is raising money and awareness of the illness with their Memory Walks, which can be found all over the country.

1 in 3 people will be affected by Alzheimer's disease and someone develops dementia every three minutes. With your help, the charity can campaign for better dementia care.

There are three kinds of walks; the Memory Walk, which can be between two and 10 kilometres, the Memory Walk Plus, which is anything over 15 kilometres and the Glow, which is two to ten kilometres in the dark.

Registration is £10 and can be done online. You can find walks local to you by visiting:

[www.memorywalk.org.uk](http://www.memorywalk.org.uk)

# Plants over pills

How one practice near Manchester is tackling mental health...  
One seedling at a time.

GPs in Hulme, Manchester, are trying to turn those blues green by prescribing a course of gardening and planting as an alternative to more conventional prescriptions.

This is being done in the hope that the mindful practice of plant tending increases a patient's sense of joy and achievement as well as encouraging the social aspects of communal gardening.

Odd as it may sound, the benefits of tending to plants is no new discovery; looking into social and evolutionary history human beings have always been drawn to natural and green spaces as a source of life and respite. Just think of the relaxing quality of taking a stroll in the park or having an afternoon lounging in the garden.

We humans like plants, and Cornbrook Medical Practice, in the inner-city area of Hulme, is fully endorsing a return to this primal treatment by regularly dolling plants out as new living and growing antidepressants; an 'ecotherapy' if you will.

Most courses of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) refer to a trio of qualities that activities proven to be helpful to those suffering with depression, anxiety and isolation have: achievement, enjoyment and closeness to others.

The plans primarily target inner-city patients who mostly have no access to gardens or usable natural

spaces to enjoy the restorative qualities of nature. Patients are given a plant each to take home, tend to and then return to the practice's communal garden; fulfilling the idea of enjoyment, closeness to others and achievement in one single holistic scheme.

**Augusta Ward, a Medical Secretary at the practice, said:** "The plants we will be giving people are mainly herbs – things like lemon balm and catmint, which all have mindful qualities... having something to care for brings so many benefits to people – especially for those who may not have a garden or be able to have pets. The plant is a reason to come back to the surgery and get involved in all the other activities in our garden and make new friends."



Depression and anxiety can be debilitating, causing a loss of enjoyment in activities as well as a feeling of purposelessness all magnified by isolation and feelings of loneliness.

This scheme (now backed by the city's health commissioners) is an example of what is being termed 'social prescribing', a method in which activities and social clubs are encouraged as an alternative to pills picked up at the chemists. Other examples of 'social prescribing' include exercise classes, dance groups and local choirs all vying for the medicinal effects social achievement has on patients.

**Dr Philippa James, one of the surgery's GPs, said:** "I've seen how our patients relax in the garden – and how they then get involved in wider events, which all adds to pride in our area. There's a lot of evidence now about how two hours a week in a green space can lift moods – and then that too has physical, mental and emotional benefits. That's something we need to harness."

According to a recent study by Arboretum (a London based environmental society), 42 per cent of 2,000 participants said that being around plants improved their mental health. This figure was even higher in London, where more than half (56%) admitted plants make them happier.

In essence it isn't the plant itself but the opportunities that tending to one offers; opportunities of self-achievement, a sense of purpose and responsibility, as well as the possibility of engaging in social activities through planting that are the true medicine.

Seeing the first few shoots appear on your windowsill may be the difference between a good day and a bad day, the regularity of watering and pruning not only become mindful rituals but a purpose to engage with the day and sharing that achievement with others is an organic way of engaging in social situations and building relationships of

support and enjoyment.

It would seem the planting scheme allows for more than one kind of growth and is an encouraging sign for the future of mental health and the notion of situational and bespoke care overcoming ineffective treatments.

Whether it is a deskbound cactus or a living room garlanded with verdgloriousness it seems plants make us happier and growing them for ourselves is even better. So perhaps from now on its "plants over pills" and a walk to the park certainly beats queuing in the chemists.



Plants are a great substitute if you're not allowed a pet and are therapeutic to look after

## Social Prescribing and Link Workers

In January the NHS announced their plan to recruit 1,000 link workers by 2020/2021. But what are link workers?

A link worker's role is to prescribe any activities or support an individual may require to get better.

You may be thinking 'but that's what I go to my GP for' and that is exactly the problem. It is thought that a significant number of appointments at GP surgeries are not directly related to medical conditions.

Patients struggling with anxiety, loneliness, mild depression and obesity may not actually require the support of a GP but may be better served with support from a link worker who can navigate them to the likes of gardening activities, dancing lessons, art classes, legal advice, volunteer support or even just relevant information and guidance.

Social prescribing offers the kind of help that you can't take with a glass or water, spray up your nostril or rub on your skin. It's about creativity, socialisation and general support.

In addition to the believed positive effects for patients, the NHS is banking on cost savings and improved services elsewhere by freeing up GP appointments and reducing medication costs.

That's why the NHS aims to have link workers dealing with up to 900,000 cases by 2023/2024.

# Let's talk...

Something on your mind? Need advice? In this regular section in the newspaper, we're offering readers the opportunity to send in any mental health questions you have for qualified psychotherapist Kirsten Antoncich, which will be answered in Let's Talk each month. This is a fully anonymous service and your questions for Kirsten will be dealt with confidentially.



## A huge heartfelt hello

I'm so excited to be a part of Aspire2. I've worked in mental health with children and adults for a long time now and I'm passionate about better access to the help and support we all need.

I'm going to be writing each month about new developments in mental health treatment and research. Nothing too onerous, just useful information that will hopefully be helpful.

I'm also going to be answering your questions each month. If you want to seek support for a particular issue or find out ways of managing symptoms, now's your chance to ask. It's all confidential, no names or personal details will be given out, just a summary of the question and an answer.

I have spent some time thinking about what to write in my introduction and I'm going with hope because it's such a big part of my work and such an important part of our individual journeys to wellness.

Hope is one of the greatest predictors of

recovery in mental health. Albert Bandura wrote in 1977 that hope is essential for the prevention of mental ill health, for coping with it and for recovery.

Hope can often be absent from the therapy room and a loss of it is associated with diagnosis in mental health. Many of us know what it's like to lose hope, so we recognise its gnawing, sinking, isolating grip.

So, what do we do if we have lost hope? If we have battled and still feel no better? If we can't get access to the services we need? If we still feel alone, disconnected, and that we will never get better?

We connect; we come together in communities like this one.

Sometimes we need others to hold the hope for us. This newspaper was set up to do just that - to connect with you wherever you are. To offer light whilst you are still in the tunnel.

**We are here, every month, with you.**



### About Kirsten

Kirsten Antoncich is a UKCP accredited psychotherapist who has worked in a variety of positions from the NHS to private practices.

Kirsten's research background was in self harm and suicide ideation and she has written guidance for professionals about supporting good mental health.

Kirsten works with children, young people and adults and is passionate about sharing access to mental health education. You can follow her on Instagram at @kirstenantoncich.

**Send your questions to Kirsten at:**

[kirsten@aspire2.org](mailto:kirsten@aspire2.org)

*Please note: Aspire2 is sadly unable to offer a crisis service. If you are in need of immediate help, please visit your GP or any of the mental health services featured in this newspaper. These include the Samaritans, Mind and CALM.*

*The "Let's Talk" service is an educational service and questions and answers might be altered slightly to benefit a wider audience of readers.*



# CALM IS THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY

CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST  
LIVING  
MISERABLY  
CALM

**We are a movement against suicide, the single biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK. Get support and join the campaign at [theCALMzone.net](http://theCALMzone.net)**



**We've all fantasised about it. Quitting the day job to pursue a dream on our own terms. We've all visualised that lottery win - a celebrity lifestyle. No matter who you are, leaving behind the security of your daily life is daunting, but being thrust into the spotlight with very little guidance can be intoxicating and dangerous.**

**In 2017, semi-professional footballer Mike Thalassitis threw caution to the wind, hanging up his boots in pursuit of a celebrity status.**

After joining reality TV show - Love Island, Mike quickly cemented his place on the celebrity circuit as his popularity rocketed overnight.

In March 2019, Mike was found dead. An outpouring of grief gripped news channels and social media, with thousands posting of their shock at what had happened.

In the days that followed Mike's tragic death, mental health experts spoke out about the dangers of reality TV fame, prompting questions of the level of support ITV had offered to the contestants of their smash hit show.

It wasn't the first time the dating show had come under scrutiny. In 2016,

Sophie Gradon took her own life as she struggled to cope with the pressures of fame following a stint in the villa.

*But it's not just the new found fame that takes its toll.*

When engrossed in the show, viewers tend to forget that contestants are real people, with real lives, jobs and families; not pawns on a chess board.

Islanders are subject to torrents of abuse from members of the public, which can have a real effect on their well-being on their return to social media.

Many leave to find they have amassed an army of fans, with their social media accounts often amassing over 1 million followers in just 8 weeks.

Questions were raised about the aftercare that is given to the islanders as they embrace their new found fame

and all the pitfalls that brings, following two months of living in the show's villa in Majorca.

ITV bosses have since admitted that they are aware of mental health issues that might come from appearing on Love Island.

Outlining a new approach ahead of the 2019 series, ITV announced enhanced psychological support for those taking part, training for all cast members on financial management and social media, plus in-depth conversations with all involved about the impact that participation can have on their lives.

In addition, a minimum of eight therapy sessions are available to each Islander once they return home from the villa, with proactive contact being kept up for 14 months after the series ends.

#HelloYellow

MAKE IT YOUR TIME  
**TO SHINE**  
ON WORLD MENTAL  
HEALTH DAY

Join in with #HelloYellow on 10 October.  
Wear whatever you like - as long as it's yellow!  
Help raise funds for YoungMinds.



**SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE FUNDRAISING KIT**  
[YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK/HELLOYELLOW](http://YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK/HELLOYELLOW)

**YOUNGMINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

Written by Alex Morrall

# FRESHERS:

the GOOD

the BAD

and the UGLY



**W**ith summer approaching its uncharacteristically sunny conclusion, leagues of prospective students up and down the county prepare to fly the nest, booklist and new bedding in hand to their respective new universities. The bags are packed, Mum is crying already, the car is fit to burst and the horizon is tinted with the giddy promise of a wicked fresher's week. Right?

## THE GOOD

To preface: Freshers week on the whole is brilliant. It's exciting, inviting, socially stimulating and a personal accomplishment when managed well. The early weeks of term serve as an exciting rite of passage from home life to independent living, learning and friendship. Freshers is a time in which young people enjoy a great many things for maybe the first time (quidditch club anyone?) and start relationships that can last a lifetime and hangovers that feel just as lengthy.

Despite the copious amounts of alcohol, games, fancy dress, casual copulation

and takeaways, freshers is certainly not the all-out festival for all that it appears to be for some. On the flipside of all the vodka and frivolity you are also essentially living alone for what may be the first time in your life, anxious about your new living arrangements and eager not to make the wrong impression.

*"Freshers week helped me navigate living away from home for the first time in a long time. I really didn't expect to feel isolated from my home country... I think what helped me was that many other freshers were feeling the same way as well as people in my corridor."*  
- Avery 23, University of St Andrews

## THE BAD

So, here's the less awesome stuff. Delving into statistics of the student experience is an enlightening (and concerning) endeavour. Over three quarters of first instances of a mental health issue being reported happen before the age of 25. Between 2010 and 2015, the number of university drop-outs due to mental health concerns increased by a whopping 210% and

reports of self-harm have almost doubled since 2017. Most concerning of all is the 79% increase in student suicides that took place between 2007 – 2015 and has been on a steady increase ever since, with the Office of National Statistics reporting that on average a student dies every four days in the UK from suicide.

With statistics such as these it would be safe to assume that student welfare and mental wellbeing is of paramount importance, with Universities Minister Sam Gyimah calling prioritising the issues 'non-negotiable'. Using fresher's week to establish and gather a wealth of support information should be a main objective, as well as registering with a local GP and meeting with personal tutors.

Men seek support the least, only making up 31% of mental health issues reported at university, whilst making up 75% of UK suicide cases. Suicide is still the single biggest killer of young British men. It is simply too easy to say that men simply do not report their struggles



Statistics show that male students are much less likely to seek support for their mental health

due to embarrassment, societal pressures of masculinity and 'not appearing weak'. Suicide occurs for a multitude of reasons and circumstances and to assume it is simply gender based would be ignorant if not dangerous.

But it is true that, for generations, many societies have encouraged men to be hypermasculine examples of strength and stoicism and not to admit they're struggling.

This pressure can be magnified whilst embarking on a new life at university and even more so during the performative rituals of freshers. The image of young, hypersexual, confident masculinity is one performed at clubs, bars and student unions across the nation; to be the life of the party, the 'big man on campus', carefree, popular with the ladies and always out with the lads.

This ideal for young men at freshers is preventing men from reporting themselves for support and help if they think they require it. Unable to take the first step in asking for help, afraid to drop the façade of manhood and unaware of their own mental health and wellbeing until it reaches crisis point.

The conversation on men's mental health has increased significantly in the past few years, with campaigns across

well as working alongside charities and organisations such as MIND, YoungMinds, Calm, SafeLine and the Universities UK's wealth of online resources.

*"I don't like drinking or clubbing... but at freshers I felt I had no choice, there's such a massive pressure to drink every day, it was overwhelming and lonely. The thing that helped was that I got lucky with housemates and had someone lovely across the hall"*  
- Jamie, University of Warwick

### THE UGLY

No secret is made of the partying portion of freshers week. Wristbands, pre-drinks, ring of fire (good luck) and countless union events make up a large proportion of that first-week student experience. It seems easier to converse with your new flatmates over a drinking game, starting off awkwardly at the start of the evening over a few wines and swearing your undying love for each other at the stroke of midnight after your third shot of whatever that blue stuff was. An entire friendship squeezed into one evening, glorious.

