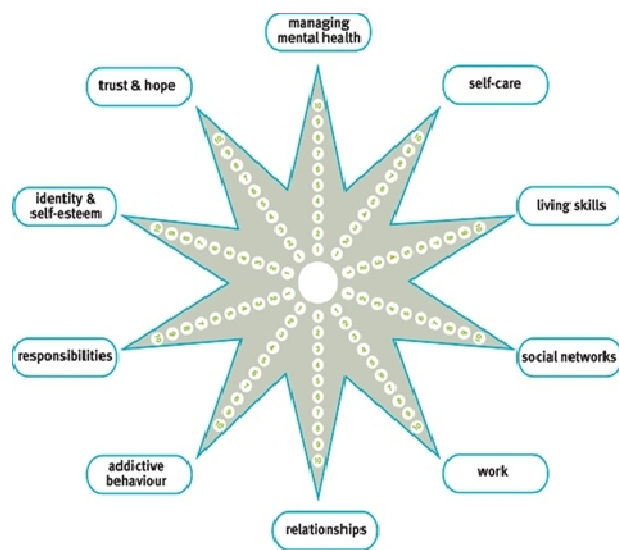


Dartford Gravesham & Swanley Mind

Newsletter December 2011/January 2012

Introducing the Recovery Star

Here at DGS Mind we will be adopting the use of the Recovery Star in the New Year. The Recovery Star is a way of mapping a person's journey to recovery. It helps a person with mental health issues identify where they want to make changes in their life, and how they can make them. It is well known as a helpful model to aid individual recovery, and will be seen more and more in DGS Mind, where, following a decision by the Service Users Panel, we will be piloting its use in Community Services. Each point of the star represents an area in a person's life, and with help from a trained staff supporter, people can decide if they want to change anything in that area, and see how they progress in their journey. This is also a great visual aid that will help us work directly with an individual's needs and at the same time, give us some performance indicators about how well we are doing.



A warm welcome to our new Social Work students, **Emma, Tom** and **Firuz**. They will be working with us in various parts of DGS Mind over the forthcoming months: we always find students a great help in extending the work we can do.

Counselling in Swanley

People living in Swanley are now able to receive counselling in their own town: with the help of a grant from Sevenoaks District Council, we now run counselling sessions in the Swanley Library and Information Centre on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All too often, Swanley residents have to make the journey to Dartford or Gravesend to get the service they require, so it is good to be able to offer local services to local people. Contact the office if you would like to learn more about this service.

Perhaps you or someone you know struggles with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Phobias or Body Dysmorphic Disorder. Our fee-paying group on a Thursday morning has spaces for new clients. Contact **Sue** at the office for more information.

Young People and their mental health issues is a theme that is being seen as increasingly important. DGS Mind is keen to develop further in this work: Already our Counselling Service takes people from age 16, and now we have a small contract to deliver training to foster parents.

X marks the spot, they used to say on old treasure maps, and clearly the spot to be on October 14th was at the Diversity Evening, organised by DGS Mind for **World Mental Health Day**. A goodly audience of up to 100 people were entertained by the Saheli Dancers, Gospel Singers, Tribal Belly dancers, and some unusual Russian dancing! A buffet of food from many different cultures was provided, and there was even time for more serious thought with a presentation from **Rock Sturt** on Dementia and BAME communities. The evening was brought to a grand conclusion with two self-penned songs from **Tilly**, one of our tenants, who had the audience wanting more. Days later, in the Gravesend drop-in, her tunes were still being sung with glee....

Mindful Money Day, on the 10th November, was also a great success. 80 people from various local agencies, and our own service-users, attended this event, which was opened by **Gareth Johnson**, the Dartford MP. The effort DGS Mind staff had put into organising this event clearly paid off, as one of the facilitators remarked: "this was a fantastic crowd of engaged and enthusiastic participants".

Anger Management, our 10 week fee-paying course, starts again on Wednesdays in the New Year: apply to the office. This course is run by qualified and experienced facilitators.

Service-users, through the Options Group, have this year organised a series of Christmas Meals in restaurants in the 3 towns, 12-16th December. Ring for further information.

Local Counsellors and Therapists: DGS Mind will be running 4 Training days in 2012, 10am-1pm Saturdays in Gravesend, on issues such as Bereavement & Loss, Working with Severe and Enduring Mental Health Issues, Tools for Counsellors, Anxiety & Depression. These will help meet your Continuous Personal Development requirements. Further details once the programme is finalised.



For better
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Fundraising News

The Fundraising Sub-group have now agreed their strategic plan for the next year: this will allow them to prioritise where energies should be directed. Look out for details of an exciting (and probably noisy) musical event in Gravesend, sometime in the Spring.

There is a raffle for Christmas Hampers being held in the office: the draw will be on December 19th. Why not buy some tickets if you are passing through?

Carers' Workshops

Starting on January 16th, on Mondays and Thursdays, the Carers Service will be running a Programme of 8 sessions, designed to inform and support the Carers of people with mental health problems. The programme will have sessions on:

- 16 Jan: Understanding the Mental Health System
- 19 Jan: Relationships
- 23 Jan: Looking after Yourself
- 26 Jan: Living with Self Harm & Suicidal Thoughts
- 30 Jan: Living with Anxiety Disorders
- 02 Feb: Living with Depression & Bi Polar
- 06 Feb: Living with Schizophrenia
- 09 Feb: Financial & Practical aspects of being a Carer

We welcome all relatives and friends who have a role supporting people with mental health problems, whether or not they are already known to DGS Mind. The programme is designed so that people can attend just the particular sessions which will be useful to them. These are free workshops from 10am-1pm, with a buffet lunch and will be held in the Masonic Hall in Dartford. However, with a limited number of places, we may need to allocate places based on need. Contact **Alex** at the office for further details.

ADVANCE NOTICE:

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind

AGM

20th January 6pm-8pm

A date for your diary: venue to be announced.
This year we will be holding the AGM in either Dartford or Swanley.

In Memoriam

James Jubilee Grubb, one of the tenants who has been with us for many years, died in St Thomas Hospital on 30th October.

A cremation and service were arranged by the housing team, and attended by several tenants including **Graham**, who read the 23rd Psalm. There was a get-together with refreshments afterwards at the Almshouses.

James, born in 1935, got his rather unusual middle name from that year being the silver jubilee year of King George V.

Community Services in Swanley

Lots of good things happening in Swanley:

- A Christmas Coffee Morning on Wednesday 14th December 11am-2pm at Swanley Youth and Community Centre, St Mary's Rd. This is a chance for other local organisations to get to know more about our services.
- Complimentary Therapy Sessions (Reflexology, Indian Head Massage, Reiki) at Swanley Drop-in on Wednesdays 11th January, 1st February, 7th March.
- A worker from the Kenwood Trust, which specialises in Alcohol and Drug recovery, now visits the Drop-in every Wednesday lunchtime, and is available for informal consultation.

The Service-user Panel have requested their own away-day, to look at Good Practices in representing others, and some team-building exercises. We are delighted to be arranging this for them in the new year.

