

NEW REASON

THE STEPPING STONES WAY FOR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING & SUPPORT



Providing therapeutic arts
for improving and sustaining
mental health & wellbeing.

Suffolk Users Forum

Speaking out for
mental health &
emotional wellbeing

Johnny

His love of
Darts & being
independent

Beautiful you
Sam's Hair making
you the priority



Stepping Stones delivering support for vulnerable people since 2010.

Stepping Stones Community is the Hub that houses all of the Stepping Stones individual companies and services.

SUPPORTED HOUSING provides accommodation and support for people with mental health distress and/or a learning disability, as well as people who have complex issues that require support.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH providing a range of services to help people living in their own homes. Offering creative enabling packages designed to offer what people need to help them feel more in control of their lives. Our services include: Help in cluttered homes, enabling, mentoring, coaching and training.

IT SERVICES provides a comprehensive IT and marketing service for the Stepping Stones Group as well as providing a hardware & software development service for external customers.

What makes us different?

We offer a wide range of flexible support packages. All tailored to the individuals need. We are flexible in the way that we support people, flexible in the way that we manage our staff teams and flexible in the use of and access to accommodation.

Contact us

**Stepping Stones Community
Sproughton House,
Sproughton,
Ipswich,
IP8 3AP**



**Freephone on: 0800 1337 355
Telephone No: 01473 487373**

**Email: info@SteppingStonesCommunity.com
website: www.SteppingStonesCommunity.com**

Our Reason

Welcome to this latest edition of New Reason. Putting the magazine together gives us a great opportunity to meet some great and interesting people, and also visit some great services. We get an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas, not just our own but those of a wide range of people who are interested and passionate about enhancing people's wellbeing.

We are aware that the thoughts and ideas that are expressed can differ and some can challenge the way that we think. For some this is exciting, whereas for others it can be uncomfortable at times. We hope that readers will enjoy the diversity of thinking in New Reason and we do stress that not all views are those of Stepping Stones Community, we through New Reason hope to provide an opportunity for expression and reflection.

In this edition which is our 4th, there are two organisations who I know very well, and who work so hard for people to have the space and opportunity to express themselves. One through advocacy and representation, the other through the arts and creative mediums for expression and wellbeing. Suffolk User Forum and Inside Out are organisations that we in Suffolk should be immensely proud of, and we hope that you enjoy reading about them and discovering some of the reasons why.

We hope you will enjoy reading Johnny's story and how he describes his experiences of supported housing.

Our regular blog, New Reason New Thinking, explores how reactions and responses to trauma not only impacts people seeking help, but can also shape how professionals and workers behave and see the roles that they have.

There is, we think, a very strong sense of how wonderfully varied and fascinating this world of helping others is. This can bring such a powerful sense of wonder and respect for the diversity and quality of life, but also an awareness that there is such real and overwhelming pain sometimes.

If you are reading this you will, I am sure, have been touched by these extremes in some way in life, work or both. New Reason aims to give a space for all aspects of life, to reflect a way of acceptance, respect of others and of the extraordinary power of people to help people, whatever their role or their place in it all may be. We hope you enjoy reading, please let us know what you think.



Matthew Morris
Director of Operations
Stepping Stones
Community Outreach

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Meet the people who have taken part
in the creation of **NEW REASON**



Matthew Morris Director of Operations
Stepping Stones Community Outreach

Matthew Morris is our Operational Director for Community Outreach. Having worked within the NHS, Voluntary and Independent Sector, for a combined 30 years, Matthew has a particular interest in developing services that see difficult feelings and unusual experiences as being understandable in the context of people's lives. Services where people can be helped through relationships that build on strengths and are based on people living the life they choose for themselves.

Louise Rackstraw Creative Director
Stepping Stones Marketing Services

Company Photographer, Videographer & Creative Designer. Louise has established her creative skills within the Stepping Stones Community, sharing the companies' vision of the Stepping Stones way of working with the public. Her work can be seen on our website; www.SteppingStonesCommunity.com From design layout, leaflets and video interviews.



NEW REASON

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SHARE YOUR STORY

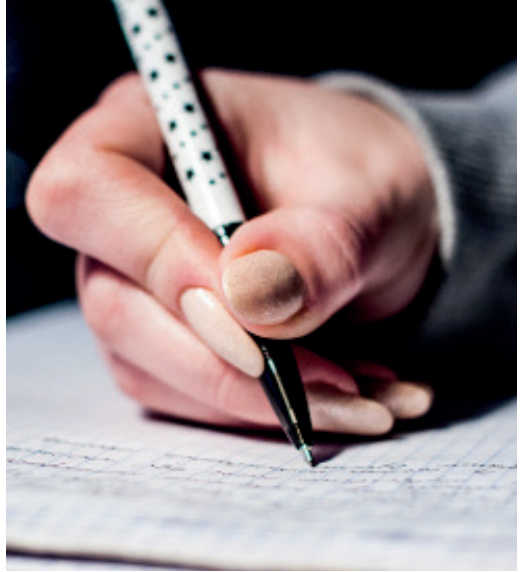
We would love to hear from you about your own experiences, whether its of personal experiences or the support you gave a friend or family member.

Sharing your experiences not only shows that we are not alone but also highlights problems that we all face in our day to day lives.

Help us to promote a better understanding of the issues we all face and contribute to the development of better mental health focusing.

We look forward to hearing from you.

info@SteppingStonesCommunity.com



A BEASTLY BURDEN



When Merel Barends was a teenager, her younger brother unexpectedly took his own life. Twenty years too late, She is trying to figure out how she could have helped him.

Merel Barends created a journalistic comic about suicide prevention. The piece went viral in the Netherlands and received many positive reactions prompting her to decide to translate and adapt the work for the international community:

You can take a look at the comic <http://drawingthetimes.com/story/beastlyburden/>

Merel consulted with psychologists from the Dutch suicide helpline in developing the piece.



SUF is leading 3 Stepping Forward workshops across the county. These will take place in Ipswich, Bury and Lowestoft, to talk about the new suicide prevention strategy for Suffolk and to invite people who are interested in making a difference to support a strategy with a vision for zero suicides in Suffolk.



www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk
Tel: 01473 907087

Stepping forward workshop - WITH A VISION FOR ZERO SUICIDE IN SUFFOLK

**Ipswich Event at Kesgrave Community
Centre on Wednesday 20th July 10-1pm**

This event is to ensure that the new Suffolk Suicide Prevention Strategy is informed by the experiences of the people of Suffolk. To book a place please email claire@suffolkuserforum.co.uk. *Trigger warning - If you are attending please let us be aware of possible triggers for you so you can be supported.