But with alcohol comes the inevitable binge-drinking. Overzealous youngsters determined to be that first week legend, nervous students having a little too much Dutch courage to make introductions easier or the newbies, who haven't encountered such a brazen drinking culture before. The sobering (sorry) facts stand as this: Universities in England found very high rates of dangerous drinking, with 41% identified as 'hazardous drinkers', 11% 'harmful drinkers' and a further 10% as 'probably alcohol dependent'.

With establishments selling alcohol at extremely discounted prices, and clubs staying open until the sun comes up, the freshers scene enables students to get hammered as opposed to having a more casual night out.

Alcohol is a depressive; it's a downer as much as it is a mood enhancer. It changes your brain chemistry and that affects your mood. However, that initial elated state that comes from drinking can quickly turn into a melancholic

the country encouraging men to speak up and out about their own experiences with mental health and manhood, but the battle is far from over to keep men talking to one another. Being open about themselves and the first few weeks of university is a wise place to start.

*"I had to help a housemate as he had been forced to perform an obscene and invasive drinking ritual to remain in the American football society...it was unsafe"*

- John, University of Gloucester

Freshers week marks the first step in an educational journey. For all it signifies, it shouldn't however, require the depredation of a student's mental health or personal wellbeing. Nor should it encourage a shift in ideals or introduce pressures to be anyone other than oneself.

Freshers, for all the excitement and socialising, should ideally also introduce a new and reliable system of support as well as sufficient signposting to relevant departments and sites dedicated to caring for such a diverse and high-risk demographic.

Luckily, many universities have already decided to act and increased investment in counselling and support services for all students as

one (we've all seen the crying and confrontations towards the end of a night). Currently, 85% of students agree that drinking and getting drunk is part of university culture, but this is changing.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics two years ago revealed the number of under-25s opting for total abstinence from alcohol had leapt by 40 per cent in eight years, with young people overtaking the elderly as the most sober generation.

The pressures to drink appear to be lessening whilst the acceptance of abstaining from alcohol and understanding its affects is on the rise, an encouraging sign for the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Organisations such as: Drinkaware, Uni Health and Alcohol Change UK all have information and support specifically for students to understand and control alcohol consumption at university.

*"I didn't drink much and didn't really go out clubbing either. For me it was more important to settle into a new city...I went to lots of activities during the day which helped me to feel comfortable with my surroundings. The stereotypical mad fresher's week can be done in later years when you know the best places to go out and still know your way around the city"*

- Emma, 23 University of Edinburgh



Freshers is a great time to try new things... like paint parties

### THE GOOD (AGAIN)

So, freshers is still wicked, not perfect, but wicked. With each passing academic year comes a new group of young people eager to take their first steps

into adulthood. And with each new group of people comes a diverse array of experiences, opinions and cultures colliding together during fresher's week, a veritable free for all of young minds.

It is a time too for youngsters to put themselves out there, try new things, meet likeminded and not-so-likeminded peers and discover a wealth of discourse with which to enrich themselves. The nerves are shared, the apprehensions almost universal but the experience of fresher's is entirely personal.

There will always be drinking and parties, dancing and the odd kebab, but that isn't the end of what freshers offers. What it really offers is a new beginning. One that is perfectly acceptable to take some time getting used to.

### NUS Advice:

"Don't be afraid to seek help. If you broke your arm you'd seek help. It should be the same principle for your mental health or any area you are struggling in. 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem or disorder, where we may need help from a specialist. It's important to get help when we need it to prevent difficulties becoming more serious. Also, don't forget to register with your local GP! Problems with money, housing, relationships and studying are all common causes of worry, your students' union can provide support and where necessary sign post to other services that exist to help you."

**nus**  
national union of students

### My advice, as a graduate

- Embrace the opportunities freshers offers both daunting and familiar. Remember, everyone is in the same boat as you with just as many new faces and names to remember (and inevitably forget and Facebook search later).
- Begin with one person, your neighbour or nearest housemate and 'buddy up' as you meet the rest of your new living compadres, it will be a lot easier with another person, keep those bedroom doors open at the start.
- Wherever possible, begin interacting with course mates before your arrival, so you have at least a couple of names and faces if all else is beyond you, Facebook, Twitter or any social media sites are great for this (it will likely be the first of MANY WhatsApp groups).
- Go to the social fairs – they're a great hubbub of activity and variety. You can go alone and stroll through or even better with a new buddy or two.
- Societies are the best way of finding those likeminded individuals with whom you can spend your free time.
- Put yourself out there with something new or find that one thing you know will take the stresses of daily activity away and reward yourself for your hard work by looking forward to it each week.
- Finally, don't overthink it; you'll meet more people than you could possibly remain best friends with during the first few weeks. Every graduate will tell you (me included) they scarcely remember half the people they shared freshers with. You may meet your lifelong best friend during freshers and you may not, both are equally normal. So, stay safe, stay responsible, eat well (especially before a night out), don't lose your keys and give yourself a decent night's sleep before embracing the next day's offerings. You're only a fresher once so embrace the opportunity the way you want to.

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# SOBER AND PROUD?

**Though Pride is known for inclusivity, those trying to avoid alcohol are often bombarded with sponsorships from major drinks suppliers and excessive drinking, which can be a trigger for those recovering from addiction. Alex Morrall explains further.**

Pride month concludes with Manchester rounding up with a huge concert in the city's historic gay village. Across the country, Pride month (or months as celebrations span longer) is a time for queer expression, community and celebration.

The event itself is a far cry from the political protest it was once centred around, with recent iterations favouring a party atmosphere and parades, festivals, drinks and frivolity.

In theory, it is an inclusive time in which everyone from the LGBT+ community can come together and enjoy a collective visibility and draw attention to salient socio-political issues minorities currently face.

However, an overlooked issue within the queer space, especially those from

disadvantaged backgrounds is that of sobriety and addiction.

As a community which experiences lifetime trauma such as homophobia, anxiety surrounding identity and "coming out", the LGBT+ demographic is at a higher risk for disorders and addiction relating to alcohol and other substances.

So, what does modern pride mean for the inclusivity of those for whom the excessive drinking and partying is a trigger point?

Up to 25 percent of the general LGBTQ community has moderate alcohol dependency, compared to 5 to 10 percent of the general population.

Some subgroups of the LGBTQ community have even higher rates of abuse with gay and bisexual women

coming in as the most vulnerable subgroup.

Some of the biggest partnerships with pride come from alcohol brands, with Smirnoff renewing its rainbow bottle for the third year running.

Absolut vodka has been working with LGBT+ organisers for decades and while these brands manage to raise significant funds for LGBT+ causes (with London alone raising £650,000 through branding and partners) the huge presence of alcohol sponsorship at pride can be overwhelming to some.

There is pressure to drink lots while participating in the celebrations, as a way of cutting loose and letting oneself mingle with glitter covered strangers in the colourful carnival that is a pride parade.



Pride events are becoming increasingly popular, with most major cities in the UK hosting one each summer.

This isn't possible or safe for those with addiction issues and as the events are so heavily centred around drinking it can often leave those in recovery or sober feeling isolated, alienated and not a true 'part of the community' - the antithesis of what pride meant in the first place.

Furthermore, pride events are becoming increasingly ticketed, with prices exceeding £200 for some major pride events to allow greater parties and performances.

This influx of corporate and commercial turnover related to pride events and shift in priorities continues the exclusivity of the event and injustice for those who cannot or will not pay such prices for a supposedly inclusive and queer orientated event.

*"It's a lot of money in most cities to go somewhere surrounded by drunk people where everything is commercialised and expensive."*  
— John, 25, Coventry

Addiction is an illness, both mental and physical, with a multitude of complex causes and contributing factors, but a common fear for those in recovery is that of triggers.

The social anxiety, constant visual marketing and cultural pressures of modern pride can be enough for individuals to relapse in their sobriety journey.

You could say that pride 'is what you make of it' but it is unreasonable to think one can avoid the presence of alcohol during the celebrations as it is just so overwhelming.

But there is a hopeful trend occurring amongst British young people, one of sobriety and acceptance.

Funnily enough, it appears it is the older generations with a greater distaste for sobriety, with just over a quarter of people ages 18-24 identifying as sober in 2017 compared with just over a fifth

of the broader adult population, and this trend is seemingly on the increase.

As LGBT+ communities continue to see a rise in acceptance so too it seems is the acceptance of sobriety and abstinence from addictive or depressive substances and alcohol.

As a community vulnerable to alcoholism and addiction it is encouraging to hear that young people are becoming more accustomed to being sober or being around their sober peers, there is still a long way ahead to ensure LGBT+ people who do not feel safe surrounded by alcohol and other substances feel ensure in the knowledge pride will not present an increased number of triggers.

Pride is supposed to be among the pinnacle of safe places for LGBTQ+ folks but only through maintaining the conversation on sobriety in the queer community will it become the truly accepting event it is supposed to be.

## "I'm so OCD!"



### 4 Myths about OCD

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a common form of anxiety disorder involving distressing, repetitive thoughts. According to studies, around three quarters of a million people are thought to be living with severe life impacting and debilitating OCD in the UK alone.**

Surrounded by a number of common misconceptions, OCD is very often misunderstood. Here are 4 common myths about OCD.

#### 1. People with OCD love keeping things neat and tidy.

"I'm so OCD!"

Generally used in a playful way while someone organises their desk or cleans their home, it's a phrase heard all too often without real understanding of the disorder. In many ways, it's the equivalent of saying "I'm so anorexic," after choosing to avoid having a dessert.

OCD is a serious mental illness marked by high levels of anxiety and emotional distress. Those suffering with the illness might have cleaning routines, but that doesn't mean they enjoy them. They keep things clean and organised to avoid experiencing the anxiety that the illness can bring.

It is important to remember that not everyone with OCD has compulsions related to cleanliness, as is often assumed.

#### 2. OCD is just being a germaphobe.

OCD manifests itself differently in different people. Only a fraction of those diagnosed are actually afraid of germs and have cleanliness related obsessions and compulsions.

Some of the common obsessions in people living with OCD include:

- Fear of a certain word, number or colour
  - Fear of germs
  - Fear of bringing harm to themselves or others
  - Fear of a losing a loved one
- People living with the disorder have their own rituals which they use to mitigate the anxiety associated with their obsessions, these are known as compulsions.

Common compulsions include:

- Repetition of certain movements
- Hand-washing
- Tapping or touching objects
- Cleaning excessively
- Hoarding

Symptoms vary between individuals and are prone to change during a person's lifetime.

#### 3. You can see when someone has OCD.

It may come as a surprise that you've probably encountered many individuals with OCD and haven't actually realised it. People with OCD are often able to suppress their symptoms in public, especially if they are receiving professional treatment.

A number of patients demonstrate no visible compulsions. This is known as 'Pure Obsessional OCD,' or 'Pure-O' and is a subtype of the disorder that involved compulsions that take place within the patient's head. People with Pure-O often don't recognise that they are living with OCD, as their symptoms do not resemble the traditional depictions of the disorder.

Just because you can't see OCD, doesn't mean that someone doesn't have it.

#### 4. Everyone is a little OCD.

Affecting 12 in every 1,000 people in the UK, people often confuse the fact that they like something to be done in a certain way with OCD, however people with OCD don't want to have it, so their compulsions are not something they want to do. You can't be 'a little OCD' - you either have it, or you don't.



# Thursday is the new Friday

With the four-day week attracting interest from businesses all over the UK, [Aspire2](#) investigates the positive effects this could have on the mental health of employees.

This year in the UK, several companies have trialled the four-day working week – where employees are paid for five full days but have Fridays off. Many of the trials have been a success, with increases in productivity as well as reductions in the amount of sick days staff take.

With workplace stress levels rising in the UK, mental health in the workplace is becoming a major talking point, and the four-day working week could provide a big boost to our mental wellbeing and enable us to find that perfect work-life balance.

After all, we spend a third of our adult lives at work (with up to another third spent sleeping), which means we have little time to enjoy hobbies and family time in the way we would like. The four-day working week has received interest from political groups, including the Labour Party, who are in conversation with economist Lord Skidelsky about the effects of the UK adopting it as a policy – with a report set to be published in September.

In a white paper published in July by Henley Business School entitled *Four Better or Four Worse*, 78% of employers who had adopted the policy said that their employees were happier. 70% of employees said that their mental wellbeing would improve as a result of the four-day week and 69% said that their family lives would be better.

Aside from this, the study reveals that businesses who have made the change have made savings already (£92bn, in fact) and that the policy would have a major positive impact on the environment.

[But how is it working out for those UK businesses who have made the switch?](#)

Maxim Grew, who is Founder and Director of The Intrepid Camera Company in Brighton, introduced the four-day week policy to his staff at the beginning of this year. He says it has been a success so far.

"Initially we signed up to the four-day week as trial until February, but we

didn't discuss it ever ending so we still have it. The overall wellbeing of the staff, in terms of social bonding at work and having everyone on the same shift has meant that relationships between staff are better," Maxim said.

**"Everyone seems happier too. There has been a noticeable shift in positivity at work and the job not being seen as a burden. Our productivity has also gone up quite a lot," he added.**

The extra day off has allowed Maxim's workers to spend more time on their hobbies and focus on what makes them happy outside of work.

