Welcome to the Summer edition of the Spectrum Centre Newsletter.

Spectrum News in brief:

- Dr Fiona Lobban will become Professor Fiona Lobban from 1st August.
- Fiona’s Hadrian’s Wall Run in May raised over £1000, a sum now been matched by the University, making a sum of over £2000 towards the Spectrum Service User Conference planned for 2015.
- Claire Hilton, Research Assistant on the PARADES Study has been awarded ESRC funding for Postgraduate study leading to a Masters and PhD.
- Lizzie Tyler, Senior Research Associate, has been awarded an NIHR Doctoral Fellowship.
- Steve Jones & Fiona Lobban attended a week of conferences and meetings in Canada with CREST.BD in June.
- We welcome Liz Stokes, Service User Researcher, to the Team—and wish her luck on her cycle ride from London to Paris in aid of MIND.

SPECTRUM EVENTS: Rita Long reports on Campus in the Community

What a tremendous turn out on 26th/27th March when over 300 people visited Lancaster City Centre to take part in Spectrum’s ‘Campus in the Community’ open days. Spectrum staff and members of the advisory panel had packed their bags and headed for the bright lights of St Nicholas’ Arcade in the centre of Lancaster. Lancaster University had leased a shop to enable University staff to bring their research into the heart of the community. The Spectrum gang seized the opportunity to let people know about bipolar disorder, the exciting things going on, plans for the future and provide opportunities for people to get involved. On the day visitors joined in a range of activities. The ‘mental health themed’ art activity proved a big hit and the mood chart generated some interesting discussions. Six worthy winners of the poem and quiz competitions are on our website. We were delighted to provide information to several people who were interested in our Early Relapse Prevention Study as well as matching two people with volunteering opportunities.

The whole staff team felt really motivated by the enthusiasm, motivation and interest of the people we met over the two days. Some people joined Spectrum Connect; so whether it’s receiving our newsletter or taking part in focus groups, we look forward to working together.

As always we want to keep developing and evaluating how we exchange information and meet people........Any ideas, then please get in touch.

SPECTRUM CONNECT: For regular editions of our Newsletter, updates on our activities and research please sign up to Spectrum Connect. Just go to our Website and click on ‘GET INVOLVED’.

(See back page for full Spectrum contact details)
Studies currently looking for participants

Bipolar Recovery Study

Who does the study involve? The study is being run by a team of researchers, academics, service user researchers and clinicians from the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research, Lancaster University. We are exploring how thinking style, responses to your experiences, your mood and other experiences influence your recovery. Approximately 100 people with bipolar disorder will take part in the study.

What will taking part involve? There are three parts of the study and it is up to you in which phase(s) you would like to take part. First you will be asked to take part in an interview about your mood experiences and a series of questionnaires on thinking style, behaviour, mood & recovery. A second part of the study will ask you to keep a mobile phone with you for 7 days. Text messages will be sent to the mobile phone at 10 random times each day (between 8am and 10pm) and we will ask you to complete a short diary each time to tell us about your mood and experiences. The third part will focus on your personal detailed recovery experience and we will ask you to share it in a confidential one-to-one interview.

For further information: Please contact Barbara Mezes b.mezes1@lancaster.ac.uk; (01524) 592622

Do you have a psychiatric diagnosis of bipolar disorder?
Roisin Turner is a Trainee Clinical Psychologist studying at Lancaster University. She will be commencing a research project shortly which will explore people’s views of their diagnosis of bipolar disorder. The research will involve being interviewed once for approximately 60-90 minutes.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Zoe Cockshott, Spectrum Centre Coordinator (z.cockshott@lancaster.ac.uk or 01524 593756) who will place your name on a list to be contacted as soon as ethical approval is granted.

Thinking style, behaviour, mood and recovery in bipolar

Who does the study involve?
The study is being run by a team of researchers, academics, service user researchers and clinicians from the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research, Lancaster University. We are exploring relationships between thinking style, responses to mood, positive experiences of mood swings, inspiration, mood and recovery. The study has received University ethical approval.

