

The words we choose, the actions we take

John Hasler, who works as an occupational therapy assistant, sent us a wonderful poem which encapsulates all that people shared with us during this timely mental health awareness week which focused on kindness. Thank you to all who shared stories with us.

Please continue to get in touch with your stories, materials and ideas – email:

linda.irvinefitzpatrick@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Random Acts of Kindness © John Hasler 2020

John writes:
This is a poem I wrote having googled 'kindness' and then taken words at random from the images I found. Each line of the poem starts with a randomly chosen word in the order I found them, hence it's title "Random Words of Kindness."

Acknowledge the realities you hear
Gentleness the balm for fear
Possibility seen and shared
Sharing showing how you care
Opportunity to offer self
Growth of trust to accept help

Sunshine that warms weary limbs
Optimism spread like thistledown on wind
Smile and let your joy be seen
Passion infused living free
Warmth a blanket cast around
Beauty in all natures sounds
Listening to the inner voice
Consideration for others choice
Change to be who you admire
Ignite the sparks to light the fire
Creativity firing inspiration
Deliberation delivering implementation

Courtesy the currency of personal relations
Encouragement from a friendly voice more productively taken
Hope becomes the bedrock of a better way of seeing
Actions make more sense when there is something to believe in
Togetherness a common bond showing loneliness the door

Moments shared and treasured and placed in memories store
Caring for each other gives both a needed boost
Positive feelings between two more readily induced

Discovery of new interests, learning of new skills
Cultivation of the gardens of delights and thrills
Gift to one another the greatest gift of time
Respect a just reward we get just for being kind

Difference is variety which is the spice of life
Harmony the way to find a balanced state of mind
Belief in basic decency that we all have within
Thriving from the nurturing that each of us is given
Simplicity the key to undo locks of complication
Good feelings gained from practicing a simple meditation
Words we choose shape the world that we try to create
Impact on those ideas which we wish to communicate
Planting the seeds of a future endeavour
Touch the raw components of our nature
Service to those in need bringing pleasure
Patience once a virtue is now a treasure

Provide for the people who don't have the means
Compassion to give to feed mouths and feed dreams
Choice to be more than the sum of our parts
Giving with all of the warmth in our hearts
Courage to lean upon the support others lend
Thoughtfulness for everyone not just for our friends
Lifting our spirits one day to the next
Unexpected help is often the best



People who have personal lived experience of mental health issues are invited to submit artworks to Out of Sight Out of Mind exhibition.

Last year more than 180 people took part and exhibited installations, projections, films, animations, paintings, drawings, sound works, prints, sculptures, and photographs.

You can submit artworks as an individual or as a group. This year **one work per person** can be submitted. Artworks can be proposed/submitted in any media and be any size. You are welcome to respond to this year's Scottish Mental Health Art Festival theme which is 'perspectives', however this is not a requirement at all.

We are planning to hold the exhibition at **Summerhall** in Edinburgh during October 2020. The current situation may lead to changes such as its location, date or the exhibition being moved online. If you make a submission, we will let you know about any changes.

How to make a submission

Get in touch to ask for the full guidance and a submission form. The form needs to be returned to us by **Friday 31st July 2020**.

If you would like to speak to us about your or your groups idea/artwork before submitting it, if you have any questions or would like a submission form, please email **pam@capsadvocacy.org** or **leave a message for Pam on 07989402634**.

About:

Out of Sight Out of Mind is a collaborative project organised by a Planning Group of organisations and individuals. It is hosted by CAPS Independent Advocacy, funded by Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership. It is part of the year-long Edinburgh "A Sense of Belonging Arts Programme" and the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival's year-round programme.

www.facebook.com/outofsightoutofmindexhibition/

www.mhfestival.com

www.capsadvocacy.org

Poverty and Coronavirus in Edinburgh: Interim Report Published

*In this blog, the of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission **Dr Jim McCormick**, introduces what has been learned so far:*

“The pandemic has created a fast-rising tide of anxiety and insecurity. For those who were already struggling on a low-income, life is now harder still, and we are seeing a new surge of unemployed people at risk of being swept into poverty.

The initial government response has offered a lifeline to many employers, charities and families. City of Edinburgh Council and community partners moved quickly to put in place support that will allow many people in the city to keep their heads above water. New relationships have formed, people have responded with compassion to those affected directly by the virus and by keyworkers keeping essential support going. There is the potential to build public and political will to achieve a just transition from where we are now.

It is right that we think in bold terms about how Edinburgh can return to activity safely, generating the good jobs, affordable housing and income security that too many citizens have been locked out of. We cannot hope to do that well unless we listen to people’s experiences now and understand the hardship and heartache they face.

This interim report is not the one we expected to publish. After fifteen months of connecting with people and organisations across the city, we planned to publish a shared view of how to end poverty in Edinburgh. Everything we learned from those conversations has been banked. We are clearer than ever about the principles and values that should guide the city’s actions – and we will set out the material and relational changes needed for the long-term in our final report in the autumn. We will also share our ideas for establishing a new network led by people with direct experience of poverty, alongside civic allies. In the weeks since lockdown began, we have gone back to many of our partners to learn about the impacts they are seeing. This report tries to do justice to what we have heard. Alongside fear and isolation, there is an upsurge of community support and kindness. Alongside unprecedented government support, there are gaps leaving too many people struggling. Alongside an extraordinary effort to house people who were sleeping rough and to protect tenants from eviction, there are unanswered questions about arrears and debts. We are all facing the same storm, but we are in different boats.