Another major benefit is the reduction in unplanned absences. "We've seen a massive reduction in sick days as a result of the reduced working hours," Maxim said.

Elektra Lighting Design, another company currently with a four-day working week, has also seen a reduction in unpaid absences: 1.59% compared to their 2.81% of 2018.



*The team at The Intrepid Camera Company, led by Director Maxim Grew (centre).*

Neil Knowles, who is the director of the company, started the four-day week policy in February.

"I was looking at it for a while, so I found out a bit more and did some research. It looked like a really good thing to do. We're still closely monitoring it and it's too short a time to finally decide if it's something permanent, but it's been positive so far," Neil said.

Like with The Intrepid Camera Company, Elektra is experiencing a boost in staff morale without negatively impacting the company's bottom line.

"We've had no reduction in turnover, and we all have Friday off which I would say is a success. We were worried clients wouldn't be able to get to us, but they've been very supportive and think our four-day week is great." Neil added.

Elektra's staff have had more time to become more invested in their hobbies, but Neil himself is thankful just for the extra day off.

**"I've got children so it's the only I get where I don't have to be at work or look after my kids which makes such a difference. Just having time to myself is an astonishing luxury," he said.**

The UK's potential four-day week is being spurred forward by the 4DayWeek Campaign, which was founded in 2016.

Aidan Harper is a founding member of the campaign, and he believes that the fundamental working structure of the UK needs to change.

"At its heart, the 4DayWeek campaign aims to politicise working hours. It feels in the last few decades as though our Monday-to-Friday work structure has become crystallised. It has been changed in the past and it can be changed in the future," he said.

According to Aidan, a reduction in working hours is crucial for people to have happy lives in the UK.

**"The Government's Health and Safety body has shown that workplace related anxiety, depression and stress has gone up in the last few years, to the point of being a crisis. The biggest cause of anxiety, stress and depression is overwork, and we're constantly burning ourselves out," he said.**

When you go back to the issue of sick days, "one in four were as a result of overwork and the effect that it has on wellbeing."

"This isn't an individual problem – there are self-help books and articles for your stress and wellbeing but ultimately it's a problem that's inherent in the structure of work. We need to change that structure so that work fits around our needs as individuals and society," Aidan added.

Despite the clear benefits, it could be some time before businesses begin adopting the four-day week policy en masse; not least those companies that do not operate a standard Monday-to-Friday structure.

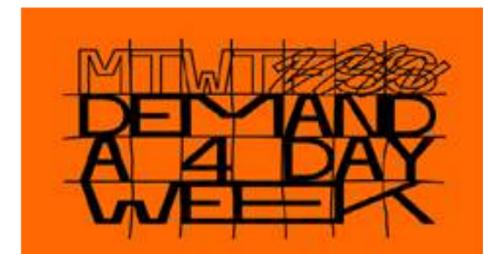
"[The four-day week] works for us because we're a small business in a niche market. Retail would be difficult because you have to have staff there every day – so you would just hire more staff. We haven't needed to do that, we just work a bit harder and we're more focused," Neil commented.

The Confederation of British Industry has opposed the four-day week proposal on the basis that "more flexibility, not less, is needed." Ultimately though, it will be for employers to decide if the policy benefits their businesses and more importantly, the mental wellbeing of their staff.

With the results of The Labour Party's investigation into the impact of a four-day working week due in September, we hope to see more companies starting to look into the benefits of reduced hours for their staff, as evidence shows that it positively benefits employees' lives and their mental health, as well as saving companies money by reducing sick days and increasing productivity.

Aidan's final suggestion is one to employees: once you're out of working hours, try not to reply to work emails or pressure others to reply to theirs. It is important to put your personal life before your professional life and understand that others might want to do the same.

If you're interested in the 4DayWeek campaign, you can sign up at [www.4dayweek.co.uk](http://www.4dayweek.co.uk)



# Love at first swipe?

**Aspire2 Brand Ambassador Aaron Crawley gives a candid commentary on the impact of online dating on mental health and the dangers of dating apps where appearance is everything.**

"The days of stressing about whether your crush likes you are gone. No longer do you have to send you friend over to them and ask them if they want to say hi, and you don't need to pluck up the courage to approach them in a pub or nightclub and try to strike up a conversation.

Online dating is now by far the easiest way to find single people.

Dating apps have made it much easier to meet potential love interests, and those with low self-esteem, body dysmorphia, and social or general anxiety can use the screen to protect themselves.

However, these dating apps have a severe drawback, and for those who have those mental health issues, the rejection from various people you have swiped right for can tilt some over the edge.

I personally have absolutely no confidence when it comes to women because of how people treated me when I was diagnosed with my various mental health issues last year. I'm not happy with how I look, I don't like being out in large crowds and I don't feel confident in my body no matter how hard I try to change it, so for me to try dating apps for the fourth time was a big deal.

This time though, I decided I would use it for a social experiment. I've used most of the dating apps before with varying degrees of success but I've never hooked up with anyone from them. I decided I would solely concentrate on Tinder this time because according to others who have used it, it's the easiest app for meeting and hooking up with people.

When you sign up, you're given between 20 to 30 girls to swipe left or right on to start you off, and after swiping right on a large percentage of the women I saw first I was optimistic I would get one or two matches. Twenty four hours in to my experiment I had no matches. None, nada, not even a pity match.

I was disappointed but my job has helped me have pretty thick skin and I didn't let it get me down too much. The lack of matches got me thinking about people who have various mental health issues and the risks they take every time they try these apps. The rejection can be a serious trigger and can lead them to do things that would put them in harm's way.

As it stands I have been on Tinder for three weeks and in that time I have had 5 hits. I was expecting more matches but as I said I'm no oil painting myself. I am going to give it one more week before I pack it in altogether.

For many of us who have such a low opinion of ourselves both physically and mentally, the rejection of getting little or no matches can be very hard to deal with. I have friends who use dating apps who have all said that they use them because they don't have the confidence within themselves to go out in a social scene and meet new people. The thought of it scares them. One person has told me that when he tells girls he suffers from mental health issues that they stop replying to him or unmatch with him.

This has led him to self-harming and contemplating suicide in the past - especially the first few times it happened to him. He felt afraid to talk to people about how he felt because while there is still a stigma around

mental health, he feels there is a bigger stigma about meeting someone on a dating app. He said later that it didn't matter what I said to him about his lack of matches on Tinder and that it didn't make him feel any better. In the moment he felt rotten and less than human - that there was something wrong physically because women appeared to be swiping left.

As for the mental health aspect, he said he's going to be slow about telling people about it in future, which is sad because suffering mental illness isn't something to be ashamed of. Hopefully the stigma around mental health will continue to be broken down and we can be open and honest about it without fear of judgement.

Anyhow, I still haven't met the woman of my dreams on Tinder and to be honest I don't think I will. I'm just going to have to try it the old fashioned way - I just need to get over my fear of large crowds."



## Mental health in our prisons

### Are staff cuts affecting mental health in prisons?

It has been stated that the current mental health state in UK prisons is 'shocking and shameful.' Over 3,000 inmates have been transferred from prisons to hospitals under the Mental Health Act in the last three years.

To some, these figures won't come as a surprise, especially considering the record high numbers of self-inflicted deaths and self-harm cases in prisons across the country. Suicides in prison are on the rise. In 2018 alone, there were 92 suicides - a 90 percent rise from the previous year and over 52,000 self harming incidents - a 23 percent rise from 2017.

Another staggering figure is the 6,000 mental health nurse jobs that have been cut in the past decade. Combine this with the 7,000 job cuts in prisons since 2010 and it makes you wonder whether the cuts are the reason behind the rise in self-harm and suicide in the UK's prisons.

The rocketing statistics question whether prisons are up to scratch in providing sufficient mental health care for their vulnerable patients. The provisions under the Mental Health Act are implemented when an inmate is so mentally unwell that only hospital treatment can help, which begs the question - is it too late at that point?

Share your thoughts via email: [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)

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# It's a wonderful world

A Facebook page started to create awareness-raising videos on autism has seen a highly positive response so far.

It's a Wonderful World, created by dad Marc Thompson (pictured right), publishes regular videos on what it's like to raise his son, Josh (left), 11, who has autism. The first video received over 5,000 views on Facebook and the page is quickly growing in likes. At the time of writing, the page has been live for just a week.

"We've been talking about doing this for a while. We get a lot of questions about Josh's condition from parents who are maybe going through the same thing, so we thought this would be a good way to help people. Some people are a bit unsure of what autism means

so we're keen to help other families as much as we can," Marc said. Marc is often accompanied in the videos by youngest son, Harry (pictured centre), 8, who helps his brother Josh with his condition. Harry also came up with the idea for the page.

"Harry mentioned we should do something online because he's quite interested in YouTube and social media. He helps calm Josh down; he talks to him and chills him out. They're very close and Harry likes to help Josh."

The page is named after Louis Armstrong's What a Wonderful World, which is Josh's favourite song. So far, the videos have covered the ups and downs of Josh's condition, the experience of his diagnosis, finding him a school and how to sign What a Wonderful World in

Makaton, the sign language that helped Josh learn to speak.

Josh was diagnosed with autism aged two and a half, and Marc says the condition can be challenging.

"His mood can be difficult. It's difficult to pre-empt how he's going to be. Some days he's brilliant and some days he's tricky," he said.

"His character is brilliant though; he's hilarious. When he says something, he means it and everyone warms to him and the way he comes across," Marc added.

Josh's condition means that he has extremely high levels of detail and technical knowledge. "The stuff he does in terms of his laptop blows us away,

he's really clever in terms of technology. It's more of a challenge in terms of communication" Marc said.

"I do a lot of presentations at work and because of how detailed he is, he helps me organise them properly," he added.

Though as a society we are becoming increasingly aware of autism, there is still a stigma attached. The anti-vaccination movement using autism as a deterrent for vaccines, for example, shows that the world is not yet fully informed of the realities of the condition and that many fear their child will have autism.

It's a Wonderful World are aiming to break down some of that stigma with these videos and Marc thinks raising awareness is the best way of creating a better understanding of autism. "It's nothing to fear. The only fear is the unknown. But if you understand it, there's nothing to worry about at all. The things people can do despite the autism is amazing and there's so much support available."

He says it also brings a fresh perspective on parenting and the rulebook is thrown out of the window.

"You find a different way with autism. You have to change your approach slightly and it's quite nice to work out what works," he says.

The aim for It's a Wonderful World is to grow to be able to help as many people as Marc, Josh and Harry can. What they have so far is a hugely positive start.

"We're keen for people to get in contact with us. I just want to raise as much awareness as possible and put people at ease."

You can watch It's a Wonderful World's videos by clicking [here](#).



## Autism Hour aiming for boost following most successful year

The National Autistic Society has created a letter to be delivered to local retailers across the UK as they hope to build on last year's successful Autism Hour campaign.

The charity is aiming to create an easier experience for the 700,000 people with autism in the UK when they visit shops and businesses. This involves making the surroundings less overwhelming by turning down music, muting background music and dimming bright lights.

In a tweet, the National Autistic Society said: "Last year, 11,000 shops took part in #AutismHour, making it our most successful year yet. But we know Autism Hour must be more than 60 mins! That's why we need your help! We've created a handy letter for you to share encouraging shops to get involved," launching a letter you can fill out and send or deliver to establishments local to you.

In last year's campaign, major retailers including Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Argos, Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Bank participated in the campaign, and some retailers have committed to regular quiet hours all-year-round.

**Autism Hour is back**  
Saturday 5 - Saturday 12 October



This year's Autism Hour will take place from Saturday 5th to Saturday 12th October and you can encourage your local businesses to participate by signing and delivering the National Autistic Society's letter, which can be found at <https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/autism-hour/ask-your-local-shops.aspx>.

Alternatively, you can sign your business up to Autism Hour 2019 at <https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/autism-hour/businesses.aspx>.



Celebrating World Mental Health Day 2019

10th October

Special 12-page Online Digital Edition

Come and join our campaign for the day  
"Buy a Homeless Person a Meal"

Aspire2 Mental Health Media and Events will be producing a special 12-page digital edition of our newspaper. If you would like to support or contribute to this one-off special edition, please contact [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)

Tell us your planned events for the day so we can advertise them in our September issue.

If your company would like to advertise or sponsor this edition please contact [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)



In this monthly series of articles, we'll be explaining the basics of common mental health conditions including how the condition manifests itself, what to look out for in others, what to do if you suspect you may have the condition and how to seek help.

By Alex Morrall

# DEPRESSION

Depression or 'depressed' is a word we hear so often in conversation but what does it actually mean? Well, depression (or major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical condition that negatively affects the way a person feels, thinks and acts.

Often misunderstood as simply 'feeling sad', depression is characterised by prolonged periods of melancholy and hopelessness that can last from a few weeks, to months, to even years at a time. It is diagnosable (proportionally more in women than men) and with the right treatment and support, most people with depression can make a full recovery.

Depression is the single most prominent mental health problem reported worldwide, with 1 in 6 people in the UK reporting symptoms of depression and with suicide being the largest killer of men between the ages of 20 and 40,

it is a condition that can have life threatening capabilities. As a mental health condition, it affects everyone differently and can have a multitude of negative impacts on a person's life and wellbeing.

Living with depression can range from a struggle to get out of bed in the morning at all to high functioning depressives who manage to hide their symptoms entirely from others. It entails a battle with one's own feelings of hopelessness and loss and can be incredibly isolating. This may mean taking daily medications to help with mood or speaking to councillors or therapists to tackle harmful thinking patterns.

Depression can take away interests and enjoyments once had in activities and relationships, hinder concentration and lead to unhealthy sleeping habits.

