

# Talking Therapy

The Listening Service (TLS) Quarterly Newsletter  
Issue 8 January 2012  
Edited by Rimla Akhtar

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A Happy New Year to everyone and Welcome to Issue 8 of Talking Therapy.

This quarter has seen the reach of TLS expand to hospitals and mental health agencies with our service providing much needed support to the women with long-term mental health issues. The theme for this issue's article from Neelam is Sources and Resources, which help us take a look at what aspects of our life energise us. We also have our regular quote and fact for the quarter but we begin with some exciting news regarding our Treasurer.

Enjoy Talking Therapy and we hope you share it with friends, family and colleagues alike!

TLS Executive Committee

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## TLS Treasurer Wins Award

Rimla Akhtar has received the Asian Woman in Football Award at the Asian Football Awards, which were held at the prestigious Home of Football, Wembley Stadium on 24 January 2012. She has been recognised for her outstanding contribution to the world of football for the past ten years.

After only three years of heading up the MWSF - Muslim Women's Sports Foundation - Rimla moved the organisation from its survival stage, where its annual income was £3k, to its growth stage where she single-handedly pursued and successfully obtained funding of over £235k for a dynamic three year project to generate women role models in sports from the black and minority communities. Rimla's well sought after knowledge and experience working with various communities have resulted in a number of advisory positions as well as her holding trusteeships with charities and not for profit organisations working across the UK, including advising the Board of the Football Association on, amongst other areas, diversity and race equality matters.



We at The Listening Service are very proud of her achievements and wish her the best for her future work!

Look out for a "Behind the Scenes" piece on her in the next issue.

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## Nominations Closing Soon for Ambassador Awards!

The Muslim Women's Sport Foundation (MWSF), a registered charity supported by TLS' Executive Committee, will be hosting the inaugural Ambassador Awards at Wembley Stadium this April with the support of the Football Association. The MWSF, set up in 2001, provides opportunities for women from minority ethnic backgrounds with cultural and religious sensitivities to access sports and shine as players, coaches, referees, volunteers and supporters.

The Ambassador Awards recognises that it's time to highlight the talent and role models that have emerged from the past decade of work. There are UK based and international categories and individuals as well as organisations can be nominated. The deadline for nominations is 31 January 2012, so not long to go.

For further information please visit [www.awards.mwsf.org.uk](http://www.awards.mwsf.org.uk). Start nominating now!

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## Sources and Resources

By Neelam Farzana

Resources are the sources of energy. Going beyond the basic needs, food, water, shelter, security etc and even good company can be a resource. On the other hand, demanding and bad company can be draining. Visiting places of interest can be resourceful – nature, greenery, water, oceans, all sorts of waterfalls, whether water gushing out creating a milky foam or a flow of water giving the image of glass and allowing us to see through it to the grass, mud or cement beneath. I love it all.

Walking in the drizzle, watching heavy rainfall, enjoying the Sun and similar beauties are my favourites and the sources of my energies. However, my recent trip to Saudi Arabia for Hajj (the Muslim pilgrimage) changed my thoughts. Some time ago I went for Umrah, which is essentially a “mini” Hajj. It was a truly delightful experience and, afterward, I wanted to go for Umrah repeatedly and as often as possible. I had thought that the actual Hajj would have been difficult for me due to the fact that there are millions of people present and I tend to avoid crowds wherever possible.

Depending on financial resources, Hajj is a once in a lifetime obligation for a Muslim and so in order to fulfil my duty towards my Lord – Allah/God – I embarked on this journey in October, content as I had my three beautiful assistants with me – my children. The tour guide informed us that the crowd would be in the region of 5.5 million and there were all colours and races from around the world. Looking out through the hotel window onto the roads, it was as if football fans were chanting as they walked out from the stadium after a match had finished here in the UK. The difference was that the scene lasted for days, throughout the day and at night, and not just for a few moments. The chants were for the Lord/Allah/God and His commands, not for a football team. The team colours they wore were white and, as they walked on the street, they appeared as clouds drifting along the earth – I felt sense of purity in the environment surrounding me. It was truly beautiful!

This amazing and joyful experience was extremely fulfilling. My issue of avoiding crowds disappeared somehow and the searing heat was of no botheration. I felt the strength of the invisible ties I had with these places – first, the Kaaba (the mosque in Makkah, which was initially built by the Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him) and second, Masjid-e-Nabvi (the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) – were strong, invisible but present.



### SUPPORT THE LISTENING SERVICE BY DONATING

Email [info@thelisteningservice.org.uk](mailto:info@thelisteningservice.org.uk)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Anxiety will have an effect on both the body and the mind.

Source: MIND

The Listening Service is a free and confidential service for women across the UK.

Tel: 020 8429 5875

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Even the arrangements to cool the huge crowd were of delight to me as I stood with my eyes closed in front of the humidifier that were spreading out mists of water at what appeared 100mph in the courtyards of the mosques and felt the immense pleasure and fulfilment. The mist around me felt like blessings being sent upon me. The cooling effect on my body and the calming effect on my mind and spirit were amazing. My thoughts were that these places are mine, they belong to the centre of my heart and I am enjoying them in my own space.

This experience that I embarked upon as an obligation became the source of enjoyment and energy. My concern of avoiding the crowd has now become weak, enabling me to accomplish some personal tasks that seemed daunting previously. Some time ago I read about God's command telling us that if we follow them then we are granted our wishes too and that's exactly what I witnessed here – a resource in itself from the ultimate Source - Allah.

I wondered at what was occurring within me to make me feel this good when the inner resource Serotonin came to my mind. Serotonin is a contributory factor to us maintaining happy feelings (for further information visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serotonin>). Once again, I was reminded of the intertwined and collaborative work of opposites – the inner resources and the outer resources.

This piece is a glimpse of my resources. What are yours? Today, use the light of your consciousness and look into your resources, as well as those that drain, in order to make conscious differentiations and possible amendments to your life.

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## World Mental Health Day 2011



World Mental Health Day is an annual event observed around the world and supported by the United Nations. This year, in Harrow, it was celebrated on 7 October to raise public awareness about mental health issues and the support services that are available.

The Listening Service, together with other mental health organisations, gathered outside St. George's Shopping Centre in Harrow to mark the day. Despite the windy and chilly morning, the spirit to support the cause was warm and alive. Visitors collecting the information available included the Mayor of Harrow, Councillor Mrinal Choudhury and Mayoress, Mrs Rama Choudhury.

According to [national-awareness-days.com](http://national-awareness-days.com), it is thought that around 154 million people around the world suffer from depression and so it is likely that we or someone we know will be affected by mental illness during our lifetime. This year's theme was "investing in mental health" and so the aim was to promote mental health and wellbeing and to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. Those at the stalls were joined by the Harrow Community Choir, whose members comprise both mental health service users and carers.

If you have any stories that you would like to share in relation to mental health and Mental Health Day 2011, please email us at [info@thelisteningservice.org.uk](mailto:info@thelisteningservice.org.uk).

### QUOTE OF THE QUARTER:

"Whoever is happy will make others happy too. He who has courage and faith will never perish in misery."

*Anne Frank*

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