Please book a place by contacting Claire Anderson on **01473 907087**
or email claire@suffolkuserforum.co.uk



The voice for emotional and mental wealth in Suffolk



Working together in Suffolk to ensure that you have an essential role in developing the best local mental health services for your mental health and emotional wellbeing

WHO WE ARE

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is a service user led mental health charity. All of our trustees, staff and volunteers have experience of emotional distress and mental ill health. We are dedicated to speaking out for mental health service users in Suffolk. We work with Suffolk County Council, Public Health, the Suffolk

Health & Wellbeing Board and local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) to ensure service user lived experience and expertise about services is taken forward in positive ways to co-produce, co-design and co-commission mental health care to deliver emotional and mental wealth for all communities in Suffolk.

To achieve this we encourage and support people using mental health and wellbeing services to share with us their experiences of care, so that we can share collective feedback and facilitate coproduction.

'Co-production is people, carers and professionals working together as equal partners to: design, develop, commission, deliver and review services, information and advice'

Follow Suffolk User Forum on Facebook: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SUFFOLKUSERFORUM

WHAT WE DO

We encourage all those using mental health and wellbeing services to share with us their experiences of mental health care: including the good, the bad and the not so sure.

As we share the collective feedback to Suffolk's commissioners and service providers, we can deliver coproduction to redesign and reshape services to better deliver services that meet people's needs, rights and choices.

We can support you to voice your views and experiences. At Suffolk User Forum we provide an opportunity for involvement that can support your own recovery journey.

We really value the partnership relationships we have developed with a wide range of voluntary and statutory organisations, enabling us to be a credible and valued voice for mental wealth in Suffolk.

As a Suffolk-wide resource point for mental wealth, our website and facebook page includes current news, signposting information about local support networks and mental health care services in Suffolk.

One service user commented;

"I am very proud of what you and I have achieved together in proving that we can work together for a better and evolved Mental Health care, whilst showing that independent Service User's opinions are as welcome and valid as any established Agency, we have broken new ground... I am well proud of us."



A UNIFIED MENTAL HEALTH VOICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES IN SUFFOLK

Suffolk User Forum really values its membership and service user networks. Membership is free. We give our members newsletters, regular updates and current information about local events, invitations to our Annual General Meeting, Open Forums and Stepping Forward events which focus on your feedback to us.

We connect people with the experience of mental illness – believing no one should feel alone with their experience... you can talk to us.

SUF AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SUF is a supporter of the British Institute of Human Rights. Trustees, staff and volunteers have participated in training events and we celebrate World Human Rights Day on the 10th December each year. SUF produced for our members "Our Basic Human Rights" document available on our website www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk as well as human rights factsheets.

“We all have the right to be treated with respect as intelligent, capable and equal human beings.”

A new pilot project delivering Mental Health Advocacy within East and West Suffolk is launching in April 2016 initially for a 6 months trial.

SUF LISTENED TO WHAT OUR MEMBERS TOLD US – WE TOOK ACTION

Over the last year SUF members have been saying that they do not understand their legal rights when receiving mental health care; did not know that they had choices or even basic fundamental human rights. Patients who had been detained under Section of the Mental Health Act 2007, also did not understand the rights they had whilst being on a section.

Through newsletter articles SUF has begun to inform our members and supporters about our human and legal rights. At the same time SUF has been talking about these concerns with Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, at their law forum and to Suffolk County Council, Customer Rights team, who fund mental health advocacy.

Together with VoiceAbility, SUF will from May 2016, pilot a new way of offering information about rights and choices,

See our website for further information including our newsletters, events and signposting for people experiencing mental health difficulties

www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk

Or call us for a membership application form on **01473 907087**

or email: hello@suffolkuserforum.co.uk



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See the Suffolk User Forum website for more information WWW.SUFFOLKUSERFORUM.CO.UK



SUFFOLK
User Forum

The Voice

of Mental
Wealth

in Suffolk

Share with us your
experiences of mental
health care services

Find out more about mental health
in Suffolk by visiting our website


www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk

01473 907087

Follow us on  @sufmentalwealth  suffolkuserforum

The New Hollies, Unit 3a, Grange Business Centre, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP52BY Charity Number: 06946785 Company Number: 1133457

call us for a membership application form on **01473 907087** or email: hello@suffolkuserforum.co.uk



"Some of my customers have challenging physical or psychological conditions, and they are really self-conscious about it. When they are with me though, my time with them is dedicated to catering for their needs. This is their quality time. I take my time with each person, I want to help make them understand that they deserved to be pampered and that our sessions are just for them."

Beautiful You



Sam's Hair at Home

*You are never
too old to follow
your dreams*

Sam developed a passion for hairdressing in her late 30's, and despite being turned away by many salons due to her age, she persevered and finally managed to find a salon who would take her on. Sam happily tells us how Ace Hair & Beauty salon on Colchester Rd (Ipswich), encouraged, supported and sponsored her through a hairdresser's training apprenticeship. "They were brilliant" she says, "they were so supportive, if it hadn't been for them I would have really struggled".

Sam's dedication was rewarded when she won the Most Focused Learner award for completing her 2 year course in just a single year.

Working from her beautifully laid out single salon at home, or out and about on home visits - Sam aims to ensure each of her customers get enough time to cater for their individual needs.

We have all at some point in our lives experienced that hideous hairdresser who makes you feel awful about the treatment of your own hair. I booked an appointment to find out for myself what Sam's hair at home would be like and I loved it. I loved her little single salon, it was homely and comfortable. I found that she was really easy to talk to and she made me feel comfortable with my own hair. Not once did I feel judged by the state of my hair, which to be honest is very dry at the ends and has been bleached a lot over the years. I didn't feel that I had to do what she recommended, I was allowed to state what I wanted without feeling I was wrong. I came out feeling happy and relaxed, and as she states, not once did I feel rushed.

It is very clear that Sam is passionate about what she does and I couldn't recommend a better hairdresser for those of us who are really self-conscious about themselves.

For more information on Sam's hair at home you can go to her Facebook page
www.facebook.com/Sams-Hair-at-Home



LOAN FUNDING FOR GROWING BUSINESSES



- ✓ Revenue
- ✓ Robust growth plan
- ✓ Need funding

Stuart Ager Senior Fund Manger
07825 699407 - stuart.ager@thefsegroup.com



Get in touch now

01473 722910

Francis Kenealy Fund Manager
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Good Thoughts for Life



The secret to change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.



