



## Charlbury Patient Participation Group Newsletter Issue No.5 July 2019

# Mental Health

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This issue of the CPPG newsletter focuses on mental health.

Mental health is everyone's business. We all have times when we feel depressed, anxious or sad and unable to cope. Most of us can deal with these setbacks but sometimes these emotions can develop into something more serious. Unfortunately, there is still a certain amount of stigma attached to the idea of mental illness though there are signs that things are improving. It is now quite common, for example, to find that celebrities from the world of politics, sport and show-business are willing to share their experiences of a mental breakdown, in public and in a positive way. This should encourage all of us to believe that we do not need to struggle to manage on our own. There is help and support available if you know where to look.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 of us will experience some form of mental illness in any given year and many more of us will come into contact with someone who has been affected. The causes are complex and are not fully understood but there are several well-known risk factors or triggers:

- genetic predisposition
- brain damage or deterioration
- trauma
- physical or mental abuse
- poor physical health
- alcohol or drug abuse
- hormonal imbalance
- low self-esteem
- bereavement
- the breakdown of a significant relationship
- poverty, deprivation or debt
- social isolation

### Useful Sources of Information

The following organisations offer an overview of all types of mental illness:

The **BBC** regularly broadcasts programmes on a wide range of mental health issues on television and radio. Further information can be found on their Action Line website.

Website: [www.bbc.co.uk/actionline](http://www.bbc.co.uk/actionline)

Telephone helpline: 0800 110 100

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS)** is an NHS service that assesses and treats young people up to the age of 18 who have emotional, behavioural or other mental health issues, such as: depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, ADHD, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

There are CAMHS services in all areas of the UK, staffed with professionally trained teams of nurses, therapists, psychologists and social workers.

**Mind** is a charity that offers information, guidance and support on all aspects of mental health conditions. These are listed via the A-Z guide on their website.

Website: [www.mind.org](http://www.mind.org)  
Telephone helpline: 0300 123 3393  
Text: 86463

The **National Health Service** website gives a comprehensive overview of a wide range of conditions and treatments, including all forms of mental illness. Use the Health A-Z link to identify a topic of interest.

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Oxfordshire Mind** offers advice on all aspects of mental health and provides information and signposting to a range of services for people of all ages in the county. They run workshops and courses covering assertiveness, communication skills, managing stress and other practical ways to improve one's wellbeing.

Website: [www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0300 123 3393

**Rethink Mental Illness** was founded nearly 50 years ago to give a voice to people affected by severe mental illness. This charity offers advice and information as well as coordinating around 140 registered groups in the UK for people who have lived experience of mental illness, either personally or as a carer. Some groups meet weekly and others monthly and they also offer support by telephone or via the internet.

Website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)  
Telephone helpline: 0300 500 0927

**SANE** provides emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers. Their confidential and non-judgemental service is provided by a team of mental health professionals and trained volunteers.

Website: [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

**SHOUT**, which was launched in the UK by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in May 2019, is a service partnership between Mental Health Innovations and Crisis Text Line®, providing people with the first ever free 24/7 texting service. Trained volunteers supported by a team of psychotherapists offer help and advice to people in crisis via text on a range of issues, such as suicidal thoughts, sexual abuse, bullying and personal relationships.

Website: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

Text: SHOUT to 85258

**YoungMinds** was established in 1993 and is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Telephone helpline for parents: 0808 802 5544

### **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)**

CBT is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on how a person's thoughts, beliefs and attitudes about themselves and the world around them can affect their emotions and behaviour. It has been shown to help with many different types of mental conditions, including: anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD, bipolar disorder, phobias (including agoraphobia and social phobia), eating disorders and psychosis. It may also help with anger management and low self-esteem as well as physical health problems, such as pain or fatigue.

### **Depression and Anxiety**

Clinical depression can be characterised as a condition defined by a profound sense of loss - of love, trust, faith, status, control, independence, hope, motivation or purpose, for example - often resulting in self-neglect and an inability to function normally, a lack of interest in socialising or thoughts of suicide. It is frequently associated with anxiety, which can lead to panic attacks, OCD or various phobias.

