

unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2008

October 2009



## The Beacon Friends Newsletter

Hello and welcome to our October Newsletter. All our Beacon Friends, staff and volunteers receive this publication and we hope that you are finding our series of focused issues on specific areas of Beacon to be interesting and informative.

This month we tell you about our recently introduced....

### **Mental Health Promotion.**

This year we saw the start of our

### **Mental Health Promotion**

which offers our counsellors and clients additional information on mental well-being. We decided to have a three pronged approach.....

#### **Newsletter articles**



Firstly, you have probably noticed that we regularly feature a small article in each of the Beacon newsletters accompanied by this sun logo and which gives a useful tip on one aspect of positive mental well-being.

#### **The Beacon Library**

Secondly, we have organised a much more robust information service via our reorganised library in the waiting room of our Bramhall office. Books have been separated into various themes for ease of use under sections such as Child Abuse, Relationships, Gay issues, Divorce, Children in Divorce etc. We also offer an extensive series of mental health magazines focusing on:



- Counselling Children and Young People
- Counselling and Psychotherapy Research
- Therapy Today, (and many more)

The NHS has also supplied us with a series of their giveaway booklets on various issues like Depression, Post Dramatic Stress, Obsessions & Compulsions, Panic, Shyness & Social Anxiety, etc. and clients and counsellors are encouraged to take away any of these for their future use and guidance. We do hope that **all our counsellors** take the opportunity of using our reference library and leaflet handouts. Our aim now is to expand this resource for the benefit of everyone and so if any of our volunteers or supporters have a relevant text book(s) they wish to donate, please speak to James.

#### **Stockport Library**

Thirdly, is our recent partnership with Stockport Library and we are supporting their initiative called

### **Self Health@Your Library**

This incorporates book collections on positive mental and emotional health and well-being for both adults and young people and located in visible locations in all libraries. Initially, these collections included a core of accredited titles and free NHS CBT booklets and was supported by the website [www.swellbeing.org.uk](http://www.swellbeing.org.uk).

Recently additional resources have now been added for children, young people and their carers, again with a core list of accredited titles. The very latest development is to amalgamate all health materials in Stockport libraries into the **Self Health@Your Library** collection.

There has always been a demand in the libraries for books on illnesses and conditions, and the side effects of drugs, and therefore, the library service has had a good wide ranging collection on health matters and one which places them in an ideal position to work with health workers interested in promoting mental health well-being.



The guiding principle behind the **Self Health@Your Library** initiative has been to empower both patients who have been referred to the library, and all their customers, to understand and manage any psychological or physical problem and to improve their mental health well-being.

This project has various other strands such as:

**"Beat the Blues" project, is also part of the "Self Health@Your Library" where Stockport Primary Care Trust commissioned the Manchester Self Help Services to supply a computerised CBT programme in Stockport. Three libraries are currently piloting this project with weekly sessions supported by a member of the Self Help Services staff running the Beat the Blue programme via the internet.**

## Books, Film & Fun with “BBC Headroom”



Stockport Libraries were chosen for the North West pilot of a BBC project to help promote better mental well-being. Each area in the country took a different focus and in Stockport they combined the ideas of reading and film making activities for young people.

School librarians from a number of secondary schools underwent training which involved mental health awareness and experienced one model for a supported reading group. This involved a facilitator reading literature aloud and the group of young people discussing the feelings that this evoked. As the group became more confident they could take part in reading aloud if they wish to, and both the librarians and the young people had lots of ideas about how they could get involved in different reading activities. In addition, the groups can borrow a camcorder to make their own films, including editing the finished product. A lot of evidence supports how getting involved in any creative activity, in particular reading, can support better mental well-being.

If you would like to know more about this project - contact Wendy Griffiths on 0161 474 2515 or email [wendy.griffiths@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.griffiths@stockport.gov.uk)

**In their turn, Stockport Library has very kindly donated a collection of books to our own Beacon library of some of their most popularly read mental health & well-being titles. These include ‘What’s the Harm’ (a book for young people who self injure), ‘Living with Loss’ and ‘Overcoming Anorexia Nervosa’.**

## And now – other Beacon news!

### Did you know?

- **Waitrose Supermarket** in Cheadle Hulme chose Beacon as one of their 3 charities to support during August. Thanks to all our “Friends” who shopped there and made sure they “posted” their little green disc into the Beacon box - as a result we recently received a cheque for £275. Thank you **Waitrose!**
- Counsellor Sarah Hubbard who has worked for us at Cheadle Hulme for a few years is moving in November to Leeds to a new job.

