



HIGH WEALDEN COMMUNITY NETWORK – Mental Health & Wellbeing

The fifth High Wealden Community Network meeting was held on 22nd May 2018 at the East Hoathly and Halland Community Garden. The focus was on mental health. Participants walked to the garden project and discussed how the project offered recovery to people with mental and physical health needs. The Garden also provided opportunities for adults with autism/Asperger's syndrome. Staff and volunteers from the mental health support services provided by the East Sussex Community Network (Southdown) described their services. A discussion was held on how best to support people with mental health needs in our communities.

East Hoathly and Halland Community Garden



This community project was initiated by James Hamilton-Andrews partly in response to his own lived experience of ill-health and to support others to use therapeutic gardening as an aid to recovery. The key to success was in gaining support of the local community, getting help from AirS and 3VA and using existing expertise within the community. Successful grant applications have been made to Sussex Community Foundation for equipment and the orchard project.

Many local people donate plants, equipment, expertise as well as time. Transport to and from the garden is a challenge for those living outside the village.

There are a variety of vegetable beds and flowering plants. Raised beds help those with mobility needs take part. Volunteers from Plumpton college planted heritage apples in the orchard and they also maintain a





section of the Wealden Way footpath that passes through the site. People who use Foodbanks are referred to the Garden Project to pick up fresh fruit and vegetables, but they often stay and become volunteers or simply enjoy the garden.

The Community Garden has regular sessions for volunteers. The project facilitates peer to peer support and it is a safe space to discuss wellbeing issues and enjoy the exercise and company that goes along with gardening.

East Sussex Community Network – Supporting people’s mental health and wellbeing

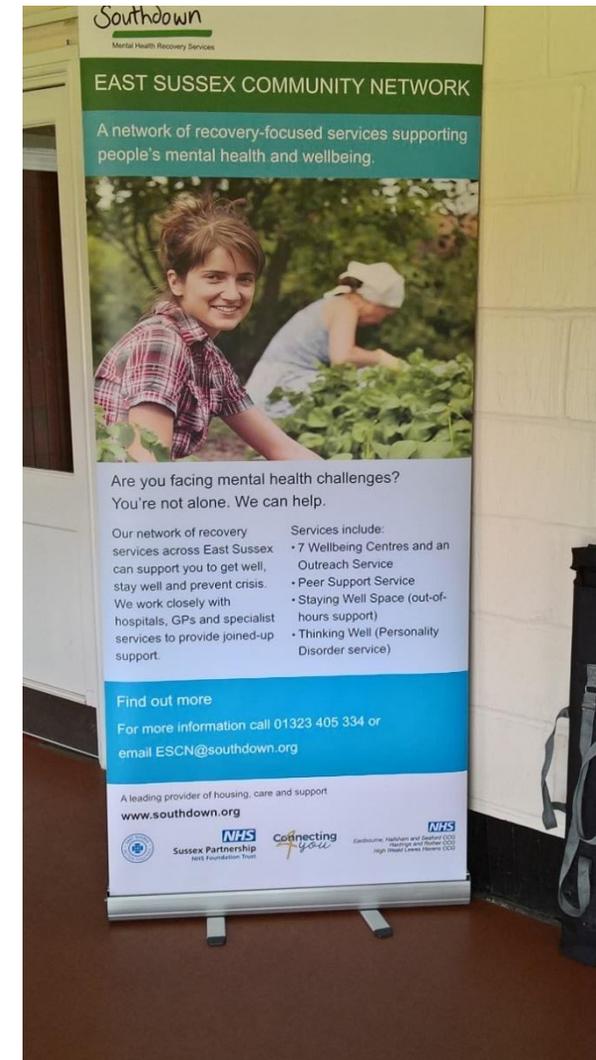
Judy Pearson described a network of services provided through Southdown. The network provides recovery-focused services supporting people to get well and stay well.

Commissioned by East Sussex County Council and local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, the contract involves development of a community network of recovery-focused services which will work closely with clinical services provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, hospitals, GPs and specialist health services. The network is part of East Sussex Better Together and Connecting 4 You health and care integration programmes.

The East Sussex Community Network (ESCN) now manages 7 well-being centres in East Sussex, located in Hastings/St Leonards, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Uckfield, Newhaven and Lewes. The over 16s can attend a programme of activities and access 1:1 support.

A Peer Support Service is offered across the Community Network and within the Wellbeing Centres offering:

- One-one sessions with a peer specialist with the focus on managing mental health, identifying strengths, achieving personal goals and support to overcome challenges
- Volunteer peers who can work on specific goals and activities e.g. accessing a book club or a sports activity



- Recovery focused drop in sessions providing an opportunity to talk with other people facing mental health challenges in a friendly, informal environment.
- Also provided as part of the East Sussex Community Network is a new service called Staying Well, which is provided at the St Leonards-on-Sea Wellbeing Centre. The service is available for adults living in East Sussex with urgent mental health support needs, outside of normal working hours. The service is now open 7 days a week between the hours of 6.00pm and 10.30pm Mon-Fri and 3.00pm and 10.30pm Sat-Sun.

People with personality disorders can access a bespoke service “Thinking Well”.

The ECN also plans to work collaboratively with Community Connectors, who are based in GP surgeries and with other mental health services, employment support and supported accommodation services.

For more details, information about referrals and contact details, please go to:

<https://www.southdown.org/mental-health-recovery/east-sussex-community-network>



Discussion

Groups discussed several issues around supporting people with mental health needs to take part in community activities. The following points were made:

Sheet 1

1. Educating the very young to take away stigma
2. Continued support following diagnosis – the carers need more support
3. Trusting person or ?? in every community – go to person who will help
 - a. Men shed project
 - b. WI mental health
 - c. Community café
4. Raise awareness of how poor current services are and that things need to change often managed by overworked, undertrained staff – volunteers

Sheet 3

1. GPs and health workers social prescribing
2. Inclusivity within different community groups. Making activity accessible for all
3. Village buddies, PAs
4. Community space (hub) with support and activity
 - a. Transport
2. Choice

Sheet 4

1. Acceptance
2. Safe space to talk

Sheet 2

1. Therapeutic rather than education
2. Meaningful activities within the local community
3. Adapting successful projects to meet the local community
4. Mixing all groups (inter-generational)
5. Promoting local services and projects

3. Education – dispelling myths
4. Access to:
 - a. Services
 - b. Support
 - c. Signposting

Data

20 people attended the meeting. There was representation from voluntary and community groups, public services and businesses supporting the local community.

Data from the evaluation forms:

13 people completed the evaluation forms. 11 rated the event as excellent/extremely useful, 2 as good, very useful. The following comments were made:

"Really great meeting to have/do an activity - good icebreaker for a group like this better than an 'exercise' (outdoors is best)"

"Working together to create something bigger which can benefit more people."

"It was great as usual"

"It is always good to follow up on where we can go forwards - emails to each other or a forum/blog where we can exchange ideas. I often think of things after I have thought about the so it would be good to have a platform for this. But thanks, ace day :) xxx"

Locality: High Wealden	Date: 22 nd May 2018	Venue: Crowborough Community Centre	Facilitators: Fiona Morton, Donna Wilson,
Themes / Topics from previous meeting:	Meeting more activity based /try out what organisations do		
Theme: (by service area?)	Previously Known Priority:	Insight / intelligence/ Discussion highlights	Next Steps: (where will this go?)