The most common form of treatment for clinical depression is medication with antidepressants such as SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) or SNRIs (serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors). These are not effective for everyone and may produce side-effects, especially during the first couple of weeks.

Anxiety is a perfectly natural human reaction to many of life's experiences but in some cases it may become so overwhelming and persistent that it can prevent one from functioning normally over an extended period of time. Symptoms may present as both mental and physical, for example: restlessness, an inability to concentrate, irritability, sweating, feeling nauseous, hyperventilation, palpitations, dizziness, a dry mouth or a change in heart rate.

Tranquillisers are designed to calm the nerves and reduce feelings of anxiety.

Scientists are not sure how antidepressants and tranquillisers work exactly but it is known that they can interact with certain chemicals in the brain and so bring about a change in mood and emotions. Other forms of treatment, such as counselling or psychoanalysis, may be needed to investigate the underlying causes of depression or anxiety.

A comprehensive list of antidepressants and tranquillisers and their properties can be found on the Mind website.

**Talking Space Plus** is a free NHS service that helps people with depression and anxiety. They offer a range of talking therapies, group courses and wellbeing activities. Access is available to anyone over the age of 18 who is registered with an Oxfordshire GP.

Website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus)  
Telephone helpline: 01865 901222

**Anxiety UK** is a charity that offers advice and support for people experiencing anxiety.

Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 03444 775 774

### **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**

OCD is made up of two main parts: obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are worries, doubts or negative thoughts that repeatedly occur in a person's mind and compulsions are the repetitive or ritualistic activities that they might perform in an attempt to reduce the anxiety that such notions cause. Where it was once dismissed as merely an eccentric form of behaviour, OCD is now rightly recognised as a serious mental disorder that can have a devastating effect on a person's day-to-day life, resulting in isolation and an inability to maintain meaningful relationships.

Common examples of obsession include: fear that one might do something embarrassing, shameful or harmful to others, fear of death or disaster, fear of contamination or germs; and common compulsions include: cleaning, washing, counting, measuring, checking the same thing over and over again, hoarding.

**OCD UK** is a charity offering evidence-based information, advice and support to those affected by OCD.

Website: [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)  
Telephone helpline: 0845 120 3778

**OCD Action** is a charity that runs a support group for people over the age of 18 with OCD and their carers, family or friends. A local group meets in Oxford twice a month. For further information email [ox.o.cd.support@hotmail.com](mailto:ox.o.cd.support@hotmail.com) or telephone 0797 6726803.

Website: [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0845 390 6232

**No Panic** is a service that offers advice on OCD, phobias and panic attacks.

Website: [www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0844 967 4848

### **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar disorder (formerly known as manic depression) is a mental health condition where a person can experience prolonged periods of depression and lethargy alternating with episodes of mania, hyperactivity and over-stimulation.

Some people with this condition view the manic phase as a time of maximum creativity but this may also be accompanied by symptoms of psychosis where they may see or hear things that are not real (hallucinations) or believe things that are not true (delusions).

Treatment may be offered by medication known as mood stabilisers, such as lithium or an antipsychotic drug such as aripiprazole.

A GP can also refer a person with bipolar disorder to a psychiatrist and may also recommend cognitive behavioural therapy - this can sometimes involve other members of their family.

**Bipolar UK** offers support to people with bipolar disorder, their families and friends. They hold monthly meetings at the Friends' Meeting House, 42 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW.

Website: [www.bipolar.org.uk](http://www.bipolar.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0333 323 3880

### **Schizophrenia**

Schizophrenia is a severe, long-term, psychotic condition where a person is prone to experience symptoms of paranoia, such as delusions and hallucinations. These can produce confusion, a sense of dissociation and feelings of distrust or hostility towards other people, all of which can have a significant impact on their ability to look after themselves and maintain relationships.

The causes of schizophrenia are not yet known but research suggests that a combination of physical, genetic, psychological and environmental factors can all contribute to the development of the condition.

After diagnosis schizophrenia is usually treated with an individually tailored combination of therapy and antipsychotic medication under the supervision of a community mental health team (CMHT).

Further information can be found on the Mind, Young Minds and Rethink websites.