What will taking part involve?
You will be asked to take part in an interview about your mood experiences and a series of questionnaires on thinking style, behaviour, mood & recovery. Questionnaires can be completed either online or via post. A £5 Amazon voucher will be given as a thank you for your time and interview.

Further information about becoming involved:

www.thinkingstyle.spectrumdevelopment.org.uk

Please contact Barbara Mezes (b.mezes1@lancaster.ac.uk) for further information or to take part via post.

Principal Investigator: Dr Alyson Dodd (a.dodd@lancaster.ac.uk)

Coming up soon: Lizzie Tyler has been awarded the NIHR doctoral fellowship due to start in January 2015. The focus of her work will be to develop a recovery focused CBT intervention for older adults with Bipolar Disorder. More details to follow.
News of Spectrum’s ongoing or recent research studies

The Integrated Bipolar Parenting Intervention – IBPI Study  Jelena Jovanoska writes;  
This study looks at an intervention which aims to help parents with a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder. The intervention combines use of positive parenting strategies taken from a worldwide parenting program (Triple P), with information on how to recognise and self-manage bipolar experiences. Participants have been allocated to either receive the intervention at the start of the study or continue with their treatment as usual (TAU). Those who do not receive the intervention initially, are offered access to this at the end of the 12 month trial period. Recruitment to the study has now finished and we are pleased to have achieved a total of 97 participants, some of whom have recently completed the study! The trial is now at the follow up phase, where we check participants after 4, 6, 9 and 12 months to see how they are getting on. We hope that the results collected will help to demonstrate that the intervention improves outcomes for both parents and children.

EMOTE Study  Faye Banks writes;  
The EMOTE study provided information about the day-to-day mood experiences of people with and without a diagnosis of bipolar disorder (BD), which was used to inform three separate PhD projects. Each project looked at different factors which might influence mood swings, i.e. Anxiety, Circadian Rhythms, and Mood Management. People with BD, people with fibromyalgia (a chronic pain condition) and people without a mental health or chronic pain condition (control group), gave ratings of their current mood and current thoughts at random moments over an average week, whilst also wearing an ‘actiwatch’ to measure sleep and activity. The findings suggest that:  
*Whilst people with BD and fibromyalgia experience similarly high levels of disturbed sleep, the two groups differ in thinking style. Thinking styles were strongly related to mood, suggesting factors to be considered for potential treatments.  
*Compared to the control group, people with BD were more anxious and had more changeable mood. This suggests that anxiety may be a key part of mood experiences in BD.  
*People with BD experienced their mood changing more compared than control group during a normal week. People with and without BD thought differently about these mood changes and in their approach to managing them.

Understanding Mood Management: A computer based questionnaire study  Heather Robinson writes;  
The Mood Management study provided information about the way that people with and without bipolar disorder (BD) manage changes in mood. A ‘mood induction’ procedure was used to make participants’ mood more positive or negative by asking them to watch happy or sad film clips. Once mood had changed, participants completed questionnaires about their current mood. Results showed that following a change in mood, people with and without a diagnosis of BD differed in the way they thought about their mood, and used different ways to manage their mood. Specifically, people with a diagnosis of BD felt they had less personal control over mood, less understanding about mood and more concern about mood. They were more likely to think that the cause of negative mood was related to themselves rather than outside factors. People with a diagnosis of BD used more ways of coping based on negative thinking and dampening of positive emotion (down playing positive feelings), whilst people without BD used more constructive ways of coping. These results suggest that people with a diagnosis of BD interpret and try to manage minor changes in mood differently to those without BD. Future research should focus on these processes to understand the impact they have on the experience of BD over time.

