

# Talking Therapy

The Listening Service (TLS) Quarterly Newsletter  
Issue 3 September 2010

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A little later than planned however we welcome you once again and this time to the third issue of our quarterly newsletter!

There has been much activity here behind the scenes at TLS as we continue to increase our accessibility and availability. Thanks to a recently received grant, we are pleased to announce our new and improved operating hours which will enable us to double the service we currently provide. **From Monday 4 October our new service hours will be Monday to Wednesday 9am to 1pm.**

Our website will be updated over the coming months so do remember to visit [www.thelisteningservice.org.uk](http://www.thelisteningservice.org.uk). Also, if you are interested in contributing to the newsletter then do get in contact! We welcome any feedback on the content of both however in the meantime, and once again, enjoy Talking Therapy!

TLS Executive Committee

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## Buckingham Palace Visit

As a shortlisted candidate for the Asian Women of Achievement Awards, Neelam Farzana, our MD, was invited to tea at Buckingham Palace.

Here's a photo of her outside the steps to the magnificent home of the Queen, the official residence of British sovereigns since 1837, with its 775 rooms including 240 bedrooms and 78 bathrooms!

Neelam's group was greeted by Air Vice-Marshal David Walker, Master of the Household of the Royal Household of the Sovereign of the United Kingdom, before being taken on a special tour of the Palace.



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## World Mental Health Day – 10 October 2010

World Mental Health Day will be taking place on 10 October.

The day is about raising public awareness of mental health issues and the day promotes more open discussion of mental disorders and investments in prevention and treatment services. There is a clearly vast treatment gap for mental, neurological and substance-use disorders as compared to general physical ailments, which is even greater in under developed countries. Physical and mental health are significantly linked and there is a real need to deal with mental health problems alongside physical illnesses.

### **Job Advertisement**

TLS is looking for an Office Manager.

The role is for 12 hours a week and will involve ensuring the smooth running of TLS' service through providing various support services to our volunteers.

More information can be provided on request.

Please email [jobs@thelisteningservice.org.uk](mailto:jobs@thelisteningservice.org.uk)

The theme for this year is a continuation of the one on integration of physical and mental health from last year, with a specific focus on the relationship of mental health with chronic physical illnesses. A greater focus is required for the mental well-being of people with chronic physical illnesses, as well as physical care, through a continued and integrated care and this is what the world, along with TLS, will be focusing on this year.

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

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## Self Expression – How Important Is It For You? *By Neelam Farzana*

Thoughts, they have their impact.

They do not exist in isolation, they create vibrations, ripple out and then take effect. We may find ourselves confused by the various inner dialogues that go on inside us and so we struggle to attain clarity – this is where speaking up, exploring and expressing become useful.

Most of us agree that some pressure is needed to keep us motivated. However, if the load is unbearable, we become stressed. One way of reducing stress is to talk about your thoughts and your feelings - this is **taking charge** of your well-being and is not a weakness, as some may choose to view it. You are looking into your inner self and paying attention to it, creating a bond with that self is a process of self elevation.

We can express ourselves in various forms: talking, drawing, painting, performing, writing etc. Some time ago I worked with an aggressive and violent young man. He was extremely frustrated so I asked him to engage in a writing exercise. To begin with, he wrote many aggressive words to describe himself using black and brown colours. He worked without pausing and used such force that reflected his body language. Eventually, he calmed down, placed all the writing material to one side and sat back, tired. This work helped him release some frustration and anger. Explaining his work he showed how angry he was with himself and with the significant others in his life. The explanation of his last piece of work was that he wanted to have a wife and children of his own and not the life he was living then – a cathartic process. This taught me how similar we are deep within us regardless of how we may look or be perceived.

I use various kinds of material such as paper, clay, glass and canvas for this kind of work. Recently I was invited to give a talk on "Communication through glass" by The League of Jewish Women. At one stage I asked for a volunteer from the group to experience the contents of my talk by working on glass and expressing themselves. My aim for working this way was for the better understanding of the group about



my talk. Not one but three women came forward, one of whom said to me that she didn't know what to do. I used my counselling skills and asked her to stay with this thought in order to accept that part of herself. Within a few moments she asked me for some black coloured paper. Now, in my experience, dark colours are often used when people are weighed down by heavy responsibilities and/or under pressures of negative emotions but one can also feel the heavy pressures of a positive experience which need exploration/expression as well. While I was involved with other members of the group, she was busy working. Not knowing what to do to then begin flowing with ideas – this usually happens when we accept our thoughts, stay with them and don't oppose them, thereby avoiding internal conflict and thus enabling self acceptance and feeling at ease in the moment. This particular volunteer finished her piece and talked about her creativity, explaining the small figure she drew representing herself with the rest of the drawing representing her life at that time, the heavy responsibilities in her life. Black was the main colour she used in her work and so we see how colours affect our mood and vice-versa.

