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September 2011

Peer Support Fife

News Byte

promoting peer support;  
peer led initiatives;  
survivor user carer  
participation & leadership

Robert Whitaker Lecture

events

PS  
Fife

&

SAMH

present

Saturday 19 November 2011  
At 1.00pm

Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife

**At the Sharp...Edge**

a dialogue event on peer led crisis alternatives

**Anatomy of an Epidemic: Psychiatric Medications  
and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America**

According to conventional histories of psychiatry, the arrival of Thorazine (chlorpromazine) in asylum medicine in 1955 kicked off a 'psychopharmacological revolution'. Yet, since 1955, the disability rate due to mental illness in the United States has risen more than *six-fold*. Moreover, this epidemic of disabling mental illness has accelerated since 1987, when Prozac - the first of the 'second-generation' drugs - arrived on the market. This increase in disability is also being seen in other countries that have embraced the use of psychiatric drugs: Canada, UK, Ireland, Iceland, Australia and NZ, among others. A review of the long-term outcomes literature for psychiatric medications reveals why this is so. The 'medical model' paradigm of care, which emphasises continual use of psychiatric medications, is a failed paradigm and needs to be dramatically rethought.

with guests Prof Phil Barker and Poppy Buchanan-Barker

Opening Address: Billy Watson  
Chief Executive SAMH

Guests

Shery Mead & Chris Hansen  
Ron Coleman & Karen Taylor  
Fiona Venner  
Jacquie Nicholson  
Jan Cameron

Tuesday 20 September 2011

10.30am to 3.00pm  
Carnegie Conference Centre  
Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 8DY

**Recovery Learning Communities:  
An Alternative American Experience**

Tuesday 6 September 2011

Renfield Centre, Glasgow

Will Hall & Oryx Cohen

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

**Cork Conference 16 & 17 November 2011**

**Medicating Human Distress:  
Concerns, Critiques and Solutions**

University College Cork, Ireland

Keynote Speakers

Jacqui Dillon, Anna Emmanouilidou

Peter Lehmann, Eleanor Longden

Terry Lynch, Sami Timimi

Abstract submission deadline 16 September

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**Zero Tolerance Consultation**

Mental Welfare Commission

Thursday 15 September 2011

10.00am to 3.30pm

Cosla Offices, Haymarket, Edinburgh

St Andrews Castle

photo courtesy of  
Daniel Muirhead

## A story about life after the acute psychiatric ward

Here is a story about a young man I met the other week in the local supermarket who I had got to know last year when visiting an acute psychiatric ward in Fife, 9wks over the summer.

We bumped into each other in the do-it-yourself checkout queue. When I said hello he asked if I had 10p so that he could buy a couple of energy drinks, he was short of the 10p. I gave him it. He offered to help me put my things through the checkout. We started chatting and he said that he was soon getting out of the hospital, he had been given a flat in a Fife town, not the place of his choice. I asked how long he had been in the acute ward, he said 15 months, which works out at over £161,000 for his care as the cost of one acute inpatient bed per week is £2,500.

He looked a bit different, I asked why, he said that he was 'off the drink' as he'd been put on a course of antabuse pills (he has alcohol issues and has been 'inside'). He was taking the energy drinks as a substitute for the alcohol.

However he didn't look happy so I asked him how he felt and he said that he had 'wasted his life'. He is 26yrs old and it was sad to hear him say this. We finished putting my shopping through and he asked what I was doing next. I felt that he would have liked just to talk and to be listened to. Unfortunately I had another appointment so had to say goodbye.

This is only one of many stories I have heard from people who I came into contact with while visiting the acute ward. It was interesting if challenging to hear how this young man was doing a year down the line. I wonder where recovery comes into his story and what hope there is for this young man when he is settled into his flat, still feeling that his life has been wasted and the energy drinks just don't fill the gap.

Chrys  
Muirhead

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## Independent Advocacy

"Independent advocacy is a way to help people have a stronger voice and to have as much control as possible over their own lives. Independent Advocacy organisations are *separate* from organisations that provide other types of services."

[www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 says:

"Every person with a mental disorder shall have a right of access to independent advocacy"

And yet in Fife all the mental health advocacy is provided by an organisation that is a service provider, and is therefore not independent. The user led mental health advocacy groups in Fife 'lost out' in a tendering process in 2009 to the only other contender, a service provider. There are questions still to be asked:

- ◆ do the public bodies in Fife understand what mental health independent advocacy is?
- ◆ do they recognise and respect the user voice in influencing mental health service planning and provision?
- ◆ how can the Fife mental health advocacy situation be redeemed?
- ◆ how can Fife mental health service users, survivors and carers have a voice and make a difference?

## SAMH National Programme for Suicide Prevention

SAMH has been working with people affected by suicide since 2004 when they first produced their information pamphlet for friends and families, *After a Suicide*, which received an overwhelmingly positive response.

SAMH works with some of the highest risk groups, including those with mental health problems, people who abuse substances, people affected by homelessness and survivors of bullying and abuse. They are only too aware of the direct impact of suicide and that's why SAMH have launched their National Programme for Suicide Prevention.

The first event in their National Programme will be a conference for the friends and family of those affected by suicide. Taking place in **Glasgow** on **17 September**, the event will be the first of its kind in Scotland and will feature a keynote speech from international suicide prevention expert **Ken Norton**, of the US-based *Connect Suicide Prevention Project*, run by NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Ken will speak from experience about how communities can work together to prevent suicide.

[www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

### Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



REBELLION AT THE GLOVE FACTORY

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