

SUSSED

Spring 2007



ISSUE 2

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Inside this issue:

SUS Service users say: These are DSB service user groups that meet weekly. The Monday group meets in Handsworth and the Wednesday group meets in the city centre. These are for current DSB service users (or those who have completed treatment with DSB) ask your worker for details or contact Steve Cox service user engagement coordinator on 0121 233 7400.

SUS stands for service users say. Its a service users group. The first has been meeting since October 2005 the second since October 2006. These groups meet weekly .Its one way for D.S.B service users to be involved with their treatment service. and one way in which DSB, Birmingham DAT and NTA consult with service users in order to shape drug treatment.

Birmingham Drug action Team implement nation drug policy and commission all of drug services in Birmingham.

The National Treatment Agency is an NHS body set up to improve the effectiveness of drug treatment in England.

Two groups meet weekly At 2pm doors open, you can get a hot drink and chat with other members. Then there is a formal meeting for an hour. A short break then group members stay for a range of free complimentary therapies.

The therapies on offer are ,

auricular (in the ear) Acupuncture, Reiki, Herbal teas, Relaxation CDs, Reflexology and Indian head massage are also available on occasion.

Traveling expenses are also reimbursed for people who attend the group.

Ask your worker how to join

Steve C D.S.B

My name is Ian and I have over 15 years experience of drug abuse. One day I decided that I needed help, so I went and spoke to my GP. I was referred to a drug worker at the surgery. I was drug tested with a mouth swab then a week later when the results were back, I started treatment.. This really saved me from self destruction. I have been coming weekly to the SUS group for over a year now and it really helps me from slipping back into usage.

Attending the group has really helped, I now know .

lot more about the rights that we have as service users I also enjoy the complimentary therapies which I think helps me not to slip back into drug taking.

Meeting people like me is very reassuring, knowing that we resist the urges to use. I recommend coming to the SUS (service user) group it has helped

me tremendously.

Ian C

Hi my name is Sarah and I have been part of SUS for a year. I really feel like part of a group. Coming here gives me the chance to chill and chat to other clients and you also get the chance for some therapies. The only thing missing is more women to get Involved. I speak from experience when I say that there is nothing to be scared of, give it a try and if you do not like it you do not have to attend another meeting

Thank you

Sarah

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“It’s the first time in my experience of being in treatment that my opinion has been asked”

Pat .

S.U.S member

“Be part of the process.”

Ian K.

S.U.S Member

Acknowledgement s: This newsletter’s concept and development has been made possible by the contributions made by members of S.U.S and other DSB service users. Steps to take in the event of a drug overdose on page four has been taken from the D.S.B Shared care leaflet Part developed by D.S.B. staff and members of S.U.S.

So what are Holistic or Complementary Therapies?

These are things like; Indian head massage, Reiki, Reflexology, Aromatherapy, Tai-chi, Yoga, Martial Arts and many more...

Many religions have a tradition of including the basic principles of the therapies for example there are elements of meditation, prayer or healing found within the belief systems of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists Sikhs and Hindu's. These practices aim to achieve positive change, mental, physical and spiritual fulfilment and health. How is this ancient tradition still relevant and linked to complementary therapies, and now recognised world wide by the medical establishment? Used with evidence supported by clinical trials and used in the N.H.S.?

Well imagine- and please stay with me, that the human body is like a 'biological computer', the body is the hardware, our thoughts and feelings are 'software' our programming, and us the person, the 'user'. To change our software, we need to change our program-

ming, to change our negative or unhelpful patterns of being- of behaving.

We firstly need to identify our specific programme- the negative emotional issue- or thought or behaviour, then we can start to 're-write' or change this through the power of healing. The process of slowly changing this pattern is achieved through the healing process of therapies, helping be free from old problems, releasing us from past patterns of behaviour, our demons- for us addiction, and probably more.

Energy flows through us, like electricity in a computer- for us it is the energy of the universe- chi or prana in Chinese and Hindu traditions. We are interconnected to everything- made of the same compounds, the idea is we can channel this positive energy through ourselves, focusing on connection, as achieved traditionally in prayer or meditation. We can use this energy to heal in the manner explained above; this is why modern medicine accepts what has been realised for thousands of years.

Evidence suggests that Holistic therapies help us heal!

.....There will be a second part to this article in the next edition of SUSSED.

So I recently spoke to Colette at D.S.B. regarding the ever growing range of complementary therapies available at the Ruskin Chambers- Corporation Street base.

