



SUSSEX MINDFULNESS CENTRE NEWSLETTER

December 2014 – Issue #1

Welcome to the first Sussex Mindfulness Centre (SMC) Newsletter!

All Party Parliamentary Group on Mindfulness

The Sussex Mindfulness Centre has had an exciting year, playing a part in national developments in mindfulness. Clara Strauss, Bridgette O'Neill and Kate Cavanagh are leading on the health strand of the current All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Mindfulness (other strands include education, criminal justice and the workplace). The APPG is leading an inquiry on mindfulness and its potential in the UK and they have been meeting periodically throughout the year, since its launch in May, with Ruby Wax, Lord Layard and a number of other key figures attending. Many SMC staff have spoken at the health roundtables in the Houses of Parliament (events for gathering evidence), including Catherine Cameron on mindfulness and pain management, Angela Busuttill on mindfulness in health psychology, Lana Jackson on mindfulness in paediatric services, Robert Marx on mindfulness with staff groups, Clara Strauss on mindfulness for people experiencing anxiety problems and psychosis and Kate Cavanagh on the potential for self-help mindfulness-based interventions. Bridgette O'Neill has led mindfulness practices at two of the roundtables which has provided an important and grounding start to each session. Helga Dittmar, Julia Racster-Szostak, Mike Hales and Helen Leigh-Phippard spoke powerfully of their experience of SMC MBCT groups at the roundtable in July. The APPG will produce a report next year, *A Mindful Nation*, which will summarise what has been learnt through the inquiry process and the report has the potential to influence the implementation of mindfulness-based courses across the country.



From left to right: Bridgette O'Neill, Catherine Cameron, Lana Jackson, Clara Strauss, Kate Cavanagh, Robert Marx and Taravajra.

SMC Research

The implementation of MBCT in the NHS – what makes it possible, what blocks it - is also the subject of a major study (ASPIRE) funded by the National Institute for Health Research in the UK, led by Bangor, Exeter and Oxford universities. We are delighted to be hosting two scheduled visits in December and January from the ASPIRE research team who are investigating how MBCT has been

implemented in Sussex Partnership. We are already learning from their initiative which, together with the APPG, is bringing together mindfulness teachers, trainers and researchers across the UK and helping us learn from each other.

Our own research portfolio is also looking very healthy and we now have over 20 peer reviewed publications. Led by Clara Strauss and with the expertise of Fergal Jones and Kate Cavanagh, research is underway into self-help mindfulness approaches for staff, and adapted mindfulness interventions for people with OCD, people who hear voices and people with complex mental health difficulties in secondary care (led by Lizzie Clark). In addition, we are evaluating various adaptations of the 8 week course to meet the needs of young people (Brenda Davis and Lana Jackson), of people with dementia and their carers (David Garland and Susan Whiting) and of staff, evaluating a mindfulness-based compassion intervention (Bridgette O'Neill, Billie Lever Taylor and Robert Marx). This is exactly what the SMC was set up to do – to allow us to innovate safely through rigorous research and evaluation and thereby develop interventions that can be of most use to the populations they serve.

Expansion with Integrity

One of the challenges of this welcome expansion is the maintenance of the integrity of the approach. We want to ensure that we remain attentive to safety and high quality in the provision of mindfulness-based interventions, as these are essential for people to continue to benefit. At a national level, the need to support and identify safe and high quality provision is being met with the development of a national list of MBCT and MBSR teachers, which may in time become a register of people who meet the minimum standards set down in the UK Good Practice Guidelines for teaching MBCT and MBSR. One of the SMC key trainers, Taravajra, is leading on developing this national list in his role within the UK Network of Mindfulness-based Teacher Training Organisations, of which SMC is a member.

SMC Training and Master Classes

We expect that all graduates from our Foundation MBCT Training should meet the necessary criteria to be on the national list, which is likely to go live next year. We are just in the process of interviewing applicants for the Foundation MBCT Training intake in 2015, and we look forward to starting our third intake of this training in January. The training attracted more applicants than ever from people outside the Trust this year. Our programme of master classes and teacher development days has been very well received with 8 events this year plus our SMC conference with keynotes Prof Willem Kuyken and Chris Cullen.

Groups for Service Users

All of these exciting developments should not obscure the hard work going on in about 25 service user groups across the Trust this year. A significant proportion of the service user groups are run by Lynn Ley and Carolyn Pollak in Health in Mind in East Sussex, and by Brenda Davis and Lana Jackson, supervised by Karunavira, in Brighton. Brenda has been particularly active in developing adapted

MBCT groups in our children and young people's service and she has recently set up a National Special Interest Group that brings together mindfulness teachers working with young people across the country, with the hope that this may lead to a large national research study evaluating a mindfulness-based intervention specifically for young people. We have also had 8 staff MBCT groups this year, all of which were full long before we started, mostly with waiting lists – thank you Emma Fordham for administering these - and we are aiming next year to increase provision of staff groups to at least 10 and to spread these more widely across the Trust from Hampshire to Kent.

Final Reflections

Reflecting on the year, we have been very fortunate to have had the support of many directors and managers who in different ways have encouraged and funded our work – including Adrian Whittington, Mark Hayward, Kay MacDonald, Sue Morris, Karl Goatley, Juliet Couche, Kelly Cahill and Catherine Cox.

We appreciate the support given to us by our new Chief Executive, Colm Donaghy, and to Tom Ormerod, the new Head of the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex, and we look forward to what we hope will be another year of bringing the intention to be fresh, kind and open with our experience and each other! We hope you enjoy this newsletter and that it gives you ideas that you can use to follow up interests of your own and connect with people who may share those interests. The creative ideas and production behind this newsletter are down to Lucie Bardowell, psychology graduate intern, and Katie Pascoe, communications administrator, who is sadly leaving. We wish her all the best in Brazil! And we welcome Jennifer Vos, mindfulness administrator at Aldrington house, who has just started. Welcome Jenny!

- Clara Strauss and Robert Marx, leads for the Sussex Mindfulness Centre

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday 24th January: Buddhist Background to Mindfulness: in MBCT/MBSR. Speakers: Taravajra and Karunavira.

Friday 13th February: Engaging Children and Young People with Mindfulness. Speaker: Chris Cullen.

Book your place soon! Contact smc@sussexpartnership@nhs.uk or visit <http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/gps/education/smc/smc-events> for more information.

Contact

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