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD is a type of anxiety disorder that may develop after a person has had a traumatic experience. The term is often associated with war veterans - in the First World War the condition was recognised and commonly known as shell shock - but there are other causes too. These include being a victim of or witnessing: torture, rape or sexual assault, mental abuse, physical violence, a terrorist attack, military action, a natural disaster such as an earthquake or an incident such as a fire or serious accident.

Symptoms of PTSD include: flashbacks, panic attacks, nightmares, hypervigilance, aggressive behaviour, all of which can interfere with a person's ability to lead a normal life.

Website: [www.basiccharity.org.uk](http://www.basiccharity.org.uk)

Telephone: 0161 707 6441

Website: [www.ptsduk.org](http://www.ptsduk.org)

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

It is common for children to be highly active, especially at younger ages. In most cases this is normal behaviour and they will gradually grow out of it. However, for some children, there could be an underlying difficulty, such as ADHD.

Core symptoms of ADHD are: difficulty concentrating, hyperactivity and acting impulsively (such as doing things without thinking through the consequences). ADHD can have a big impact on a child's behaviour at school, peer relationships, self-esteem and family life without appropriate management

ADHD tends to run in families, suggesting a genetic risk. In addition there may be environmental factors as well as differences in the actions of certain chemicals in the brain (neurotransmitters). Previous theories about diet causing hyperactivity are not supported by recent research. However, maintaining a balanced diet, good nutrition and exercise is always important. Boys are more likely than girls to have the condition.

There are no specific tests used to diagnose ADHD. The diagnosis is made by healthcare professionals, such as a paediatrician, psychiatrist or clinical psychologist, who carry out an assessment that involves taking a detailed developmental and psychosocial history and observation of the child at home and at school.

ADHD can be managed in various ways, for example: group-based parent programmes, which help people to understand and manage their child's behaviour; individual therapy, such as CBT and social skills training (SST); and medication, such as methylphenidate (brand name Ritalin®), which has been proven to be effective in managing the symptoms of ADHD. It can only be prescribed by a specialist following thorough assessment, and requires regular monitoring to check for improvements in symptoms and to avoid any side-effects.

ADDISS, the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, offers information, support and resources to anyone who needs assistance, especially parents, teachers and health professionals.

Website: [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)

Telephone helpline: 020 8952 2800

### **Eating Disorders**

The two most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Both are characterised by an obsession with food and the effect it has on one's weight and body shape.

Anorexia nervosa is a condition where a person is unable or unwilling, for whatever reason, to eat enough food to maintain a healthy weight. It is often connected to feelings of low self-esteem coupled with the belief that eating (and exercise) is one of the few areas of life where they are able to feel in control.

Bulimia nervosa is characterised by episodes of overeating or bingeing. A person will often feel ashamed or guilty about this so they will make themselves sick or take laxatives in order to try and reverse the situation.

These conditions are more common among women than men and the behaviour typically starts during the mid to late teens. For women it can mean that they stop having periods or, if they are pre-pubertal, the onset of menstruation is delayed. Treatment usually involves a combination of supervision of one's food intake and weight and talking therapies such as CBT.

Website: [anorexiabulimiare.org.uk](http://anorexiabulimiare.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 03000 11 12 13

Website: [b-eat.co.uk](http://b-eat.co.uk)  
Telephone helpline (adult): 0808 801 0677  
Telephone helpline (youth): 0808 801 0711

**CREDO**, The Centre for Research on Eating Disorders at Oxford, was founded in 1981 and is funded by the Wellcome Trust. It has developed three leading treatments for adults with eating disorders, all of which have been endorsed by NICE: cognitive behaviour therapy for bulimia nervosa, enhanced CBT for eating disorders, and guided self-help.

Website: [www.credo-oxford.com](http://www.credo-oxford.com)

### **Self-Harm**

People sometimes turn to self-harm as a way of dealing with stress, caused, for example, by pressures at school or work, money worries or problems with a personal relationship. It is often a response to their belief that no one is paying any attention to how they are feeling.

Methods of self-harm can include: cutting or burning one's skin or excessive scratching or biting, hitting oneself, head-banging, hair-pulling, over-eating and drug or alcohol abuse. These actions allow a person to change an emotion into something physical, which can produce an immediate sense of relief. However, the effects are usually only temporary as they address the symptoms rather than the causes of distress.

