



# Newsletter #2 Spring 2018

## Peer Support Issue

YOUR COMMUNITY WORKING WITH UNIVERSITIES OF EXETER & PLYMOUTH

## What we have been finding out

**Hello and welcome** to the 2nd issue of the DeStress project newsletter.

The DeStress project is a research study looking to understand how austerity and welfare reform is impacting on mental health and how antidepressants and talking therapies impact on wellbeing.

The project has been running since November 2016 and so far there have been 16 focus groups with 97 people in total taking part and 45 interviews one to one interviews

There is a new project website if you want to find out more on how your views and opinions have shed the work so far

We have been hearing your experiences and people are experiencing mixed level of support from their GP's.

One of the positive results of what you have been telling us is that we are currently working with Health Education England to produce some training materials for GP's around guidance for approaching mental health and stress

issues in a consultation. Together with Health Education England and community partners from our advisory group, we will be shaping this guidance for GP's and Health Professionals based on the findings from your interviews

We have been listening to a lot of your experiences of the help and support you have received and on page 2 we have covered some of the big themes that you feel contribute to the causes and challenges of stress.

And we are also hearing about how peer support groups have been helping some of you to feel better and giving you a greater understanding of your own issues, so we have dedicated this issue to looking at some of the peer support available within your communities

**Have a look at our new website**

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

## Want to take part?



We are nearing the end of the interview stage but would still love to talk with you, so if you are aged between **18-65** and **have seen a health professional (like a GP)** about stress, anxiety or feeling low because of the kind of issues mentioned. **We are interested in finding out what prompted you to seek help, what support you were hoping for and how you felt about the GP visit and the support given.**

**Interviews can be at a time and place to suit you.**

**Call or email us for more information or if you would like to take part**



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## What you've been telling us

These are some of the big challenges you are telling us about

### FEELING STIGMATISED & JUDGED

Mental health issues are still seen as having a stigma. When people worry they will feel judged, they often don't access support and so often prevents people accessing support that is available.

- \*The perception of feeling judged comes from attitudes of professional services, like job centres & schools but also from other people within local communities
- \*The media is feeding the negative portrayal around health and welfare benefits
- \*Fear of being judged as a bad parent

\*Pressures of social media to be seen to have a perfect life

### LABELLING & DIAGNOSIS

\*You are finding that it can be too quick or easy to be given a mental health label, but those labels seem to be necessary to help you get access to treatment, support, benefits and housing.

### BENEFITS & DISABILITY ASSESSMENTS

- \*The process is degrading and in itself causes much stress and anxiety
- \*There's still a lack of understanding and recognition of mental health issues from benefits advisors.

### HEALTH SERVICES

- \* People find it difficult to see a GP, and seldom the same one.
- \*Visiting a GP is often the last resort for support
- \*GP's have limited treatment options either pills or talking therapies.

\*Barriers to accessing the talking therapies: like waiting lists, lack of child care provision, costs of travel, support is only short term and doesn't address underlying problems; people feel self-referral is difficult.

\*There are mixed experiences of using medication – it's a way of coping but not addressing the problem. Many people feel 'fobbed off'

\* Some of you feel pressure to take up medication or talking therapies even if you don't feel it is right for you. There is a lot of pressure on you to be seen as 'helping yourself' and taking responsibility

\*Self-management is usually the only alternative to not taking up what is on offer from GPs

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND THE FINDINGS

VISIT:

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

Follow us on Twitter

@DeStRESSExeter



## Peer Support- what is it?

Excerpts from MIND [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other. Support takes on many forms, community groups, befriending, self-help groups, support groups and on line communities and different things work for different people.

The support is based on sharing experiences and mutual respect and reciprocal support and may help you to talk about your situation, introduce you to new ideas and ways of coping, reassure you that you are not the only person dealing with this and help you to see just how common mental health issues are, it gives you with a sense of belonging with a community who share your experiences and a safety net in difficult times and will help you if the support you have had so far has left you feeling disillusioned.

