

## Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network

### ABSTRACT FORM

The Scottish Mental Health Service User Research Network was launched in 2011 with the aim of promoting mental health service user research in Scotland through helping to develop partnerships with other organisations, build capacity amongst service user researchers and showcase examples of good practice in relation to mental health service user research.

Organisations or researchers are invited to submit an abstract of their research to the Network. Where submissions satisfy the criteria agreed by the Network for service user research, these will be published on the Voices Of eXperience (VoX) website at <http://www.voxscotland.org.uk>.

If you wish to submit a research abstract or have any questions please email Chris White at [c.white.mentalhealth@gmail.com](mailto:c.white.mentalhealth@gmail.com)

<b>Research Title:</b>	Being diagnosed with a mental illness
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<b>Author(s):</b>	HUG (Highland Users Group)
<b>Date:</b>	2009

<b>Details of User Involvement (50 words max):</b> <i>(This should include brief details of the level of participation by services users in the following stages of the research: research design; implementation and data collection; data analysis; dissemination)</i>
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This report is formed from notes taken at meetings at local branches of HUG, open to all members (including all service users in the area). The project was designed, implemented and written up by HUG.
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<b>Research Rationale (50 words max):</b> <i>(This should include brief details of the purpose of the research).</i>
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Many are affected by a diagnosis as much as the mental illness itself. Researchers wanted to look further into how diagnosis affects service users, and other people respond to it.
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<b>Method (75 words max):</b> <i>(Brief explanation of research methods, participation, data collection, analysis etc.)</i>
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This report is formed from notes taken at meetings at local branches of HUG on how users are affected by their diagnosis. The meetings were open to all members (including all service users in the area). 101 members were involved.
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<b>Findings and Recommendations (150 words max):</b> <i>(Please provide a brief overview of the main findings and recommendations)</i>
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Most service users found that a diagnosis made mental health problems much easier to deal with. Recovery felt much more possible. They had access to information, support treatment and benefits. However, it can also lead to trouble with employment, particularly as a result of
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stigma and suspicion. People treat you differently, even family or mental health professionals. Often they will simply see the disorder, not the person. Self-image can be greatly affected.

An incorrect diagnosis is very unhelpful, and a repeated change in diagnosis can be bewildering, But not being diagnosed at all is much worse. If service users are told there is nothing wrong with them, they blame themselves for their problem. Diagnoses can be vague and unhelpful – service users want professionals to go through the diagnosis with them, and provide clear information. Some feel that diagnosis makes mental health problems overly medical, ignoring social factors. Different diagnoses can be viewed differently.

**Dissemination Details (50 words max):** *(This should include details of any events, journals etc. and how to obtain copies of the research)*

Circulated via the VOX newsletter, and featured on the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership website.

**Keywords:** *(keywords aimed at identifying the research report in information systems and search engines)*

'Hug' 'highland' 'service user' 'mental health' 'diagnosis' 'mental illness'

<b>Link to full research paper:</b>	<a href="http://www.hug.uk.net/reports_pdf/0903%20Being%20Diagnosed%20with%20a%20mental%20illness%20report.pdf">http://www.hug.uk.net/reports_pdf/0903%20Being%20Diagnosed%20with%20a%20mental%20illness%20report.pdf</a>
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<b>Contact Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:hug@hccf.org.uk">hug@hccf.org.uk</a>
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Are you happy for this email address to be published?      Yes       No

<b>Telephone Number</b>	01463 718818
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Are you happy for this number to be publicised?      Yes       No

**Completed forms should be returned to:** Chris White at [c.white.mentalhealth@gmail.com](mailto:c.white.mentalhealth@gmail.com)

**Thank You**