Putting this right requires that everyone has a stake in what happens next in Edinburgh. We can redesign support, services and the city economy. The scale of the challenge for planning and long-term budgets needs to be recognised openly and honestly. Where a return to business as usual would see the gains from this crisis unravel, we must change the rules of procurement, eligibility and evaluation. Enabling people to secure fair work will be crucial in overcoming the financial knock and the emotional trauma many have faced. We must address with urgency the gaps in support which have left those in precarious hospitality and construction jobs and many of the self-employed with reduced hours or no earnings.

Employers and housing providers have as much responsibility in making a just transition happen as governments, councils and charities. In the coming weeks, we will tune in to citizen experiences, seek out unheard views and develop potential solutions alongside communities.

You can connect with the Commission through [Twitter](#), through our [website](#), or by emailing – strategyandinsight@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Living with the lights on - world premiere

The **Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival** is delighted to present the world premiere of *Living With The Lights On* – the film, adapted from Mark Lockyer’s acclaimed solo theatre show. Directed by Geraldine Williams and performed by Lockyer, the film has been assembled from iPhone footage shot during the lockdown.

In **Living With The Lights On**, Mark Lockyer tells the story of how he met the Devil while performing in a Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Romeo and Juliet* – an experience that culminated in a terrifying journey through the medical and criminal justice systems, through prison and hospital and on towards eventual recovery. The show is a testament to the fact that mental illness can happen to anyone and that, with the right treatment, there can be a life beyond it.

The original version of *Living With The Lights On* received four and five star reviews when it was first staged in 2016. The show - which had its Scottish premiere as part of that year’s SMHAF – was described as ‘a brutally funny account of mental illness’ by the Guardian and ‘riveting’ by the Times.

Living With The Lights On – **the film will be available to watch from Monday 8 June until Monday 15 June**, exclusively at www.mhfestival.com. There will also be a Q&A with Mark Lockyer taking place via Zoom, with full details announced soon.

Mark Lockyer says: “The stage version of *Living With The Lights On* has no set. If anything I tell the story in a space with a few bits of ‘stuff’ that might be hanging about in the theatre on the day. It’s because ‘the story’ is the only thing that matters. Also it’s just me performing. And so the same is true of the film. I play everyone. All 36 characters if you include the one -liner cameos.

“The beauty of the film is that the madness, colour and surreal nature of my illness can be brought to life visually. I employed the services of artist and maker Geraldine Williams who directed and edited the film. Geraldine brought ideas to the scenes visually I could never have imagined. But in the edit Geraldine was able to weave wonderful magic. We pushed the boundaries of what can be achieved with very little. It is a visual feast. Some scenes are not literal at all. They are deliberately set against ‘reality’ because time and reality didn’t always marry in the depths of my illness.

“We shot it on an iPhone because the aesthetic is beautifully cheap and wonderfully simple and honest. No gimmicks, just like the stage show. Honest, raw, visceral, inventive, imaginative, shocking but above all funny. I laugh at myself endlessly. I have been an actor for many years and have been blessed to have been involved with some great projects but this film for a myriad of reasons is the best piece of work I have ever made. It is beautifully simple and I hope it can inspire others that even on a shoestring ANYTHING is possible if you have the vision and desire. I hope you enjoy it.”

www.mhfestival.com

Scottish Recovery Network: Booking Open for Edinburgh's July's Conversation Cafes

The SRN writes:

At this time it is important that we find ways to talk about wellbeing. This is a chance for those who missed out last time to get involved in our online conversation cafés. The current COVID-19 situation means that we are all finding new ways to connect with each other. Conversations allow us to share and to learn from others.

So put the kettle on, grab a treat and join us in the conversation café for a good blether about:

- **what we're doing to stay well**
- **what's helping us to stay well**
- **what recovery has to offer us in planning for the future**

We would love to hear your experiences, stories and ideas.

How it will work

Each conversation café will be hosted in June / July and facilitated by the Scottish Recovery Network. We want to bring people together with others in their area so there will be six conversation cafés, Edinburgh's conversation café will take place on **Tuesday 7 July** from 2pm until 3.30pm

Really enjoyed it! Nice to hear how other people are personally and professionally coping during these strange times. A very positive and worthwhile experience for me. It was relaxed and the pace was not rushed either – Participant



Small numbers for good conversations

There will be a limit of eight participants in each conversation café so we can have a good conversations where everyone has space to talk. However if there is a lot of demand we will open the café more often and let you know the dates. If you don't get a place this time please make sure you add your name to the waiting list when booking to gauge your interest in future events.

If the conversation café is not opening in your area but you would like to join us let us know and we can arrange that.

Online security & wellbeing

We will be using video conferencing tool Zoom for the conversation café. Your online security & wellbeing is our upmost priority so we will send out instructions on how to access and use this tool safely to those registered before each event. We will also be providing top tips for wellbeing for after the café sessions.

If you would like to take part in the conversation café using only audio rather than video we can accommodate this if you let us know once you have received confirmation of your place by email.

Accessibility

Scottish Recovery Network supports #CommunicationForAll and we are working towards being fully inclusive. If you have any additional needs please let us know and we will do our very best to accommodate them.

If you have any further question please contact: **0141 240 7790** or **info@scottishrecovery.net**

We look forward to meeting you in the conversation café :)