

Training & events programme

22nd & 23rd July - ASIST in Oban
13th August - Dealing with Self-harm in Helensburgh
10th September - Choose Life conference
18th & 19th September - ASIST in Inveraray
23rd October - Dealing with Self-harm in Inveraray
18th & 19th November - ASIST in Helensburgh
9th December - Self-harm in Bute
Contact us if you would like a safeTALK or Tune-up in your area
We are also recruiting people who have been through the ASIST 2 day workshop to deliver suicideTALK. We will provide a one day Training programme to help get you ready.



ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day intensive course giving suicide first-aid skills to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide.

There is also a half-day **ASIST tune-up**, where previous participants can get a refresher and re-connect with other suicide first-aiders.

The one day **Dealing with Self-harm** course is suitable for anyone working

or living with someone who self-harms. Participants gain more understanding into the reasons for self-harm and some helping strategies. We are also running a shorter self-harm awareness session.

SuicideTALK is a one-and-a-half to three hour session on suicide prevention and



safeTALK helps you to become a

suicide alert helper in two to three hours.



Working to reduce suicide and self-harm

chooselife

in Argyll
and Bute

Getting healthy

MOST of the time we hear about mental illness, mental distress and other negative aspects of mental health. A new Scottish Government document wants us to focus on what makes us mentally "flourish".

It sets out a vision of how we, as a society, need to develop opportunities for people to develop, expand and focus on the things that make us feel valued, loved and important.

We need to develop our own personal approaches to making us feel mentally fit and positive. What this means in practice is looking at what is important in our lives and

giving these things time and space in our often hectic lives.

This is a very personal, individual thing as what matters to one person may not to others. It might be friendships, creative or physical activities, being part of our communities, churches, local groups, travelling, writing, reading, talking...what matters is that we do more of what we want to do and not always get lost in the things we have to do.

A simple but at times tricky juggling act - but what is more important than feeling mentally flourishing?

By Dave Bertin, Co-ordinator



Ready for anything: p2 ❖ In training: p4&5 ❖ Bagged : p6&7

Newsletter Spring/Summer 2008

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No chance of running on empty

IT would have been hard to miss the third annual Men's Health Forum Scotland (MHFS) 10k for Men event.

This unique event, the only of its kind in Britain, marks the culmination of Men's Health Week 2008 (9th - 15th June) which aims to improve the health of men across Scotland.

Breathing Space were proud to be event sponsors of this year's event which took place in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park on Father's Day (15th June).

As event sponsors Breathing Space's logo and strapline 'open up when you're feeling down' was displayed on every



participant's number badge, t-shirt and drawstring goody bag. They also provided a Breathing

Space 'chill out' tent where spectators and participants could come in for a 'breather'

during the run at Bellahouston.

As always Team Breathing Space was taking part in the event with our team of around 40 guys from all walks of life and levels of fitness getting round the 10k route all in the name of Breathing Space.

MHFS, who organised the event were grateful for all those who took up the opportunity to help out on the day with everything from packing goody bags and doing leaflet drops in the event build up to stewards for the route and water stations on the day itself.

Make sure you keep a slot in your diary for this amazing 4 event next year.



RICHARD Leckerman, National Development Officer, visited Choose Life to talk about how the two organisations could work together, as Richard said 'by organising events together we can raise awareness, give folk the opportunity to hear about us and how we can help and link in with existing services. It's also about reaching geographically isolated communities and acknowledging their needs.'

Richard, pictured below, explained that another part of the Breathing Space ethos is to encourage people to take a bit of Breathing Space and do something caring for themselves, a message close to our hearts here at Choose Life.

One way of taking a bit of time out to feel more connected with the world and giving yourself a physical and emotional boost is running and we are pleased to say that Breathing Space and Choose Life got together to support the MOK run in Campbeltown in May.

Tony McLaren, National Coordinator said: 'This is a fantastic way of preventing the onset of low mood or depression. Unfortunately men in particular still find it difficult to speak about their feelings and to ask others for help. Many guys in Scotland today are literally 'running on empty' and may be experiencing difficulties in their lives and feeling unable to cope.'

Find out more at www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk



Your mental...I'm sensible

THE NHS Highland Health Promotion team in Argyll and Bute have been busy in the last few months raising people's awareness of important Sensible Drinking and Mental Health messages. It's just that this time they've taken a slightly different approach.

Craig McNally, Senior Health Promotion Officer for Addictions gave a bit of the background. "It started last year when we had a stall at the Connect Festival in Inveraray to highlight the sensible drinking recommendations. We decided to design t-shirts with a sensible drinking messages on."

