



“let us share our  
voices of experience  
in mental health”

**Diversity Network Bulletin** January 2011, Issue 4

Welcome to the Fourth edition of the diversity network bulletin, if this is the first time you have viewed this bulletin, you might want to see our earlier issues to get a better picture of our work. You can access back issues by clicking on the following link <http://www.voxscotland.org.uk/about/our-work/diversity> this bulletin is also available in hard copy format on request.

## **Who we are**

VOX is a Scotland wide, member lead organisation; we work to ensure that people with a lived experience of mental health issues get the opportunity to inform services about their experiences and to influence policies in relation to mental health at a national and local level.

## **The aims of the bulletin**

The bulletin seeks to hear from groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds and whose views in relation to mental health issues are not heard from traditionally. The aim is to share and learn from each other, to facilitate awareness, positive change and anti stigma, to promote partnerships and collaborations and to celebrate diversity.

## **Submissions**

Please contact the VOX team if you would like to submit an article, poem, report findings or information.

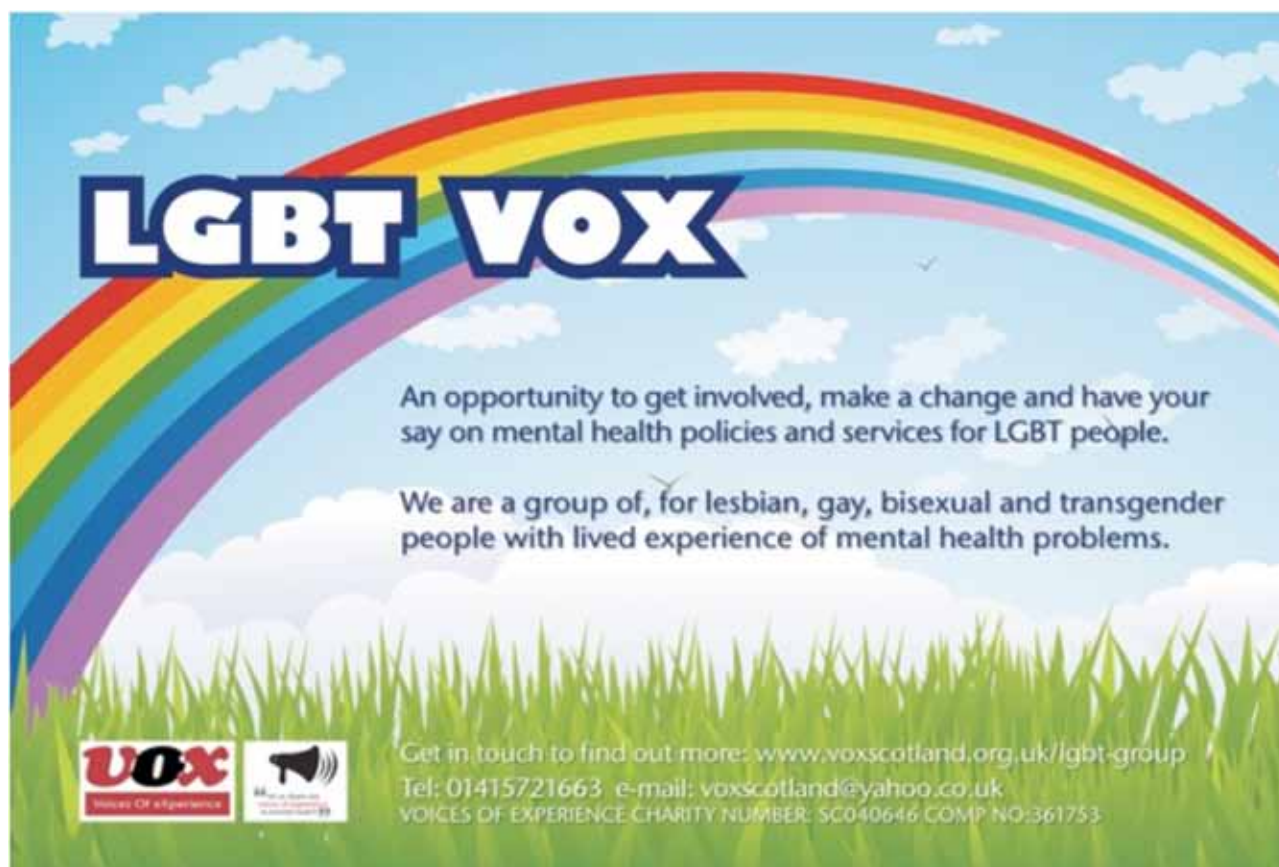
**Important note (also known as the small print in some places)**

The views expressed in this bulletin by members, individuals and Organisations are not necessarily the views of VOX unless otherwise stated.

