This is Spectrum’s final newsletter for 2016. It’s a great opportunity to send our best wishes for the festive season. We look forward to working with you in 2017.

Professor Steve Jones writes...

Welcome to the Winter Issue of the Spectrum Centre Connect Newsletter. I have been interested in Psychology since I completed my first degree in 1985 at University College London; and ever since, I have been fascinated by the application of psychology to mental health. I undertook my PhD at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, studying Psychological Processes in psychosis, and following my clinical training there in 1992, I developed an increasing interest in issues around bipolar disorder: I worked on developing psychological approaches to bipolar whilst in London and subsequently at Manchester University.

In 2008 I took up Chair at Lancaster University and we worked to set up the Spectrum Centre. This move was largely to provide the opportunity to really look carefully at what is going on with people with bipolar disorder psychologically and to work with them to develop better, more effective psychological help, so that, ultimately, we can reach a point where people living with this condition are offered genuine choices so they can match psychological help to their range of needs and wishes. In my occasional spare time I enjoy cycling – both on the road and mountain biking.

I’d like to say thank you to all our Spectrum Connect members for taking an interest in and working with us on our research studies.

RESEARCH NEWS

Ongoing studies

The REACT Study

REACT – the Relatives Education And Coping Toolkit Study

Sue Flowers, REACT Supporter, writes

REACT: Help us help you this Christmas!

I am pleased to report that whilst writing this update we have already recruited 290 participants to the REACT (Relatives Education And Coping Toolkit) Study; our research will test the effectiveness of this new online resource in reducing the distress and increasing the wellbeing of relatives and friends of people with Bipolar or Psychosis. However, we are still looking for ANOTHER 376 PARTICIPANTS so if you know of anyone who supports people with these conditions, who might benefit from some extra information and support, please ask them if they want to get involved. In addition to accessing online resources we are also offering Amazon vouchers to all participants to thank them for their time and effort.

Sue Flowers, REACT Supporter (relative with lived experience)

For further information, check eligibility, and register for the study go to

www.reacttoolkit.co.uk
Twitter @REACTTOOLKIT
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/REACTtoolkit/
We’re delighted to include in this newsletter results from the suicidality stream of the PARADES Programme that many of you were involved with. The PARADES programme was funded by a large grant from The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The programme ran over 5 years in collaboration with Manchester Mental health and Social Care Trust, Nottingham and Manchester Universities. This was the first award for research into bipolar disorder funded by NIHR and focused on the development, evaluation and implementation of psychological approaches to bipolar disorder and related problems.

Click here to read the introductory PowerPoint presentation

If you would like more information about the PARADES programme then please visit the website:
http://www.parades-bipolar.co.uk/

Suicide in bipolar disorder: Findings from a prospective clinical database

People with a bipolar disorder diagnosis (BD) have a high risk of suicide, but little is known about what personal or treatment characteristics might be linked to this risk. This means that clinicians and families may not be able to identify who might be most at risk, what warning signs they might look for to indicate changes in risk, and therefore unable to take appropriate action. In this paper researchers sought to address this problem by examining the characteristics of all people with BD who had died by suicide in England, while under the care of mental health services (covering the period 1996-2000).

Findings:
- An average of 116 people with BD, who were under the care of mental health services, died by suicide each year
- 60% had been in contact with mental health services during the week before, but were assessed as being at low risk for suicide
- Personality disorder, alcohol addiction/misuse and depressive illness were also signs of increased risk among people with BD

Why it’s important
Little research has been carried out on suicide in BD, even though rates of suicide in BD are high, so it is important to help raise awareness of this important subject and help prompt much needed conversations around the emotive and often stigmatising issue of suicide. Identifying common characteristics that might indicate a service user is at risk of self-harm/suicide e.g. alcohol dependency, might help family members identify when a service user needs additional support. This may reduce stress, anxiety and the isolation felt by people who care for someone who has suicidal thoughts or plans. The information highlighted by this study can be used to support the promotion of an environment that is conducive to the wellbeing of people affected by the issues associated with suicide. The results of this study can also be used by mental health services to increase the confidence of health care professionals who work with vulnerable clients. In turn, this could increase the confidence of service users and the people supporting them. This study contributes to a growing body of research aimed at reducing the tragic consequences, too often experienced by people with BD and those who them.
STAFF NEWS

Sadly we’re losing some of our key staff over the next month or so. Both Alyson Dodd and Rita Long who have been long-serving and central members of the Spectrum Team are moving on to pastures new. We have asked them for their reflections on their time at Spectrum.

Rita writes
Hi all I’ve taken this opportunity to let you all know that after five dynamic and inspiring years at the Spectrum Centre, I am leaving the Service User Researcher Post at the end of December. I’m moving on to build on my experiences at spectrum and pursue other service user projects closer to home. As always I’ve got lots of fingers in lots of pies but I’ll be mostly concentrating on working with Stockport MIND and the Soteria project in Greater Manchester.

It has been a rollercoaster journey that has given me the confidence and impetus to follow my personal interests in the world of mental health. Spectrum introduced me to many experiences that previously I would not have dreamed of, never mind achieved. When Professor Fiona Lobban suggested I applied for a Winston Churchill Traveling Fellowship I honestly didn’t take it seriously. However, after a little persuasion I applied through an open application and interview process and was awarded the Fellowship. My Fellowship took me to Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco and Ontario and closer to home to the House of Lords and I was invited to speak at Blenheim palace. It was this Fellowship that introduced me to the Soteria project and was the catalyst for setting up something similar in the North West.

