



Support Training And Recovery Systems NEWSLETTER

April 2014

**Gone so tragically but will never be forgotten...
"you touched many lives and your footprints will live on"**

It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I write this piece to acknowledge a hard working and much loved member of STARS, who was taken away from us on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at the young age of 27.



Marta J's input into the work we do was generous, giving and full of insight. Always available to support her peers and always ready for some fun, she will be sadly missed not just for her contribution but for her empathy, understanding and compassion.

We are especially proud to have helped in our own individual ways by sharing our experiences for her case studies for her Psychology dissertation, which she only finished a few hours before her tragic accident.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family, friends and loved ones at this very sad time.

By Neelam K.

Oxford Brookes Teaching (nurses)

"I am just writing to let you know what an excellent *colleague* experience I had working with your STAR today. She contacted me in advance making appropriate requests for information and was available to help me plan our work together. On the day, she arrived in good time and her performance (as a patient in therapy) and additional contributions to the presentation were fantastic (I must also say she was terribly supportive - it was my first solo teaching gig at university). Afterwards, she used debrief well. Her behaviour and conduct were genuinely a credit to both herself and STARS. Best wishes"

*Feedback
from STARS events*

'From despair to work via STARS' - an account of moving on from Complex Needs Services to the workplace

I had worked prior to attending Complex Needs, but in roles that didn't feel meaningful. STARS on the other hand gave me something different; a chance to influence professionals and to give a personal perspective on what it's like to live with a Personality Disorder diagnosis. This gave me the space to realise that personal experience of living with Personality Disorder, was not perhaps the negative I'd built it up to be in my mind, and STARS gave me the ability to see I could use this experience for something else. It also helped build my confidence, moving me away from someone who struggled to speak in a small group, to someone able to present to large groups of people.

During my time with STARS I attended and spoke at conferences and helped deliver training sessions, all with the support of peers who understood how hard this could feel. This combination of work skills, and peer support allowed me to realise that full time work was not an impossible aim.

I now work for two local charities, planning and delivering services and love every minute of my working life. The STARS project allows a gentle progression into work, and a supportive environment to learn and develop new skills. Whilst Complex Needs allowed me to learn skills to live a happy, fulfilling life, STARS allows me to put these skills into practice.

By Anonymous

Wellbeing Group, Simon House

"Thank you so much for sending a 'Star' to our WBG today. He was truly a super Star and his input was really well received by the group. His experience that he shared today seemed to have quite an effect on certain residents and as a result of something he said he managed to change someone's perspective regarding their addiction. He really made a difference today so thanks again."

"Thanks so much for organising the 'Stars' to participate; the residents are really enjoying the groups since they joined; this is one of the most successful groups we have ever run at Simon House and the 'Stars' add something special and dynamic to the group."

"I have just realised that I have not contacted you, many many apologies. Firstly 'thank you' to you for organising the STAR worker visit, it went very well. It was a very balanced and informative talk. I know that one of the people rang Complex Needs up the very next day! So we really did appreciate the visit and the time and effort involved. Best wishes"

*Feedback
from STARS events*

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Ever since I first saw the STARS flyers, in the Complex Needs reception area at Manzil Way, I had an idea of what it might mean to be a 'STAR' – giving something back - and I wanted to be well enough to be able to become a part of that. This idea proved to be one of the many things that helped me to find my way to recovery.

Since attending my first STARS meeting in June 2013 I've taken part in some meetings with clients, and I've been able to share the changes that I've been able to make in my own life with them – going from isolation and despair to being a relatively confident and cheerful individual!

I have also been involved in delivering several training sessions with the TVI staff, and in this work I've had the opportunity to meet lots of people from various different professional backgrounds, all with one thing in common - wanting to work better with people who have a diagnosis of, or a suspected, Personality Disorder.

Through my input I know that I'm making a difference to the way that people see the diagnosis and what it might mean to those who have it. I think we, as STARS, have the power to give hope, to show people that recovery is possible, but this isn't to say that it isn't a little bit nerve racking every time you choose to share those difficult parts of yourself with an audience!

To work well in STARS I've learnt that you really have to know your limits. You have to be able to reflect on the past, non-judgementally, and through doing that I've not only been able to help others, but I feel I'm always learning something new about myself as well.

By Ruth E.

I joined STARS last December and have engaged in working with people both new to the Complex Needs Service and at the ending of their journey. I have also had the chance to shadow a "Self Harm Skills Day". That involved educating a wide range of professionals in strategies for managing self harm behaviours.

The staff and other STARS members are very welcoming and patient in answering the many questions that I had as a newbie.

The work I have done so far has been interesting and eye opening. It is helping me re-gain my confidence and my eagerness for learning and gaining new experiences are all renewed too.

I would recommend it to anybody who is looking to gain experience working in this or a related field.

By Carole H.

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*Feedback
from STARS events*

Information Sharing session, Manzil Way

"Just a quick bit of feedback on the STARS and the Information Sharing Sessions at Manzil Way: I suppose it won't come as any news that their involvement is golden and absolutely fundamental to the sessions proving effective. In particular, their ideas and feedback in our session debrief were really insightful (and challenging!), and have prompted me to make several changes to the way the session is run and what I share within the session. I would imagine I'll get the chance to see them again at some point and feed this back to them face-to-face, but just in case I don't, I'd be grateful if you could forward this on to them. Many thanks!"

By Anonymous

E I N I T I A T I V E C C G S
E R D M E N T A L G X I O N U
E X I E V D C R S G Y T M I P
D H P H T T I I E T S U M N P
V E S E S E X S I S V E U I O
A A N X R M L L O Q U P N A R
L L E N O I A P A R E A I R T
L T Y N A N E H M H D R T T G
E H T T O L S N G O E E Y F N
Y H K S X H P Z C N C H R F I
S H R T H A M E S E I T U T V
K E R I H S K R E B P K M X A
P G G R E C O V E R Y G C S E
E C I V R E S T R E P X E U L
D R O F X O Q X C Z S L N B B

BERKSHIRE	PERSONALITY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	PLANNED
COMMUNITY	RECOVERY
COMPLETED	SERVICE
DISORDER	SIX-MONTHS
EXPERIENCE	SUPPORT
EXPERT	THAMES
HEALTH	THERAPEUTIC
INITIATIVE	TRAINING
LEAVING	USER
MENTAL	VALLEY
OXFORD	

I often speak in metaphor but my own experience of climbing Mount Kenya was heavily drawn upon between 13 and 15 months. I climbed to 15720 feet. I did not climb into the specialist glacier region because I did not have the right experience or equipment. The last three months in therapy for me were a kin to climbing that last few three thousand feet to the summit of Kenya. That part was the metaphor.

I have since come to realise that life is full of hills, mountains and valleys. Like my mania and depression, it has high and lows. For me, the idea that summit days exist are there as a motivation to meet the challenges ahead in life. And, just as mountains are difficult to climb up, they can be difficult to climb down.

Not all ups have to be mountains. Birthdays can be summit days too. It's about recognising the achievement, however big.

Summit Day.

The wonderful thing about summits is that you can see for miles.

From where you've come, to where you are going. You have an idea how you are going to get there, but the rest is in fact unknown.

Unfurl your flag my friend.

Plant it firmly.

Take some time to enjoy the view.

Breathe in the air.

Be proud of what you have achieved.

By Jackie J.