GPs can prescribe medication to deal with the depression and anxiety that can lead a person to self-harm and they can refer to a local CMHT for talking therapy.

The following charities support young people at risk of self-harming:

Website: [www.harmless.org.uk](http://www.harmless.org.uk)

Website: [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Website: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0808 808 4994

### **Risk of Suicide**

Records show that 5,821 suicides were registered in the UK in 2017 and men are three times more likely than women to take their own lives.

In spite of its name, **Samaritans** has never been a religious organisation, although it was founded by a London vicar, Chad Varah, in 1953. He was primarily concerned to offer support over the telephone to people at risk of suicide.

Samaritans is now a charity that operates with around 20,000 trained volunteers who respond to over 5 million calls for help every year. They can be contacted by phone at any time of the day or night on 116 123 (calls are free and will not show up on your phone bill) or you can email them on: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** offers a free and confidential telephone helpline and webchat facility to anyone who is contemplating suicide.

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)  
Telephone helpline: 0800 585 858

## Dementia

Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) associated with a progressive decline in the functioning of the brain. The condition is characterised by memory loss and forgetfulness, disorientation and confusion. People may also experience mood swings or changes in personality.

Dementia can affect a person at any time but it is more commonly diagnosed in people over the age of 65. A person developing dementia before this is said to have young onset dementia. It is estimated that there are currently around 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this number is set to increase to more than 1 million by 2025.

There are over 200 subtypes of dementia and the five most common are: Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementia and mixed dementia. (For more detailed information see the websites listed below.)

**Dementia UK** provides advice and information about all aspects of dementia. They also run a specialist team, known as Admiral Nurses, who provide support in the community and in care homes, hospices and hospitals.

Website: [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org):  
Telephone helpline: 0800 888 6678

**Alzheimer's Society** is a charity offering information, advice and support to people living with dementia and their carers.

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0300 222 1122

**Dementia Oxfordshire** is supported by Oxfordshire County Council and the NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group under the auspices of Age UK Oxfordshire, Guideposts and Young Dementia UK. They offer support on a range of



subjects aimed at helping a person living with dementia to stay independent, including legal and financial advice, claiming benefits, adapting the home and access to local activities and leisure opportunities.

Website: [www.dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 01865 410210

**Dementia Friendly Charlbury** is a local contact group of volunteers who want Charlbury to be a friendly and welcoming place for everyone, especially people living with dementia and their carers. They offer general advice and can provide information about services in the area.

Email: [charlburydf@gmail.com](mailto:charlburydf@gmail.com)

### **Support for Carers**

**Carers Oxfordshire** is a joint project between Action for Carers (Oxfordshire) and Oxfordshire County Council. They offer workshops and practical advice to carers.

Website: [www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0345 050 7666

### **A Personal Account**

I experienced severe domestic violence from my ex-husband during my twenties. I managed to get into Women's Aid with my two children & began a new life. Several years later I married a gentle guy I had known for years, however, within the last seven years he was diagnosed with Parkinson's & his mood began to change. I became his Carer, & was offered some counselling at our GP Surgery. I felt some support with this but it is only available for around 6 weeks, so in reality more of a time to talk freely in a confidential setting.

My husband's health continued to deteriorate & then my son was diagnosed with cancer so I became Carer for both, he died within five months. I found myself quite resentful that he had passed away whilst my husband, so much older, had outlived him.

Next my husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's Dementia - his changed behaviour meant a return of the nightmares experienced after I left my ex-husband, he would also shout & I became really distressed. I felt I could not go on & even thought of suicide. I told Social Services but they felt my husband had mental capacity & would therefore stay at home with me regardless of how I felt. During this time I was in touch with Talking Spaces & Oxfordshire Carers, I was given an extra week of respite care for my husband. Someone suggested I did not collect him! During this week I had an assessment with a psychologist & mental health nurse. During the assessment I was in pieces & they determined I was suffering from PTSD, but not strong enough mentally to have in depth treatment with psychologist so I initially should be given help to relax.

