



Supporting young people on the path to better mental health

Autumn 2015

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter!

For one reason and another, it's been a long time (nearly a year!) since we've had a chance to put together a newsletter, but that's definitely not because there's been nothing happening. In fact, quite the opposite ...

As The Project goes from strength to strength, our workload has increased dramatically, but with no additional capacity within the staff, it's been hard to keep up with everything. We offer our apologies here for things that may have slipped through the net over the past few months, or for taking longer to respond to enquiries than you – or we – would have liked.

There's been so much going on that it would be impossible to include everything. So, we've just picked out a few of the significant highlights from the past few months.

BIG NEWS!

Comic Relief funding for The Project!



In August, after months of waiting, we finally heard that our application for Comic Relief funding had been approved! Comic Relief will be providing just under two-thirds of our funding for our

Axminster group for the next 3 years.

We are now seeking match funding from other sources to secure full funding for the group, ensuring we will be able to continue offering support to local young people and their families for the foreseeable future. **If you know of any organisations, or individuals who may be interested in providing match funding, then please get in touch.**

This is an amazing success for The Project. Only 10% of applications to Comic Relief get through their rigorous assessment process, so we are chuffed indeed to have been awarded this grant.

New young people's group to open in Chard

We are delighted to announce that, from January 2016, The Project will be opening its second young people's support group in Chard, Somerset. Working in partnership with Yarlington Housing Group, who provide social housing across South Somerset and East Devon, we aim to launch the group in January 2016.

Yarlington are generously providing full funding for a one-year pilot, and we are excited at this new opportunity to work in partnership with a successful local business.



We are now looking to build relationships with GPs and schools across South Somerset, and hope to be accepting referrals by the end of the year, ready for the group's launch in January.

We are also looking to recruit new volunteers of all ages over the next couple of months. All The Project's volunteers have experience of mental health issues, so we welcome applications from people with lived experience. If you'd like to find out more, [CLICK HERE](#)

Farewell to Sarah



In July, we said a sad goodbye to Sarah Higgins, who runs our Young People's Support Sessions. Sarah has been training to be a social worker, and having recently qualified, reluctantly had to leave us due to the demands of her new job.

Staff, volunteers and young people are already missing her like mad, but we all wish her well in her new job, and look forward to welcoming her back as a volunteer from time to time in the future.

NEW! Job Opportunities at The Project

We have two part-time job posts to fill, and are looking for two awesome, passionate people to join The Project's friendly team.

Due to Sarah's departure, we are looking to recruit a **Group Worker/Session Facilitator** to run our young people's support sessions, both in Axminster and at our new group in Chard.

We are also looking for an **Information & Administration Support Officer** who can help us meet our monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements, as well as helping us to build on, and continually improve on the high standards of our services.

Full details about both job opportunities, including hours and pay are on our website.

[=> Find out more](#)



MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING & TALKS

Mental Health workshops for young people

We can offer a range of mental health workshops which can be delivered to small groups of students, or to a whole year group, as part of a school's PSHE curriculum. Our workshops provide an interactive and engaging experience for students, and feedback from our workshops, from both staff and students, has been extremely positive.

With 9 in 10 young people with mental health issues experiencing stigma and discrimination, it is clear that young people themselves need to have a better understanding of the issues, to break down the fears and misunderstandings surrounding mental illness, and which can often prevent young people from seeking appropriate help.

Over the past year, we have run a number of successful Mental Health Awareness workshops with students in Years 8 to 12 at Axe Valley Community College and Sidmouth College. Student feedback from these sessions has been extremely positive, and staff were impressed by our professionalism, the course content and how well it was pitched for the relevant age groups.

 "This was interesting, it changed my views on mental illness completely" - Yr 11 Student

If you would like us to come to your school, or other youth setting, please get in touch.

[=> Find out more](#)

Mental Health training for professionals



The Project now offers a number of mental health related training sessions and workshops for professionals working with young people, helping to equip them with increased knowledge and awareness around a number of specific mental health issues.

There has been particularly high demand for our **Self Harm and Young People** workshop, and feedback has been excellent.

 "Made me reconsider my own perspective on self-harm which I thought was open minded" - course participant

This interactive workshop offers an opportunity to discuss the subject of self harm openly and safely, in a small group (max. 20 participants). It is suitable both for those with no awareness of this subject, as well as those supporting young people with this type of behaviour.

