

# Voluntary Support Scheme

Registered Charity Number: 1097279

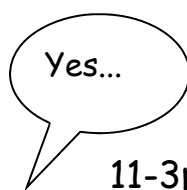
Newsletter no. 18, Summer 2008



## Assertiveness:

Not pushy, not stroppy, just clear and respectful  
of you and others.

If you sometimes wish you knew how to say "No" (or "yes") and get other people to accept what you are feeling and saying (or if you work with people who wished they could) then this day is for you.



The day will be led by Anna Abel and Isla Gale,  
NHS Primary Care Mental Health Workers

11-3pm, Wednesday, September 10th, 2008.

St George's Extension, Tiverton.



Free (£10 if you book and then do not attend)  
Booking essential by 3rd September.  
Contact details below:

Contact us at:  
Beck House, Beck's Square, Tiverton, EX16 6PJ  
Telephone: 01884 258507  
Email: [voluntary.supportscheme@virgin.net](mailto:voluntary.supportscheme@virgin.net)  
Website: [www.voluntarysupportscheme.org.uk](http://www.voluntarysupportscheme.org.uk)

## Think yourself well?

It sometimes seems that the only form of counselling the NHS has ever heard of is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - and very effective it is too. It sets out to teach people how to change to more positive thinking patterns and then act on them. There are many other schools of counselling and psychotherapy that are equally effective, but the NHS doesn't seem to have heard of them. Doctors took a long time to come round to the idea that talking to someone could be helpful in the first place. They seem to have thought it was a bit of mumbo-jumbo—like acupuncture. Now, come to think of it, quite a lot of GPs are practising therapies like acupuncture and homeopathy themselves.

It turns out that it is more important that you get on with your therapist and believe s/he can help you than what s/he does, because, believe it or not, the most important tool for change or healing is our own mind. Who would have thought it!

Insurance companies have noticed that if we are in an accident and suffer something like whiplash injury we will not get better until compensation payments have been made—almost as if we were controlling how we feel by ourselves and can't let ourselves get better until the law suit is finished.

Athletes often explain their preparation as a time of mentally rehearsing their actions in great detail.

I am not suggesting we can mend a broken leg by thinking it better but I am suggesting that if we can't imagine how it will feel when it is mended it *may* take longer to knit together. Pretending we have certain skills may actually be a good rehearsal for really acquiring them—that is why self-confidence is so important. If Dawn had not been confident she could really walk over hot coals she probably wouldn't have been able to without getting blistered feet.

So, we need our GP to diagnose what is wrong, and we need skilled practitioners to help us get better, but we also need to think ourselves well too.



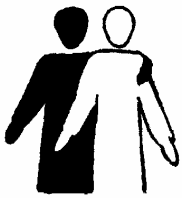
Sue Larg  
VSS Chair

## Volunteer Week 3rd June 2008

Thanks to all those who generously sponsored the fire walking; we raised over £500. This will help us continue to link volunteers to people who are going through a rough patch in their life (such as depression, anxiety or isolation), and to run our Self-Help Group.



VSS offered refreshments to passers by as part of the Fair, arranged by Involve, to celebrate Volunteer Week in June.



## Voluntary Support Scheme Self- Help Group

We are a friendly group who are here to help each other through a difficult time in our lives.

We offer a warm, friendly welcome with loads of tea and coffee and biscuits and cake when we need a treat. We meet every Thursday, 11.00am -1.00pm and enjoy various activities such as computing, cooking, board games and craft, trips out together or anything you would like to do – we are open to suggestions. Or you can just sit and relax with a drink and biscuits.

Some of the activities we have enjoyed so far:

- We have had a very interesting local history talk which we followed up with a visit to Tiverton Museum. We are planning a guided walk to find out more about local buildings and events.
- We have been shown different card-making techniques and made cards for various occasions.
- We have caught the bus to go out for a picnic lunch together
- We have tried line-dancing.
- We invited the Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator over to talk to us about volunteering opportunities.
- We completed a 2-day accredited Food Hygiene course and used this by providing the refreshments for Volunteers' Week celebrations.

If you would like to know more contact us at the address on the front page.

## Did you know that stress is the biggest reason for sickness absence in the UK?

We will always have stress in our lives, it motivates us and without it we would do nothing, but it can build up and become overwhelming.



**STRESSED?**

### How can stress affect me?

Stress can affect us physically, emotionally and our behaviour may change too. Signs of being under too much stress may include:

- feeling aggressive, irritable or down
- feeling constantly tired or under the weather
- you may avoid difficult situations or making decisions
- sleep problems



### Life is not always easy!

- As with physical health we all need to look after our emotional health.
- Finding ways to deal with stress in a positive way will help you look after yourself and relieve the pressures of stress.

### How can I fight stress?

#### ❖ EXERCISE



- Physical activity is a great way to relieve stress & tension. It also lifts mood and can boost self-esteem.
- You don't need to head for the gym; brisk walking, swimming & gardening are good ways to get moving.

#### ❖ SELF-HELP

- There are a number of self-help books available in local libraries. These can help you learn skills to reduce stress & anxiety, lift mood and boost self-esteem.



#### ❖ STRESS CONTROL COURSES

- 4-week stress control courses are run regularly around various locations in Mid Devon. Our next one will be held in Tiverton Library, 5.45pm-7.45pm, starting on 9th Sept. For more details ring Gill Mobbs on 01884 235561 or email: [gill.mobbs@middevon-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:gill.mobbs@middevon-pct.nhs.uk)

**IF STRESSFUL FEELINGS DON'T SEEM TO GO AWAY & BEGIN TO INTERFERE WITH DAILY LIFE - DON'T STRUGGLE ON YOUR OWN, SEEK HELP.**