

Caring with Confidence – a carer's story

I first heard about Caring with Confidence (CwC) from my Carer Support Worker. I had many times found myself in a situation where I felt unwell and not able to cope with day to day problems. So when my Support Worker suggested that I attend a few CwC sessions to see if it helped me, I thought "why not?". I went along to the first one, 'Finding your Way'. I enjoyed it very much and found it to be very informative. I then decided to attend more sessions and eventually I went to all seven.

A few weeks later I found out that a course was being held in London to become a facilitator for CwC. I decided to give it a go. I set off with a great deal of trepidation, wondering if I was taking on too much. The course was residential, so that in itself was a bonus. I checked in to my hotel and then went to join the other 23 candidates. Everyone was nervous but excited.

We had three facilitators and soon they had everyone feeling much more relaxed. We worked our way through some of the sessions and by the end of the first day we were all feeling much more confident. That evening everyone had a one-to-one with a facilitator to iron out any problems they might have had.

We started again at 9am the next day. That was slightly more challenging as we had to stand up in front of everybody and practice some of the facilitating skills we were learning, but the more we practised the more confident we became. Our facilitators were wonderful and constantly congratulated us on our progress. At the end of the second day we were given some homework; to get into four groups and to prepare an 'ice breaker' for our facilitators the next morning. This went down very well and we were all congratulated on our resourcefulness.

The third day was another very busy day and was virtually putting all the pieces together. Everyone had to see one of the facilitators to find out if we had been successful; I am delighted to say that I was. The course finished at 4pm and we all went our separate ways having made, in such a short time, some very good friends, promising to keep in touch.

I entered the course with great trepidation but I left exhilarated.



Venues and Dates for Caring with Confidence (CwC)

For further information please contact Stephen Rabbitts, Carers Project Coordinator on 01277 265353 or on stephen.rabbitts@southessex-trust.nhs.uk

for carers



Carers Oasis

Social Club

The club meets on the second Monday of each month

19.00 to 20.30

- Carers Oasis aims to provide a haven of hope, support and understanding and is for those who are unable to attend daytime services such as our Carers Café or Support Groups, or due to other commitments is also available to all our Carers;
- Your wellbeing is paramount and taking time out for yourself can enable you to cope better with the often rollercoaster road of Caring... "You are not alone";
- The opportunity to network with other Carers, whose circumstances may be different, but with whom you share a common factor;
- To explore resources and other social activities that may be available to you;
- If you're looking for a break pop in for a chat over a cuppa.

Our Social Club meets at

Cooimbewood,
1 Websters Way, Rayleigh,
Essex.
SS6 8JQ

for more information please contact
Gina Biggs on 01268 774850

Whether you are new to caring, or whether you have been caring for a number of years, caring with confidence is an opportunity to have time away from caring, meet with others in similar situations, and gain the confidence, information, and skills to help in you in your caring role and improve your life and the life of the person you are looking after.

Caring with confidence has been running all over South Essex since July 2009 - so there will be one near you. Where needed, travelling expenses and cost of replacement care for the cared for person, will be covered.

There are seven sessions in the programme, each session covering a different topic. If you are interested in taking part we would recommend that you attend the introductory session "Finding My Way"; this gives you an introduction to and a taste of the other sessions you can choose from.

The sessions have been extremely successful – some of the many positive comments from carers have been: "It made me think about how I could change my situation for the better and change tactics on coping"; "Hearing other people's problems puts mine into perspective"; "Very informative, helpful and enjoyable" and "it gives me an opportunity to think about caring and to meet other carers".

Booking on to caring with confidence is very easy. Carers can book on to a session simply by contacting the Carers Development Team on 01277 265353. One of our team will give you the dates and venues of the sessions and book you on to one of them. Alternatively email carers.information@southessex-trust.nhs.uk.

for carers

Get Involved - Help us with a new carers project

The Department of Health (DoH) has asked Primary Care Trusts and Local Social Services Departments in England to put forward ideas to test out ways to improve support for carers.

NHS South West Essex PCT approached SEPT to join them in expressing an interest to look at 'Better NHS support for Carers'. This bid to the DoH has been successful and over the next 18 months there will be pilot projects in Brentwood, Basildon and Thurrock.