Supporting Johnny

Diagnosed with Asperger's and spondylo-epiphyseal dysplasia tarda (a bone and muscle disorder), Johnny has been a user of one of the Stepping Stones Supported Housing projects since August 2015. *Interview by Louise Rackstraw*

Johnny: *When we were growing up my mum used to childmind lots of children and she used to childmind the football commentator Stewart Gerald's son Tom Gerald. Tom Gerald is now a skier for England. They were really nice people.*

Louise: Have you met a lot of interesting people?

Johnny: *Yeah quite a lot of interesting people. My brother is a sound engineer and he has been working tours with the Foo Fighters. He's got an amazing job and he's very high up there in his area.*

Louise: What about you Johnny?

Johnny: *I am a dart player myself, I am practicing hitting 180's & 140's, I can hit 180's every now and again, I've just got to get them every day. That's hard (he laughs). I go to the Magpie have a pint of coke and play darts, they are really good there, they let me practice there as much as I want. I used to go to another pub but they took the dart board down so I ended up playing pool there instead. For me it's is one of those quick fast games, I find it really easy to pot all the balls quickly and nobody seems to want to challenge me as I'm just too good at it.*

Louise: So you're quite an active person?

Johnny: Yeah, I don't like sitting around, not at all. I like to cycle down to the shops as well as other places. I used to cycle to Framingham, Eye, Stradbroke.... Quite few places really. I think the max I have cycled is 25 miles. I did actually walk from my mums to work and back home once that took me 5 hours. I also like to skateboard as well, I do that at the local park here which is 20 minutes away. I tend to go during school hours then I get the park pretty much to myself. With the weather getting better I can improve and learn more skateboarding tricks. I used to play cricket for my local club, I did that for 7/8 years which was quite cool. I've got 4 Cricket trophies upstairs as well as a dedicated to playing the season bowling award.



Johnny sharing his boarding skills. top right Johnnys boards, one signed by Tony Hawk



above Johnny's cricket trophies. Left hand Johnnys signed by Gary Sobers, Cricket bat. below Johnnys 180 dart throw.



Louise: So do you play game consoles or watch TV?

Johnny: I do play on the PlayStation every now and again, I enjoy playing the racing games more... like Grand Theft Auto, I have also played Call of Duty. The only time I watch TV is near night time when they have decent stuff on like The Simpsons and Family Guy I like all their episodes. I watch my sports online as it has all been changed on the TV, which I am not happy about, they have taken all the good sports channels away have put just boring stuff on instead.

Louise: Have you been anywhere interesting?

Johnny: I went to Los Angeles which was paid for by my cousins after she lost her husband in August 2014, he died of Cancer. It was all in his brain..... I had to leave work for that from Morrison's, I went up to London where he was staying in hospital and I think one day he was getting so bad and it was getting night time, we went up to visit him and he just passed away, it was devastating really. He was my dad's brother. Ken and I used to get on really well..... He was like a second dad to me. Dad has lost 2 brothers now, it's quite a bit sad for him really.

When we went to LA we went to Universal Studios and I saw Homer Simpson walking around, it was quite cool. On one episode of the Simpsons they had one of those drinks called a Flaming Moe and I found cans of them so I brought loads, it was really nice (he said smiling) but I am a Monster Energy fan, I drink anything Monster. I have had to cut down on them a lot, it's not too bad.

I went to Barbados not long ago and we went to one of the beaches. I was sitting at a table having a drink and some food and I was talking about celebrities and one of the security guards told me that Jeremy Kyle was laying on the beach, and I thought 'are you serious' so I stood up to have a look and there he was, he was actually laying on the beach, not far from

me, near the stairs. I had to go over and shake his hand, I had to greet him, it was hilarious. I had to pull up a sunbed, not that far away from him, about the distance of a small room away from him and I just laid there thinking 'Jeremy Kyle.... Wow.... My day can't get any better'.

Louise: I hope you don't mind me asking but it would be interesting to know how you got to be here?

Johnny: My dad has Dementia, I looked it up and it's an illness in the brain that stops a person from doing things there and then, he can't remember anything short-term, his short term memory would just get lost. Don't get me wrong he can remember things from a long time ago, what happened ages ago, he can still remember telephone numbers from a long time ago but give him something to do here and now, he wouldn't do it or couldn't do it because of his memory loss. Mum found it very hard, and my parents would fall out so much about it all. It just got worse and worse. I accept that I used to argue with dad over stupid stuff, when I used to say stuff and he would ignore me, which used to really annoy me. Ok... fair enough the stuff I used to say would wound him up but I just wanted him to understand. Mum got to the point where she couldn't take it any more plus with me and dad just not being able to get on... he just seemed to pick on me all the time, no matter what I was doing. I hated being

in the room with him, I didn't want to anymore. Mum got on the phone to get me out of there and got it sorted so I could come here. Mum is happier now also she is now living in a little cottage which my brother is renting out and Dad is being supported in a place where he can be managed.

Louise: Sounds like you had a very overwhelming time with things at home. How does that make you feel?

Johnny: Pretty much annoyed, because I have had to leave all my friends, I don't get to see anyone that I know anymore **BUT** I love being here, I get to do what I want to do, things that I have always wanted to do. I feel more confident and I'm more independent and do my own thing and I have met a few people here, some of them at the skate park. It feels good now, it feels like something completely different and it is good.

Louise: So what are your aspirations for the future?

Johnny: Carry on playing darts and try and make the PDC. I have entered it twice in Norwich but I never made it through but I am young and I will just keep on playing. I know I can hit 180's & 140's people have seen me do it down at the pub. I have joined a darts club where I play every Wednesday and Thursday night and they have said that I am a good darts

player. I got in because the manager of the club who also cooks at the pub saw me playing and he told me to come along to one of their nights, I went along and played and we won, which was really good. I used to play darts with Mervin King on Friday mornings, he plays darts from Norwich to Ipswich. I asked if I could have a photo with him and he said yes (he grins) he told me to keep it up and that if I wanted to make it to the PDC there was no reason why I couldn't especially at my age. He said 'you keep hitting those 180's everyday' (which I want to try and do) 'someone will support you' he told me 'you will have to take it to the next level, you have to start winning every single game in the singles.' That's where I have to concentrate and plug away. That's my goal, I do have other goals one of which is to finish a game with 9 darts. That's when you end a game with just 9 darts using a double 180 which leaves you with a 141 check, you then need to hit a treble 20, treble 19 and a double 12 giving you the 9 dart finish. It is the hardest thing to do especially in a match.

Louise: Wow that sounds like you have a really goal there, will you keep me updated with your progress in darts.