## Some recent client comments

At the finish of their counselling our clients are asked to complete an Client Evaluation form. Here are three anonymous opinions of how counselling helped them.....

*“I think for me it was being able to talk to someone who didn’t know me and therefore wasn’t able to judge me and it wouldn’t change our future relationship”.*

*“I have been able to explore myself in a helpful way. This knowledge has helped me grow in confidence. Thank you”.*

*“Firstly by having someone to just listen without judgment was great without feeling undermined. Having someone offering a variety of avenues to go down which you wouldn’t have thought were necessarily of any concern or thought. And just to be heard”.*





**Another in our series of positive mental health tips....**

## **Keeping an eye on your personal stress**

Some pressure is unavoidable – and some can be motivating – but stress is harmful to both mental and physical health. If you find you're not sleeping, becoming ill-tempered, having difficulty concentrating, worrying a lot, eating a lot more or a lot less, or feeling "on edge" all the time, then you should take a step back and consider how much pressure you are under. See what you can do to remove or reduce sources of pressure in your life. Meanwhile, deal with the effects of stress by relaxing more and using other positive coping methods.

### **Is the credit crunch making an impact on Beacon?**

Yes of course! Especially on our waiting list of new clients which at the moment is at an all time record high of 150 people and they are bringing issues like work related stress and redundancy, anxiety and depression. We have seen this tremendous increase in clients during the summer months when usually it's a quieter time for us. So, to deal with this we are taking on more counsellors and supervisors and introducing new counselling venues. Sam Smith our Finance Manager is watching the figures very carefully and the Board of Trustees are fully aware of the potential pitfalls that could trip us up. So far, it is surprising that client donations have stayed level, despite the downturn, however, it's still too early to judge yet, and we shall have more detailed figures towards the end of the year. So in a nutshell, everything in our power is being done to ride out this financial storm successfully and we hopefully will emerge an even stronger local charity when the anticipated economic "green shoots" start to appear.

### **Another impact!**

Yet another dramatic impact has shown itself recently. When we advertised for our new position of Office Administrator, we were swamped with a colossal 304 applications! We have now whittled this list down to a very select half a dozen or so and by the time you read this Newsletter it is anticipated that one of them will have been selected.



### **Do you want to know more about Beacon and what we do?**

Then go to our website [www.beacon-counselling.org.uk](http://www.beacon-counselling.org.uk) where you will find lots of information, including many of the recent issues of "Friends Newsletters".

*Thank You*

Once again special thanks goes to St Thomas' Church in Mellor who have generously donated £400 to us recently.

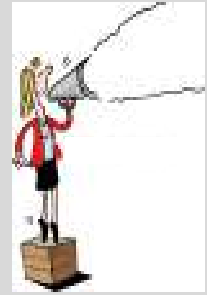


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**This is to let you know  
that the Open Forum on  
Saturday 17th October  
has been cancelled due  
to lack of interest**



We are on the  
internet...

[www.beacon-  
counselling.org.uk](http://www.beacon-counselling.org.uk)

## **Counsellor News**

**A warm welcome to the 7 new counsellors who started working for us from the beginning of October. They are Julia Larmer, Katherine Walker, Vicky Ashraf, Fauzia Ahmed, Victoria Wilshaw, Liz Yates and Elizabeth Bunting. We hope that having an increased counselling team will help to address our much too long waiting list.**

**James will also be organising yet another interview day as soon as possible since we need to take on yet more counsellors!**

**A new recent initiative has been the training of 8 of our counsellors to carry out 30 Minute initial client assessments which we'll trial over the next 4-5 months to compare with our existing 50 minute one. At the end of this trial we'll compare with the traditional method and, if there is no difference, we'll switch to the 30 minute one since we can then fit in two clients in an hour. This should massively reduce waiting times for a client's first contact with us.**

## **A perennial problem**



As with many organisations that deal with health related issues Beacon suffers from that frustrating "old chestnut" the disappearing client! Our figures reveal a large discrepancy between the hours of counselling that we offer to clients and the actual take-up of these hours, and in fact during the last 3 months a total of 225 hours in which counselling was arranged to take place, but didn't, because the client either cancelled or just didn't turn up. I think probably everyone has seen in their own GP waiting rooms posters announcing that this is also a common problem with doctor appointments too. So what can we do about this problem when the counsellor and receptionist turn up but find no clients to help? Perhaps you might have a suggestion that we could discuss that might help with this issue?

## **News Flash.....**

**We are very pleased to announce that Debby Bridge will be our new Office Administrator. Debbie will commence work on 26th October. Look out for more information about her in our next Newsletter.**