The projects will look at better information and support for carers in GP practices, hospital wards and out-patient clinics. Carers have told us that they need recognition and professionals to talk to them about the person they care for and about support available for carers.

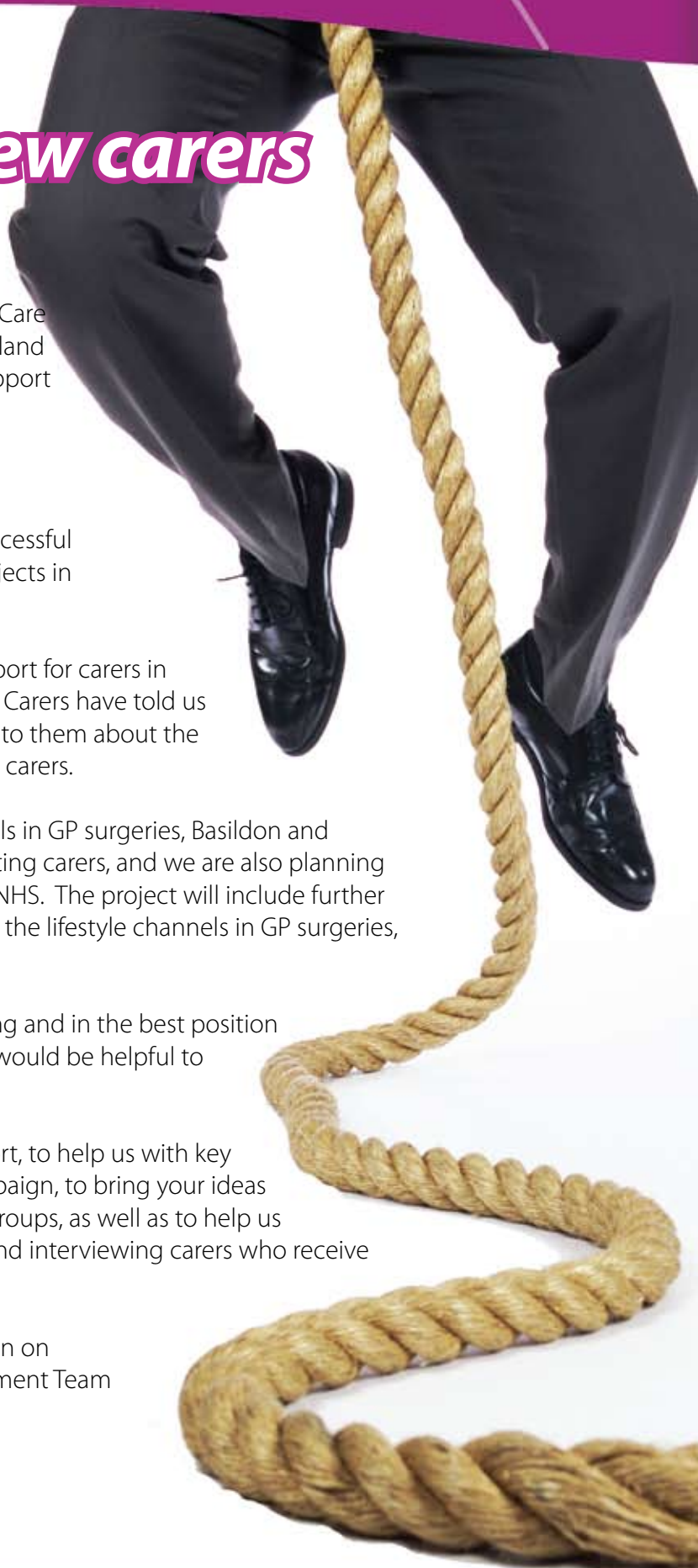
There will be training made available for professionals in GP surgeries, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital, SEPT teams on supporting carers, and we are also planning a big campaign to raise recognition of carers in the NHS. The project will include further development of a website for carers, information on the lifestyle channels in GP surgeries, and information on local radio and newspapers.

Carers are experts through their experiences of caring and in the best position to advise on what type of information and support would be helpful to carers.

We need your help to train NHS staff on carer support, to help us with key messages and information in a care awareness campaign, to bring your ideas and experiences to meetings and project steering groups, as well as to help us find out if the project is working well by talking to and interviewing carers who receive this improved support over the next 18 months.