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## LGBT VOX e-survey



**LGBT VOX**

An opportunity to get involved, make a change and have your say on mental health policies and services for LGBT people.

We are a group of, for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people with lived experience of mental health problems.

Get in touch to find out more: [www.voxscotland.org.uk/lgbt-group](http://www.voxscotland.org.uk/lgbt-group)  
Tel: 01415721663 e-mail: [voxscotland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:voxscotland@yahoo.co.uk)  
VOICES OF EXPERIENCE CHARITY NUMBER: SC040646 COMP NO:361753

**VOX** Voices Of Experience  
Mental Health Community Support

If you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person interested in mental health, have experience of accessing mental health services or want to discuss issues that affect your mental health then this new group might be of interest to you.

The group meets regularly in an informal way, tea/coffee, juice and Danish pastries are a must, we have a chat and share our news and views with each other, some of us are also starting to work on a guide to inform and support mental health professionals and community groups understand what is important for people who are L, G, B or T with a lived experience of a mental health problem.

Explore the groups' aims and objective at [www.voxscotland.org.uk](http://www.voxscotland.org.uk)



## Highland Users Group

HUG, the Highland Users Group is a collective advocacy group, which represents the interests of users of mental health services across the Highlands.

Our main aim is to improve the way in which we, as users of mental health services, are treated by campaigning to improve the rights, services and treatments of people with mental health problems.

The HUG Communications Project challenges the stigma surrounding mental health problems through working with young people, the media and delivering awareness training to professionals.

Some of our current work;

HUG have been working in partnership with ARGH (Autism Rights Group Highland) to produce a report on autism and mental health

We have been working with homeless members to produce a report on homelessness and mental health and are working with the Highland LGBT forum to produce a report on the LGBT community and mental health.

For contact information visit;

<http://www.hug.uk.net/>

Or

<http://www.voxscotland.org.uk/get-involved/groups/highland-users-group>

## Breathing Space Day 1st of February 2011: Recovery and Hope

Breathing Space Day 1st February, 2011: Hope and Recovery.

We have decided on this theme being inspired by our mission statement which helps us to promote the service we provide to the people of Scotland.

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. We are here in times of difficulty to provide a safe and supportive space by listening, offering advice and information.

It is our belief and hope that by empowering

people they will have the resources to recover.

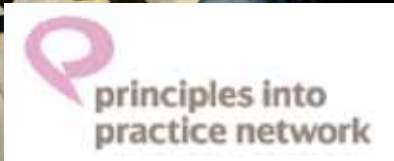
We are asking people of Scotland to wear the badge for "Hope and Recovery"

If you wish to support us in this endeavour and in addition further promote Breathing

Space Day this February, then e-mail [Jennifer@breathingspacescotland.co.uk](mailto:Jennifer@breathingspacescotland.co.uk) and request your badge, which we will send out along with a free 2011 Breathing Space Calendar

Telephone 0800 83 85 87 Monday-Thursday 6pm-2am, 24 hours at weekends Friday 6pm-Monday 6am.





## Respect for diversity award shortlist announced

Four projects that have shown best practice in meeting the mental health needs of people from minority communities have been shortlisted for a national best practice award. Principles into Practice Awards aim to share and celebrate best practice in rights based approaches to mental health across Scotland.

Shortlisted projects for the 2011 awards are:

- Equally Connected

A participatory research project delivered by Health in Mind, that works creatively and in culturally sensitive ways to identify issues and lobby for service change.

- LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing

Healthy Living Centre which has developed a range of therapeutic and support services, information sessions and courses to help address the high prevalence of mental health problems with the LGBT community in Scotland.

- Wah Kin, Glasgow Association for Mental Health

A partnership programme that works to increase the accessibility of mental health services for the older Chinese community in Glasgow. Low uptake of services has been attributed to resilience/self management this project aimed to establish the extent to which this was true and how much was down to accessibility of NHS services for older Chinese people and their carers.

- The Sanctuary Project, Positive Mental Attitudes

The final award winners will be announced at the Principles into Practice conference on the 18th March 2011 at the Scottish Youth Theatre in Glasgow. The event provides an opportunity for those working to improve mental health and well being to attend workshops where they can learn from these and many other projects. Shortlisted projects will also feature on the best practice website [www.principlesintopractice.net](http://www.principlesintopractice.net) alongside discussion forums, opinion pieces, video and audio content.

# SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL

## {CALL FOR ENTRIES}

Our annual open film submission gives filmmakers the opportunity to share their work and ideas with audiences across Scotland and internationally.

The festival is committed to finding and celebrating the work of filmmakers who explore mental health in film.