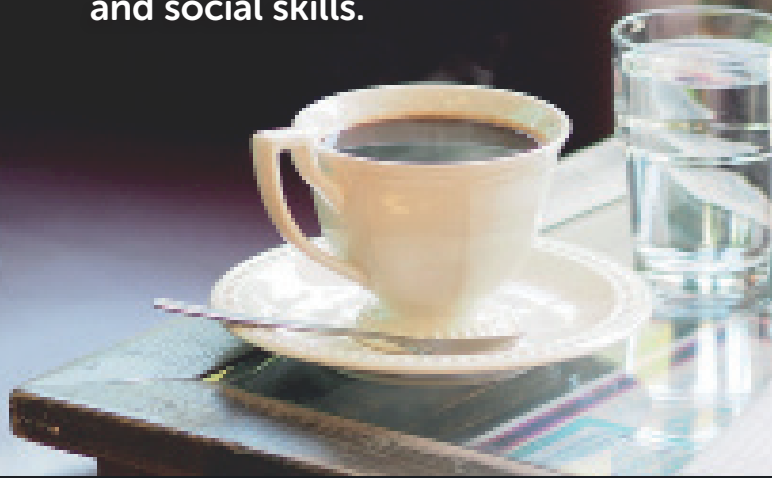


STEPPING STONES

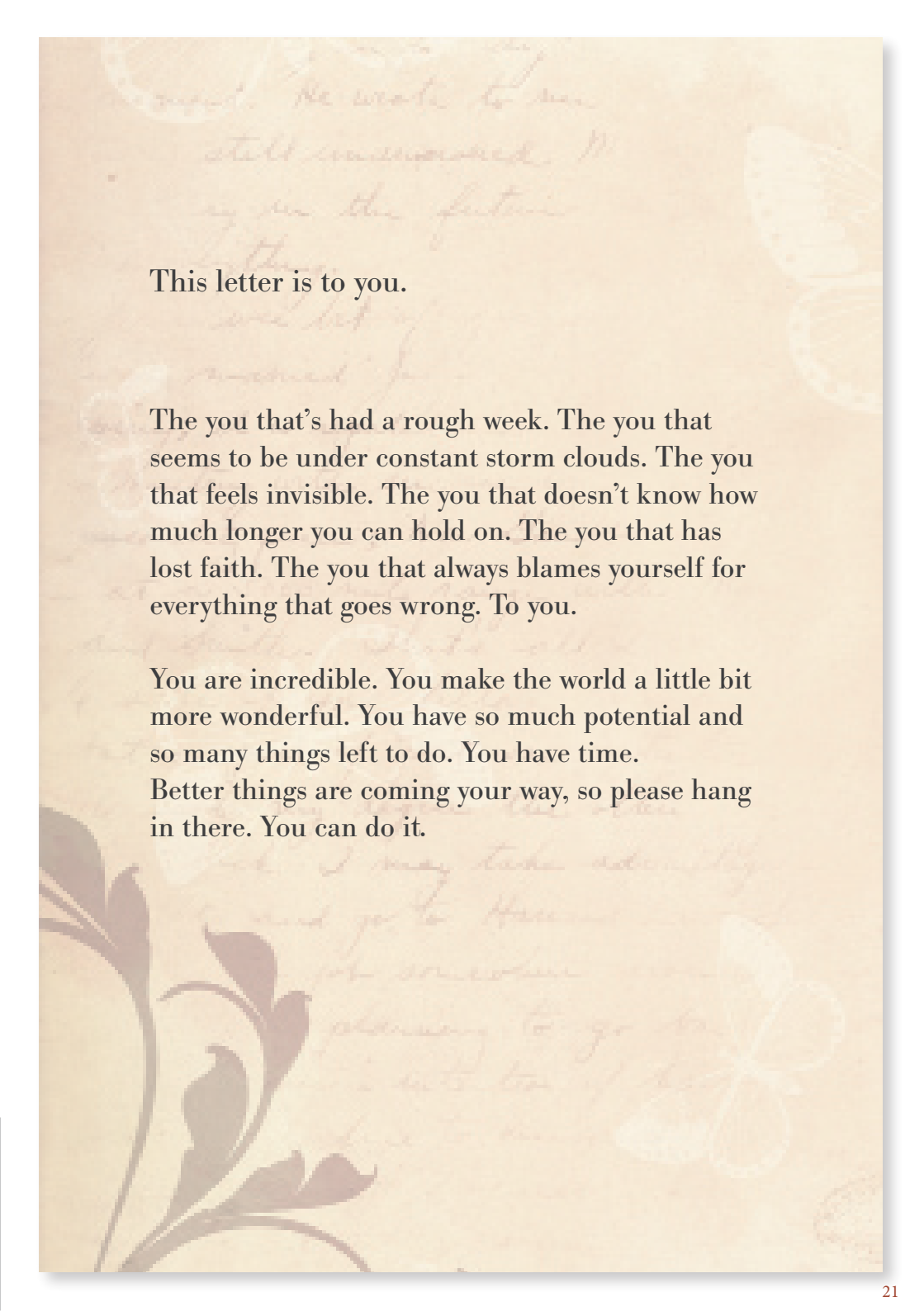
SUPPORTED HOUSING

Alternative to Admission and Respite Beds.

**We provide a supportive and
safe environment within the
community helping people
develop their personal
and social skills.**



For more information please contact us on
Freephone: **0800 133 7355**
Telephone: **01473 487373**
info@SteppingStonesCommunity.com

The background of the page is a light beige color with faint, ghostly cursive handwriting in a darker shade. There are also several botanical illustrations: a large, detailed leaf on the right side, a smaller leaf on the left, and a stylized flower or plant motif in the bottom right corner. The overall aesthetic is vintage and elegant.

This letter is to you.

The you that's had a rough week. The you that seems to be under constant storm clouds. The you that feels invisible. The you that doesn't know how much longer you can hold on. The you that has lost faith. The you that always blames yourself for everything that goes wrong. To you.

You are incredible. You make the world a little bit more wonderful. You have so much potential and so many things left to do. You have time.

Better things are coming your way, so please hang in there. You can do it.

**Inside Out Community,
Gippeswyk Hall,
Gippeswyk Avenue,
Ipswich,
Suffolk,
IP2 9AF**



Who are Inside Out?

Inside Out is an arts and mental health charity which was founded in 2003. They are committed to providing programmes throughout the year for people drawn to the therapeutic arts as a way of improving and sustaining their emotional wellbeing. Based in Ipswich their programmes take place in the East Suffolk area. The people who participate are mainly people recovering from periods of distress and those who live with a continuing vulnerability to episodes of psychological distress.

