

Talking Therapy

The Listening Service (TLS) Quarterly Newsletter
Issue 7 September 2011

Welcome to Issue 7 of Talking Therapy.

There have been many arts related projects taking place in Harrow that our volunteers have been involved with this quarter and you'll be able to read about one of them in this issue. But first comes this quarter's article on acceptance, forgiveness, peace and harmony being key ingredients for internal harmony for us all.

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

TLS Executive Committee

Acceptance and Forgiveness

By Neelam Farzana

Forgiving others. We hear this being said frequently. Self development and looking after one's self is sometimes a struggle so do we actually accept ourselves, particularly in this fast-paced environment? Do we look into slowing down, de-stressing and being at peace within?

The ability to forgive and accept yourself makes accepting others easier. Self acceptance and forgiveness is the key to maintaining peace as otherwise there is often a continuous struggle with thoughts such as, "Why did I do that?", "Why was I treated that way?", "Part of me says this but another says that" etc. Whilst I was watching a BBC television documentary I thought that this is what the scientist meant when he was explaining the many thousands of selves within us. In my experience, adding an element of acceptance with balance and working with troublesome thoughts/inner dialogues has proven beneficial, whether in counselling settings or otherwise. Taking charge while also being easy with ourselves is similar to comforting others when we see them go through difficult times. As a Muslim, I am conscious of all the resources provided to me in this world by Allah (God), known and unknown, and it is my responsibility to look after them for my own good. However, I am all too aware of the ease with which I can fall in the trap of ignoring the need to do this.

In relation to the unknown resources, I recently came across a piece of work by Susan Sussman which noted the following: "Gershon and Wade (1994) and Gershon (1998), working on the presence of serotonin in the gut, described the discovery of a virtual 'second brain' in the gastro-intestinal tract, having found all the major neuro-transmitters hidden deep in the walls of the small intestine." Despite the fact that we all regularly talk about our "gut feeling", it was delightful to read the discovery of this second brain. It really does go to show that the more I know, the more I come to know that I know nothing!

The need for a trust-worthy environment in which you can talk about issues that may be affecting you is great and hence why services like TLS exist. The impact of empathic and sympathetic words can be beneficial – even the mere presence of "another" is beneficial, which can be seen as "healing energy", as described by Carl Rogers.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER:

"Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results."

Albert Einstein

ADDITIONS TO JUNE 2011 NEWSLETTER

We didn't mention the name of the poet who was quoted in the previous newsletter's article "Ending Mental Health Stigma" – this was the famous scholar, poet, philosopher and thinker, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, whose poetry is considered to be amongst the greatest of the modern era. Note also that the poem should read:

Jahaan main ehlay emaan soorat-e-
khursheed jeetay hain. Idhar doobay udhar
nikley udhar doobay idhar nikley.

LOOK OUT!

TLS will be at Harrow shopping centre on 7 October 2011 – this year's mental health day – we hope to see you there!

Email info@thelisteningservice.org.uk for further information.

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

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Again, it comes back to being at ease and at peace, particularly when providing the kind of presence mentioned above, however to get to this point we usually first need to work on our own selves, including accepting and forgiving. This requires self-observation, monitoring of our thoughts and feelings, our actions, behaviours and habits, making amendments where needed. Our senses give us messages that are taken within and manifested, these are stored in our memory and we attribute our meaning to them.

Keeping calm is key in changing and demanding times. With rethinking and re-planning we can reconnect with our well-being and taking responsibility of our own input in the situation is part of self-acceptance. When dealing with challenges, stepping back and thinking through things often enables us to use our own inner strength with confidence and flexibility and thus we do not repeat mistakes and failures which do not help nor change what has happened. To encourage growth and positive change there is a need to forgive yourself, which will aid in learning from your mistakes and failures. Change is usually painful but we must remember that, with time, feelings will pass. Make changes consciously, asking yourself, "what is the lesson for me in this situation?" and move on. At times of confusion I try to tell myself, "It's all ok. All is fine." It helps where or not everything is fine. My grandfather used to say to look for the best in people, which made sense later in my life. This keeps me at ease and thus peaceful.

There is a quote from Jalal ad-Din Rumi which reflects this understanding: "If you are irritated by every rub, how will your mirror be polished?"

Arts and Mental Health Celebration

27 August saw the celebration of mental well-being in an arts festival at St. Anne's Centre in Harrow. The day-long event saw dancers, poets, painters and singers come together under the banner of Time To Change, the national campaign to end mental health stigma. TLS partnered with Time To Change and ran



a glass painting stall, which proved to be the most



popular amongst the community. Many adults and children alike, several new to the glass painting world, enthusiastically engaged their creative juices on glass frames with varied results reflecting the many backgrounds of the individuals taking part.

The festival was part of an "arts week" being held that also included a special screening at Vue Cinema in St. George's of the film "Open Secrets" directed by Azeem Khan, about stigma within a British Asian family.

If you have experienced mental health stigma and would like to share your story then contact us at info@thelisteningservice.org.uk.

SUPPORT THE LISTENING SERVICE BY DONATING

Email info@thelisteningservice.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?

Long-term and intense anger has been linked with mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and self-harm, as well as poorer physical health.

Source: Mental Health Foundation

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