There is strong evidence from the DeStress study that involvement in informal community groups and activities is beneficial, with participants saying peer group support has been effective in enhancing their health and wellbeing. We have come across many support groups in the study sites - read more about two groups that are being embraced by local people and helping them feel better and more supported

CRAFTERS IN ACTION & GAV, EBBY & JAZ  
@ POW WOW CAFÉ



**Creative Minds Art Group (below)**



**Tuesday's 10.30 – 3.30**

**Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre**  
**75 Clowance St, Plymouth the number 54**  
**bus route stops right outside – so no excuse**  
**come along and have a coffee**

WANT TO KNOW MORE, CALL WOLFIE  
07592852244

## Teignmouth's Pow Wow cafe & the Crafters of Round Table

The Pow Wow café is a community café in the heart of Kingsway, West Teignmouth it was opened by Mars Hill church in response to the community wanting a local shop and hub. The cafe is community focused and local people are encouraged to bring their activities and groups to use the space.

One group who uses the space is the Crafters of the Round Table, started by Dawn and Kirstine, it's all about learning and sharing crafts, materials their skills. But crafting is just a ruse, whilst it gives the group a focus, this group has developed into an anxiety and stress peer support group and there is no stigma here – it's warm and welcoming, people are open, they share feelings and situations and they support and encourage each other. The best thing is the energy of this group, you can feel the positive glow from them all.

Jaz has been coming to the group for a while, she was encouraged to share her crafting skills and teach others as well as giving her a reason to get out of the house and make her feel better. Ebby was also at home all the time bringing up her young son and had no friends, now she has lots and she has learnt great crafting skills. Both of them also now volunteer in the café and are very much part of this community They love coming to the café – they have found supportive friends and have weaved themselves into the fabric of this crafting community.

When Jaz was offered to volunteer behind the café counter she 'gave it a go'. She has a long term illness and she loves how Pow Wow is accepting of every individual and invites them in, no matter what disability. *"I have gained confidence and that is so important to me, volunteering and the group has made me feel I can do things. I love volunteering in the cafe and it is not pressured like work – if I am ill and can't do it – they are happy to take the rough with the smooth"* *I recently got the opportunity, through being in Pow Wow, to take up a Barista course, so now I can make a decent cup of coffee"- it's a win for everyone*

**CRAFTER'S OF THE ROUND TABLE**  
**EVERY TUESDAY MORNING from 9.30 at**  
**the Pow Wow Café, Kingsway, West**  
**Teignmouth Everyone's welcome, just pop**  
**in and come and say hello**

## Creative Minds Art Group Plymouth

So what's special about Tuesday's at Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre? its home to the **Creative Minds Art Group**, a peer support group run by local people providing a friendly, informal space for anyone in the Plymouth area to come along to, especially those who may have mental health conditions

Started a few years ago by **Wolfie, Theresa and Annie**, this is a supportive, nonjudgmental space using arts and crafts as the focus. ***We share, listen, support each other, connecting through our common interests and shared experiences of mental health.*** Everyone agrees that the focus of art and making things helps clear the mind – we make and the chat flows... but no skills are needed to join in and every form of art or craft is available from, painting, model making jewellery to writing stories. ***We have all benefitted from coming along, it stops our social isolation and it gives us something to look forward to and a place where we can be ourselves – no need to wear a mask or hide. Whether it's making something or just sitting drinking a coffee, it's important to let people just 'be' and groups like this are even more important now that mental health drop in services have all but vanished'.***

We want to invite others along to join this group and help them to be less isolated when facing mental health conditions- there is no judging here, and definitely no treating mental health with the stigma that many feel is associated with it.