Follow InsideOut on Facebook: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/INSIDEOUTCOMMUNITY

Can participation in the arts make a real contribution to recovery from emotional distress and can the arts contribute to a more sustained state of well-being?

Inside Out ran surveys during 10 years of running therapeutic arts programmes and the answer suggested to both of these questions was yes.

This largely anecdotal evidence is strongly supported by UK research which identifies measurable health benefits and makes the case for funding community arts and wellbeing programmes. A review of the evidence for Arts and Health (Walford, 2010) identifies improvements widely experienced and attributed to participation in arts and health programmes. These include: improved motivation, increased social engagement, enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem, increased resilience, a more relaxed state of mind, better concentration, increased self-expression and self-understanding, and a stronger more positive sense of self.

These outcomes can be achieved by people with more enduring problems as well as those experiencing less severe issues.

A study by Hacking S, Secker et al has highlighted a number of experiences related to participation in therapeutic art groups that signify positive outcomes in themselves or lead to valued improvements: feeling more connected to others; perceiving art as a socially valued,

inspirational and meaningful activity; experiencing art work as an opportunity for self-expression; engaging in art activity that offers 'time out' from the anxiety laden preoccupations of everyday life; the discovery and enjoyment of a creative self and the development of artistic skills which may lead to re-defining of personal identity in a more positive way.

All art can take you 'into yourself' as well as 'out of yourself' and it is this interior life from which some of the most meaningful artistic expression comes. It enables students to explore and express their lived experiences and emotional life – often through the safety of symbolic images, experiences which may have been suppressed and overlaid by the illness metaphor. There is in art the possibility of self-realisation, of finding the truth of oneself and living more freely from that authentic core. Teal (2008) regards exploration of feelings and identity in the context of arts and mental health programmes as a significant step forward in the healing process.

She quotes one students reflection

“you get to know all sorts about yourself through art ... I could see I was beginning to express myself ... art helped me find myself again”

One seemingly important – though paradoxical, factor in the process of achieving positive outcomes in community arts and mental health projects, is that such groups are explicitly not therapy groups in any direct sense but are first and foremost creative arts groups. They are usually led by professional artists, and the primary aim is to encourage and develop an individual's creative expression through various art forms. Through engagement in the creative process participant students discover for themselves the ways in which making art in the company of others can be a healing experience that helps improve and sustain wellbeing and meets many of their desired health and wellbeing outcomes.

At Inside Out group values and the facilitating style of the lead artist are also important factors in outcome. Many people come to community art groups discounting their creative ability, carrying – as many of us do, negative attributions internalised from others in our earlier years. Inside Out has three key values which thread through interactions within the group – our rules of engagement. They are:

- (1) warm acceptance,
 - (2) inspirational engagement,
 - (3) positive validation of participant students and their creative achievements.
- We want Inside Out groups to be warm, friendly and safe places; places where you can feel inspired by the activity, the

facilitators and others to explore your creative self; a place where you can immerse yourself in the flow of the groups creative energy; discover more of yourself and your creative potential and have that positively affirmed.

“There is something liberating about participating in the arts – liberating in all sort of ways. I believe that’s what Inside Out can be for people – liberating!”



Trustee Peter Watkins writes - Art as a Lifeline

When I think of the word ‘lifelines’ I imagine some-

thing to grasp hold of when it seems we are almost lost and beyond help. Something that brings hope at a time of hopelessness; something that offers us a secure mooring as emotional storms sweep through our lives; something that reminds us that strength as well as vulnerability is part of our human heritage; something that allows us to imagine a different way of being in which there is a more sustained sense of wellbeing, and to strike confidently out in that direction. If we cannot conceive of a different life for ourselves we have nowhere to go but the painful reality of the present. Many creative experiences can act as lifelines: the visual arts can take us both out of ourselves and into ourselves in safe and healing ways.

“We believe in the power of creative process to strengthen the spirit”

Inside Out offers everyone who joins us as a participant student an opportunity to discover their own lifelines through the arts: one previous participant who had experienced the deadening hand of severe depression for lengthy periods in his life said ‘It was like being re-born back to life on the creativity of the group’. Another participant student wrote ‘the blank page became my friend’.

We believe in the power of the creative process to strengthen the spirit: this has been Inside Out Community’s inspirational slogan since the charity’s beginnings in 2003. There is an almost indefinable strength that enables us to keep going when faced with the challenges of life: the disappointments, the traumas, the hardships, the conflicts, the losses that inevitably arise in any life. But sometimes they can be overwhelming and we become dispirited and despairing. At times like these we need to find ways to strengthen our spirit so that we can regain the resilience and resolve to see things through. The arts can help! facilitators and others to explore your creative self; a place where you can immerse yourself in the flow of the groups creative energy; discover more of yourself and your creative potential and have that positively affirmed.