For our full range of training and workshops visit our website.

[=> Find out more](#)

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training



Every school and organisation has physical first aiders, who are there to pick up the pieces when someone hurts themselves. But, what about people who are hurting emotionally? Do you know what you need to know about mental health to feel confident in helping a young person who is struggling?

Youth MHFA teaches practical skills that can be used every day. It gives a deeper understanding of the complex issues relating to young people and mental health, and helps people recognise the symptoms of mental health problems and enables them to provide initial help.

Whether you teach, care for, support or live with a young person, this training is for you!



We have a number of training dates coming up this Autumn, and there are still limited places available on the following courses.

1-day Course:

Monday 21 September – Taunton
Monday 19 October – Tiverton

2-day Course:

Thurs/Fri 15/16 October – Dorchester
Thurs/Fri 19/20 November - Taunton

[=> Find out more](#)

Mental Health Awareness Talks

Over the past year, Debbie has given a number of talks to local groups and organisations to raise awareness around young people's mental health issues.

In June, Debbie gave a talk at the Devon WI Annual Conference in June, speaking to over a hundred people about her experiences of being a parent of a young person with mental health issues. She also talked about The Project's approach to supporting young people and providing early intervention and prevention support.

If you would like Debbie to talk to your group or organisation, please get in touch.

*Through **The Project's** training and workshops in schools and communities, we aim to raise awareness around young people's mental health issues, breaking down the stigma and prejudice surrounding mental illness, and ensuring those who work with and care for young people have the knowledge and experience to offer timely and effective support to young people in need.*

All profits from our training and workshops are used to help fund our support groups.



OTHER NEWS

The Project receives national recognition

In February, The Project's Coordinator, Debbie Humberstone, won the Deputy Prime Minister's Mental Health Hero Award for the South West, selected from over 900 nominees nationally. Debbie and her daughter, Jess, went to London to meet Nick Clegg, and to receive the award at a ceremony at Admiralty House.



In the same month, The Project was also shortlisted for Mental Health First Aid England's Youth MHFA Champion Award 2015 for its work in raising awareness around mental illness and increasing mental health literacy. Debbie attended a ceremony at the House of Lords – no award this

time, but fantastic that the work The Project is doing is being recognised at this level.

New Advisory Group for The Project

Earlier in the year, Debbie invited a number of people together to form an Advisory Group for The Project, made up of six professionals from the fields of mental health, education, communication and health policy.

With new opportunities for The Project's future development coming all the time, the group bring their considerable knowledge and experience to help steer The Project forward and offer the benefit of their advice to further its aims and objectives.

Members of the Advisory Group are: Sheena Asthana - Professor of Health Policy at Plymouth School of Government; Dr Clive Britten - Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist; Hilary Burr - Deputy Chief Officer at EDVSA; Marc Kastner - Inclusions Office, Devon County Council; Glenn Smith - Principal at Honiton Community College; Jenny Vince - IAG Consultant

[=> Find out more](#)

Young People Support Sessions

The Project always welcomes new and exciting ideas for activities and workshops for our young people. Over the last 6 months we have been lucky enough to have an array of people who have given up their time to come in and work with our groups. We had a memorable visit to Magdalen Farm, where we did team building activities and met all the animals – even the rain didn't ruin the fun!

We have also learnt about EFT, sophrology, healthy eating, expressing ourselves through art, singing, playing instruments and spent time preparing ourselves for the Summer Spectacular fundraising event.

Sessions are now back into full swing, after our two week summer break in August, and we have lots of



Goat walking at Magdalen Farm

interesting stuff planned for the rest of the Autumn term. From mindfulness to self esteem workshops and Christmas activities, there will be something that all of our young people can get involved with.

Our younger group is currently at full capacity, with a handful of young people on our waiting list. However, we do unfortunately see a surge of referrals into our service around the time that school starts again, as previous anxieties resurface and support is needed. We hope, with the addition of our new Chard group, that we can keep the waiting list down to a minimum in the coming months. Our older group does still have a couple of spaces available, so if you would like some support and you are between the ages of 18 and 24, please feel free to get in touch via our email address.

