



# SUPPORT TRAINING AND RECOVERY SYSTEM

## Newsletter - October 2018

### OFAFE

**One of the best trainings that I've been able to help deliver has been an afternoon slot at an OFAFE weekend.**

OFAFE is the Oxfordshire Friends and Family Empowerment service, supporting those living or in regular contact with those with a Personality Disorder diagnosis and/or other complex needs. In spite of the name, the weekend was open to those who do not necessarily live in Oxfordshire.

Over the course of three hours, it was great to be able to offer some hope to families and loved ones struggling to support people with Personality Disorder. It reminded me of what it must have been like for my family, friends and employers – and I left the afternoon with a sense of relief that there are people who really want to help. What's more, they were open to trying something different and genuinely seemed to benefit from our experience.



Oli

### TCEPT

**STARS have been helping to develop a new training course that's starting up for the first time.**

The Therapeutic Communities and Therapeutic Environments Practitioner Training, has been developed over the past year by clinicians and members of STARS with lived experience.

The course will be made up of three residential weekends spaced apart by 6 months each. The first and third weekends are timetabled with lectures and seminars on topics dedicated to improving skills and understanding when working with people with complex emotional difficulties. The second weekend will be a Living Learning Experience where the students themselves will be part of a therapeutic community. STARS members will be there to co-facilitate the sessions and will co-deliver supervision for the students over 12 sessions throughout the course.

We are looking forward to the course beginning for the first time at the end of October 2018, it has taken a lot of planning and preparation and now we're finally going to get to start running it. It will run every year going forward, more details are available at [TCEPT.org](http://TCEPT.org)



Stuart

### CHT

**Since August, STARS (Linda and myself) have been working with CHT (Community Housing & Therapy), specifically Liliias Gillies House in Old Coulsdon, London.**

Liliias Gillies House is a residential service, supporting adults with a combination of complex mental health problems, personality disorders and/or psychosis. Support provided is a combination of individual therapy, and group therapeutic activities with the aim of recovery through relationships, developing life skills and confidence.

The community began to struggle, relationships between staff and residents had broken down, ultimately resulting in a difficult and volatile dynamic.

I was afraid I wouldn't be able to help this group work together to be more of a therapeutic community again. There was so much anger and resignation, I was afraid I wouldn't be enough of a positive example. But I feel immensely proud that together with Linda, the community completely changed and is now almost unrecognisable from 7 weeks ago.

We are regularly given feedback from both staff and residents, saying how much better and different the community feels and how hopeful they are. The community meetings that hardly anyone was attending, now has almost every resident attending and discussing their feelings in a much safer, more supported and therapeutic space.

This has easily been the most challenging and rewarding work I've ever done in almost 3 years I've been a STAR, and I feel so overwhelmed with how much our own experiences have been able to help turn things around for this community.



Rachel

The community had got itself into a paralysed position of staff-resident us-them polarised hostility and suspicion, and we were really struggling to move out of it. Rachel and Linda analysed what was going on, worked with staff and residents, and their careful, thoughtful interventions, alongside some changes that management put in place, shifted the dynamic, enabling everyone to move on.

Rachel and Linda's input really was transformational: the community's working again.

Dr Peter Cockersell  
CEO of Community Housing & Therapy

## Self Harm Training

**In May 2018 STARS helped deliver a training on Self Harm in Thame.**

The role of the STARS was to provide first hand experience and insights into the frames of mind and feelings behind self-harmful behaviors, and to answer any questions the assorted clientele may wish to ask. We have also created a series of videos which are played as part of the presentation, to give an even broader perspective of what can be the leading causes behind self-harm.

Speaking from a personal point of view this is the third self-harm training I have helped to deliver, and I think that the input from ex-service users such as myself is invaluable, mostly because the clinicians, as skilled as they are, cannot fully enter the mind-set of the service user who may be presenting themselves as needing help. With us here to pass that information on, and the TVI clinicians delivering the theory side of things, I'd like to hope that the clientele leave with a wider understanding of the subject matter, and will be able to feel more confident in dealing with someone who self harms. And judging by the feedback forms we have received over the events I have helped in, I'm pleased to say that definitely appears to be the case.



## Shadowing as a STAR

**Before being selected to support training delivery, we have to shadow an experienced STAR.**

I found this really helpful as it enabled me to get a sense of what happened during different types of training, and also how the clinicians structure and deliver their sessions in different ways.

I got to know other STARS much better and was able to evaluate how much a training session was going to take out of me emotionally before I started to be selected for work.

One of my shadowing sessions was a Self Harm training day. The two STARS who were supporting the clinician put me at ease and emphasised that I did not have to say anything at all. The attendees of the training day were made aware that I was there to shadow, too. I didn't say much to start with, but by the end of the day my confidence was building. One of the aspects of TVI that I really appreciated that day, was the debrief after the training was over. It gave me a chance to receive support and feedback – and to ask questions about the day and raise concerns.



## "What is Love" poem

What is love?  
They say it's a feeling,  
A warmth down inside  
A volcanic eruption  
When side by side  
A surprising pain  
When forced apart  
The feeling that glows  
And then just keeps growing  
As together they close

Then glides to that moment when the two are as one  
Just stand, so heart can beat heart then all understand  
I know what that is so I go round again  
What is love?

It can move mountains  
Pull mighty loads  
It will live on forever  
Hate can only kill  
Love withstands all  
The dark, grey and black  
Just shades of rainbow  
Colours and hews  
Love can maintain  
Flourish and grow  
Just needs that seed to grow wherever they be  
Give a seed

Let me see all  
Where do I start by planting a seed?  
Nurture and feed  
Encourage and grow  
As small seeds may flourish if the sun will now show  
The sun has the role giving it strength  
Come on my seedling I need you grow!  
Strong as tree  
A plant you may be  
But tomorrow I leave on an adventure for me  
I will tell you a story when you are on my knee  
A story of wisdom, bad deeds  
A story of me  
A story that ends with all to reveal  
Do I now know?



## More Information



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