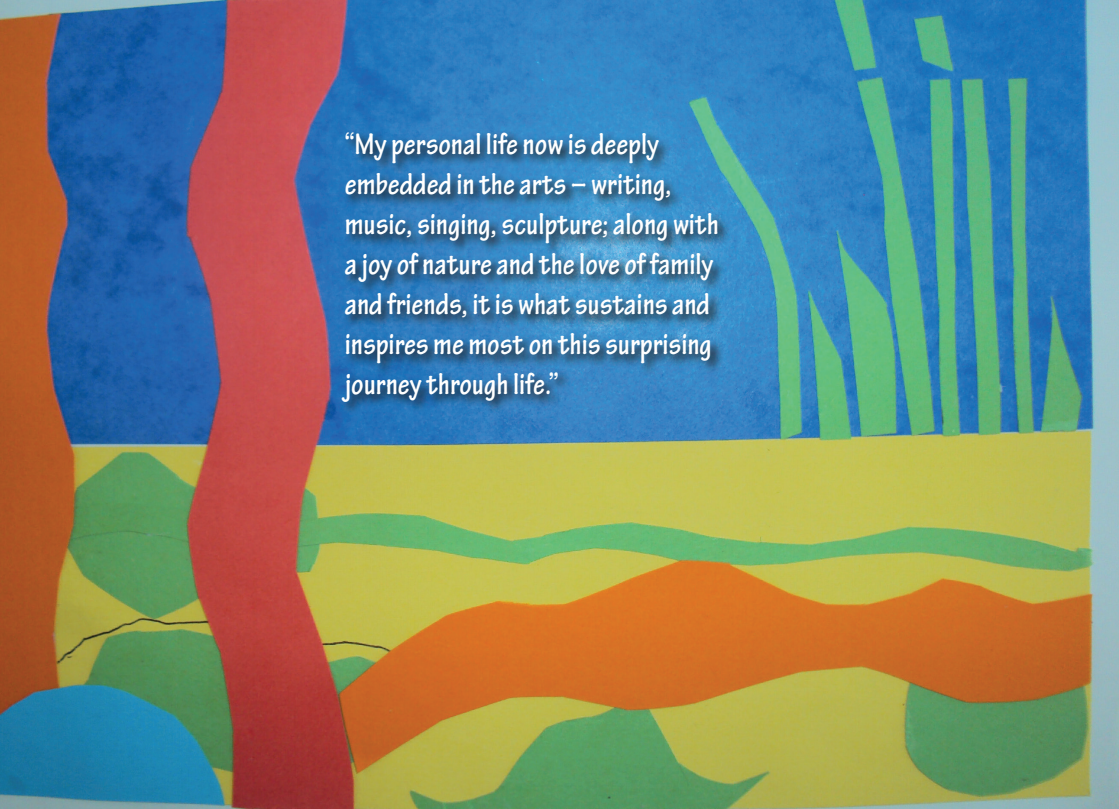


Accessing the Group

Referrals can be made by any agency or carer or family member supporting a person experiencing emotional distress, or alternatively an interested individual may self-refer. Ease of access is always a consideration for Inside Out, so there will be no formal referral or enrolment forms to complete; initially we simply require a name and contact details to secure a place. No formal pre-programme assessment is required.

Workshop programmes include: the visual arts, creative writing, singing, music, drama, and more, led by professional artists who share their skills in inspiring and supportive ways. If you live in the region and would like to join a programme please contact us.

“Inside Out got me believing in myself and interested in art again. Now I’ve just been accepted to do a college arts course”



“My personal life now is deeply embedded in the arts – writing, music, singing, sculpture; along with a joy of nature and the love of family and friends, it is what sustains and inspires me most on this surprising journey through life.”

all Artwork supplied by InsideOut

TWELVE GOOD REASONS TO JOIN AN ARTS AND WELLBEING GROUP

- Promotes relaxation, enjoyment, inner calm.
- Enables personal and emotional expression in safe and creative ways
- Increases social contact and inclusion
- Increases motivation and energy for living
- Strengthens self-esteem and confidence
- Develops self-awareness and understanding
- Offers a meaningful, purposeful, socially valued activity
- Enhances coping skills and resilience
- Develops artistic/creative skills and interests
- Encourages self-redefinition towards a more positive identity
- Engenders a sense of hopefulness
- Makes creative (whole brain) thinking available for living

Arts & Wellbeing



We believe in the power of
the creative process to
strengthen the spirit





A sunset over the ocean with a wooden pier railing in the foreground. The sky is a gradient of orange, yellow, and pink, with the sun low on the horizon. The ocean is dark with white-capped waves. The pier railing is in the foreground, silhouetted against the bright sky.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

The greatest success is being yourself



New Reason, New Thinking

Life Lessons by Matthew Morris

I first entered the world of madness and “mental illness” aged 21 when I left home in Northampton and started my mental health nurse training here in Suffolk. I had worked for Mind, in a drop-in centre in the town centre as part of the Youth Opportunities scheme previously, but there the attitudes to people were different, more understandable and compassionate. Not so mad, and not focused on “mental illness”.

Our induction in the first two weeks of nurse training included a tour of St Audrey’s Hospital, which was created as the County asylum in 1829. I don’t think anything I had experienced in my life up to that point could have prepared me for my first exposure to a psychiatric ward. We were shown through the locked doors

of a ward for older woman who were diagnosed with dementia. The woman’s bodies were emaciated and twisted as they were sitting in padded, high sided wheeled chairs called G chairs, all tilted backwards in reclining positions. Trays were attached to the front, I learned later that the trays and the reclined position meant they could act as restraints.

The cleaners were working on the ward and had moved all the chairs to the middle of the dining area. There had been no regard for the fact that people occupied the chairs. They were randomly pushed to the centre of the linoleum so that the number one task of cleaning could be completed as per routine. Thinking back, I know that I was deeply shocked, but I had no words for that shock.

My first proper work placement was on an acute admission ward at St Clements in Ipswich, and on my first day I sensed that something bad was going to happen. There was a rush of activity and concerned faces. Male nurses from other wards were called upon to come over and assist. They arrived in the staff room and began to roll up their sleeves, unclip their ties, remove their watches and prepare for action. They had an air of anticipation, adrenaline and ritual that I could only liken to when I was part of a team that were about to go on the pitch for a football match.

It was a familiarly male atmosphere thick with tension, cigarette smoke and bad taste humour.

They were preparing themselves for a violent situation, I think secluding someone and giving them an injection. Again I was shocked and frightened but coped by switching off from the feelings and the consequences of feeling that way.

Perhaps if I were aware I would have to do something about it, and my young self didn't have the wherewithal to react. I wonder now also whether I was trapped in a way. Trapped by the decision I had made to be a part of this world, and not knowing what I would do if I walked away.

'...Me as a shocked and bewildered observer, but I know now, complicit in my passivity. She as the victim of violence ...'

Trauma and experiences that happen in life that challenge us, are increasingly being recognised as the most important factors in understanding and helping people who are emotionally distressed. Evidence is consistently supporting the view that it is what has happened to people that is most important to acknowledge and address. That, arbitrarily attempting to classify and group people into pseudo-scientific categories, serves only those who might gain in some way by doing so. That denying the relevance of life experiences serves to enable others to

avoid having to address the issues that people's difficult feelings and traumas might force them to acknowledge. To avoid us collectively addressing

our cultures, our society and how it permits abuses, how it labels people already discriminated against, how it enables people to ignore poverty, ignore inequality, hypocrisy and greed.

The evidence is clear and becoming more unequivocal as time goes by, there is no proof for theories of chemical imbalances, and there are no discoveries of genetic predispositions to any "mental illnesses". We are discovering that of course genes are relevant to who we are, however there are so many variables that are influenced by life. We are discovering that nurture has far more influence and power than nature.

We are hearing more and more evidence from around the world that when we change our perceptions and harness the skills that we all possess as human beings, we can all make a profound difference to how we and others see themselves and the world around them. We can open our eyes, our ears and our hearts. This is true for us all, our life experiences, our reactions to them and the reactions of those around us, and our traumas influence us all, including we who are workers.