[=> Find out more](#)

Peer Supporters

Earlier in the year we ran our first Peer Supporter Training course for young people attending our 18-24s support sessions. From that, two of our young people went on to become peer supporters, helping out at our 13-18s session while continuing to access the support of the older group for themselves. This has been hugely successful, with both young people gaining skills, experience and confidence, and the members of the younger group benefitting from their valuable lived experience.

One of our peer supporters has now decided that she is ready to move on, and as she is no longer attending support sessions for herself, she has joined The Project as a full member of the volunteer team.

Parent & Carers Support Group

Our monthly Parent & Carers Group continues to meet, with new mums, dads, grandparents and carers coming along almost every month.

Some months, the group is an open space for parents/carers to share with each other about any issues or challenges they are currently facing, and supporting each other through these difficult times. Other months, we have had guest speakers and workshops taking place. These have included Mindfulness and EFT workshops and a talk from a Consultant Psychiatrist.

In July, parents also shared their experiences to inform Devon County Council's [Mental Health Needs Assessment around Self Harm](#).



RAISING MONEY FOR THE PROJECT

Over the past year, there have been some amazing fundraising efforts on behalf of The Project, and we are grateful to every individual, group and organisation who decides to raise money for us. It has provided a vital lifeline to us over the past year.

Just a few of the groups who have fundraised for us this year are: NCS Axminster, All Saints & Smallridge WI, East Devon District Scouts, EDHF Nordic Walking, Singing Matters Choir, Kroft Originals Singing Group and Waitrose.

Individuals have taken on cycle rides, sponsored walks and even the Rock Solid Race at Escot.

Thank you all! Every pound raised will help us to continue our work supporting young people.

Summer Spectacular – June 2015

Axminster Guildhall was the venue for The Project's fundraising Summer Spectacular on Saturday 6th June. It was a night of entertainment with live music provided by people connected with The Project in all sorts of ways - young people who attend our sessions, volunteers and staff, supporters and local singing groups who have raised money for us over the past year. The event was sponsored by Frank Property, the Seaton-based estate agent.

Around 180 people attended the event, which included an auction run by local auctioneer Graham Barton, of 'Homes Under The Hammer' fame, and in total £3,215 was raised for The Project. So many local businesses and individuals donated prizes, it's impossible to thank them all individually, but we were overwhelmed by all the offers of help and support we received.

London to Paris Cycle Ride – July 2015



Matthew Lathey, who lives in Dorchester, recently took on the London to Paris Cycle Ride to raise money for The Project, cycling just under 300 miles over 4 days, from 8-11 July, and raising a magnificent £2,127 for the group.

Matt took on the challenge to raise awareness around young people's suicide, following the death of his brother's best friend, Dan Collins, who tragically took his own life last year at the age of 22.

Matt and Nigel Collins, Dan's father, came along to the group, and movingly shared his experience of Dan's death, and left a positive message with young people, encouraging them to speak to someone if they were struggling to cope with life.

If you would like to sponsor Matt, and donate to The Project, you can still do so via his fundraising page <http://www.gofundme.com/lwrhis>

#heartonthehand – raising awareness around mental illness



To participate in The Project's "Heart On The Hand" campaign and help raise awareness around young people's mental health issues, please (1) draw a red heart on your hand, (2) take a selfie, (3) post it on social media using #heartonthehand, (4) text HAND09 £1 to 70070 and (5) nominate your friends to do the same!



Don't forget our #heartonthehand wristbands, which are on sale to help promote our campaign to raise awareness around mental illness. These are available

to purchase via our [online shop](#).

Remember to post your #heartonthehand selfie on our Facebook page or on Twitter using the hashtag!

Shopping online? Support The Project

I know nobody likes to think about it in September (apart from the supermarkets!!) but if you are doing any online shopping in the run up to Christmas, then please take a minute to sign up to EasyFundraising to help raise money for The Project. It is really simple to do, will only take you a few minutes AND costs you nothing! For further information, and to sign up, go to our [EasyFundraising](#) page ... then get shopping!!

The Project . Young People's Centre . Lyme Road . Axminster . EX13 5AZ

T: 01404 549045 | M: 07970 167341 | E: info@theprojectyp.org.uk | www.theprojectyp.org.uk
Follow us on Twitter: @TheProjectYP | Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/theprojectyp



The Project is hosted by East Devon Volunteer Support Agency (EDVSA), Registered Charity No. 1134611