While at Spectrum, I have presented at many national and international conferences. A far cry from feeling ‘I’d made it’ when I’d been to a meeting in a university! I sometimes find it hard to believe that pre-PARADES and Spectrum I literally couldn’t stand in front of any group and speak. (I imagine a few of you will be laughing at the thought of me being scared to talk anywhere!!)

Coming from a non-academic background made working with many service users, carers, researchers and mental health staff not only rewarding but an education in itself. Working with such a wide variety of people with differing knowledge and skills is the aspect of my work thing I will miss the most.

With the help of Spectrum Connect and the advisory panel we have built a team of people who contribute to Spectrum’s work in a variety of ways. These valuable systems will carry on long after my departure. Spectrum will be employing a new Service User Researcher who will support our existing networks as well as bringing new ideas and links to additional networks.

The post with be advertised early next year (we are not sure when so keep an eye on twitter and our Facebook page). If anyone would like to know a little more about the roles then please email me on: rita.long2@Lancaster.ac.uk

So, with mixed emotions I say goodbye as Spectrum’s Service User Researcher although I hope to be involved in other ways in the future.

Alyson Dodd is also leaving us at Christmas after 7 years of working at Spectrum. Alyson has worked tirelessly on several Spectrum research projects including the Enhanced Relapse Prevention online trial, investigation of the relationship between thinking styles and recovery in bipolar disorder, and numerous studies exploring the psychological factors that underlie risk of developing mania. Alyson has also led the postgraduate course module Mental Health: Theory, Research and Practice since 2011. She is moving on to a Senior Research Fellow post at Northumbria University, where she will continue her work on evaluating therapies for bipolar disorder and exploring the psychology of emotion regulation and mania. She also hopes to embark on a project investigating how to support students who experience mood swings with the charity Student Minds, as a follow on from the Spectrum Centre study ‘Personality and the Student Experience’.
Alyson says, ‘I came to the Spectrum Centre in 2009 as a postdoc, fresh from completing my PhD at the University of Manchester. Within a few years, I became a Lecturer, leading the PhD in Mental Health course and collaborating with Spectrum Centre colleagues on many exciting research projects. I strongly believe in the Spectrum Centre mission statement and I could not have asked for a better, more supportive place to develop as a researcher. Leaving is bittersweet, but I am excited for new challenges ahead - and will remain a firm friend of Spectrum.’

Lizzie Tyler is back from maternity leave
She is looking for people to take part in her study ‘Recovery focused CBT for older adults with bipolar disorder’. If anyone is interested in taking part please see the flyer on the back page.

**OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED**

*Studies Looking for Research Participants*

**Decision making and risk in people diagnosed with bipolar disorder.**

My name is Anna Chiara Sicilia and I am conducting this research as a student on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology programme at Lancaster University.

**What is the study about?**

The purpose of this study is to explore the links between the way in which people diagnosed with bipolar disorder make sense of their daily experiences and make decisions and their likelihood of taking risks in everyday life. Bipolar disorder has been associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour, particularly during periods of mania. This often leads to negative consequences both in the short and long-term. Understanding the reasons why bipolar disorder is associated with a higher likelihood of taking risks will help to obtain a deeper understanding of the condition as well as its clinical management.

The study will involve **eight (8) brief online questionnaires** focused around people’s perception of risk and risk taking, impulsivity and their current mood state. As you will see, some of the questionnaires ask about risks related to sexual activity; BUT the aim of the study is not to find out about your sexual life. Risk associated with sexual life is just one example of many candidate risk behaviours. We are only interested in your attitudes and thinking around “the risks” associated with engaging in sexual activity.

Please note that it is possible to pause and save at any time during the study, therefore if you feel like you need a break, you will be able to continue the study at a later time.

If you are interested in this study, please follow the link below to read our participants’ information sheet and check if you are eligible to take part. This link will eventually take you to a page where you can choose whether or not to take part in the study and, if you agree to take part, will take you on to the online questionnaires.

https://lancasteruni.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_b7tap9F1Mvq5mFn

If you have any queries, please contact the Chief Investigator in the first instance.

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<th>Chief investigator</th>
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<td>Anna Chiara Sicilia</td>
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The study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC) at Lancaster University.
Recovery Focused Therapy for Older Adults with Bipolar Disorder

- Have you been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder?
- Are you over the age of 60?

Would you like the opportunity to take part in a study with the potential to receive up to six months of individual, recovery focused psychological therapy with a trained professional?

The Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research, Lancaster University is conducting a study that may be of interest to you.

- 25 people over the age of 60 with bipolar disorder will be offered a recovery focused CBT intervention for 6 months alongside current treatment.
- We will compare their outcomes with 25 people who continued with their treatment as usual.
- Both groups will be followed up for a 12 month period and asked to complete some telephone interviews and questionnaires.

WE ARE RECRUITING NOW! PLEASE CONTACT US USING THE DETAILS BELOW

- **Email**: e.tyler@lancaster.ac.uk
- **Phone**: 07967 837938
- **Post**: The Spectrum Centre, Division of Health Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YT
- **Website**: www.spectrumcentre.org

The REACT Study is still seeking participants

*(See details on page 1)*

**Spectrum Connect Database**: If you haven’t already done so, you can register to be added to our database so that you can receive information about what is going on in Spectrum and find out if you’d like to get more involved. To join the Spectrum Connect database just go to our website, click on ‘Get involved’, and then on ‘Register now’ or contact us (see below for our contact details).
**Contact details:**  
**Website**  www.spectrumcentre.org  
**email**  spectrumcentre@lancaster.ac.uk  **phone**  (01524) 593756  

The Spectrum Centre, Division of Health Research, Furness Building, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YG  

We are on Facebook ‘The Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research’  
Or follow us on twitter @spectrumcentre  

Lancaster University  

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