On that first placement on the acute inpatient unit, I made my first real connection with someone who was there for help. She was a middle aged woman who was diagnosed as being depressed. I would often sit with her for long periods, usually in silence as she appeared to gain some comfort just from having someone close to her, sometimes she would cry, occasionally she would tell me about her life and I would listen.

She was then prescribed MECT. This was obviously something that frightened her and was something that she didn't want. I had been asked about MECT in my interview for the training, and although ignorant to its reality I had expressed an open mind, as if it really helped people it could be a good thing, right?

Such was her fear this woman refused to have it. I think it was fear, but in the depth of her despair she wasn't really able to articulate her reasoning, just her refusal to have the treatment. The response to her refusal was to put her on a Section of the Mental Health Act and to force her to have treatment.

On the first day that she was due to have her treatment there was a rota drawn up to continually observe her so that she couldn't eat or drink. People have to be fasted prior to treatment, as it involves having a general anaesthetic and a muscle relaxant prior to the electric current being applied to

'It was one of the most distressing days of my whole working life because of what happened to her, my complicity in it and failure to speak out on her behalf.'



the brain. I was one of the people on the rota. Continual observation meant staying alongside someone within touching distance at all times.

This was to be a truly significant day in both our lives. Me as a shocked and bewildered observer, but I know now, complicit in my passivity. She as the victim of violence and oppression in the name of care and science.

One thing that is significant to what was happening, and informs about the culture within the services then, and probably now, was that no one considered changing the routine of administering treatment. There was no thought to what this woman would be going through, except to stop her eating and drinking prior to the normal process being followed. MECT always started at a set time and therefore she had to be controlled before this time. No one said let's arrange for it to be done earlier. The routine, or probably more significantly the Psychiatrist and the Anaesthetist routine were more important and this wasn't even questioned. The feelings and fears of this terrified woman were not the number one consideration.

'I remember that morning like you remember a nightmare. I think, when I look back on it, I probably did sleepwalk through most of my early psychiatric experiences.'

The woman was small, she was slim and wiry with long auburn hair. She had large features and large eyes that sat deep in their sockets. When I took over my observation duty she did not speak, she hadn't for the previous days, but acknowledged me with a small nod of her head. She sat on her bed in the dormitory, her legs not crossed but twisted, wringing her hands and twisting her head. She would occasionally stand suddenly, making me jump, pace backward and forward looking out of the three panels of window that looked out onto the car park. She would then return to her place on the bed.

After around 15 minutes, half way through my time of being with her, she did not return to the bed. She left the dormitory and went down the dark corridor leading to the day room. She then quickly jumped into one of the bathrooms and tried to shut the door. I had been warned about not letting her get to the taps to drink but wasn't alert to what she was thinking. She attempted to shut the door on me and I tried to stop her, we were pushing on either side of the door.

I will never forget the look in her eyes, it was one of pleading desperation and anger, and I think she could see in mine that I was confused, frightened and that I did not know what I was doing.

She then suddenly released her pressure on the door, stood upright and came out of the bathroom. She didn't speak, all I could say was "thank you".



I was unable to process what had happened, because in a way that part of me wasn't there. I spent long periods of my training disconnected from how things made me feel as I really don't believe that I had the resources to do anything else. I was, and am now, considered laid back and to be taking things in my stride. However, this can often be a disguise for disassociation and an unconscious survival strategy.

What I am now able to reflect upon, that is something I have observed many many times during my career in others who are in the midst of incredible stress and emotional turmoil, is this woman's compassion, empathy, dignity and respect. In that moment, struggling with the pushing on the door, she was able to act upon what she saw in me and care for me! She saw my distress, she responded to me, she took care of me, to the detriment of herself. We didn't ever discuss that moment and people could interpret her actions differently, but I know from the way that she looked at me and responded to how I felt that this was an act of enormous grace, courage and compassion.

I went on that day to witness that woman being carried into the treatment room, held down on a bed until the anaesthetic was given, and then "treated" with MECT.

'I will never forget the look in her eyes, it was one of pleading desperation and anger, and I think she could see in mine that I was confused, frightened and that I did not know what I was doing.'

It was one of the most distressing days of my whole working life because of what happened to her, my complicity in it and failure to speak out on her behalf.

I felt guilty, but don't think I really thought through why at the time. I was told that it was for her own good, she is ill, and sometimes you have to act in people's longer term best interest. I know I listened to this and could see this was an attempt at justification, but I just didn't believe what I was being told, I didn't argue as I didn't have anything else to say, other than "surely what just happened can never be right".

I am left to wonder whether, in understanding and recognising trauma and the affect that life has upon us all, in this beautiful crazy world, maybe we could all acknowledge that this applies as much, if not more sometimes, to the people working with people who have experienced or are experiencing distress. We must ask to what extent the exposure to other people's, and their own distress, influences the "science", the therapy, the research and the theories that are applied to people. To what extent do the life experiences of the worker influence what they do long before they even start their work, set out their goals, and make decisions about the paradigms they are working within?

Maybe we can begin to accept that people, life, feelings, creativity, cultures, beliefs, behaviours, minds and souls are so complex and unique that they are out of reach of explanation by current science, research, facts or truths. Perhaps this acceptance could enable us to be more accepting of difference and less fearful.

We could look closer to home for explanations of people's struggles and acknowledge that poverty, inequality, discrimination, bullying and abuse challenge people profoundly and that these challenges have consequences.

Whilst we all look for explanations that can reassure and provide a sense of stability and certainty, we must take care that they are not seen as universal truths and that they are not tarnished by discrimination, by prejudice and then enable traumas to be compounded, and the majorities comfort to be at the expense of those that are different or in the minority. We are all uniquely the same and simply complex.

NB: Some of the descriptions included in this piece have been altered to protect the identity of others.



STEPPING STONES

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We provide a range of services in the community designed to help and support people to overcome the problems and challenges that they are experiencing. We put people at the heart of their recovery; harnessing strengths, hopes, aspirations and past life experiences to help create better futures.

CHANGE

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Telephone: **01473 487373**

info@SteppingStonesCommunity.com

Suffolk OPEN STUDIOS



For more information see www.suffolkopenstudios.org or contact
Liz Hedges liz@spirusmarketing.com or Jo Riches at Spirus on 01638 741830
or jo@spirusmarketing.com.

In Memory

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the sudden and untimely passing of Claire Smith who was in our last edition of New Reason (Helping Claire).

She was an amazing lady who had been through some tough times but had taken some massive steps forward to improve her life.