***'We are not medical professionals but we all have our own experiences to draw on which makes us experts in understanding just how important this support is – having someone who understands and has been there, understanding from a place of shared experience, that has truly helped us all'.***

The group is family orientated with junior members who come along in the school breaks, we have large, secure outside space that children can safely run around in, we are also planning many events for the future including day trips to art exhibitions, Eden Project and even London,

***'Sometimes I come in feeling like I have the world on my shoulders but leave feeling so much better' – this is something we all need in our lives***

# What's on in your area

Here are some of the local groups, activities and peer support groups that you have been telling us about that are happening in your local area

We know there is much more happening but these are just a few things you have recommended



## Support Groups and debt advice in West Teignmouth

**Andy's Men's Club-Teignmouth Football Club Mondays 7-9pm:** an informal group for men to meet up and chat about the day to day stresses of life. Drop in. For more information speak to Keith on 07915975715

**Helping Hands Low Moods Group 9-11am Wednesday** various venues Call Rachel on 07475016057 for more info

**Pow Wow Community Café**  
Soft play area for under 6's, hot food & drinks, groceries, pay point and free Wi-Fi.

**Kings Tots -Mondays 10-11.30am**  
**Crafters of the Round Table -Tuesdays 9am 12**

**Art Group- Thurs 10-12** drop in session

### Meadow Centre, Kingsway

#### Mondays

9-11am **Men's over 50's breakfast club**

#### Tuesdays

10.30-11.30 **Seated exercise**, any ability welcome

12.00-2pm **50+ lunch club**

7-9pm **bingo** (every 2 weeks)

#### Wednesdays

2-4pm **Memory time** – over 50s

#### Thursdays

1-4pm **over 50 games afternoon**

9.30-12 **Craft group**

**Children's Centre** – place where children under 5 and their families can access services and information find them on Facebook [facebook.com/teignmouthanddawlischildrenscentre/](https://www.facebook.com/teignmouthanddawlischildrenscentre/)

## Debt and general advice

### Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Teignmouth Library  
Mon/Wed /Fri 10am -12.30pm Drop In

### CAP Teignbridge Debt Centre,

Free debt help call **0800 328 0006** (*free number for landlines and mobiles*) for a friendly chat to arrange an appointment for support or advice.

## Support Groups in Devonport and St Budeaux

**Welcome Hall Lunch Club** Tuesday 12.30 & Friday 1pm **Craft Club** Tuesday & Friday {following on from lunch club}

**Quilters Group** Wednesday Evening 6.30pm, also range of activities put on through different groups – call Glynis 01752 606317 for info

### St Budeaux Community Centre

**Square club**, social events for senior folk, every Wednesday call 01752 365246 for details

**Barnardos Children Centre The Barn Community Café** 10-11.30am Wednesdays, Kit Hall Crescent, Barne Barton 01752 362320/ 361052 – drop in

**Pembroke Estate Office. ACES over 50's** group Thursday 12.30-2 pm at The Cabin, Pembroke Street. Social group, activities, days out, Contact Karen 01752 607277

### Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre

**Creative Minds Art Group** Tuesdays 10am - 3.30pm drop in or call Wolfie 07592852244

**Women's Group** Wednesdays 1-3pm [Craft, speakers, etc]

**Red Velvet Cinema Group** Devonport Guildhall **10.15 every other Wed** (23rd May 6th & 20th June) £5 a ticket – includes & tea and cake after the film

**Devonport Live Café**, George Street  
Open Mon –Fri 8.30- 4pm /sat 9am-4pm as lots of regular groups like Timebank and craft groups – call 01752 657843 for more info

## Debt Advice

**Credit Union** 14 Cumberland Street, Devonport call 01752 201329 or 01752 310698 or email [office@cpku.co.uk](mailto:office@cpku.co.uk)

### Plymouth Community Homes

Financial Inclusions Team offer help and support with rent and household bills and helping you claim all benefits you are entitled to call **0808 2306500/ 01752 237990** / call in at Plumer House Offices or email [enquiries@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)

**Citizens Advice Plymouth** Ernest English House Buckwell Street Plymouth **Drop in service** Mon –Fri 9am to 5pm **AdviceLine** Mon to Fri 9am to 6.30pm /Sat 9am to 1pm **03444 111 444**

**Money Advice Plymouth** Mon-Fri 9am 4.30pm at Devonport Guildhall 01752 208126.