If you are interested please contact Mike Waddington on 01268 491353 or Carla Fourie at the Carers Development Team on 01277 265353

Training and support will be made available.



for carers



Tough Love

Loneliness, despair and anger are a few of the powerful emotions experienced by family and friends of addicts. These feelings are not dissimilar to the way in which a person with an addiction feels about their own addictive behavior. It is these similarities that give rise to what's called "Tough love".

"Tough love" is a colloquial expression and a structured approach to deal with problems like substance misuse and addictions. To love in this way means to keep strict limits and boundaries about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour and to help the addict to learn from their own mistakes.

This approach is not without its difficulties and the struggle to maintain a supportive caring approach with clear and specific boundaries is not easy for any family member or friend when the natural response is to 'take care'. However by not establishing limits or allowing the person to experience consequences (in the name of love) we are denying them important learning opportunities and chances to change. We either hurt as we watch them learn through natural consequences or we hurt as we watch them unable to care for themselves

Historically substance misuse programmes have been associated with corrective punishment-based approaches that impose on the substance abuser a sense of responsibility for his/ her own actions, fully experiencing the negative consequences of their own behaviour. This view confuses responsibility with punishment.

Criminal justice and substance misuse research found that increasing encouragement for compliance rather than over reliance on punishment is more beneficial. Punishment is rarely an effective strategy to promote behaviour change due to the guilt and shame. CDAS instead promotes the reward and encouragement of positive action, and reacting and discussing the negative.

If we think of tough love as a way to enable the other to fulfil their maximum potential, and to feel safe, to explore the world knowing there is a safe port to return to, consistent and reliable, predictable, where rules are clear. It is an approach to feel confident and loved, and to never feel completely alone. This is tough love, and we recommend it!

The journey through addiction for family and friends is hugely difficult but help is available. Pitsea and Thurrock CDAS have a group for the families and partners of people with substance misuse problems. Thurrock CDAS are working in partnership with Thurrock Carer's centre. The groups provide a non judgmental, safe and therapeutic environment to help members explore what it means to live with / care for someone who has an addiction especially by exploring clarity in boundaries and communication.
Pitsea: Britta Taylor 01268 583154 Thurrock: Joao Pereira 01375 375361

for carers

Carer Information and Education Talks

The Trust provides monthly Information and Education Talks on a range of topics that carers have asked for. These free talks are delivered by a team of Consultant Psychiatrists, Social Workers, Psychiatric nurses, Family Therapists and other Senior Clinicians. It creates the opportunity for mutual learning - professionals and carers sharing their knowledge, skills and lived experiences.

To book a place or to find out more information please contact the Carer Development Team on 01277 265353 or email Carers.Information@southessex-trust.nhs.uk

Date and Time

29 January 2010

10.30

Subjects

Impact of Mental
Illness on the Family
and
Recovery for Service
User, Families and
Carers

Venue

SAVS Centre, 29-31
Alexendra Street,
Southend-on-Sea,
Essex SS1 1BW

The Soul Reason For Being A Carer

Georgie Wakefield

What's it like being a carer?
Well it's exhausting to say the least
But carers have little choice
It's the nature of the beast
What's it like being a carer?
We're always on the phone
Sorting out DSS benefits
And running an extra home
Carers are never off duty
There's a very tight reign on our time
If we manage to grab some time for ourselves
We believe we've committed a crime
What's it like being a carer?
We're no longer in control
We're shell shocked grieving disbelieving
It bores into your very soul
We try to bring you comfort
Reassurance when nights are so long
When you feel you've had enough of this life
Carers will you to carry on
What's it like being a carer?
We long for things to change
We get tired from sorting out muddled minds
Day after day after day
There's messages in the inbox
When we check our mobile phones
Where are you mum?
Will you be long?
I get sick of being alone
So why do we keep on caring
When we're aware that life should be fairer?
Well that's simple the answer is love
The **SOUL** reason for being a carer

for carers



A Carer's Story

For many years I had been under immense stress and pressure in caring for my partner who had a severe mental illness. Having made a brave decision to move on with my own life and continue to care from a distance, I found myself to be no longer required in the caring role which left a huge void in my life. In a strange way I missed the hassle and felt I had no sense of purpose. I had lost my confidence and my self esteem was at an all time low.

