

24.3.2010 Allied Health Professionals

In Mental Health Conference

“Collaborating for Change”

MacDonald Inchyra Grange Hotel



The Collaborating for Change Conference for Allied Health Professionals (AHP) in Mental Health was held at the MacDonalld Inchyra Grange Hotel in Inchyra, Stirlingshire. This was a high-profile government backed conference involving 200 Health Professionals including Occupational Therapists, Art Therapists, Drama Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech & Language Therapists, Clinical Support Workers, Dieticians and Service Users.

The conference was held to launch a document that is about to be published which is giving recognition of the role of AHP's within the mental health workforce and was....

"An opportunity to engage in a discussion and debate on how to implement the recommendations in the 3 year action plan to maximise the contribution of the Allied Health Professions in Delivering for Mental Health."

The day was initiated by Elaine Hunter who is the Lead AHP for Mental Health at the Scottish Government. Elaine is on a 2 year secondment and she has raised awareness of the contributions of AHP's and ensured that AHP's have been included in all the relevant policy development workstreams.

This was a full day event involving speakers and several workshops and Jeanette Allan was asked if Buddy Beat would come along and close the day's proceedings. Buddy Beat is known to refuse nothing but blows and Jeanette began rallying the troops and before she knew it she had an eager 12 volunteers. Amongst the throng were new members Marion Mullin and Irene Malone, who all made their Buddy Beat Performance debuts, even though Irene has just joined in the last week or two. Nae pressure! Jane was unavailable as she was away working in Poland as part of the Music in Hospitals programme that she is involved with, so the Scepter of Queenship was passed to Jeanette Allan.

The Buddy Beaters were:-

Jeanette Allan, Karen Auld, Marion Bisland, Allan Borland, Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Irene Malone, Marion Mullin, Jackie McDowall, Eileen McGrory, Christine Robertson, Noreen Young and Martin Savage, Jeanette's personal slave and brave bus driver.

Jeanette organised a mini-bus and picked up Noreen and Anne Dowie at Dykebar before finding the rest of the gang outside Paisley Town Hall at 8.15am. We all piled on and squished our petite derrieres into the seats and away we went. Driver Martin soon saw the usual Paisley rush –hour and wisely took some detours to get us onto the motorway. The journey passed pleasantly enough with Marion Bisland handing round her bag of candy. Just before 9.40 we approached the hotel and Jeanette piped up "Who's excited?" and she received a chorus of affirmatives and Allan retorted "Who's terrified?" and he received about the same volume of reply. We poured out of the bus and in usual Buddy Beat style it was Charge of The Loo Brigade. Then it was a quick snap-on of conference name badges and the group moved into the main hall as the day's events had already began-

except for Allan, Hazel, Tom and Jeanette who busied themselves setting up Buddy Beat's stall in the area reserved for lunch. Allan brought along his display boarding and Tom his Buddy Beat photos to stick on there. Jeanette had bought Fairtrade items- musical frogs, pigs and even a crocodile of varying sizes plus mini djembe and the idea was to sell these to raise funds. Would that work? - Let's wait and find out.



The Buddy Beat Stall - bargains and thrills galore!

When we made our way into the hall the room was rather busy and with seats at a premium, Buddy Beat were scattered to every corner of the room, something that would later prove advantageous to a lot of the conference attendees. The first speaker we heard was Geoff Huggins from the Scottish Government Health Directorates and he spoke about the strategic overview and position of the AHP Action Plan. A lot of the people attending were looking forward to the next speaker, Dr David Reilly of the Glasgow Homeopathic Hospital and he spoke about human caring in the Age of Change and how AHP's need to listen to the experts- the service users. Dr Reilly had the audience's rapt attention and when he had ended his talk, it was time for tea and coffee. Allan and Hazel manned the stall and several people came up to view the photographs, ask questions about who we are and also to make a few purchases. After the break, it was back into the hall for Elaine Hunter's section. Elaine works for the Scottish Government and is the AHP Advisor in Mental Health and during this session inspirational films were shown of service users taking on challenges, which seemed to hit the right buttons around the audience.

Next up we heard from Fiona MacNeill, founding director of Fiona MacNeill Associates and her work is focused on shifting leadership thinking and performance. She set each table a challenge to have a conversation for an hour, with each having a pre-selected team leader and scribe to record the group's thoughts and opinions on a piece of flip chart paper. There are 17 recommendations put forward by the government and each table was given one recommendation to have a conversation about. One of these is something that fits in very well with regards to Buddy Beat-Recommendation 7 and it states that- **"AHP**

mental health leads will ensure the provision of evidence-based, socially inclusive and accessible therapeutic activity across a range of settings”

The table that had Allan, Hazel and Tom on it was set recommendation Number 1-

NHS boards should fully engage AHP's in leading the rehabilitation of people with mental health problems, developing new ways of working, focusing on supporting people's employability and ability to return to work and enabling early access to AHP's after a diagnosis of dementia.

Their table debated this over and the occupation therapists with them seemed pleased to have 3 service users to talk to and hear our opinions. One of those present was a Partick O/T called Carole Shaw and she had attended a Buddy Beat workshop last October at Dykebar Hospital called Arts, Creativity and Recovery. She was amazed when Tom remembered her. What a small world it is!

With Buddy Beat spread all over the room, our voices appeared to have been heard and when we had finished our discussion, Fiona MacNeill took possession of our findings and pinned them on the back wall and she said she would take them away to see what she could take from the ideas presented, and this action released each table to the lunch-time bun fight. Allan, Hazel and Tom had found this conversation exercise very useful, and Noreen and Anne D were impressed with their table's willingness to listen to them, and Christine reported likewise.

