



# September 2007

## Service users - or used by services?

At the last meeting we talked about how the EUF Executive had decided to change the format for the monthly Forum meetings so they could be made better for everybody. We will now have the Big Topic just after the beginning of the meeting and have a shorter agenda after the break where we will concentrate on EUF stuff.

This month's Big Topic is, **Service Users - or used by services?** We decided not have a speaker for this topic as we are the ones that have experience of using services and of sometimes being used by those services.

Some of us do not like being called 'service users' because we don't want to be thought of as 'users'. But sometimes we are not the 'users' but the 'used'!

Sometimes the information we give to mental health workers and the relationships we build with them are used in ways we don't agree with. Sometimes we don't even know how workers use what they learn from us.

So how are we being used in training, in research, to try out new things? Is this alright? Have we given consent?

But if we want mental health services to get better, mental health workers have to use what they learn from us.

So how can we work together with mental health workers, students, researchers and others in ways which we don't feel used but are part of making mental health services better?

Come along to the next Edinburgh Users Forum to talk about these issues and how to improve everyone's learning.

### Our Next Meeting:

**Saturday 1st September  
2007**

1.30 - 2.00pm Doors open  
2.00 - 4.30pm Meeting starts

McDonald Road Library,  
Edinburgh

For more information contact  
CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

## Hot Topics

**“When ever he gets into a fix, he reaches into his bag of tricks.”**

By Adrienne Chalmers

“Some of you may remember that line from the Felix the Cat cartoons. No? Just me then?”

You may have been following the idea of EUF designing our own way of dealing with times we feel suicidal. Well the time for talking about it is over, now it's time for action! What better time to start this piece of work than Suicide Prevention Week? It runs from 10th to 17th September. We will be having our first meeting during this week to look at exactly what will be involved in the Bag of Tricks and how we are going to go about this. Sandra DeMunoz, the Edinburgh Choose Life Co-ordinator, has offered us practical help, for which we thank her. However we need to meet first as service users to work out what it is we want to do, before we can think about taking her up on her kind offer.

We had a discussion at the last EUF meeting about this idea and many members shared their thoughts. One thing which was very clear, as if we didn't know it already, is that we are all individuals and different things work for different people. That's the whole point of the Bag of Tricks, it's not a training course delivered in the same way to everyone, but a way of supporting each person to work out what they need for themselves.

There were quite opposite views on a number of issues. For example, one person thought that thinking of the upset you would cause others was a good way to stop yourself doing yourself in. Others thought that if we are feeling suicidal heaping more guilt on our shoulders couldn't help.

We also noticed that the language used around suicide is very important. For example, people often say suicide is a "cry for help". People in general can use this as a way of dismissing a very serious situation as some sort of attention-seeking.

There were lots of ideas about things that made us feel suicidal, like stigma, poverty, the drugs we are prescribed and other people we know killing themselves. There were also a lot of things that made us feel better like; being able to talk to someone about how we feel, having something worthwhile to do with our lives, having a goal to reach for, having friends, even coming to EUF!

We think this is going to be a really important piece of work for us and it may eventually be able to be taken on by people who aren't EUF members. We aim for it to help us when we feel suicidal to know how we can find a way

**There will be a meeting on Thursday 13 September, 2.00pm, in the CAPS office.**

If you are interested in this piece of work get in touch with Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

## Oor Mad History

“On 1 October, CAPS will be hosting a special event at The Drill Hall - all of the service user groups in the Lothians are being invited. Our special guest is David Reville, from Toronto in Canada. He has been a service user who has also been a politician, a lawyer, and is now an academic. He teaches a university course called "Mad People's History" which is different to most courses about mental health problems because the course is about the 'mad people' and what we thought and experienced rather than the professionals.

David will tell us about the course he teaches and about what service users in Toronto are doing to discover their history. We will also have a chance to learn from other service users across Lothian what they are doing and to talk about what we'd like to do next.

A very enthusiastic group of EUF members met early in August to share thoughts and ideas and it is clear there is a lot of history "out there" - in our own memories and those of people we know, who have used mental health services over the years. We hope to find ways of discovering this history and sharing it with each other. Maybe one day, there will be "Mad People's History" courses in Edinburgh? Let's make it happen!

By Anne O'Donnell”

**Our next meeting is on 10 September, 2.00 - 4.00pm, Rehearsal Hall, The Drill Hall, Dalmeny Street, Leith.**

If you would like to come along contact Kirstie at CAPS on 0131 538 7177

## Day Services Review

EUF are looking for some people who would be interested in forming a Steering Group to direct the work that they need to carry out for the Day Services Review.