My thanks go to SEPT for encouraging me to embark upon a new era in my life which has been my saviour. I decided to use my caring experience and 'expertise' and put it to good use in helping other carers. I knew I would be able to empathise and it would come from the heart.

I have trained to be a tutor to deliver the 'Looking After Me' (LAM) courses for carers of people with mental illness. The six week course of two and a half hour sessions helps carers manage their own lives. When I participated in the course myself, I found it to be very helpful in solving a particular problem that had been worrying me for a long time. I also made friends with other carers in similar situations. It made me look at life differently and I became far more positive. The course is a wonderful tool in helping those who struggle in their caring role and gives them the strength to carry on when they are often at their wit's end. Becoming a tutor and helping others has given me so much satisfaction and great enjoyment.

This step forward subsequently led me to train as a facilitator on the new CwC programme. This is also purely for carers but is structured in a different way so that carers are able to choose which sessions are of interest to them. There are seven modules covering different aspects of caring.

So my life has turned around. I feel a great sense of achievement, I am far more confident and positive than I have been for many years and I recognise my 'old' self. I hope to be able to develop my skills and would urge any carers, especially those who feel they have lost their identity to do the programmes, either as a participant or more importantly to train to become tutors or facilitators themselves.

for carers



Looking After Me

The “Looking After Me” course is about carers making time to look after their own health needs, as well as those of the person they care for. It aims to help them to develop self-management skills to take more control of their situation and make a difference to their lives.

“Looking After Me” is a course for carers aged 18 years or older who care for someone who is using any of SEPT’s services and is run over six consecutive weekly sessions each lasting two-and-a-half hours.

We have been running “Looking After Me” courses for Carers for the last two years, and the carers who have been on them have found them very enjoyable and helpful as it concentrates on their health and well being.

“Looking After Me” is facilitated by two volunteer carers. SEPT sponsors and supports carers who have been on the course to complete the training to become “Looking After Me” facilitators if they wish to.

To book a place or to find out more information please contact the Carer Development Team on 01277 265353 or email Carers.Information@southessex-trust.nhs.uk

Direct Payments



A direct payment can be made to a carer if the carer’s assessment and the carer’s support plan identify a need for this. Direct payments have been made to carers for several different things, for example:

- short breaks for respite
- complementary therapy
- learning equipment
- personal assistant to stay with service user whilst carer attended college
- we have even purchased a potters wheel for the carer to follow their leisure interest whilst continuing in their caring role!

So the first stage is to have a carer’s assessment and a carer’s support plan carried out.

Ask your carer/ support worker or alternatively call PALS on free, phone 0800 085 7935

for carers

Useful contacts

Here are a few helpful contacts. Please let us know if others should be on the list!

SEPT Switchboard - 01268 366000 (24 hour service), 0300 123 0808

SEPT Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - Freephone 0800 085 7935 (office hours)

SEPT Carers Team - 01277 265353

NHS Direct - 0845 4647 (24 hour service)

South Essex Mental Health Information Line - 0845 6013617 or 01268 287755

Carers UK - 0808 808 7777 (Wednesday and Thursday 10.00 – 12.00 and 14.00 – 16.00)

MENCAP Learning Disability Helpline - 0808 808 1111

Age Concern National Helpline - 0800 00 99 66

Southend Carers - 01702 393933

Thurrock Carers Centre - 01375 413753

Essex County Council - 08457 430430

Southend Borough Council - 01702 215000

Thurrock Borough Council - 01375 652652

Princess Royal Trust for Carers - 0844 800 4361

Carers Hotline - 01245 434375

Choice & Medication

The website offers you

- information and advice about medications used in mental health.
- information on the side effects of medication
- compares medications for different conditions
- lists medication by name
- lists medication by category

Go to www.choiceandmedication.org.uk

For more information please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service – PALS – on freephone 0800 085 7935

new national help line & website

A new national helpline and website for carers has been launched. This very useful website can be found at –
www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx

HELP IN A CRISIS

If the person you are caring for becomes seriously unwell outside of working hours or you need urgent clinical advice, please call **01268 366000**.

If you need more advice or information, or would like to comment on *For Carers*, please contact the Patient and Public Involvement Department...

freephone **0800 085 7935**

pals@southessex-trust.nhs.uk

www.southessex-trust.nhs.uk