

Talking Therapy

The Listening Service (TLS) Quarterly Newsletter
Issue 4 December 2010

Welcome to Issue 4 of Talking Therapy and *Happy New Year* to you all! We hope you all have a wonderful break over the Christmas and New Year period and are refreshed and ready to take on 2011!

We've had some useful feedback on our newsletter and also requests to get involved with volunteering at TLS – we thank you very much for your support and offers of help. There are a number of areas in which we would love to have your assistance so please do keep contacting us – we would ask you to be specific as to what you would like to do, for example, developing the website, contributing to the newsletter, searching for funding etc.

It's been a busy few months for our volunteers and staff at TLS, which you'll read about in the pages below, from visits to Downing Street and the House of Lords to World Mental Health Day celebrations in Harrow. We hope you enjoy reading about our activities and remember that **our service hours are now Monday to Wednesday 9am to 1pm.**

TLS Executive Committee

Downing Street Visit

As a member of the 2009 Muslim Women's Power List, our treasurer, Rimla Akhtar, was invited by the Prime Minister to a private Eid-ul-Adha reception at 10 Downing Street on 22 November to celebrate the annual pilgrimage made by Muslims to Makkah, Saudi Arabia.



Here's a photo of her with David Cameron and also Co-Chair of the Conservative Party and Minister without Portfolio, Baroness Saeda Warsi.

Rimla was joined at the event by leading men and women from across the Muslim community, including those from the sports, finance, community, arts, government, defence and public sectors. In a speech at the reception, The Prime Minister noted the "immense" contribution that is made by Muslims to the UK and spoke about the need to understand the commonalities between faiths and celebrate our faith.

He also commented on the need for each one of us to think about what we can do to "build a stronger community", to "take more control of our lives" and "to help solve some of the social problems we have in our country."

Rimla commented, "It was an inspirational evening and fantastic to see the Prime Minister leading a positive celebration of the contributions made by this community. It really was surreal walking in through the No.10 door – unfortunately there were no media cameras there to capture the moment!"

Help at Hand for Concerned Parents!

By Lea Holmes

When parents or carers find out their child is using drugs it can be a terrible shock and cause tension and distress for them, their family and friends. As drug and alcohol problems do not exist in isolation it is important to follow a "Think Family" approach and focus on the needs of the whole family rather than only addressing the drug.

As a family support worker for ASK under 18 Drug and Alcohol team, has.... I am available to all parents and carers of young people 11 to 18 years at risk of misusing alcohol and drugs. It is often the case that a young person may be rebelling, using drugs or drinking alcohol against the advice of their parent and with no intention of stopping. Even so,

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I enable parents to get an understanding of why young people may misuse substances, improve communications, implement new boundaries and enhance family relationships.

The Department of Children, Schools and Families' document *Every Child Matters: Change for Children, Young People and Drugs* outlines how parents, carers and families have been identified as having a key role in preventing problematic drug use among young people. ASK parent and carer support aim to help the parent or carer by increasing confidence and developing behaviour management and communication skills.

Lea works with parents, grandparents, carers, foster carers and supported lodging hosts, offering a blend of emotional support and practical guidance. If you are concerned about young person and would like free confidential advice, guidance and support call Lea on 020 300 88284 or email ASK@compass-uk.org

World Mental Health Day – 10 October 2010

On a chilly and windy morning, TLS, in conjunction with Harrow PCT, Capable Communities and other local agencies, participated in celebrating World Mental Health Day 2010. The theme for the year's celebration was mental health and long term conditions and the need for continued and integrated care.

World Mental Health Day is an annual event, celebrated throughout the world, to raise awareness about mental health issues. The day promotes more open discussion about mental health issues and how best we can go about treating the conditions involved. Here in Harrow, the aim was to engage with the local community to increase public awareness in a fun and energetic way and, despite the harsh weather, the motivation and interest of passers-by was clear to see. The event included a number of dance groups and singers taking over the floor at St. George's Centre as well as the Harrow Community Choir and local community groups promoting their work at the Harrow Baptist Church. Amongst those present for the day was the Mayor for Harrow,



Councillor Asad Omar, who

reiterated the importance of the work being done in the field of mental health. The Mayor also learnt about the work being undertaken by TLS and was more than happy to promote it by posing with our latest leaflet in this picture to the left.



TLS' work was promoted through a podcast which was recorded for Harrow Community Radio and played for all to hear at the Church. Additionally, our Managing Director, Neelam Farzana, and Treasurer, Rimla Akhtar, manned a stall for the day in the town centre and engaged with our visitors who were questioning us on the day's events as well as the work of TLS, including some policemen who took an interest in our work and decided to take our leaflets with them.

The day ended with a fantastic opportunity for all to dance to the hit Bollywood song "All is well" which, in addition to being great fun, reminded everyone of the importance of remaining strong mentally as well as physically. As the World Health Organisation notes, there is "no health without mental health".