In its broadest sense 'mental health' is a term which touches most aspects of our lives; from our relationships to how we respond to the world around us. We're looking for films which show that mental health is something we all have, and something we all need to prioritise from time to time.

Previous winning submissions have looked at topics such as moving home, ageing, grief, loss, endurance, support, friendship, equality, sport, music, childhood as well as films about specific diagnoses or conditions.

Entry is free.

The closing date for entries is Friday 6th May 2011.

Please visit the website [www.mhfestival.com](http://www.mhfestival.com) for more information.

Email [smhaff@gmail.com](mailto:smhaff@gmail.com) for submission guidelines and entry form.

The fifth annual Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival will take place across Scotland throughout October 2011.



## Independent Living

...the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an undertaking to be carried out for all.

UN Charter

Independent Living is about human rights. Disabled people have these rights too but all too often their rights are taken away or watered down.

From what to eat to where to live, life is all about making decisions - being able to choose what you want to do and how, where and when you want to do it are things that non-disabled people often take for granted. But as a disabled person, the right to control your own life is more often than not denied.

Come to the Festival!

Rally round, a Movement has arrived!

The first ever Festival for the Independent Living Movement in Scotland takes place in the Thistle Hotel Glasgow on the 17th of February, 2011.

It will be a celebration of what we are and what we do.

Check back to this site for more details and information about signing up to attend, which we will add when they are become available.

[www.ilis.co.uk](http://www.ilis.co.uk)

## Breakfast at McDonald's from anonymous

This is a good story and is true, please read it all the way through until the end! (After the story, there are some very interesting facts!):

I am a mother of three (ages 14, 12, and 3) and have recently completed my college degree.

The last class I had to take was Sociology.

The teacher was absolutely inspiring with the qualities that I wish every human being had been graced with.

Her last project of the term was called, 'Smile.'

The class was asked to go out and smile at three people and document their reactions.

I am a very friendly person and always smile at everyone and say hello anyway. So, I thought this would be a piece of cake, literally.

Soon after we were assigned the project, my husband, youngest son, and I went out to McDonald's one crisp March morning.

It was just our way of sharing special playtime with our son.

We were standing in line, waiting to be served, when all of a sudden everyone around us began to back away, and then even my husband did.

I did not move an inch... an overwhelming feeling of panic welled up inside of me as I turned to see why they had moved.

As I turned around I smelled a horrible 'dirty body' smell, and there standing behind me were two poor homeless men.

As I looked down at the short gentleman,

close to me, he was 'smiling'

His beautiful sky blue eyes were full of God's Light as he searched for acceptance.....

He said, 'Good day' as he counted the few coins he had been clutching.

The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. I realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue-eyed gentleman was his salvation.

I held my tears as I stood there with them.

The young lady at the counter asked him what they wanted...

He said, 'Coffee is all Miss' because that was all they could afford. (If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something. He just wanted to be warm).



Then I really felt it - the compulsion was so great I almost reached out and embraced the little man with the blue eyes.

That is when I noticed all eyes in the restaurant were set on me, judging my every action.

I smiled and asked the young lady behind the counter to give me two more breakfast meals on a separate tray...

I then walked around the corner to the table that the men had chosen as a resting spot. I put the tray on the table and laid my hand on the blue-eyed gentleman's cold hand.

He looked up at me, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'Thank you.'

I leaned over, began to pat his hand and said, 'I did not do this for you. God is here working through me to give you hope.'

I started to cry as I walked away to join my husband and son... When I sat down my

husband smiled at me and said, 'That is why God gave you to me, Honey, to give me hope...'

We held hands for a moment and at that time, we knew that only because of the Grace that we had been given were we able to give.

We are not church goers, but we are believers. That day showed me the pure Light of God's sweet love.

I returned to college, on the last evening of class, with this story in hand.

I turned in 'my project' and the instructor read it.

Then she looked up at me and said, 'Can I share this?' I slowly nodded as she got the attention of the class.

She began to read and that is when I knew that we as human beings and being part of God share this need to heal people and to be healed.

In my own way I had touched the people at McDonald's, my son, the instructor, and every soul that shared the classroom on the last night I spent as a college student.

I graduated with one of the biggest lessons I would ever learn:

UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE.

**see me**...

LET'S STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH  
[www.seemescotland.org](http://www.seemescotland.org)

### Speakers Bureau

The 'see me' Speakers Bureau pilot began in May 2009 and since then our three local speakers have visited a range of settings (including schools, community groups and university societies) to talk about their experiences of mental ill-health and stigma. Over the last year our speakers have presented to over 180 people and the feedback has been hugely positive. In post-talk evaluations when asked, 98% of people agreed that they "would support a friend if they developed a mental health problem".