The "Chillax" t-shirts that they gave away proved so popular with people attending the festival that they could have given away five

times as many. It was decided that another t-shirt with a different design should be developed for this year and after consultation with the public the "I Am Sensible" logo was agreed upon.

Craig explained, "This years t-shirt has the words 'I Am Sensible' emblazoned across it. It also displays the sensible drinking message 'Drink Sensibly: women 2-3 units, men 3-4 units per day'."



Sam and Craig

Time to breathe

BREATHING Space is the free, confidential phonenumber and website for people in Scotland who are feeling low. It is a key part of the Scottish Government's National Programme for Improving Mental Health & Wellbeing. Working with NHS 24,

The phonenumber provides an accessible out-of-hours mental health service for people in Scotland.

Breathing Space now has a 40 strong team of special phone line advisors based in NHS 24 centres in the West and East of Scotland. The service has extended its opening hours and is now available from 6pm Friday to 6am Monday and 6pm-2am Monday to Thursday.

Throughout winter an internal system of 'warm transfer' was rolled out, so that any mental health related calls received by the NHS 24 phone line are

seamlessly transferred to a Breathing Space advisor. The service received a record number of calls (4,200) and website hits (13,400) in January.

On Friday 1 February, Linda Fabiani MSP, launched Breathing Space Day 2008 at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow. She

embraced the Breathing Space ethos saying, "In our busy lives it is important that

we take personal time out to help maintain and improve our mental wellbeing."

A further phase of remote & rural promotional activity is set for spring 2008.

Tony McLaren, National Coordinator, explains, "This campaign will coincide with the end of long dark winter months, which can be an especially difficult time for people in the northern reaches of Scotland and the outlying isles and for those experiencing the effects of seasonal affective disorder."

Open up when you're feeling down

0800 83 85 87

www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis offers free, confidential support/information and advocacy to women and girls(13yrs&over) who have been raped,sexually assaulted and/or sexually abused at anytime in their lives. Our centre is run by women for women. We offer face to face, telephone and in special circumstances e-mail support.



Ready, willing, able

Sue McKillop, a Support and Development worker for Argyll And Bute Rape Crisis, talks about her ASIST experience

AS I only started in post in January this year I have been out and about introducing myself to agencies in the area.

It was in doing so that I met Tracy and over lunch we discussed the benefits of myself and two Volunteers taking part in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training in Rothesay.

The introduction to the course was comforting. Placing the emphasis on CPR for suicide. At no time were we left in any doubt that we were only part of a network of support for people at risk of suicide. The course was very well run. Friendly

Facilitators and a diverse group of people. There was the right balance of humour and patience delivering serious and sensitive training.

Recently I have had occasion to use the training I received on the ASIST course within the work that I do for Rape Crisis.

I felt confident dealing with the situation where before I may have struggled or even missed the invitation to ask the question 'Are you thinking about suicide?'

I would and have recommended the course to many people that I meet as you never know when or where it may be needed.

At the same time, Craig's colleague Samantha Souter, Health Promotion Officer for Mental Health, was searching for a way of raising awareness of the importance of good mental health.

She decided that using an environmentally friendly, reusable cotton bag would be a good way of getting a message across to a large number of people.

Sam said: "reusable bags are becoming more popular and, hopefully, while people are using them other people will be reading them." Sam explained that the message is funny and hard hitting.

"We wanted people to carry the bags and thought that if we had put the message 'Your Mental Health is Important' on both sides of the bag some people might not want to carry it. By splitting the statement and putting 'Your Mental...' on one side, and '..Health is Important' on the other it makes it a bit more quirky but hopefully gives the same message and makes people think."

Craig added, "It was only when we got the t-shirt and the bag into the office and held them side by side that we noticed they said 'I am Sensible' and 'Your Mental...'."

HAVE you felt suicidal or attempted suicide in the past? Do you want to give others hope and help tackle stigma so that people are less afraid to speak out and get the help they need? If so, perhaps you would be interested in becoming a media volunteer for Choose Life?

Three quarters of suicides in Scotland are by men. This is why we are particularly keen for men between the ages of 20 - 40 to speak out about their experiences.

To increase awareness and educate the public about the issues surrounding suicide, Choose Life is helping people with first-hand experience to publicly tell their own stories via the media. Full training and support is given. If you are interested contact: 0131 624 8945 or email info@seemescotland.org. For more about Choose Life, visit www.chooselife.net