Her confidence had grown so much and she was always out and about meeting up with friends, shopping with her mum and attending a Suffolk Mind group every Tuesday. She had started organising a coffee afternoon for other group members every other Monday. Claire was so chuffed as she got to have a set of keys which made her feel in charge.

She passed so suddenly and it has shocked us all.

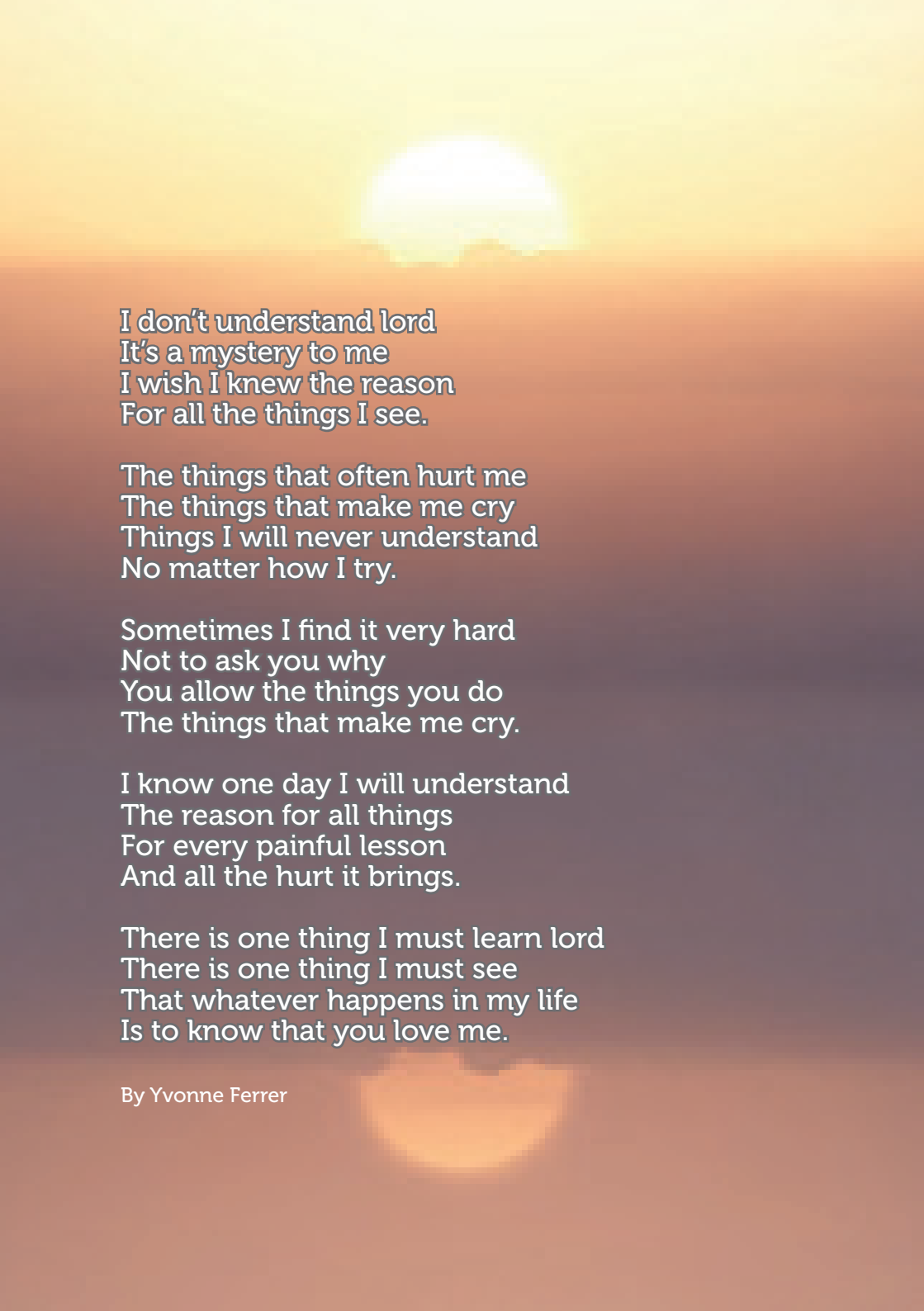
Claire was such a very special person and will be greatly missed. Our sympathy goes to her family.





**When Your Beautiful Heart
Stopped Beating**

**Our Hearts Just Broke in Two
Knowing that Here On Earth
There Will Never Be Another
Like You**



I don't understand lord
It's a mystery to me
I wish I knew the reason
For all the things I see.

The things that often hurt me
The things that make me cry
Things I will never understand
No matter how I try.

Sometimes I find it very hard
Not to ask you why
You allow the things you do
The things that make me cry.

I know one day I will understand
The reason for all things
For every painful lesson
And all the hurt it brings.

There is one thing I must learn lord
There is one thing I must see
That whatever happens in my life
Is to know that you love me.

By Yvonne Ferrer



Headspace is part of Volunteering Matters (formerly CSV) and is based in the Old Crown Court in Ipswich. Headspace is a free service which helps people to make positive changes to their lives. Our staff and volunteer mentors can help you identify what you need and want from life so that you can set meaningful, realistic goals.

Many people find that negative thoughts, feelings and experiences hold them back and stop them living the life they want. Through attending Headspace, it is possible to rediscover positive aspects of yourself, take control of your life and take steps towards achieving your aspirations.



Our programmes are 12 weeks in length and we currently run four programmes per year. Please get in touch for programme start dates or to find out more information.

Contact details

Email: head.space@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Office: 01473 418020

Mobile: 07904 442821

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Norfolk and Suffolk **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

General enquiries: 01603 421 421



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under 18 (Suffolk)
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www.ipswichandeastsuffolkccg.nhs.uk



07789 603304



TEL: 0808 802 5544



Tel: 020 8215 2356

Emotional support

If you would like to offload or talk to someone about your problems, then you may find an emotional support line useful:



SANE

Tel: 0845 767 8000

SUMMER



The wealth of summer
Is dreamer's gold.
For so short a time
It is ours to hold--
Gold in the meadow,
Gold by the stream,
Riches enough for
a miser's dream.


Golden currency,
Ours to spend,
And here, where the sun
Warmed grasses bend,
A golden mattress
On which to lie
As the sun sinks low
In a golden sky.

by Lois Duncan

The Stone Foundation



Housing and Tenancy support
for vulnerable people



There is a distinct lack of housing options generally for people who experience or have experienced mental or emotional distress or any other sort of 'disability' and who are 'vulnerable'.

Help us make a difference

call us on **0800 1337 355/01473 487373**

Elaine.Thomas@TheStoneFoundation.co.uk