EUF will be responsible for going out to speak to as many people as possible who use, or would like to use, mental health day services in Edinburgh. We want to know what sort of services people want to have on offer and when and where they want them.

The Steering Group will help manage and guide EUF's piece of work and if they wish, they may be directly involved in carrying out the research.

**The next meeting is on Friday 14 September at 2:00pm. Please call Kirstie at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 for**

## edspace

We have included a leaflet for edspace, the new Mental Health information website in this month's newsletter. It has a directory of mental health services that are available in the Edinburgh area and you can also look at mental health fact sheets and access crisis information by logging onto the site.

You can comment on edspace or make any suggestions by clicking on the Contact US button on the site.

Log onto: [www.edspace.org.uk](http://www.edspace.org.uk).

## At our last meeting.....

Bill Scott, Policy and Parliamentary Officer for Inclusion Scotland (IS) which is the national disability-led organisation that gives disabled people a voice came along to speak to the Forum. One of the things we talked about was the new project that directly involves disabled people called Contact 100 — the Manifesto Review and how service users can be involved in development.

The Contact 100 project is about people who have an interest in one or more of the issues that are raised in their "Manifesto for Inclusion" coming together in small groups to review and advise about what they think is the best way to tackle them. This is done mainly by email contact but people can be contacted in other ways depending on their needs. If they are interested in a subject, they can get sent information about what is happening and give comments. There are also chances for people to give evidence to committees in Parliament.

At the moment it is not illegal to park in a disabled parking space or bay without a blue badge. There is a bill being proposed that wants to make this an offence and charge a £30.00 fine for anyone that parks illegally in a disabled space or a bay. The Forum felt the fine should be much higher, as you can get charged £50.00 for dropping litter in the street. The bill will have to go through different stages at parliament and evidence will have to be taken on it. Disabled people will be invited for their opinion during this

process and we can put pressure on the politicians to increase this fine if enough people think it should be more.

The government in Westminster is consulting on the 'Framework For Fairness' equality legislation. This proposes that all forms of discrimination come under one bill. If this gets passed it could say what kind of discrimination should go to the top of the political agenda. This might mean that the different forms of discrimination could be competing against each other for recognition when they should be working together for change!

EUf agreed to take out membership and will send a letter out to MPs opposing the proposed 'Framework For Fairness' bill.

This is a summary of what was discussed at the meeting. Full minutes of all EUf meetings are kept in the office and are available to any member on request.

Minutes are not automatically sent out any more because members said that they didn't want this.

If you want the full minutes please contact the CAPS office - details on the back page.

You can also ask to have the EUf newsletter sent to you by e-mail as well as or instead of by post.

## Have Your Say Day

**10 September 2007**

**11.45am - 3.45pm**

**Craigroyston Community  
Education Centre  
1a Pennywell Road  
Edinburgh**

CAPS are holding a day for people that use mental health services in North West Edinburgh, so they can come together to talk about the changes that are happening to services in this area and have a long term say in the services that they use.

During the day, service users will be able to put questions about the changes to Kirsteen Greenholm, Project Manager, Mental Health Redesign NHS Lothian.

CAPS will be providing a buffet lunch for anyone who comes along and can help with child care, carer and transport costs.

If you would like more information about the event or to book a place contact Donna at CAPS by 3 September Tel: 0131 538 7177  
Or email [donna@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:donna@capsadvocacy.org)

## Before it's a crisis...

Here is a short list of phone numbers you can contact for support when most services are closed. It is a good idea to have these numbers and others where you can find them when you need support or help. Services such as Breathing Space and the Samaritans offer a listening service. Social Work and the NHS are more appropriate if you need more than this.

### Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (6.00pm-2.00am)

### Samaritans

08457 90 90 90 (24 hours)

### NHS 24

0845 24 24 24 (24 hours)

### Emergency Social Work Service

0800 731 6969 (out of hours only)

### Crisis Centre Interim Service

Free phone 0808 801 0414 (24 hours)

Text phone 0808 801 0415 (24 hours)

If you get support at home, you may have an 'on-call' number to contact staff. If you have contact with a Community Mental Health Team, they may also have a number for you to contact staff.