After a couple of months I began sessions with the psychologist from the Mental Health Team in Witney. I continued for over a year, I learnt how to acknowledge flashbacks & unwanted feelings, then how to manage them. My husband died

towards the end of last year & I was 'signed off' by the mental health nurse in February.

Witney Mental Health team is a brilliant facility who have helped me so much, I cannot thank them enough.

I hope this info will help others in some way.

## **Autism**

Autism is a spectrum disorder ranging from very mild to very severe. It is not considered to be a mental illness as such but research shows that around 70% of autistic adults meet the diagnostic criteria for depression, anxiety or risk of suicide.

Autistic people often find it difficult to communicate and interact with other people and they may display restricted or repetitive behaviour and be resistant to any change in routine. This can make them vulnerable to many negative life experiences, such as unemployment, bullying, financial exploitation and involvement in abusive relationships, all of which can have an impact on their mental health. And while some individuals are able to live relatively independent lives, others will require a lifetime of specialist support.

The **National Autistic Society** offers advice and support on all aspects of autism:

Website: [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk) or [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0808 800 4104

## **Learning Disabilities**

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities - for example household tasks, socialising or managing money - which affects someone for their whole life. A person with Down's syndrome and some people with autism may have a learning disability, which means that they take longer to learn and will need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.

The condition can be the result of inherited genetic make-up but it can also occur during pregnancy if the expectant mother has an accident or is ill, during childbirth if the child is starved of oxygen or otherwise damaged, or after birth as a result of illness, accidents or seizures.

**Mencap** describes other conditions, such as dyslexia or ADHD, as 'learning difficulties' because, unlike learning disabilities, these do not affect a person's intellect.

Website: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)  
Telephone helpline: 0808 808 1111

The charity **Hft** was established in 1962 with the aim of providing housing, social care and other services to people with learning disabilities and their families. They now support over 2,500 people in the UK.

Website: [www.hft.org.uk](http://www.hft.org.uk)  
Telephone: 0117 906 1700

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is the process of alert awareness to the experience of the present moment, in a non-judgemental way.

Evidence-based scientific research has shown that mindfulness as a secular therapy has much to offer today in the areas of both pain relief and mental health and courses in mindfulness are now routinely offered after diagnosis of depression or anxiety. Involving meditation, simple movement and attention to the breath, mindfulness aims to build up a regular practice that will continue to maintain resilience, stability and wellbeing.

The Oxford Mindfulness Centre, which is based within the Oxford Department of Psychiatry, has pioneered much relevant research and they offer courses and training in mindfulness. Their broad mission is to “reduce suffering, promote resilience and realise human potential across the lifespan through combining the ancient wisdom of mindfulness with rigorous contemporary science.”

Website: [www.oxfordmindfulness.org](http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org)  
Telephone: 01865 613157

A list of accredited teachers can be found at: [www.ukmindfulnessnetwork.co.uk](http://www.ukmindfulnessnetwork.co.uk)

### **Social Prescribing**

Recognising that mental health is affected by a whole range of social, economic and environmental factors, many GPs now support social prescribing (often as an alternative to medication) in order to help people to take greater control of their own wellbeing.

Social prescribing schemes cover a variety of activities, which are typically provided by local organisations from the voluntary and community sector. These may include gym-based exercise and fitness training, dancing, walking, swimming and other types of sport, gardening, arts and crafts, singing, further education, reading groups, cookery and slimming clubs.

Website: [www.kingsfund.org.uk](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk)

## A Statement from the Charlbury Medical Centre

The Charlbury Medical Centre's stated aim is: "To provide our patients with high-quality, safe, accessible care in a responsive, courteous manner." Their values with regard to patient care are as follows:

- **Quality & Safety** - Work within the framework of NHS Primary Care Services to provide the highest quality care which meet the identified needs of our patients.
- **Respect** - Treat our patients with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times.
- **Support** - Support patients in helping them to make decisions to improve and maintain their health.
- **Promote best practice** - Utilise specialist expertise within the practice team and externally, and encouraging the continuous education and professional development of all members of the practice team.
- **Patient-centred** - Put our patients at the centre of everything we do.
- **Responsive** - Nurture a culture which is innovative, forward-looking and adaptable.