Symptoms of depression may not always be obvious at first and so

keeping an eye open for these signs is vital in intervention of supporting of those whom may be dealing with the disorder. Whether in oneself or others.

These may include:

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless
- No longer finding things enjoyable
- Irritability or shortness of temper
- Isolation
- Finding decision making difficult
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Eating too much or not enough
- Suicidal thoughts
- Thoughts of self-harm

Spotting these signs in others may be difficult, more physically obvious symptoms may include:

- Slow movement or speech
- Lethargy or tiredness
- Weight changes
- Lack of performance at work
- Isolating oneself from social

- situations and relationships
- Low sex drive (Libido)
- Low self-hygiene (untidy appearance)
- Alcohol or drug misuse

These symptoms are not universal; everyone experiences depression differently and may show most or very few of these symptoms.

Depression is a prolonged medical illness. Think of it in the same way you would the flu, or a broken arm; it is not a sign of weakness but a group of symptoms that are involuntary and need treatment to become manageable. Anyone can encounter or develop depression regardless of age, gender or social standing. Mental illness does not discriminate, but it also does not need to define a person or persons.

Often, the best thing to do to help someone you may suspect is dealing with depression is unclear, and you may feel helpless in the knowledge a loved one is suffering. It is important to note that depression is NOT personal,

hiding it will not help and that, most importantly, you can't 'fix' someone else's depression. You can simply be a support to them.

What you can do is talk to them, open up a compassionate and patient conversation. Remind the person that they are loved and valued and that you are there for them. It is okay to say that you don't understand but want to help, sometimes a simple 'you may not believe it now, but the way you're feeling will change' is enough to comfort a loved one in need.

Encouraging them to seek help is also one of the best things you can do, whether it be the GP, a therapist or even the emergency services if necessary. You can start the ball rolling in terms of support if you gently encourage professional support.

If you suspect yourself of showing signs of depression it is important that you seek support for yourself. It is vital you reach out and contact someone with

these concerns, whether a friend, a family member or a doctor. It may seem daunting at first but no one knows you better than your friends and family, and doctors are trained to respond and treat depression and help you feel better.

Stay active, it can feel difficult enjoying the activities you once did but forcing yourself out into the world can be incredibly helpful when feeling depressed or isolated. Exercise cannot be encouraged enough for those dealing with depression, the natural endorphins and sense of achievement can really improve your mood.

But, if you feel that you may not need such support quite yet, there is a wealth of self-help and self-care resources both online and in local communities throughout the country and books, meetings and online courses are there if you feel they may help.

Don't suffer alone - if you are struggling with depression there are services that can help you. See the contacts below.



**MIND:**  
0300 123 3393  
info@mind.org.uk  
Text: 86463

**NHS Choices**  
nhs.uk

**CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)**  
0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight)  
thecalmlzone.net

**Samaritans**  
116 123 (freephone)  
email: jo@samaritans.org

**NHS 111**  
call: 111

**Befrienders Worldwide**  
befrienders.org

# The Psychedelic Mental Health Revolution

Mention psychedelic substances and for most people the image of tripping club goers will come to mind. However, long before their recreational use and the war on drugs, shamans were using psychedelics for their healing properties. Since the accidental discovery of the psychedelic properties of LSD by Albert Hoffman in 1943, there was also a great deal of interest from scientists and psychiatrists who saw great healing potential in these fascinating substances.

This increased interest spurred on vast bodies of research into the applications of LSD (acid), MDMA (ecstasy), DMT and psilocybin (the active compound found in magic mushrooms) in the treatment of a variety of mental conditions.

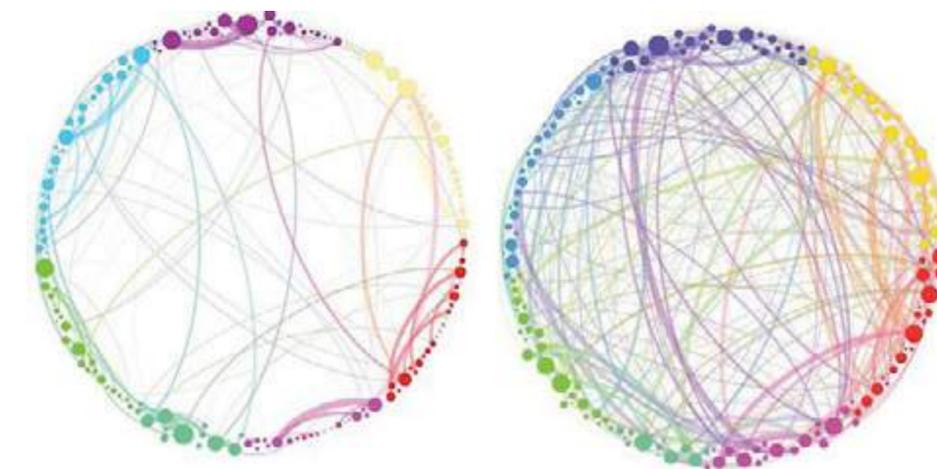
Sadly for many who may have benefited from this research, everything came to an effective standstill when the US government ramped up its war on drugs with the Controlled Substances Act being passed in 1970, essentially closing the door on any government-sanctioned psychedelic research.

In recent years there has been a revival in psychedelic research. In the UK we are lucky to be close to the epicentre of this research, with the world's first Centre for Psychedelic Research having opened at Imperial College London earlier this year.

So far research has shown the potential benefits of taking psilocybin for treatment resistant depression, MDMA to treat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and LSD for treating addiction and reducing anxiety for those with terminal illnesses.

In a TEDx talk, Dr Robin Carhart-Harris (Head of the Centre for Psychedelic Research) explains how when not on psychedelics the adult brain has limited communication pathways between different regions of the brain and are confined to particular communities or cliques. Comparatively, when on psychedelics different regions of the brain will communicate much more openly and freely with other regions of the brain.

He draws parallels between the adult brain on psychedelics and that of the infant brain with its emotional lability, overactive imagination and experiencing everything as novel. He explains how the adult brain although more sophisticated and finessed, is also more constrained whereas the infant brain is simpler and freer in its functioning. Additionally when on psychedelics more of the brain contributes to the visual experience than ordinarily, allowing for dream like visions when the eyes are closed. The brain being unanchored from incoming sensory information allowing it to conjure imagery from the depths of the brain.



Dr Carhart-Harris continues to highlight the magnitude of the problem that is depression; it is a leading cause of disability worldwide (affecting 350 million people), the most costly brain disorder in Europe and the number one cause of absenteeism from the workplace. According to his statistics, 15% of those with the condition will commit suicide.

As it stands only 50% of patients respond to antidepressants and as many as 20% don't respond to any current treatment. In the first phase of the first ever clinical trial looking at how psilocybin could be used as a treatment of major depression, Dr Carhart-Harris' team found that three months after taking the psilocybin the results were more effective than all current treatments. All subjects showed improvement after three weeks, 67% were in remission (depression-free) at one week and 42% were still in remission after three months.

Over the coming months we plan to go into greater detail on this subject and talk to experts in the field, providing anecdotal accounts, of which I myself have one to share. If you're open minded you may just be surprised what you learn.

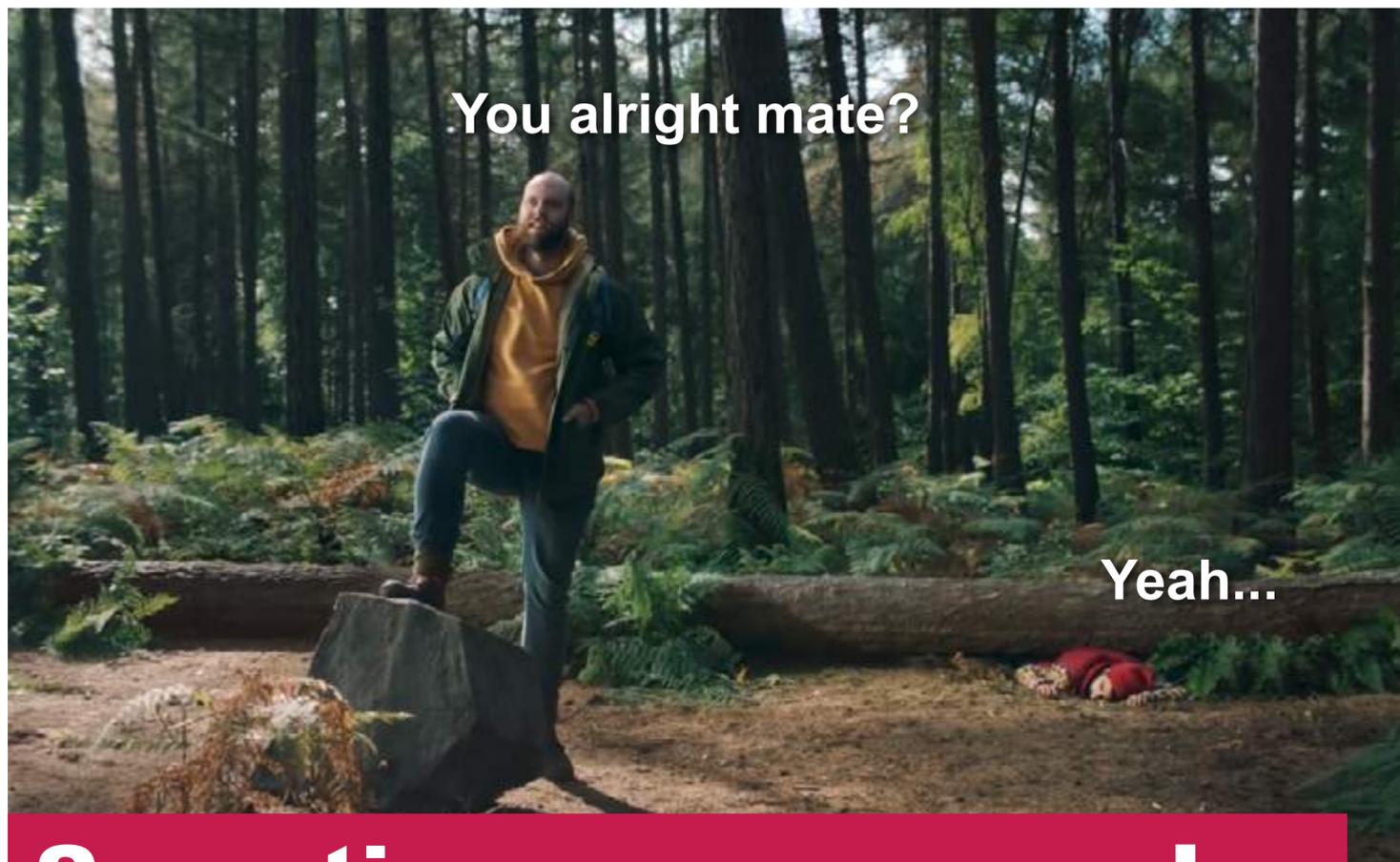
- Thomas Watson

**Tom is the organiser of 'York Men Walk and Talk.' A friendly environment for men to socialise, exercise and get things off their mind.**

**It's believed that men don't discuss their emotions and challenges enough and that's a large cause of mental illness and suicide amongst men. Let's fix the problem one step at a time.**

**For more information visit:**

[meetup.com/York-Men-Walk-Talk](https://meetup.com/York-Men-Walk-Talk)



You alright mate?

Yeah...

**Sometimes we say we're fine when we're not.**

**So if your mate's acting differently...**

**Ask twice >**

**With 1 in 4 people experiencing a mental health problem this year alone, if a mate says he's fine, he might not be. To really find out, ask twice.**

We are a growing movement of people changing how we all think and act about mental health problems.

To learn about how you can get involved, click [here](#).

**time to change**

let's end mental health discrimination

**"I was treading water and starting to sink."**



**Being an elite athlete can be a battle at the best of times, but is sacrificing your own mental health for your career really worth it?**

**Olympic champion Callum Skinner has said that a lack of understanding from British Cycling led to his retirement from the sport, aged just 26.**

After seeking advice from his coach and sports psychologist Dr Steve Peters, Skinner initially requested a break from the sport, explaining he was going through a tough time, battling with serious mental health issues.

'culture of fear' and 'bullying.'

Skinner had stated he didn't feel mental health was understood well enough at the time, but in May 2019 British Cycling announced a new mental health strategy. The screening is aimed at ensuring athlete's mental health is assessed and looked after with the same importance as their physical well-being and performance.

The new strategy involves check-ups every six months, with British Cycling adding that they want to ensure coaches and professionals are more proactive when it comes to recognising and treating mental health problems.

A spokesperson for British Cycling admitted that Callum's experience had helped them to improve their mental health provision, with GB Cycling Team's performance director Stephen Park adding, "It's important that we create a culture and environment in which our athletes feel supported and want to be a part of. The revised mental health strategy is just one piece of the jigsaw in terms of how we're constantly looking for improvements in the support we can offer to our riders. It's not to say that we have all the answers, but rather we are committed to making improvements in the services we are able to offer."

**Have you experienced a lack of support in your workplace?**

Email: [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)

**"I was treading water and starting to sink."**

Despite the intention of a break, his sights had still been set on the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, until a conversation with the British Cycling management quickly turned to how long he could be away from the sport before he was out of contention for Tokyo altogether.

**"There was too much focus on performance and not enough on getting better."**

With his mental struggles being neglected and talk turning to performance, he made the decision to bow out. "I was asking for a break for the sake of my safety, which was recommended by my coach and team doctor, so to then have that morph into a conversation about performance just made me feel as if this wasn't something I wanted to do any more," Skinner said.