The impact on the rest of the group was also interesting with one member of the group commenting, "it is fascinating" and another participant saying, "it is enjoyable". This is exactly the point of these exercises, to feel good, be at ease, to relax, as I see relaxation healing us at a deeper level. When we enjoy our lives and feel good we function better. My focus in these kinds of exercise provisions is to work with thoughts and feelings - **not the beauty of creativity but the beauty in creativity.**

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The meanings attributed to the piece of art by the artists in these exercises are of paramount importance because their piece is the sketch of their inner world, their thoughts and their feelings in that moment to express themselves, which can be of comfort, and in my experience this is what often takes place. Thoughts and feelings are part of our inner fabric - as the saying goes:

Watch your Thoughts, they become words.  
Watch your Words, they become actions.  
Watch your Actions, they become habits.  
Watch your Habits, they become character.  
Watch your Character; it becomes your Destiny.

Life is a continuous process of change – we constantly evolve and transition from one state to the next.

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## The Voice of Victims By Neelam Farzana

It's been 5 years since the bombings in London and the 7th July Assistance Centre, where I once volunteered as a counsellor, held a remembrance event in conjunction with other support organisations in East London in honour of those who were affected by the events of that day. Whilst listening to the survivors and bereaved, admiring the bravery and trying to understand how they may have felt (especially the process some of them had to go through when finding and identifying the bodies of their loved ones), I remembered not only my struggle on that day but also of those whose struggles go unnoticed and/or receive no help.

Amongst the many commuters that morning, my son was also travelling to work on the London Underground. After hearing the news of bombing I made several phone calls to reach him but he wouldn't attend his phone. I called his work and found that he hadn't reached work and neither had he phoned them. I tried his friends but he hadn't contacted them either. The feelings of helplessness and vulnerability I went through are difficult to explain. Walking up and down the stairs not knowing what to do, I found his mobile in his room. This was a momentary relief but I was then back in my fear of the unknown. It wasn't until his manageress called me informing me of his safe arrival at work that brought me to face my emotional state.

A speaker who lost his son in Sharm-el-Sheikh talked about the process of his journey to Egypt and the lack of assistance. My imagination began following the speaker's physical journey as well as his emotional journey. I thought of his difficulty of informing his wife regarding their son and assumed how he may have dealt with it and the emotional pain attached for both parents. The process of liaising with the families in difficult circumstances was highlighted by a family liaison officer mentioning the need to be realistic on the part of officers.

It is beneficial to live here in the UK as an individual that has freedom however there are also fears which I face on a daily basis due to being a mother and these fears become real for many others across the country. These will be different to those faced in other parts of the world where the worry may be in relation to how they will feed their children, how they will provide clean water or indeed how they can ensure physical protection.

The pain and the lack of justice, the bereavement and the psychological effects on victims, as well as the survivors - who is helping them? Are they not human? By the end of the day I was left with these questions and the reinforced understanding that there is a need to support those who are suffering all around the world.

### QUOTE OF THE QUARTER:

"The world is three days: As for yesterday, it has vanished. As for tomorrow, you may never see it. As for today, it is yours, so work on it.

Hassan Al-Basri

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## ADVERTISEMENT

### WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY EVENTS IN HARROW

Join us and fellow organisations from Harrow in a celebration of World Mental Health Day between 8 – 13 October. Look out for TLS' stall on St Ann's Road and our presentation at the Harrow Baptist Church both on 8 October where our interview for Harrow Community Radio will be aired.

**Inspired by World Mental Health Day we invite you to find out how we can support your well being.**



**8th October, 10.00am - 5.00pm**  
St Ann's Shopping Centre  
Music, Classical Dance, Karaoke

**8th October, 10.00am - 5.00pm**  
St Ann's Road, Harrow  
Wide range of information stalls and activity showing how Harrow supports your well-being.  
Free Hugs




**8th October, 10.00am - 5.00pm**  
Baptist Church  
Harrow Baptist Church, College Road  
Drama, Music, Talks, Healing, Reiki, Laughter Therapy Workshops  
Refreshments

**13th October, 10.30am onwards**  
The Hive, Camrose Avenue  
7-a-side Football Tournament  
Refreshments

**12th October, 10.00am - 4.00pm**  
Wiseworks Open Day  
Refreshments, Plants, Woodwork, Computer taster sessions

**13th October, 1.30pm - 4.00pm**  
The Bridge, Christchurch Avenue  
Wealdstone Open Day

**With Contributions from**  
Sweet Sensations, Srishti, Harrow Community Choir, Harrow Users Group, Anjlie Chappia, Mind in Harrow, CNWL, Harrow Each, Harrow Ask, Stonham, The Listening Service, Harrow Association for the Disabled, Harrow Expert Patients, Cathy Edgar, Alzheimers Society, Age Concern, Harrow Mencap, Harrow Women's Centre, Samaritans, Stress Society, Diva Asian Women's Network, Harrow Rethink, Usurp Gallery, Family Action.



**For more information on activities in Harrow, call 07957726822 or visit [www.harrowpct.nhs.uk](http://www.harrowpct.nhs.uk)**

### SUPPORT THE LISTENING SERVICE BY DONATING

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

Depression affects 1 in 5 older people living in the community and 2 in 5 living in care homes

Source: Mental Health Foundation