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QUOTE OF THE QUARTER:

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward."

Vernon Law

Kick It Out Recognition

In addition to being invited to Downing Street, TLS Treasurer, Rimla Akhtar, was also invited to the House of Lords by Lord Herman Ouseley who is also the Chair of the national organisation that works to eradicate racism from football, Kick It Out (KIO).

The event was organised to celebrate the achievements of KIO during 2010 and to launch the review of the work carried out during the previous 2009/10 football season. Lord Ouseley welcomed the attendees, amongst whom were players from the prestigious Premier League as well as key community figures, and reiterated the importance of combating the issues which continue to hamper the game. His words were echoed by Minister for Sport and the Olympics, Hugh Robertson, who also handed out special awards to recognise the contribution of individuals and organisations to the football community.

Amongst those recognised was our very own Rimla who received the grassroots award for her "impressive contribution" as the Chair of the influential Muslim Women's Sport Foundation. Rimla commented, "It wasn't until 20 seconds into the introduction that I realised Herman was talking about me! I'm obviously very honoured to receive this award and from the Minister for Sport. Sport is something I've been passionate about for my whole life and I'm eager to help other women have a positive experience of it. This is for everyone who has worked to bring equality in sport or indeed in any arena in life."



A video put together by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport can be found at the following link – http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtube_gdata_player&v=PS9u7s-3vWQ

Listen to Yourself with the Ears of Your Heart

By Neelam Farzana

We can listen to ourselves in various ways, some of them are listed below.

Is your body warm enough? Do you drink enough water and have enough food to live? Food, water and air are basic necessities and important Ingredients for our well being. Information on the importance of water intake nowadays is well advertised and so is a healthy diet. A saying of the Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him) is that our stomach should be a third food, a third water, and a third air. Do you follow a good diet or is your diet poor? If so, then look into it consciously and make amends.

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Go a step further and listen to your soul - what is it saying to you? Does it have enough food or is it thirsty? Meditation, contemplation, making and maintaining the connection with the Supreme Being, our Spirituality can help fulfil the thirst and hunger of the soul.

Breath is life, how much attention do you give to your breathing? We can learn to breathe in ways that can help our bodies and help quieten the internal noise of the mind. Yoga can be one way to learning different methods of breathing. Sit in quiet surroundings and a comfortable position and listen to any internal noise within you. Although breathing is an automatic function, focussing and breathing consciously can help you access positive feelings of well being. Begin to bring more awareness to your breath for own good.

How are you physically? Do you exercise and/or walk regularly? Any aches and pains must be addressed. My way of dealing with minor issues is in the following sequence: resting and relaxing, stretching, use of alternative medicine with the full knowledge of my GP, and if nothing works then move to conventional medication. What is your method? Mental health is as important as physical health. How are you feeling? Do you generally feel at ease or are you carrying unnecessary worries? Worries will give you something to do but will not take you anywhere so ask yourself, "Where am I in a situation?" "Am I seeing it objectively or am I lost in it?" How much of the responsibility is yours in the situation? Take a pen and paper and write the answers down. Putting them on a piece of paper may help clear the picture and bring clarity.

How critical and judgmental are you of yourself? Do you often put yourself down? Notice what you think and say, even when joking. Pay attention to how you react to your mistakes and poor choices. Are you the only one who makes mistakes? Can you forgive yourself and give you permission to enjoy your life?

Instead of putting yourself down, affirm positive messages about yourself. Treat yourself gently, with respect and grace. Every time you put yourself down do the complete opposite – give yourself a gift. The gift doesn't have to be an expensive one. If you love flowers just visit your local flower shop – a mere observation of the flowers can be relaxing. The memory of the beauty of flowers can be visited later without visiting the shop. Or it could be a pat on your shoulder for recognising the negative and turning the tide in the other direction for one's own good. Buy a bouquet for yourself if you can. You deserve it. Think of yourself as a child who is learning to walk, you need encouragement and not criticism.

Do you accept yourself? Are you kind and compassionate to yourself? If not, then what is stopping you?

Ask yourself and listen to your inner answer. Accept yourself – be kind, gentle and compassionate. These qualities, though not seen physically, will be seeping through you. Let the positive energy spread around like an aroma, like the sweet aroma curling out from an incense stick and melting away.....flow like water, adapt yourself to your surroundings, be at ease.

Love yourself, listen to yourself and pay attention.

We are a combination of mind, body and soul. If our soul is hungry **or** thirsty, we won't feel at ease. If there is anything on our mind that is bothering us, we won't feel at ease. The unease can travel in the body and can bring discomfort, which, if not addressed, can lead to ill health. So we see how important it is to listen to one's self, to know one's self as best we can and act accordingly. Be a jack of all trades and the master of yourself.

**SUPPORT THE LISTENING
SERVICE BY DONATING**

Email info@thelisteningservice.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

About 10% of children have a mental health
problem at any one time

Source: Mental Health Foundation

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