This isn't the first time the governing body has come under scrutiny in recent years, with a 2017 report revealing a



Supersonic Fitness, a new fitness concept for York, takes a holistic approach to wellbeing and a healthy and happy lifestyle. Written by Catherine Turnbull.



# Feeling Supersonic

Supersonic Fitness, in the heart of York, is reversing the notion that going to the gym is a chore and replacing it with a feel-good path to wellbeing.

The venue offers a full range of premium gym equipment alongside studio spaces for classes, a state-of-the-art spa recovery zone and a healthy eating café open to members and non-members.

Located in the transformed Stonebow House development, once the legendary Fibbers music venue, the lifestyle transformation concept is unique in the UK.

Created by locals Nick Sadler and Sarah Cleland-Smith, whose company motive8 delivers high-quality bespoke health and fitness solutions, Supersonic Fitness is the first lifestyle facility of its kind and the development of Supersonic has been a passion project for Nick and Sarah.

Nick left Yorkshire, aged 19, to work in America and started a gym design and installation company in 2000, but it had always been an ambition to move back to Yorkshire and develop something different.

*“We’ve created Supersonic to be more than just a gym; it’s a sanctuary open to all with the aim of supporting you every step of the way to achieve your personal goals for total lifestyle transformation,” Nick said.*

*“The space has been designed to make you feel good and help you to lead a healthier lifestyle – whether that’s working out, practicing mindfulness, aiding recovery, meeting friends or nourishing yourself with great food. Mental fitness is as important as physical fitness,” he added.*

If you’re after a high tempo workout, the gym has a full range of high-

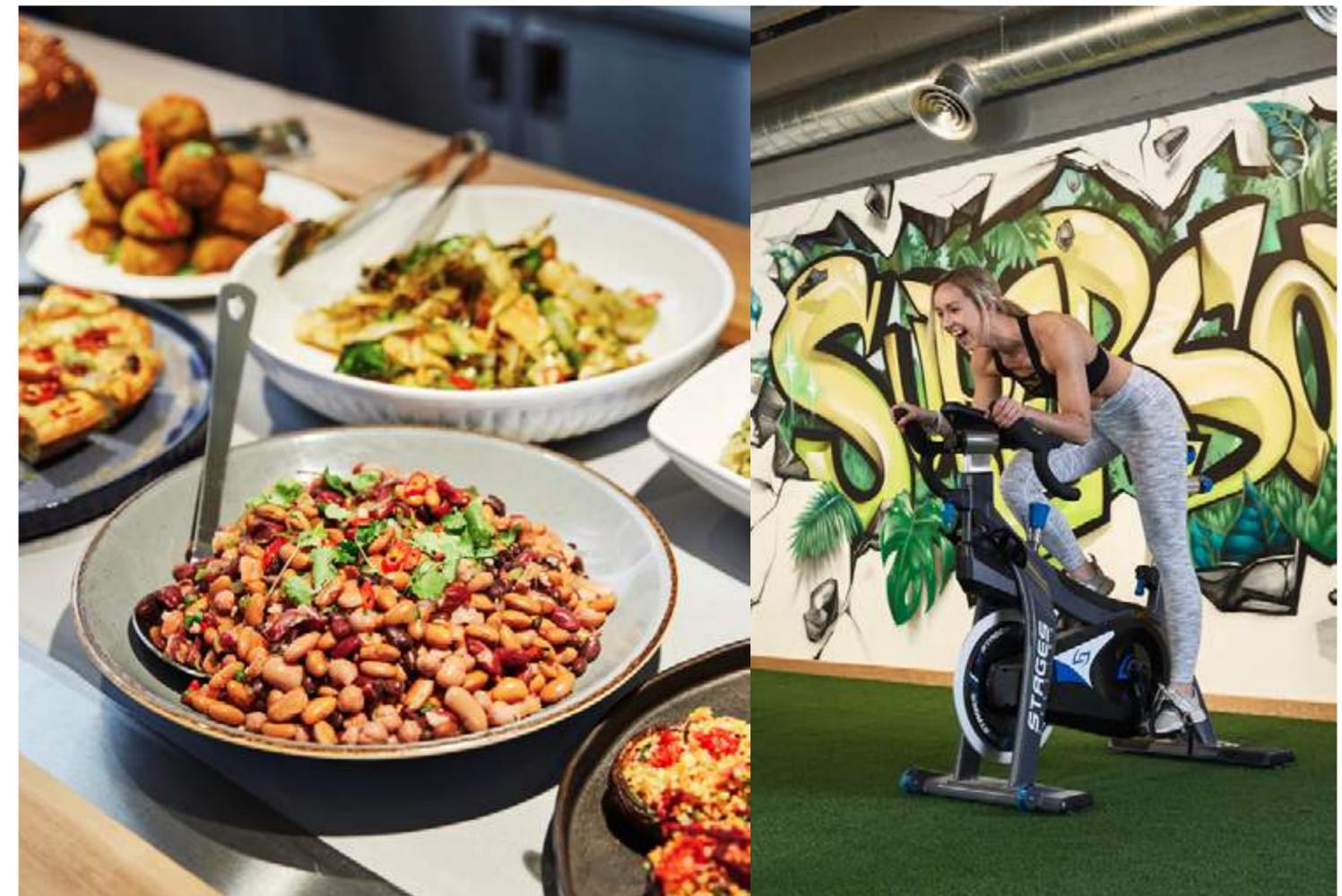
quality cardio, strength and resistance equipment alongside studio classes, cardio and bespoke Super60 fitness classes on offer.

For relaxation, there is yoga and meditation for mental and spiritual wellbeing, spa-standard changing facilities and living plant walls.

To aid in recovery, there is injury rehab and return-to-fitness support and a state-of-the-art recovery zone with infrared and ice recovery.

With an unusual space to work with, including a fully glazed gym, the equipment layout was very important to make best use of the space available.

A best-of-breed approach was taken from a variety of manufacturers - Erimus equipment was specified throughout the gym alongside Technogym, Octane, Concept 2, Matrix and Watt Bike.



A dedicated functional zone with a bespoke ceiling mounted rig allows users to mix up training alongside a stretching area offering members a spacious area to warm up and cool down.

There are two fitness studios, one which focuses on higher intensity fitness, such as Spin, Boxing, and HIIT, whilst the other is a more relaxing space for yoga, Pilates, barre, tai chi and meditation. Both studios were designed to create the optimum environment for working out.

The unique recovery zone includes a state-of-the-art infrared sauna, a Finnish sauna, experience shower and ice fountain allowing members to move between the dedicated ‘heat and ice’ areas for a full contrast therapy session.

The treatment room and changing

facilities have been finished to a beautifully high standard, offering members a luxurious and spa-like experience.

Understanding that nutrition and how we fuel our bodies are essential to wellbeing, there is also a welcoming café open to both members and non-members with low-level seating and at-bar dining, serving quality fresh and organic meals, a daily salad bar, snacks and drinks, including freshly made juices and smoothies, with a focus on local produce, and all prepared by a top chef.

The number one goal at Supersonic is that you leave feeling better than when you arrived. That you take from what you need on that given day for your physical and mental wellbeing be it exercise, mindfulness or simply social interaction and some feel good food.

To embrace a happy and healthy lifestyle at Supersonic Fitness, membership starts from £78 a month and taster classes are available at £6 per session.

Potential members can also book a tour of the facility and meet the team before committing to membership.

Stonebow House, 8-10 The Stonebow, York, YO1 7NP

01904 929540

[transform@supersonicfitness.co.uk](mailto:transform@supersonicfitness.co.uk)

[supersonicfitness.co.uk](http://supersonicfitness.co.uk)



# Rob Hill Foundation



The Rob Hill Foundation (Registered Charity No. 1181220) is dedicated to Rob Hill, brother to Chris Hill, who tragically lost his life May 2014 to an accidental drug overdose. The charity aims to reach out to as many people in the world as possible and share the solution to beating addiction; so that other families do not suffer in the same way.

Chris Hill has worked hard to become an addiction expert and the best-selling author of *Get Your Life Back: The Road to Freedom from Addiction*. After losing his brother and having battled 20 years of addiction himself to drugs, alcohol and nicotine – Chris discovered the solution to overcoming addiction and then created a programme to teach this method to others. The Rob Hill Foundation helps people beat addiction to both substances and activities; as well as empowering them to deal effectively with anxiety, stress and depression. This extends to dealing with trauma, any fear-based conditions and OCD.

The charity targets people who struggle to find help through the health service, those on benefits, those

at risk of homelessness and those who are already homeless.

### Why this recovery programme is different to everything else:

- It's a very simple model/solution suitable for all ages and learning abilities.
- A model that doesn't rely on willpower so no sense of deprivation is felt.
- No reliance on any pharmaceutical supplementation which reduces costs and prevents addiction to other medications/substances.
- It works quickly, change happens within a few weeks usually.
- Learning achieved offers empowerment, self-confidence and self-reliance.
- A 'life-tool' that can be reused for other addictions, and to create life-change.
- A module of the learning tackles the learner's ability to manage anxiety, stress, and chaotic thoughts and overwhelm; so it tackles mental wellbeing as well as addiction.

To make a donation, please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/robhillfoundation>

### Where your donations go:

- Expanding the free workshops to other areas of London and the UK; collaborating with homeless charities and food banks.
- Distributing free copies of the Beat Addiction Programme as widely as possible.
- Taking out a mobile 'health bus' to shopping centres and public

spaces to highlight addiction and mental health issues and the support on offer.

- Piloting an early intervention scheme to help those at risk of homelessness to deal with their addiction problems; to prevent family break-ups and job losses.
- Training frontline workers from charities and other organisations

to better understand addiction and mental health; and eventually to deliver the Beat Addiction Programme.

- Initiating a campaign to de-stigmatise addiction and mental health so that people no longer feel shame around needing help, asking for help and then knowing where to get that help.

For all enquiries, please contact Chris Hill [chris@beatmyaddictions.com](mailto:chris@beatmyaddictions.com) or call 0800 644 6313

## Mental Health and Nutrition

# WE ARE WHAT WE EAT



By Janet Comrie

"We are what we eat" has been said so many times, but like many sayings, people don't really think about it. Many of us also don't think very much about what we eat. Life is so busy and time so short for things like preparing tasty food that is healthy.

We are seduced by Healthy Snacks – when close inspection reveals that the majority of them are far from healthy.

### And what is healthy anyway?

We tend to go towards the things that are promoted to us; supermarket convenience meals, sandwiches, wraps and boxed salad, and we think that because it says low calories or low fat that it is somehow going to keep us healthy.

There are now countless studies showing that many of the food items we consume are not healthy, and the effect of eating the good stuff in there is wiped out by the bad stuff.

And to go a step further, we are what our bodies absorb, so even eating the right foods with the most nutrition that our bodies require doesn't mean that we are getting the nutritional benefits.

**Over the coming months I am going to be focussing on the scientists who work in this field, and the research and evidence that clearly shows what dramatic effects the wrong food can have on our mental health, from Anxiety to ADHD. I'm also going to be highlighting where you can go to get help in changing your food choices, and then being able to stick to the choices you make by helping remove your desire to eat things that are damaging to your system and overall physical and mental wellbeing.**

HELP ANXIETY	FOODS THAT	CAUSE ANXIETY
<b>Eat These</b> ✓ <b>GOOD FOODS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Cashews</li> <li>• Salmon</li> <li>• Turkey</li> <li>• Chamomile Tea</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Oats</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Dark Chocolate</li> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Avocado</li> <li>• Kale</li> <li>• Green Lettuce</li> <li>• Chard</li> <li>• Bok Choy</li> <li>• Collard Greens</li> </ul>	<b>FOODS THAT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anagala</li> <li>• All Leafy Greens</li> <li>• Kiwi</li> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Banana</li> <li>• Turmeric</li> <li>• Kefir</li> <li>• Kimchi</li> <li>• Natto</li> <li>• Tompeh</li> <li>• Fermented Foods</li> <li>• Brown Rice</li> <li>• Whole Grains</li> </ul>	<b>Skip These</b> ✗ <b>BAD FOODS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar</li> <li>• Artificial Sweeteners</li> <li>• Foods With Gluten</li> <li>• High Sodium Foods</li> <li>• Hydrogenated Oils</li> <li>• Microwave Popcorn</li> <li>• Shortening/Margarine</li> <li>• Store Bought Pie Crust</li> <li>• Pre-packaged non-dairy creamer</li> <li>• Frozen Dinners/Meals</li> <li>• Processed Foods</li> <li>• Processed Meats</li> <li>• Biscuits/Sweet Rolls/Danishes</li> <li>• High Fructose Corn Syrup</li> <li>• Aspartame</li> <li>• Fried Foods</li> <li>• Trans Fats</li> <li>• Alcohol</li> <li>• Caffeine</li> <li>• Soda</li> <li>• Caffeine</li> <li>• Fast Food</li> <li>• MSG</li> <li>• Food Dyes</li> <li>• Store Bought Fruit Juice</li> </ul>

Whilst research into this area comes from all corners of the globe, Britain is lucky to have Dr Michael Mosley, the BBC Doctor and Journalist. Dr Michael has written and presented a variety of information and advice on diet and mental health, and also did the TV special, *Trust me I'm a Doctor Mental Health Special*, which we will be featuring in more detail in subsequent publications.