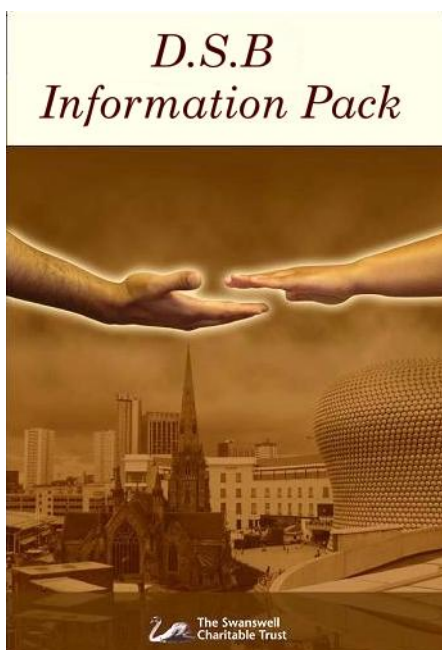
A new clinic is being set up to provide services on a permanent basis each Friday afternoon. Your drug worker will be able to provide the relevant information to help decide on the best way forward.

All therapies are provided by trained, certified and experienced staff that can give further advice and chat about treatment options, and what to expect in greater detail.

You can try auricular acupuncture, Reiki, Reflexology, Herbal teas and shortly Indian head massage. Benefits can include improved sleep patterns, relaxation, decrease in anxiety and stress, pain management, help with withdrawal symptoms and more! So give it a go.... **Jason P**

If you would like to know more about the complementary therapy clinics at DSB ask your worker for a leaflet, or contact Colette Turner on 0121 233 7400

Information pack: produced in partnership with SUS (this is a version of the welcome pack that is given to new service users) this has started to go out to existing service users...ask your worker about it...*Steve Cox*



The DSB information pack has been developed with the help of the SUS group's

It has started to go out to existing service users from Feb 2007. It is based on the welcome pack which has been given to new service users of DSB for around six months now

The pack contains:

What happens now leaflet describes what happens from first walking through the door to getting prescribed , progressing through treatment and eventually leaving treatment , also what to do if you have a problem

Jargon buster which explains words and terms that we use.

Comments form and free post envelope to tell us what you think

Expression of interest form and free post envelope so that you can join a SUS group.

A copy of DSB Service users rights and responsibilities.

There's a list of needle exchange pharmacies around the city .

An example care plan is included so people have an Ideas about what could go into one , that care plans are collaborative and are reviewed every three months care plans are unique to each service user.

The intention of the pack is to provide service users with essential information about their treatment with DSB.

Thank you to the members of SUS for their help in making this possible.

Stories, poems, letters

Ian's Story

Hi my name is Ian and I am a service user this is my story.

Two years ago I used to take drugs until I heard that I could get treatment.

I went to my doctors for help with my drug taking and they told me about what DSB do, so I asked if I could be referred..

I had a lot of help and support from DSB, they also put me in touch with Floating Support so that I could get some help with sorting out my debts.

I was doing so well that I was able to get a small job with a friend and I had money, but then a year down the line I got Stressed so I went back on drugs for a few weeks until I had a talk with my Drug Worker together we sorted things out I take Subutex everyday now and I am sorting my life out..

Now if I have any problems I can talk to people who can help me.

I have been off drugs for about a year and a half now.

I owe my life to DSB

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

Ian

Heroin The Devil Dance

Dear Mr Brown,

You took me away from reality, I didn't realise how much control you had over me, until one day I decided not to dance with the devil anymore. From that day to this you've become challenging in many ways. Fortunately for me you have really took the breath from my body without success. This is because I'm a fighter, a Leo, and I know you hate that.

I can't remember or even think of any one particular time I enjoyed your

company. Your mind games are dangerous territory and I'm disgusted they are many and I'm just me. I'm glad to let you know you are no more I have the ability and the strength and courage to take away many more of your victims. You are hell and I hate you. When I read this letter back I really wish I could put on a stamp and address so that you could read and feel how I've felt. Five years of my life you took and now the tables have turned.

I'm out to get you away from as many individuals as possible. I will be someone you will never forget, bring it on, you are the lowest of the low.

Listen to what I've said and take it on board, you were never a friend of mine now I see that oh so clearly.....
(Goodbye now and 4eva)

Mark S

Alive and free

Once I felt alive and free

With ambitions of what I wanted to be

I used to laugh, used to cry

Live life to the max

Afraid to die

Then I discovered what they call brown

I licked the crack and needed to come down

After a while it stole my soul

I felt like nothing

Not half, not whole

Its an experience I don't want repeated

Years of my life

I felt so cheated

To keep my habit I had to beg,

steal and borrow

I felt no remorse

Only sorrow

Here I sit

Locked up in jail

They said no probation and no bail

I want the urge

To stay on the wagon

To resist the temptation to chase the dragon

Paula L

Involving Service users In research

Are you interested in research ?

