**Mental Health Forum Relaunch and Networking**

**21st April, 2023 Shirehall, Shrewsbury**

**Notes**

**Attendees:** Jackie Jeffrey, Citizens Advice Shropshire; Kate Ballinger, SaTH; Naomi Roche, Shropshire Council; Clive Ireland and Hester Schofield, Shropshire MHS; Steve Jones, Shrewsbury Street Pastors; Amanda Jones, Shropshire Supports Refugees; Karen Corcoran, Radfield Home Care; Jenny Jennings, The Redwoods Centre; Lynda Jones, Independent Mental Health Advocate; Mandy Thorn, High Sheriff of Shropshire; Natalia Rubinger, Bethphage; Kate Petford, Bethphage; Aaron Hartshorn, MPFT; Holly Corrigan, Cancer Champion; Claire Purcell, Lingen Davies; Rachel Statham, Rosalie Sharp, Shola Hughes, Emma Jones, Rebecca Green, Landau; Catherine Ellery, MPFT; Hannah Green, MPFT; Maryan Davies, MPFT; Fiona Doran, Telford Mental Health Forum; Dee Ploszay (facilitator); Sarah Hampson (notes).

**Apologies:** Laura Atyeo, Open Harmony; Katie Millard, The Happiness Club; Claire Pamish, Shrewsbury Adult County Mental Health Services (MPFT); Sara Heath, Shropshire Autonomy; Natalie Jackson and Sue Chalk, Community Resource; Elaine Palmer and Sandra Williamson, Bromford Supported Housing

**Introductions/Around the Table Sharing:**

* Clive Ireland shared that Shropshire MHS are seeing a lot more in crisis than ever. He also updated the group on their current work.
* Steve Jones shared that Shrewsbury Street Pastors are dealing more and more with people with mental health issues, even more than drug and alcohol issues now. This means that the conversations they are having with people now are very different and this is a growing area of their work and training needs.
* Amanda Jones shared that Shropshire Supports Refugees is working on trying to prevent the mental health of refugees from deteriorating, but this can be challenging to get the mental health support that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for this group. She is also seeing the “cracks” in her staff, and has now devoted Friday afternoons entirely to working on staff mental health.
* Karen Corcoran shared that Radfield Home Care is working on services that help with isolation, including dementia cafes evert Tuesday morning at Shrewsbury Town Football Club (STFC), which are open to all. She also reminded the group about the Dementia Day on the 18th of May at the STFC and invited al to attend.
* Jenny Jennings is new to her post at the Redwoods Crisis Treatment Team, and is looking to connect more with groups and services in Shropshire to help understand the gaps between where their services end and others can help pick up clients.
* Linda Jones, independent mental health advocate, notes that those working on mental health issues with clients are often close to mental health issues themselves (either they have dealt with them or have people close to them who have). She suggests that people take the time to find ways to distance themselves and provide boundaries between what clients are going through and their own experiences to protect their own mental health.
* Mandy Thorn is the new High Sheriff of Shropshire. She has an extensive background in health and care and knows the importance of mental health issues and has a special interest in dementia. She wants to put the spotlight on unsung heroes, and offers to do anything she can, with visits, promotion, etc. to help groups should they want it this year.
* Natalia Rubinger and Kate Petford from Bethphage shared that their organisation supports people with learning disabilities in independent living, and that mental health is a growing issues for their service as well. They sometimes find it challenging to get the right support for people as they often find that people have trauma only after they have been referred.
* Aaron Hartshorn from Shropshire Psychotherapy services said that he is here to network and is keen to learn ways to signpost people with mild to moderate anxiety and depression.
* Holly Corrigan shared that she and her team now support 50 cancer champions across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin (STW), and she is here to connect with others to find more ways to support and get the word out about their project.
* Rachel Statham and colleagues from Landau shared that they are delivering a pilot scheme through MPFT that helps people with mental health issues around finances and housing and their project will also be signposting to other work, such as those organisations in the room, so here to connect and support.
* Catherine Ellery shared that she is with the Shropshire Crisis Team, working with the most mentally unwell in Shropshire, which covers one of the biggest geographical areas in the country, which is challenging, because their staffing ration hasn’t changed in years. It is important for her and her team to know what other help is out there, which is why she attends.
* Maryan Davies and Hannah Green are from the Community Mental Health Transformation team, and are here to listen, and will come back to the next meeting to share more about the procurement this team will be doing around significant mental health issues in STW.
* Fiona Doran co-chairs the Telford Mental Health Forum, which has continued to grow over the last five years. It meets online and statutory organisations also attend. Anyone from this group is welcome to attend the Telford meetings as well, please contact Fiona if you would like an invite to the online meetings. She would like to see these two groups work together on things in the future. [fionadoran@icloud.com](mailto:fionadoran@icloud.com)