**For help in quitting addictions to food substances such as sugar and processed foods and poor-quality carbs such as white rice and white pasta, take a look at the work being done by The Rob Hill Foundation, and Chris Hill's Beat My Addictions programme. This programme also extends to help with Alcohol and Drug addiction, both of which are linked to mental health issues.**

# Poems, Artwork and Short Stories

## My Best Friends Departure

I jumped, you caught me.  
I laughed, you joked.  
I was down, you picked me up.  
I crumbled, you glued me back together.  
I loved you, you loved me back.

You jumped, I couldn't catch you.  
You forgot to laugh, I couldn't remind you.  
You were down, I couldn't hold you.  
You crumbled, I had no glue.  
You loved me, I still love you.

Without no warning or sign,  
You ventured to a world divine.  
I refused to say goodbye,  
Yet tonight I cry.  
My tears are for you my friend,  
But our legacy will not end.  
For I shall see you soon,  
But first I have living to do.  
I promise I won't forget,  
Your face is embedded in my heart.

- Carina Spencer

(Source: [www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/suicide-my-best-friends-departure](http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/suicide-my-best-friends-departure))

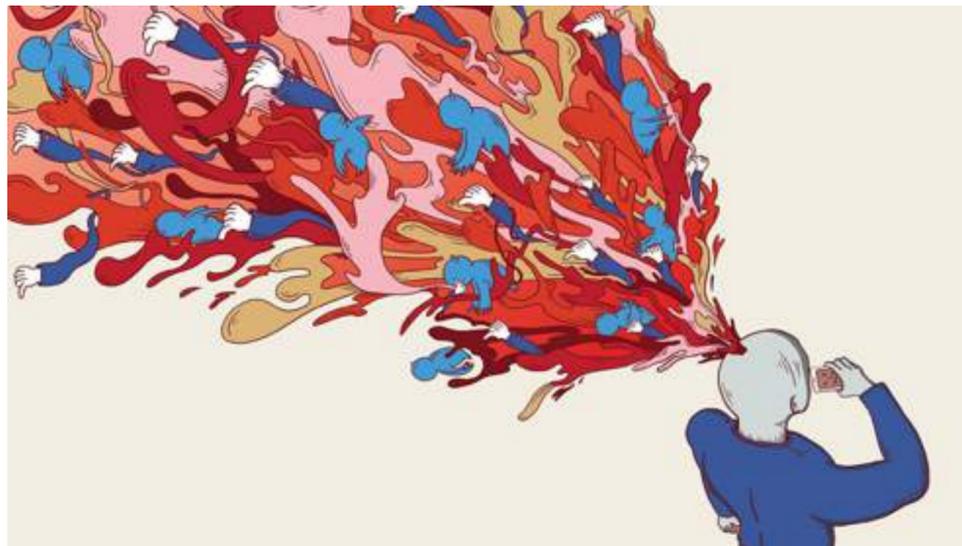
"It's OKAY to be scared. Being scared means you're about to do something really, really brave." - Mandy Hale

"When I look back on all these worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened."

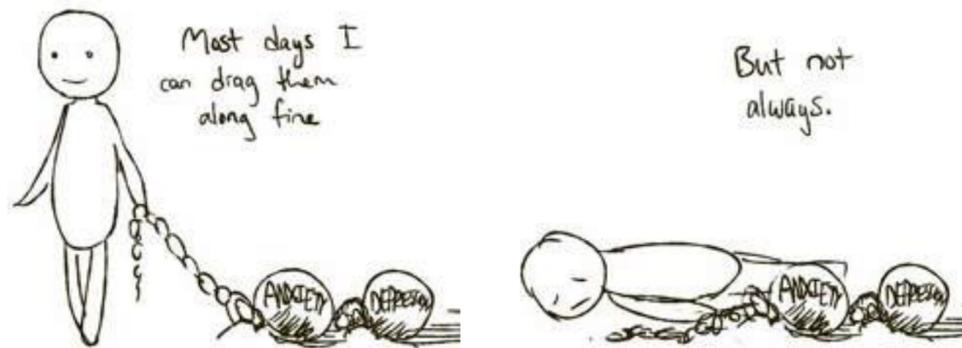
- Winston Churchill

If you can't yet be honest with a doctor then start with a friend, colleague or relative. It can be hard to find the courage to speak up, but it can set you on the right track.

"What I did was find two people who are very close to me and mentioned how I am feeling to them," says UK illustrator Sharmelan Murugiah. "It just opened me up a little in order to then seek more professional help and really look into myself and figure some stuff out."



Artwork by Sharmelan Murugiah



Artwork by TheLatestKate

aspire2

We're looking for contributions from readers on a monthly basis. Whether it's a poem, quote, short story, or a piece of art with a link to mental health, we'd love to hear from you!

Email [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk) to get involved!



See through the eyes  
of Van Gogh

The work, life and mind of one of the world's most renowned artists is currently being showcased at St. Mary's Church on Castlegate, York.

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience is open until 5th January, allowing visitors can step inside the life of the inspired 19th century impressionist painter.

The multimedia experience tells Van Gogh's life and his creations through projections, recreations and interactive elements of his artworks around the historic exhibition space.

Over 200 of his works are featured, but rather than remaining static, the huge projections of paintings come alive with digital animation and an emotive soundtrack, to create a world where the visitor sees through the eyes of Vincent Van Gogh for a 35 minute, fully immersive 360 degree experience.

The Dutchman's death in 1890 is generally accepted to be a suicide and it is believed that he suffered from bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder. Van Gogh's work was fuelled by his personal troubles and his lack of success in his own time, leading to some of the most famous pieces of art ever created. The Starry Night, pictured above, for example, was painted from Van Gogh's asylum window in Southern France. He was staying at the asylum following a breakdown where he cut off his left ear.

The exhibition opens daily from 10.00am, closing at

6pm Sunday to Wednesday, 7pm on Friday and Saturday and 8pm on Thursdays. Last entry is one hour before closing, and visits take approximately one hour. York St Mary's is located in Castlegate, with easy access from the Coppergate Centre, adjacent to JORVIK Viking Centre.

Tickets can be purchased before visiting. Admission prices are £13.00 for adults, £11.00 for concessions and students and £9.00 for children. Family tickets are available for £38.00 (two adults and two children). For more information, please visit [www.vangoghexpo.co.uk](http://www.vangoghexpo.co.uk)





## How you can help us:

Aspire 2 depends solely on capital raised through advertising, donations, grants, and sponsorship.

### Donations

We gratefully accept any and all donations. No amount is too big or too small and your money will be reinvested into the company to raise awareness of mental health.

To donate, click [here](#).

### Advertising

If you would like to advertise your company or product on any of our media services then an advertising package can be found that would benefit both parties.

To enquire about advertising, contact Peter at [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)

### Sponsorship

If you would like to sponsor Aspire 2 we would be delighted to discuss this with you in more detail. Sponsorship packages are offered in the following areas and can be for periods of one, three or five years:

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  - Social Media Sites or one social media site
  - Sponsorship of the App
  - Sponsorship of the Online Digital Newspaper
- Sponsorship of Events, Road Shows, Mental Health Choir, Award Ceremony
- Sponsorship of the Newspaper Publication, Distribution, Competitions & Prizes
  - Sponsorship of Radio Station & Recording Studio
  - Office Running Costs

To enquire about advertising, contact Peter at [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)



## The art of scars

What we can learn from the Japanese art of broken ceramics and how it could apply to our own mental wellbeing.

To us Britons, when we drop a bowl, or a vase or something even more valuable - I shudder to think - we most likely react angrily or regretfully, swearing to ourselves and despairing at the splinters of ceramic littering the kitchen floor. Quick to the dustpan and down into the depths of a bin bag to be greeted by used teabags and yesterday's leftover toast. A swift (and hopefully painless) removal of the artefact from our lives. However, there exists such a practice in which the broken object is fixed and its imperfections celebrated. It's called 'kintsugi' and upon discovering the tradition I can safely say without question that no other ceramic repair technique has made me feel quite so emotionally bolstered.

'Kintsugi,' or 'kintsukuroi' translated literally as golden ("kin") and repair ("tsugi") describes the practise precisely: a broken ceramic stitched back together with bright gold lacquer. The art creates branches of shimmering 'scars' holding the remaining pieces of pottery together. These marks (or 'wounds') are not only beautiful, but unique and unpredictable. Often referred to as the 'art of precious scars' no two examples of kintsugi are the same, as no two scars on human skin are. Both are the result of instances of trauma or damage, physical in nature but neither lacking in emotional significance. The process itself can take months to complete, requiring labour and tenacity to transform even the smallest section of pottery from broken splinters to the beautiful treasures seen throughout Japan.

The kintsugi method suggests to us many things. But chiefly: what is broken can be repaired and that damage is never the end. To Kintsugi, when something is perceived as 'broken' its flaws become appealing, highlighted and celebrated. It is no longer anonymous but individual and characterful. Everything can be repaired

and returned to a state more unique and beautiful than it was before. To be once broken isn't the end nor does it detract value. It is an opportunity to observe the beauty of resilience and learn that it is trauma that allows us to evolve, become more precious and see the positivity in coping with negative experience.

It may seem high fluted for me to suggest such uplifting ideas can stem from a few pieces of dropped pottery and some powdered gold. But, if we take a moment to consider ourselves, our own trauma and even our own scars as moments in time from which we learn the beauty of resilience this somewhat niche practice becomes a potentially universal mantra. Scars aren't an end; repair is possible and damage - whether physical or emotional - can be embraced and make each of us unique and valuable. Just because we hurt does not mean we're finished nor does it mean we are less beautiful.

- Alexander Morrall



Alexander Morrall is a 23-year-old artist living in Tadcaster, North Yorkshire. Having graduated from the University of Warwick with a degree in English Literature and Theatre Studies, his development into art started as part of a project during his study, designing tattoo and makeup designs for Shakespeare plays. From this, his digital and traditional works have explored themes of identity, violence, mental health and queerness. Alex uses digital painting, photo manipulation, collage and drawings to create his work. Often using religious or cultural imagery mixed with a surreal aesthetic sense, Alex's work has been purchased both locally and internationally, finding a niche audience through social media sites such as Instagram. He now works alongside the Aspire2 editorial team writing articles and features relating to mental health and wellbeing.

You can see Alex's work at: [@alex.morrall](https://www.instagram.com/alex.morrall) on Instagram.



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### Professional Contribution

**My name is Andrew Wetherell, I was born in London in 1964, and I live in Loughton, Essex.**

My main work for the past 25 years or so has been in the Mental Health field. Initially, I ran self-help support groups on a voluntary basis and this led to paid work as a Mental Health Advocate.

As part of the above work, I became involved with the United Kingdom Advocacy Network (UKAN) which was a fantastic experience. After a few years, I was elected to post as UKAN Chairperson and it was a privilege to serve in this role for 12 months before rotating out.

Around the end of my time as UKAN Chairperson, I became aware of an initiative for Service User Participation within the three English High Security Hospitals (Ashworth, Broadmoor & Rampton). It was the brainchild of the late, great Ray Rowden, who was the Chief Executive of the NHS Executive's "High Security Psychiatric Services Commissioning Board" (HSPSCB). I successfully applied for a role as Project Manager in the above connection. I had a fantastic 18 months working with the High Security Hospital Patients & Staff.

Prior to commencing work at the HSPSCB, I became involved with "The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health" (SCMH) where I met Steve Morgan who educated & trained me in the area of Clinical Risk Assessment & Management. From 1997 to 2006, I had the pleasure of delivering various practitioner workshops on Clinical Risk around the UK for SCMH.

My Wife & I set up our own Mental Health Training & Consultancy business in 1997 ("ARW Mental Health Training & Consultancy" (ARW), and have delivered training around the UK on Mental Health Advocacy & Service User Participation, but these days the work I do at ARW is virtually all on Clinical Risk Assessment & Management coupled with Effective Care Programme Approach processes.



In the summer of 2014, we set up a completely unrelated business: Property

Development & Lettings. This was truly a 'bittersweet' experience as the ability to do this was only by using the inheritance legacy from my late Mother & Father.

We now have a small portfolio of homes in Bulwell, where we provide high quality homes at a reasonable price. I do feel that my parents would have approved of what we are doing, as well as the way we are doing it.

I now have a very varied, enjoyable and flexible life where one day I could be repairing a roof, and a few days later I might be delivering a workshop to various Mental Health practitioners. Variety really is the spice of life!

I very much look forward to seeing Aspire2 develop over the coming weeks, months & years.

In future editions I hope to be writing about various Mental Health topics including the following:

- + Risk Assessment & Risk Management
- + The Care Programme Approach
- + Twelve Step Recovery

**At Aspire2, we are looking for professional contributions from those working in the mental health sector.**

**We're looking for real stories, expert opinions and interesting facts about mental health that you would like to share with our readers.**

**You can get in touch via email on: [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)**

### Pets and mental health

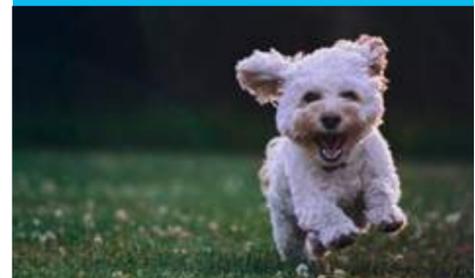
According to the Mental Health Foundation, the companionship that a pet offers is a great way to reduce anxiety and stress.

A pet can be a great source of comfort and motivation for owners and contribute to helping us to live healthier lives when it comes to our mental health.

Dogs are especially great for encouraging owners to get exercise, which is highly beneficial for those suffering from depression.

It has also been said that pet ownership is helpful for those with ADHD, as they can provide a calming influence. For elderly people, the companionship of a pet can be a great support system and reduce their feelings of loneliness and insecurity.