Lunch was buffet style and the room was soon chomping and chatting and this gave the attendees a chance to catch up and explore the various stalls around.



If you look closely at the centre you can spot two ladies sporting banana coloured polo shirts and they are busy raiding the buffet. Police will show this footage on the next Crimewatch in an attempt to identify them.

Allan and Hazel, or Mr & Mrs Marks and Spencer as they may now be known, showed their prowess at selling and chatting to the gathering. Allan displayed a special talent and we expect to see him on the next series of The Apprentice. They did a roaring trade over lunch! Tom and Anne Dowie were very pleased to once again meet up with Genevieve Smyth from the College of Occupational Therapists in London. Genevieve had organised both Recovering Ordinary Lives conferences in Leeds in February 2009 and London in October 2009 that Buddy Beat had been involved in and she remains one of our biggest fans!



Anne D, Noreen and Eileen-Buddies together

Everyone piled back into the main hall after lunch and Jacquie Lunday, Scottish Government Chief Health professions Officer, took to the stage and introduced Roberta Goodall, who was there to represent her film-maker daughter Lindsay Goodall. She spoke about the Scottish Bafta award winning short film by her daughter called “Irene” that we were about to see. Irene was Roberta Goodall’s mother and she had been diagnosed with dementia and at the age of 92 her family were faced with the difficult choice of whether Irene should go into a carehome. It was very funny at times and poignant at others and received a thunderous round of applause. One of the funniest moments was at the end when the family were celebrating Irene’s 93rd birthday and as Roberta presented her mother Irene with her cake with a view to blowing out the candles she asked her mother not to spit on the it as she did so to which Irene instantly remarked “And don’t you spoil my fun!”



Mr O and Miss Y

We then split into 5 workshops for an hour or so. These were -

- 1/ Valuing the Lived Experience
- 2/ Engaging Carers/Working Together
- 3/ Education to Support Evolving and Future Practice
- 4/ Inspiring Leadership for Change
- 5/ Developing the Research and Evidence Base.

Each seemed to be well received by Buddy Beat members and while these were going on, Jeanette and Anne Dowie tip-toed around setting up the drums and Boomwhackers. Before we went on, everyone filed back into the room for the Prize giving, and Anne Dowie was disappointed not to win The Wearer of the Best Banana Yellow Polo Short, even though she was clear favourite.

Taking of polo shirts- Buddy Beat now have their own specially commissioned polo shirts thanks to a contact of Lesley King's in Helensburgh and they are the main colours of the Boomwhackers and have been embroidered with our initial letters TBB. These colourful tops add an extra bow to our performance as we can have an orange, yellow, red, green or purple Buddy Beater stand up and guide the members of the audience using that same Boomwhacker colour.



*The Boomwhacker Kids-
Anne D, Noreen, Allan, Hazel and Christine.*

And so finally after a long and varied day, it was time for Buddy Beat to round things off. We were unable to sit on the stage but sat to the left hand side of it and Jeanette knelt down in front of us and counted us in with Allan starting with a solo beat and we then joined in groups of 4 and performed our new but as yet untitled piece which has a base beat borrowed from Queen's We Will Rock You and has 2 rhythms layered over it. This went down very well and then Jeanette took to the stage to lead a Boomwhacker workshop. She firstly asked everyone to rumble, then to stop and start together and then play as one. Having mastered this, Jeanette then singled out each coloured section, starting

with red, and Red Allan stood up and demonstrated the beat required. Next up Yellow Anne D took to the floor and was quickly followed by Orange Tom, Green Noreen and Purple Christine. Having rehearsed our colour groups, Jeanette launched into conductor mode and it looked superb to see 200 Boomwhackers splicing the air with Jeanette leading and her five children by the side ably assisting. The Von Trapps were back! It looked the bees' knees and sounded magnificent and then Jeanette ended by whipping a set of Cowbells from nowhere and leading a Call and Response, all the while smiling away. During this Buddy Beat kept a constant beat to keep things going. The look on the audience's faces was a joy to see and at the end we received a tremendous round of applause.

As the room emptied, Buddy Beat quietly jammed in the background and then we packed everything up and bundled back into the minibus. If there was an award for "Best Usage of a Conference" it would surely go to our Christine. Christine was brought up in the area and managed to get an early appointment to get her hair done and nipped out for half an hour! Also, the hotel was the venue almost 40 years ago for Christine's wedding, and she asked Tom to take a couple of pictures in the room where she had danced all night all those years ago.

Martin had us back in Paisley at 6 on the dot and we thank him once again for doing us proud.

The next day Jeanette ran the normal Buddy Beat session at The Paisley Arts Centre and began by asking for feedback on the day out. Anne D loved the Boomwhacker section and this was echoed by Tom, who also loved meeting up with people he had met on his Buddy Beat travels. Eileen and Marion Mullin loved the reaction of the audience and Noreen said that she had enjoyed performing and seeing the short films during the day. Jeanette also received lots of praise from the various health professionals at the hotel for our valuable input around the tables.

Allan and Hazel sold an excellent £59 of goods and also £7.50 in tips from purchasers who told them to keep the change! But the Borland Enterprise Scheme was not finished and they held a Duty Free session on the bus trip home, netting another £15 in sales bringing the total to a superb £81.50. Jeanette then purchased £20 worth for Dykebar Hospital and at our meeting this morning saw another £9.50 in sales! That brought the total to a whopping £111.00! Fantastic! Who knew we had so many Captains of Industry in our ranks?



Left to right - Noreen, Anne D, Tom, Marion B, Allan, Marion M, Jackie, Eileen, Karen, Hazel and Christine.

Buddy Beat- To Infinity and Beyond!

Words (with a little help from Jeanette Allan) and pictures by Tom Chalmers