Advisory Panel News  Rita Long writes  
Opportunity to get involved: Several places have recently come up on Spectrum’s Service User ‘advisory panel’. This group is an integral part of Spectrum’s work. Tasks undertaken include reviewing information sheets, staff training and generating ideas for conferences. This is a great opportunity for someone who is interested in bipolar / psychosis research and wants to volunteer in a supportive, encouraging environment. We meet bimonthly for 3 hours, allowing time for a sandwich and catch-up. The Spectrum Centre works across multicultural communities and welcomes applicants from ethnic minority groups. For an informal chat or more information please contact Service User Researchers, Liz Stokes or Rita Long on (01524) 592768.  
Also: Congratulations to existing panel members Derek and Trish who are getting married in September; and to Joe Feeley on his Music Degree from Salford University.

Glossary of research terms  Research Assistant, Adam Sawczuk clarifies a few of the terms you might come across in Mental Health Research

Quantitative vs Qualitative Research:  Quantitative research deals with data that has been measured or quantified in numerical form such as height, weight, or as often used in psychology, rating on scales or questionnaires. Qualitative research deals with data that has been observed and described but not measured, such as interactions or experiences. Researchers use Quantitative research to test a hypothesis, look for cause and effect as well as making predictions. Qualitative research is used to understand, describe and interpret factors such as attitudes, perceptions and experiences.
Mental Health Staff to give ‘lifestyle MOTs’ to patients with mental illness
Claire Hilton, Spectrum Research Assistant

Mental Health staff will soon be giving lifestyle MOTs to people with serious mental illnesses (SMI), according to the NHS News Blog (http://www.england.nhs.uk/2014/05/15/physical-mot/). This new NHS initiative aims to reduce avoidable deaths among those with SMIs, such as bipolar, schizophrenia and psychosis, who suffer from the same physical health conditions as the general population but may be more likely to pass away up to 20 years earlier (McNamee et al. 2013).

Robson & Gray (2007) noted some complex reasons for the lack of physical health checks: limitations of health services due to physical health being overlooked; the effects of having a SMI; where service users do not report physical health problems; and do not lead a healthy lifestyles; and medical side effects such as some anti-psychotics can lead to weight gain and sedentary behaviours.

NICE guidelines recommend that both primary and secondary care clinicians should provide routine health checks. This is the first time that NHS Trusts across the country will be routinely carrying out physical health checks to look at: smoking, diet, weight, blood pressure, glucose and fats/lipids to identify and treat relative illnesses.

These checks were set to start in April 2014 and health professionals such as mental health nurses, psychiatrists, health care assistants and psychologists will be given financial incentives to carry out these health checks. These health professionals will then refer the service user to other services, or provide relevant lifestyle education.

This initiative will hopefully help identify physical health problems, and ensure that service users receive treatment. It is also hoped that this initiative will help bridge the gap in communication between GPs and mental health services.

REFERENCES

Meet the team
Jelena Jovanoska asks Martie some probing questions...

What did you do before you came to work at Spectrum?
Long story! But I left school at 17 and did children’s nursing for 3 years (training). During that time I met fantastic clinical psychologists who inspired me to go into psychology, did a 3 years psychology degree then went onto a Masters in research methods. During my time doing the Masters I did a volunteering post in a NHS trust helping deliver Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy.

What inspires you to work in mental health?
I seem to have noticed many people choose to work in the field because of personal experiences such as themselves having difficulties or family. So yeah, that’s the same for me. I’m also heavily influenced by role models in my life, one of them being a clinical psychologist trained in the height of the 60’s. So naturally the idea of being a person who helps fight for the rights of people who are usually marginalised is something dear to me. It’s also very important to me that my profession’s basis lays in compassion, which I like to think is one of the roots of mental health work.

What is on your bucket list of things to do in your lifetime?
To do the Shikoku Pilgrimage on the Japanese Island of Shikoku. To do un-supported, stable hand-stands. Become a yoga teacher. Spend a time at Yokoji Mountain Centre. Do a month of Ashtanga yoga at its home in Mysore India. Keep my plants alive (currently going well).

What do you hope to achieve in the near future?
I’d really like to complete my current project to a high standard, leave achieving everything I set out to at the beginning of the post. And... get my handstand more stable!!!