**Has having a pet helped your mental health? Email us at: [editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)**



# PTSD CAN MEAN SOME SOLDIERS NEVER LEAVE THE BATTLEFIELD

**COMBAT STRESS** is the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health, helping former servicemen-and-women deal with trauma-related mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

This year we marked our centenary. We were founded in 1919 by a group of pioneering men and women who saw how servicemen returning from the First World War with shell shock received little or no sympathy from the public. Our founders believed that with the right support, veterans could be helped to lead fulfilling lives and overcome their mental health problems.

That ethos is still at the heart of Combat Stress today. Every year more than 2,000 former servicemen and women take their first step to getting help by reaching out to us.

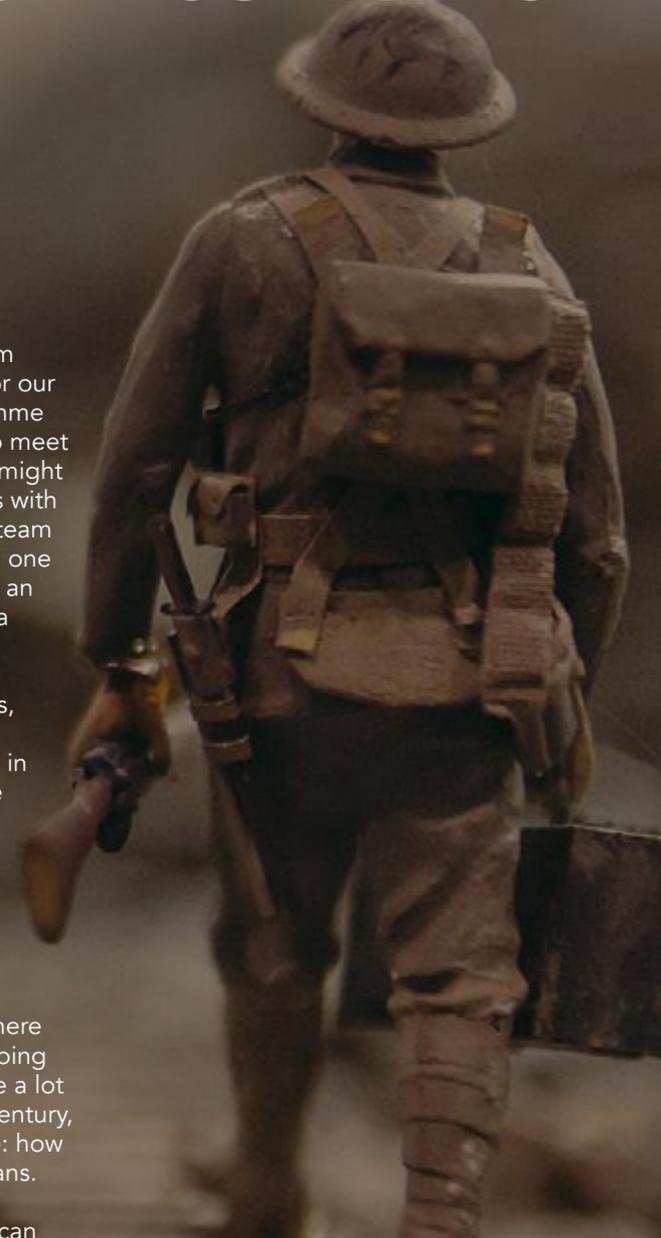
Without the right support, their lives can become desperate. Anxiety, anger, depression, isolation and, in some cases, suicide – can all tear families apart, destroy relationships and devastate lives.

Our treatment doesn't just transform lives, it saves them too. When a veteran asks for our help, we develop a programme of treatment and support to meet their individual needs. This might include one-to-one sessions with a member of our specialist team in the community or visiting one of our treatment centres for an outpatient appointment or a residential programme.

We have teams of therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses specially trained in veterans' mental health. We also provide support in the community through psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists and our veteran-led Peer Support Service.

For 100 years, we've been here for veterans when they're going through a tough time. While a lot has changed over the last century, one thing remains the same: how vital our support is to veterans.

We know invisible illnesses can be just as hard to cope with as physical ones. That's why we're on a mission to help every former serviceman and woman tackle the past and take on the future.



**COMBAT  
STRESS**  
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

HELPLINE: 0800 138 1619 EMAIL: [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)

## Professional Contribution: Professor David Kingdon

David Kingdon is Emeritus Professor of Mental Health Care Delivery at the University of Southampton, UK, formerly Clinical and Medical Director in Hampshire and Nottinghamshire and honorary consultant adult psychiatrist. He has worked in the Department of Health and been involved in many policy initiatives. His research interests are in cognitive therapy of severe mental health conditions and mental health service development on which he has published many peer reviewed papers, articles, chapters and books. He received the Aaron T. Beck Award for Exceptional Cognitive Therapy in 2015.

Effective interventions now exist but they are not being systematically implemented in a responsive and service-user focussed way. Although financial and human resources are undoubtedly a factor in this which the NHS Long Term plan is seeking to address, organisational issues are fundamental to producing services which listen to service users and offer them the care, support and treatment they need. The infrastructure is however now in place, including digital technologies, to provide essential clinician and service user driven, data managed, high quality services.

Investment in prevention by improving pathways through Child and Adolescent MHS, perinatal and Improving Access to Psychological Treatment is happening but again developing and demonstrating effectiveness is essential. The serious reduction in funding to local authorities, e.g. Sure Start, public health and social care, is unfortunately undoing and indeed reversing any gains. Traumatic events in childhood are central to many people's mental health problems and doing all that is possible to prevent or mitigate this is the most important prevention priority.

Monitoring of provider organisations needs reconsideration in response to recent media disclosures and more robust attention needs to be given to the responsibilities of funding agencies including Integrated Care Organisations/Clinical Commissioning Groups. Provider units need to be effectively regulated but also need equitable funding to achieve standards, again this is likely to be more meaningful if payment systems are developed.

Crisis services need coordination through single points of access, e.g. in Hampshire, the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership has developed mental health nursing support to 111, as many areas have an inefficient range of discrete cover arrangements which overlap or leave gaps, and which should be coordinated with and across services using communication technologies. There is certainly also a need for more, funded, 'listening ear' support involving service user and third sector organisations and again technology has a role. Rehabilitation and inpatient services are stretched leading to placements out of area: provision, staffing and funding is very variable and there is a strong case for greater national coordination and monitoring of bed usage and development of local rehabilitation services with specialist complex trauma and comorbid substance misuse expertise.

A further issue that needs resolution is the status of the Care Programme Approach. This was developed as a clinical process applying to all patients but then became narrowed to a group with more severe problems. However, allocation to CPA by different teams and Trusts is variable and inconsistent – this in turn affects who is monitored in relation to care planning (which should apply to all patients and should now focus on collaboration and quality linked to assessed needs) and how responsibilities of primary or secondary care for physical health care are managed. An evidence-based pathways and outcomes approach can provide a more reliable definition of severity and condition to resolve this. It can also provide greater definition of thresholds

for acceptance to secondary care and supervision and support to primary care. The development of social prescribing is a major opportunity for early intervention for mental health problems generally, including substance misuse. Support to primary care from secondary care teams can make this most effective in supporting early management of mental health problems, escalation when needed, and recovery from them.

Mental health services have the highest prominence ever, as demonstrated during Mental Health Awareness week, however if they are to retain this and more effectively meet service user and carer need, they will need to maximise and demonstrate their effectiveness. There is still limited information about the mental health system available and attractively delivered bulletins/websites could help increase understanding across the sector and beyond.



# SANE: Decades of help

Media Manager at SANE, Richard Colwill, explains the history of his charity, which is still fighting the stigma of mental health.

SANE was founded in 1986 by the investigative journalist Marjorie Wallace (right), following the public response to a series of articles she had written for The Times newspaper called The Forgotten Illness. She was fired up by the suffering experienced by patients at once liberated and dispossessed by the closures of the old mental hospitals, and the apathy and indifference with which so many were met once discharged into the community.

Since then the mental health landscape appears on the surface to have shifted dramatically. A succession of public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns have brought mental illness out of the shadows.

Yet we at SANE still find ourselves fighting the same battles on behalf of people for whom the neglect still continues and who often have nowhere to turn at times of crisis and despair.

This shift in public perception and acceptance has been reflected in laudable policies by successive governments, for example, in improving access to psychological therapies and by the introduction of waiting times for mental health patients. But many of the fundamentals of mental healthcare have continued to be eroded over decades, and it is vital we tackle this history of neglect by restoring the balance between inpatient and community care.

We should ensure that every mental healthcare trust has psychiatric beds available for people who are in crisis, or who need long-term care. This will help avoid the scandal of people being denied treatment or sent hundreds of miles from home for a hospital bed. It would also help to relieve the pressure on overstretched and demoralised community mental health teams.

We also need to train and employ sufficient psychiatric doctors, nurses, therapists and counsellors so that home treatment teams can provide the safe and consistent psychological treatment that people who contact us say they desperately need. In order to achieve genuine parity between mental



and physical healthcare there must also be a cultural change, so that those arriving at A&E who are suicidal or self-harming are assessed and treated, rather than patched up and turned away. Without measures such as these we will be unable to bridge the growing gap between high aspiration and the reality of psychiatric services at breaking point.

SANE continues its work to this day. Each year we are contacted by thousands of people reporting all kinds of mental health problems, their families, friends and professionals in the field. It is through this frontline experience that we know just how isolated patients can feel and how confused they and their families have become by the ever-changing configuration of mental health services.

Our three main aims are to raise awareness and combat the stigma surrounding mental ill-health; provide emotional support and specialist services; and promote research into the causes and treatments for mental illness.

In recent years, efforts to raise awareness and combat stigma have not been matched by improvements to psychiatric services, and the daily reality experienced by those who contact SANE. We consistently campaign for those voices to be heard, so that those in need receive the care and treatment they deserve.

We also provide emotional support, guidance and information to many thousands of people affected by mental ill-health. We are open to all, whether you are experiencing mental distress yourself, or are a carer, family member, professional or concerned member of the public.

SANEline remains the only out-of-hours national, specialist mental health helpline, available 365 days a year to people in crisis, those with enduring and relapsing conditions and those who care for them. Our growing team of volunteers offer listening, understanding, up-to-date information and support to callers in need and distress.

A deeper understanding of the causes of mental illness is vital in the search for better treatments and therapies. To that end we built our research centre in the



grounds of Warneford Hospital, Oxford. The Prince of Wales International Centre for SANE Research (POWIC) hosts research teams working across disciplines, stimulating new ideas and disseminating information.

We also continue to run our Black Dog Campaign to encourage people to speak out about mental illness and find their

own language to express their experiences. Sculptures of Black Dogs wearing coats (above) designed by artists, celebrities and others have been placed in business foyers, public parks and shopping centres in towns and cities throughout the UK. They have become particularly popular touring schools and universities.

If you would like to contact SANEline in confidence, please call 0300 304 7000 (open between 4.30pm and 10.30pm, every day of the year). For more information on SANE, please visit our website at [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk).



# Schizophrenia Awareness Day 2019

Rethink Mental Illness will be holding a Schizophrenia Awareness Day on Tuesday 17th September 2019.

We know that schizophrenia is a common illness: 1 in 100 people in the UK will develop it. However, while conversation around more common mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety has opened up in the last decade, those with lived experience of schizophrenia don't have a significant voice. On this day Rethink Mental Illness aim to generate conversation around what it is like to live with schizophrenia through integrated media and social media activity.

We are currently recruiting Media Volunteers and asking them; 'What do they want the world to know about their experience of living with schizophrenia?' So, if you live with schizophrenia and are interested in sharing your story please get in touch with us at [media@rethink.org](mailto:media@rethink.org) or call us on 0207 840 3138.



Our goal is to make sure everyone affected by severe mental illness has a good quality of life.

To find out more about future events, the work we do and support we provide, visit:

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

**Together we are stronger**



## Campaign Updates

### In Sight In Mind

This joint campaign with the Royal College of Psychiatrists is calling for people with the most severe forms of mental illness to have access to the services they need in their local area. Out of area placements last on average twice as long and as a result cost twice as much. Of the £535m spent each year on mental health rehabilitation services, around two thirds is spent on patients who are placed out of area. It's a case of the people who are most unwell getting the worst care. Rethink Mental Illness has made a number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to CCGs and NHS trusts around the country for details on what they do in relation to rehab. This information has been analysed and we hope to publish a report on our findings by the end of August. As a result of the report we hope to work closer with NHS England, who share our understanding of the problem, so we can get better data on the issue.

### Act for Mental Health

We campaign to improve the rights of people detained under the Mental Health Act. The Act is badly out of date and fails to respect the rights and autonomy of people treated under it. In late 2017, after campaigning by Rethink Mental Illness and others, the Prime Minister announced an Independent Review of the Mental Health Act, which would look at how it is used and how it can be improved. The Review heard from thousands of people detained under the Act, as well as their carers and loved ones. In December 2018, the Review published its final report, which included around 150 recommendations for change.

26th July 2019 saw the first debate on the Mental Health Act since the Independent Review's final report was published in December. Rethink Mental Illness have been working with Neil Coyle MP to table this important debate and to brief all MPs about key recommendations from the Review that are aimed at tackling some of the current issues with the use of the Act. Minister for Mental Health Jackie Doyle-Price MP responded to the different points made by MPs. She reaffirmed the Government's commitment to deliver a White Paper by the end of the year and noted that work had already begun with the Ministry of Justice to deliver some of the recommendations, such as ending the use of police cells in Section 136 detentions.