Are you interested in getting an accredited qualification in research?

Birmingham Drug Action Team and Birmingham university are collaborating to do some service user led research.

Training will be on offer which will lead to an accredited qualification on how to conduct research, ongoing support will be available.

Email n.lynch@bham.ac.uk

Telephone 0121 678 2352 or ask you worker for more information. closing date for interest is the 18th May 2007.

Involving service users in research

Are you interested in research?
Would you like to be involved at every stage?
Would you like research to be carried out on issues that are important to you?

We need and value your unique expertise and experience

Reasons to get involved:
Develop new skills and confidence
Can boost future chances of employment
Can help to bring change and improvements to existing services

What we offer you
•Qualification (research training)
•Pay you for carrying out research
•Cover travel expenses
•Support and guidance at all stages

Who can take part?
•Anyone interested in research
•You must be reliable and trustworthy
•Open minded
- No previous qualifications needed

If you would like to take part or need any other information please contact Natalie on n.lynch@bham.ac.uk, or tel 0121 678 2352

Service Users

Have your Say at D.S.B



By Sean and other members of SUS who met with drug worker Richard Scott to discuss **Safer Injecting.**



Pharmacists displaying this sign in the window operate a needle exchange service. You can dispose of your used equipment by returning it in a sharps bin. Needle packs are available free of charge containing sterile needles and syringes, citric, vit c, filters, sterile wipes, and condoms. Sharp bins are also available. (sterile water ampoules are also available from drugline) **Never share**

your injecting equipment. Always use your own works, cup, spoon and filter. (a needle exchange is also available from Drugline, Carrs lane, in the city centre)

Safer injecting technique is injecting with the minimum risk of catching viral infections, overdose, vein damage, infection from bacteria, not passing any infection you may have onto others. Always use sterile equipment and rotate your injecting sites.

Ask your worker about safer injecting techniques

Veins carry blood to the heart whereas arteries carry blood away from the heart. If you hit an artery the blood may force back the plunger, be frothy, you may bleed heavily. Do not inject into the artery. If you do hit an artery apply firm pressure for at least half an hour. Lie down and raise the affected area (if possible).

Dial 999 for an ambulance, even if you stop bleeding you must seek medical help.

The best injecting technique is not to inject at all ! If you are going to use Heroin smoking is safer for a lot of reasons. Its harder to overdose, catch blood borne viruses (like hepatitis and HIV) get abscesses or deep vein thrombosis.

When you're thinking about injecting in your groin then its time to stop!!

Use the correct needle and syringe for how you inject. Needles are colour coded

Brown (0.4mm) is for surface veins. **Orange** (0.5mm) for surface and deeper veins. **Blue** (0.6mm) intramuscular and deeper veins. **Green** (0.8mm) for intramuscular injecting. Only use these needles for what they are intended for, using the wrong needle could injure you or it could break off. Using the correct volume size of syringes is equally important. **Syringes** come in different sizes and the correct uses are as follows.

Insulin syringes for superficial veins (surface veins). **0.5ml** syringes for subcutaneous injecting (skin popping). **1ml** Intravenous (into veins), intramuscular (into muscles) subcutaneous injecting. **2ml** syringe intravenous and intramuscular. **5ml** syringe for Intravenous use.

Heroin in the UK is made for smoking (brown) in order to use it for injecting, you need to break it down with water and a mild acid (sterile vit c, citric sachets and sterile water are contained in needle exchange packs). There have been cases where people have used lemon juice which is non sterile and has led to cases of fungus growing in the body. This has been linked to loss of vision and blindness. Some people prefer citric, some vit c, both are acidifiers and can cause vein damage so using **as little as possible** is the best advice. Weight for weight citric is stronger than vit c so if you are switching from vit c to citric you need to use a quarter of the amount that you would usually use.

*Please pass your comments, suggestions, poems, and stories for consideration to appear in upcoming editions of S.U.S. c/o Steve Cox service user engagement coordinator....your worker can do this on your behalf. Thank you from the members of SUS to everyone who contributed to this edition of SUSSED the articles by individual contributors are their own copyright and may not necessarily be the views of Sussed or DSB. Sussed strives for 100% accuracy.....***Next edition Summer 2007**

Steps to take in the event of a drug overdose

Don't Panic

- 1 Lie the person on the floor.
- 2 Put them in the recovery position (on their side with one arm bent, and tilt their head back).
- 3 Call an ambulance - dial 999. Speak calmly and clearly to the operator.
- 4 Do not leave them alone unless you go to get help yourself. If you have to leave them make sure they cannot roll over onto their back.
- 5 When the ambulance arrives, if you can, tell them what the person has taken.
- 6 This could save their life.

