



# SUPPORT TRAINING & RECOVERY SYSTEM



## Newsletter September 2019



From left: Oli, Stuart and Linda, BIGSPD Conference 2019

### GP personality disorder training programme launch

October 2019 sees the launch of an exciting scheme to train 20 GP practices in the Thames Valley to develop skills in working with people who have complex presentations and personality disorders.

The Training team comprises a GP, a trainer with specialist clinical experience and two STARS (trainers with lived experience.) The training team will be working across all four Thames Valley Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Project co-lead, GP Dr Rob Schafer said "There is a huge need for this in primary care. By training clinical staff together with their admin and reception teams, and having STARS at the heart of the programme we've shown we can make a real difference to staff skills and confidence. Ultimately this should give patients with personality disorder a much better experience when they visit their GP surgery."

The first practice to receive the training has now made several changes following their visit. This includes setting up an internal complex case discussion meeting so all staff can help find solutions to problems and improve consistency when responding to patients in crisis. Other parts of the UK have already expressed initial interest in how they might set up similar schemes of their own.

The practice manager had the following to say:  
"A HUGE thank you to you and the team for all your hard work yesterday. This morning the staff are actively talking about the session, how much they enjoyed it and how much they got from it. The STARS were a big hit!"

 Dr Rob Schafer  
Project co-lead

### BIGSPD Conference 2019

**This year STARS presented a workshop at the three-day BIGSPD conference in Durham.**

This is the annual networking forum for the British and Irish Group for the study of Personality Disorder. The workshop was titled "What's in a Name". It was structured around the findings of a small study that STARS conducted, examining attitudes of service users and staff towards personality disorder diagnosis.

We presented data from 72 participants including service users, ex-service users and staff from the Complex Needs Service which operates in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Our most significant finding was that in spite of at least 86% of service users stating that they had experienced stigma as the result of their diagnosis, only 47% of them thought the diagnostic term should be changed. Interestingly, most of that stigma was reported to be from family and friends. We also found that no service users thought other people viewed those with a personality disorder diagnosis positively.

Finally, the staff participants all thought that the term "personality disorder" should be changed whereas the service users were almost evenly split. Having presented the findings, we then had a debate with the workshop members on whether the term personality disorder should be changed, chaired by Steve Pearce from Oxford Health. Attendees included clinicians, ex-service users and commissioners. After animated discussion there was a significant swing in favour of retaining the term, but still a slim majority of two people in favour of changing it. Key topics that came up during the debate were; stigma, prioritising access to treatment and the difficulty agreeing on a viable alternative to the current diagnostic term.

Attending and presenting at BIGSPD was a great opportunity for STARS. We participated in, and listened to, wider discussions and new research findings in personality disorder and related fields of both physical and mental health. We look forward to writing up our findings as a paper.

 Linda, Oli & Stuart

## Greenwich University

**Greenwich University is a regular job on the STARS volunteer list.**

Being driven into London by my STAR partner for the day, lovely to be chauffeured to work. A regular engagement for STARS, we go to Greenwich to talk to degree students about Personality Disorder. We start by enquiring what their perceptions of PD were, also they expected when they had a client on their list with a Personality Disorder.

We discussed their beliefs and examine the realities and myths among their expectations, then we took questions from students. These were varied and interesting and showed the interest in subject content. After the session we have lunch in the canteen, hosted by the Course Lecturer and then a pleasant drive home.

★ Pauline

## Frequent Attenders A&E Conference

**Three of us attended this conference which was generally A&E doctors.**

We were first on for around 20 minutes discussing the pros and cons of our treatment as frequent attenders. It set the day for the rest of the conference and produced a lot of thinking from the doctors.

★ Linda, Oli and Ruth

Hi Oli, Linda and Ruth  
Thanks you again so much for your contributions to yesterday – you helped to set the scene and the feel of the day so well with your experiences and insights, and I think many of the attendees had not experienced this sort of talk before.  
Well done, you were fantastic.

A&E Doctors  
Frequent Attenders A&E Conference

## Human Rights, Dilemmas & Solutions in PD Conference

**STARS did a co-production with Dr Steve Pearce on belongingness.**

Two of us went to this conference in London, there were a variety of people there from lawyers to people working in Personality Disorder (PD) units. Our part went very well discussing the need to belong and how helpful and unhelpful belonging can change someone's life.

★ Linda

## Community of Communities Annual Forum at RCPsych

**In April, STARS delivered one of the workshops at the CofC's Annual Forum, at the Royal College of Psychiatrists in London.**

Entitled "We're All In This Together", we explained the history of STARS and took people through the process of becoming a member and what the work entailed.

The focus was initially on how clinicians and ex-service users / patients can work effectively together and the positive impact that our training days can have on attendees' understanding as a result. However, the workshop's attendees were also keen to make time for Q and As, so we restructured our workshop accordingly.

We described the increasing range of work available to STARS, the doors to employment that it can open for members over time, and the increasing national demand for such training. There was much interest in the room from various therapeutic community members about the potential future work offered by STARS.

Clinicians and professionals were also keen to hear about what we offer and the unique model that TVI has created in its clinician/STAR training delivery. Our feedback was entirely positive and I, for one, was happy that all our hard work and preparation paid off.

★ Oli

## More Information



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