If you want to know more about our campaigns, please contact our campaigns team at [campaigns@rethink.org](mailto:campaigns@rethink.org)



## Fundraising Events

### Walky Talky

This fundraising event aims to bring people together for a short walk while creating a safe space for people to talk about mental health. It is free to sign up, but we ask people raise at least £100. Please see details below.

**5k in Regents Park, London**  
10am Sunday 8th September

**7k in Calke Abbey, Derby**  
10am Sunday 22nd September

If you have any queries, please get in touch with us at [rethinkevents@rethink.org](mailto:rethinkevents@rethink.org) or call us on 0207 840 3063.

## Support

We provide over 200 expert mental health services in England. These can help you or someone you know with everything from advocacy, to housing to criminal justice and secure services, as well as nursing care and carer support, among others. You can also access over 140 of our local support groups which are run by people with experience of mental illness. Please go to our website at [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) to see what services and groups are in your area or call us on 0121 522 7007.

Advice and Information Service (RAIS) – Our RAIS service offers practical help on a wide range of topics such as The Mental Health Act, community care, welfare benefits, debt and carers' rights. We also offer general information on living with mental illness, medication and care.

Tel: 0300 5000 927 (Opening hours 9:30am-4pm, Monday to Friday)  
E-mail: [RethinkMailbox@rethink.org](mailto:RethinkMailbox@rethink.org)



## Read something that you'd like to talk about? We want to hear from you!

Our 'Letters to the Editor' section will be your opportunity to speak about mental health, your experiences, your opinions on our stories, share your frustrations, praise breakthroughs, celebrate successes and more!

If you'd like to get involved, email our editorial team on:

[editor@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:editor@aspire2.org.uk)

## Let's talk about mental health!



## GLOBAL SOUND GROUP TEAM UP WITH ASPIRE2 TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

London based music promotion specialists, Global Sound Group, is teaming up with [Aspire2 Mental Health Media and Events](#) to promote mental health awareness in the music industry.

Global Sound Group works closely with musicians and record labels to bring artists national and regional exposure through their network of contacts. The company also provides mixing and mastering services and has worked with high-profile clients including Emeli Sande, The Vaccines, The Courteeners, Jessie J, Sean Paul and Lana Del Rey.

Recent research (from Record Union) shows that at least 73% of independent musicians have struggled with mental illness and only 19% feel that the music industry is providing healthy working conditions. Of those surveyed, less than 40% claimed they sought professional help, while more than 50% claimed they turned to self-medication including drug and alcohol abuse.

James Dyble, managing director of Global Sound Group, said "Having worked in the music industry for many years, I have seen the impact that mental health can have on musicians. Therefore, I knew we had to team up with Aspire2."

With musicians being considered three times more likely to suffer from depression, [Aspire2](#) and Global Sound Group aim to raise awareness and reduce social stigma around mental health in the music industry.



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## Hiscox York team scales cliffs for SASH



**Daniel Atkinson, who works in Workplace Services at Hiscox York, describes his team's experience of climbing cliffs and a rope bridge twice the height of The Shard...**

The Hiscox York Adrenaline Challenge first came about in 2016 when myself and a colleague were chatting at our Summer party. We had both been heavily involved in our Social/Charity committee and had both always wanted to do a sky dive.

After putting the idea forward to the committee we managed to assemble a group of 15 brave staff members to take part in the event. It was a huge success, raising over £2,500 for our chosen charity for the year, York Samaritans. We then decided to make it an annual challenge and the following year we bungee jumped from the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, raising another £2,500, this time for SANDS York.

The challenge for 2019 needed to be something different, so rather than a 'falling' challenge we chose climbing. I put out a call for volunteers to take on the Honister Via Ferrata Xtreme challenge. This would be a tough few hours climbing various cliff faces and slopes, including a half a mile rope

bridge suspended at an eye watering altitude (twice the height of The Shard). We gathered a brave group of 15 and spread the word for sponsors as we counted down to the 17th August. When it came to the day itself there were a few nervous faces and plenty of time to contemplate what lay ahead on the long bus ride to the Lake District. Luckily the weather was on our side as we geared up and headed to the first spot on the climb.

The first climb over the edge was definitely a trial by fire for many of us, but as the adrenaline kicked in we adjusted to the height we all pushed on and managed to take in some of the gorgeous views. I'm confident in saying that each of us definitely had a part of the course we were dreading and soon it was within sights, the dreaded rope bridge. With only a single rope to walk on and two ropes to hold onto we slowly but surely made it across. One thing I definitely wasn't expecting was the wobbling - I almost went horizontal at some points! The final part of the course was a beautiful, yet draining walk

up through the slate mines for our final ascent to the peak. A well-deserved victory photo was snapped followed by a rocky jeep ride back down to the bottom.

So far we've managed to raised just over £1,000 for [SASH](#) York with more donations coming in. SASH is a great charity who do amazing work to prevent youth homelessness.

I'd like to say a massive thank you to all those who have taken part and donated in the adrenaline challenges so far. We will return again same time next year with a brand new, even bigger challenge!

If you would still like to donate to SASH, please click [here](#) and help us smash our target!



**SASH** Preventing Youth Homelessness Together



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Open Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm.

We provide information on  
mental health problems,  
where to get help, treatment  
and advocacy.  
[mind.org.uk/info](http://mind.org.uk/info)



Mind is a registered charity (219830). Registered company in England number 424438.



## Nationwide York gets muddy for MIND

Saffron Goldthorpe, Assistant Branch Manager of Nationwide York on her team's Tough Mudder Challenge and why they chose York MIND.

On 28th July, a team of eight people from Nationwide Building Society participated in the Yorkshire 5K Tough Mudder challenge with the intention of raising money and awareness for York MIND as we're advocates of "no one should suffer alone, and it's okay not to be okay."

We chose York MIND primarily because mental illness has impacted everyone in our team, whether it's been personal or a relative with anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, suicidal thoughts or day to day stress.

We have built a relationship with Holly from York MIND and we've been raising money for them through hampers, raffles, bake sales and tombolas throughout the year. We plan to take part in the Yorkshire 10K Tough Mudder challenge in 2020 which is on Yorkshire day (no better day to get muddy in sunny Yorkshire!)

We've set ourselves a goal of raising £3,000 by the end of the year and have currently raised more than £1,000. We have therefore planned to do various events to continue raising money & awareness.

York MIND has used our branch to run counselling sessions and an awareness meeting with our team around the support they offer, which our team found invaluable as it helped us understand what they do to support the local community.

Overall, the team loved participating in Tough Mudder and the other fundraising events and we can't wait to get involved in more activities to support York MIND and to continue raising awareness around mental health.



# Turn a painful event into happiness and wisdom



Lisa Jane Halliday is a Theta Healing Cert. of Science and Master Teacher. Lisa has over 25 years' experience as a well-respected professional Transformational Teacher and Master Energy Healer and is the creator of 'Happiness Beyond Loss' a 3 step method to bring guidance, healing and transformation from a significant loss.

Lisa's experience is based on almost two decades of working with people worldwide, helping them bring more clarity, balance and positive transformations within themselves and their lives. Lisa is dedicated to helping people rediscover their happiness and she loves sharing ways to help people build a healthy, mindful, and sustainable lifestyle.

"With the right guidance and support we can find a way to turn a painful event into happiness and wisdom," Lisa says.

## What is Theta Healing®?

Theta Healing is one of the most advanced forms of energy medicine available on the planet. It is simple and gentle healing modality that allows us to access the deepest

subconscious beliefs to heal our body and emotions from addictions, phobias, trauma, self harming, depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

A Theta Healing® session lasts between 30 minutes to 2 hours. In a Theta Healing® session, the aim is to uncover the limiting beliefs that have led to the current problem and to change them instantly, replacing them with positive and helpful ones that will nurture and support us. Simple muscle testing is used to ascertain what beliefs the subconscious holds and then to verify that they have changed.

Theta Healing® endeavours to treat the body, mind and spirit as a cohesive system by reducing or alleviating the cause of stress in our busy lives while it helps the body to reach a place of deep relaxation where it can balance the body systems.

Through the relaxation process the body is more capable of dealing with the stresses placed on it by daily living and those associated with disease and disorders. It is believed to encourage the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good hormones, well

documented in their ability to relieve stress.

Theta Healing® gently nudges the body towards improving the nerve pathways in the body and therefore enhance general well-being. From this process you will have a much deeper understanding of how to respond to situations rather than react. Feel optimistic, empowered and confidence to embrace your life in a more positive way.

Lisa is passionate in helping people rediscover their happiness and empower them to make the changes in their life and witness amazing results!

Lisa is ready to offer you a safe, comfortable place to release, let go and become more aligned to more love, joy and freedom in your life.

**Lisa offers 1 to 1 Theta Healing® sessions, which are a wonderful way to move forward rapidly. These are available by telephone or via Skype. To book your Theta Healing® session, contact Lisa on theangel7@hotmail.co.uk or phone (+44) 07809404946. Visit [www.LisaJaneHalliday.co.uk](http://www.LisaJaneHalliday.co.uk).**

## A letter from the editor...



If you represent a company that has done something to help the mental health of your staff or the general public, or if you are interested in doing so, **we want to work with you.**

### Why Should You Advertise with Aspire 2?



With mental health within the professional space becoming an openly discussed topic, we're offering companies the opportunity to build awareness further by advertising with us.

Good mental health in the workplace is essential, and we at Aspire2 feel that published advertisements through our online newspaper are a responsible and effective way of starting vital conversations.

We'll promote your company's social corporate responsibility towards the education and implication of mental health issues and an understanding within staff teams and the professional space as a whole.

At Aspire 2 we aim to represent, educate and discuss a wealth of mental health issues and news and your inclusion in our newspaper would reflect your company's proactive stance on such important discussions and topics that resonate universally.

We hope to include you in our coming issues and look forward to promoting your company's presence within the mental health community.

To enquire about advertising, please contact Peter at [peter@aspire2.org.uk](mailto:peter@aspire2.org.uk)



**aspire**2

# Who's triggering the insanity?

By David Jones

The father of one of the El Paso massacres, Gilbert Anchondo, made a truly stunning and inspirational announcement when he said, just hours after the incident, "I forgive him [his son's killer] because he was not in his senses. He had the devil inside him, I'm a great believer and I forgive what he did."

Compare that statement to that of the President of the United States, Donald Trump.

Arguably the most powerful politician on earth decided to lay the blame squarely on the mentally ill.

After the El Paso shooting, Trump stated that "mental illness and hatred pulled the trigger."

The two statements and positions are remarkably different and raise obvious and important questions. Clearly, no-one would carry out an attack that was so full of hate, without being at least troubled mentally.

The President absolutely nailed that argument, as simplistic as it may be.

Now the dust has settled after yet another massacre on the streets of the U.S, how can the "land of the free" allow people who are classed as mentally unwell (by the President himself, no less) have access to assault weapons, produced and manufactured with one intention only: To produce such brutal fire power that in the wrong hands they become "weapons of mass destruction"?

Of course, the right to bear arms is the cornerstone of this debate. The Second Amendment is upheld to protect the very "liberties and freedoms of society".

Why then, is it only after a massacre that the assailant is labelled "insane" but just hours before each massacre these very same perpetrators were law abiding citizens of the free world?

The Second Amendment and the Constitution are defended by many associations including the gun lobbies.

It could be argued that these organisations have more power and persuasion than the President himself and some believe and uphold the "moral principles" that U.S citizens should be able to protect themselves by buying multiple assault rifles, machine guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition on the production of an identity card or driving licence.

According to reports, there are more guns in America than citizens. If that's the case then are they actually living in the land of the free? And if so, free from what exactly?

Perhaps the next parent will forgive the United States of America itself, which has provided free access to assault rifles and placed them into the hands of the "sane" that are only labelled insane after each atrocity?

There are now millions of Americans calling for gun control, tighter laws and more research into each application before purchase, but these are outweighed by the majority who are calling for even more "weapons of mass destruction" to be made available and they use the second amendment as the cornerstone of the debate. Perhaps it's time that someone questions the psychological state of the so called "sane"?

But are they even allowed to do so?

A Health & Human Services (HHS) directive dated 5th August 2019 warned communications staffers not to post anything on social media related to mental health, violence or mass shootings without prior approval.

That statement alarmed some Government & Mental Health Experts who said they felt muzzled at a moment when many Americans were searching for answers to the epidemic of mass shootings. What happened to the land of the free and the free speech they hold so dear?

Many researchers and mental health experts said Trump's comments contradicted well-established research which found most studies of mass shootings have found that no more than a quarter of the perpetrators had a diagnosed mental illness.

In layman's language that means 75% were deemed sane and were lawfully and constitutionally allowed to bear arms.



Aspire2 Mental Health Media and Events

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## Our media services:

- Online mental health monthly digital newspaper
- Website: [www.aspire2.org.uk](http://www.aspire2.org.uk)
- Social media:



**October:** World Mental Health Day, 10th October 2019, 12 page special edition  
(Buy a Homeless Person a Meal Campaign)

**December:** The first free monthly national mental health print newspaper

**Summer 2020:** Aspire2 national 24/7 DAB radio station

## Upcoming events:

**September 2019:**  
Linking with Converge - York St John University - Mental Health Choir

**December 2019**  
Aspire2 Christmas Party  
Friday 20th December 2019  
Venue: Supersonic Fitness, Stonebow, York.

**November 2020**  
Aspire2 Mental Health Conference

**December 2020**  
Aspire2 Annual Mental Health Awards Ceremony

**Aspire2 Mental Health Media & Events**

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