If you require advocacy you may contact:

**Advocard** 0131 554 5307

(Monday to Friday 9-5pm)

# Community Happenings

## Suicide Prevention Week 10 - 17 September

Around two people each day die from suicide in Scotland and it is the biggest killer of young Scottish men, yet suicide is still one of society's taboo subjects.

Talking about suicide and being willing to listen, can help save lives. It can also help to raise awareness of issues and reduce the stigma associated with suicide.

Choose Life will mark Suicide Prevention Week 10 - 17 September with national and local events all over Scotland.

**A service for  
those touched by suicide  
16 September  
at 3:00pm  
Augustine United Church  
41 George Forth Bridge  
Edinburgh**

The event has been organised by Choose Life Edinburgh, Edinburgh Community Mental Health Chaplaincy and Samaritans. All welcome.

## Films Screening

The following films are showing at:  
**Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road,  
Edinburgh**, as part of Suicide Prevention Week:

### **The Bridge**

**Wednesday 12 September  
6.00pm**

The Golden Gate Bridge is confirmed as the most popular suicide destination in the world. Eric Steel's documentary explores the suffering of those desperate enough to consider suicide as an option for themselves and the impact it has on family and friends following the event. Filming 23 of the 24 people who died there in 2004, Steel also interviews friends, witnesses and one man who survived his suicide attempt.

**Please note that this film contains scenes of suicide which may be disturbing to some viewers.**

The film raises issues for debate and discussion around suicide. As a result, following the screening of the film, there will be a discussion around the themes raised by this poignant film and what is happening locally around suicide prevention.

This will be led by Professor Stephen Platt, Director of the Research Unit in Health, Behaviour and Change at Edinburgh University, and the Choose Life Co-ordinator for Edinburgh, Sandra de Munoz.

# Community Happenings

## Grow Your Own (FREE EVENT) Saturday 15 September 2.00pm

A warm, intelligent and charming British comedy, written by Michael Winterbottom's regular collaborator Frank Cottrell-Boyce, this is the story of what happens when some asylum seekers are given plots in a traditional English allotment. It's actually based on a real life project in Liverpool, where a psychiatrist working with victims of torture and persecution began using gardening as therapy, with impressive results.

As part of Suicide Prevention Week this free screening is sponsored by the Community Planning Partners in Edinburgh who support the work of Choose Life locally within the city. There are also some things that can be done to try to reduce suicide and in fact be seen to 'protect' us from it.

These issues will be discussed following the film. We are also pleased that members of Redhall Walled Garden, an Edinburgh based project funded by the Scottish Association of Mental Health, will be participating in the discussion.

For more information about events and how you can be involved in Suicide Prevention Week contact Choose Life on 0131 537 6660  
Or log onto: [www.chooselife.net](http://www.chooselife.net)

## Bipolar Fellowship Scotland

**Bipolar Fellowship Scotland (BFS) is hosting a conference followed by their AGM on:**

**Saturday 22 September  
10.45am to 3.30pm**

Keynote speakers will be;

Geoff Huggins– Head of Mental Health Division

Dr Andrew McIntosh- Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry

Alastair Pringle– Patient Focus Manager

There will also be the following Workshops;

The THRIVE Approach– beyond recovery– Mike Smith and Marion Aslam

Storytelling– Nicky Dettany, MIND

Nutrition– Sarah Stelling– Edinburgh Centre for Nutrition and Therapy

individual places- £15  
Members of BFS– free

For more information call BFS on 01415602050.

## About Edinburgh Users Forum

The Edinburgh Users Forum (EUF) is an independent collective advocacy group.

Our members are people who use, or have used mental health services. We were set up to give people who use mental health services a say in the services that are provided, and how services are run.

We have monthly meetings where we discuss issues and invite speakers along. We campaign on issues like benefits, housing, advocacy, crisis services and bus passes. If you would like any more information about EUF please contact us.

### Contact us

Phone: (0131) 538 7177

Fax: (0131) 538 7215

Email: [euf@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:euf@capsadvocacy.org)

Write to:

Edinburgh Users Forum  
c/o CAPS  
5 Cadzow Place, Edinburgh  
EH7 5SN

### Dates for your diary

#### **EUF 2007 meetings:**

Saturday 1 September

Saturday 6 October

Saturday 3 November

Saturday 1 December

Saturday 5 January

### Monthly meetings

We meet at the McDonald Road Library, Edinburgh (on the corner of McDonald Road and Leith Walk). Come along from **1.30pm** for a cuppa and a chat. Meeting starts at **2.00pm**.