Participants were also asked what the most important messages that they took from the talk were and the 'see me' key messages are evidently coming through. Responses

included; "1 in 4 people develop mental health problems, most people recover and everyone should get the same respect".

Our dedicated speakers have also had a very positive experience of the programme, especially in building their confidence. Alistair, who has given more than ten talks in the last year said, "Doing these talks for the 'see me' campaign has really made me feel like I'm making a difference to peoples attitudes to mental ill health by sharing my experience"

After the success of the pilot we are now looking to the future and expanding the Speakers Bureau. We are planning to recruit more speakers and also are hoping to reach more groups and organisations throughout Scotland. If you would like more information about the Speakers Bureau, are interested in becoming a speaker or to request a speaker's visit for your organisation please contact Becky Duff, 0131 554 0218 [becky.duff@seemescotland.org](mailto:becky.duff@seemescotland.org)



## **Muvizu presents: Glasgow Youth Film Festival**

6 – 16 February 2011

Opportunities for young filmmakers! Call for submissions.

Glasgow Youth Film Festival 2011 has joined up with Chew TV again to launch our very successful 'One Minute Movie Competition'.

The competition is open to anyone in Scotland aged 14 – 19 years old.

This year's competition is specially themed – we're looking for films under 60 seconds about the best kept secrets in your neighbourhood! The films can be about your favourite childhood memory, where your friends hang out every weekend or anything unique to where you live. The judges are looking for all types of creative and imaginative films: comedies, dramas, animations, documentaries.

The best filmmakers will be rewarded with special prizes! One of the prizes will be an Alienware laptop worth £800, kindly supplied by Muvizu for Best Individual film.

The winning entries will be announced at special ceremony during GYFF and the winners will also be invited to screen their films at The Arches.

The closing date for entries to be uploaded is Tuesday 1 February 2011 at 6pm.

For more details and how to enter click here - <http://www.glasgowfilmfestival.org.uk/oneminute>

## **Free film-making course for BME women**

**(e.g. black, roma, south Asian, mixed, first nation, Asian, south Pacific Islander etc. etc. all of the many peoples who are the majority of the world) (aged 16-30) running in February and March 2011 over evenings and weekends. (We fund travel costs for women on low incomes).**

Each course participant will create her own short film that will then be publicly screened.

The course teaches the practical and exploratory aspects of film-making: camera use (framing, shot composition, steady-cams, tripods, lighting etc.), sound quality, storyboarding and editing using final cut express.

Also integrated into the course are empowering workshops on subjects we wish we'd had access to as younger women e.g. self-defence, massage (clothed), d.i.y. women's health, vision therapy basics etc.

We also watch films together with an emphasis on material by and about people of colour. This sparks off participant discussions on both film-making methodology and important issues.

We aim to create a focused learning environment, to sometimes be serious but always have fun in the course of a day.

More details can be found on our website [www.digitaldesperados.org](http://www.digitaldesperados.org) or by emailing us at [digitaldesperados@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:digitaldesperados@yahoo.co.uk) or by leaving a message on 07400 610 319 - we will get back to you!

# Contact Information

## Samaritans

08457 909090

They provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

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## Breathing Space

0800 8385 87

(Monday - Thursday 6pm-2am)

(Friday - Monday 6pm - 6am)



Breathing space is a free and confidential phone line service for any individual, who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.

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## NHS 24

0845 4 24 24 24

An online and telephone-based service that can answer your questions about your health and offer advice.

## VOX- Voices of Experience



c/o Mental Health Foundation, 30 George Square, Glasgow, G2 1EG

Telephone: 01415721663

Email: [mal-gailani@mhf.org.uk](mailto:mal-gailani@mhf.org.uk)

Website: [www.voxscotland.org.uk](http://www.voxscotland.org.uk)

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## Saheliya PEER ADVOCACY

Come and help us support our women!

A volunteering opportunity

What we give you: Full training, Support, Expenses

What you do: Speak English and one community

language. Be available for up to 4 hours a week.

Contact : Saheliya

125 Mc Donald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NW

Tel: 0131 556 9302

Email: [peeradvocacy@saheliya.co.uk](mailto:peeradvocacy@saheliya.co.uk)

Website: [www.saheliya.org.uk/](http://www.saheliya.org.uk/)

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## DAS-Depression Alliance Scotland

DAS is a national organisation that focuses specifically on depression. They offer information, self help support groups and telephone and email support.

Telephone: 0845 123 23 20

Email: [info@dascot.org](mailto:info@dascot.org)

Website: [www.dascot.org/index.html](http://www.dascot.org/index.html)