**Mental Health Forum Background/Review of ToR**

Dee Ploszay shared some of the background of the mental health forum over the past few years. The group has been largely a contact list since Covid began, as it was not able to meet in person. The previous chair, Lilian Owens, had kept this going and before that had done a lot to maintain a mental health network in Shropshire. Lilian had to step down as chair this year, and Dee, as previous representative to the VCSA Board for the forum, has been acting as its facilitator in the interim. She presented the group with a revised Terms of Reference for consideration and opened the floor to discussion.

* A few members asked why a Shropshire forum should form separately from the Telford Mental Health forum that is already in existence.
  + Dee noted that this forum had always functioned as a Forum of Interest under the VCSA, with the purpose being to have open representation and communication between these two bodies. Since the VCSA is a Shropshire organisation, this forum has existed in Shropshire for this reason, but has always contained members that work across the whole geographical county, and Dee hopes that it will remain that way.
  + Other members noted that there are benefits to having a forum in both Shropshire and Telford, with the two being well linked. For example, smaller groups located in Shropshire only may find more of a voice here, but benefit from being linked into the larger conversation across STW.
  + All members agreed that information sharing between STW is vital, and that whatever is decided, effort should be put into strong links across the county.
  + Maryan Davies noted that funding from MPFT will be area specific, but that working across the county will be important for them.
  + Fiona Doran reiterated that all are welcome at the Telford forum.
* Due to time pressures, it was decided that a follow-up email would be sent to members to provide feedback on the proposal to create a Shropshire group and accept to edit the ToR.

**Group Discussion**

Members were given discussion questions to consider while networking and enjoying tea and coffee. These questions were:

* Who would we like presentations/updates/reports from regularly or as one-off for information?
* What are some training opportunities/needs-sharing and requests
* What other support needed/available for staff, volunteers and clients
* Any other suggestions as to how this Forum can support members/best ways of communicating with each other etc /what should be regular agenda items?

Upon return to the full discussion, group members shared the following reflections:

* Members agreed that we need to think outside the box and meet people where they are, rather than expecting them to come to us.
* It was also agreed that more training and support is needed across the board.

Discussing future meetings and what members would like to see for speakers:

* Amanda Jones offered to give a talk at an upcoming meeting about the journey/experiences of migrants.
* Clive Ireland offered to provide some training or workshop from Shropshire MHS at a future meeting.
* Maryan Davies offered to provide an overview of the community mental health transformation and funding that will be on offer.
* Linda Jones suggested that something on destigmatizing psychosis would be helpful.
  + Maryan Davies said that they may be able to provide a contact with lived experience to speak on this.
* Rachel Stratham suggested that one of the new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) officers with West Mercia Police would be good to have come speak about their new programme and the support they provide.

**Future meetings**

The next three meetings of the forum have been set as:

Friday, July 21st from 9:30am-11:30am at Shirehall in Shrewsbury

Wednesday, September 27th from 9:30am-11:30am at the Lantern in Shrewsbury

Friday, December 15th from 1pm – 3pm at the Lantern in Shrewsbury