

“This is Madness”

A group for people who are interested in discussing issues relating to mental health, critiquing the ways help is provided and getting involved in projects aimed at bringing about changes locally and nationally.

What are symptoms? Part of an illness? Reactions to oppression? An uncomfortable learning opportunity?

Are talking therapies as effective as is sometimes claimed? It might be ‘good to talk’ but do we need specialists to do this with?

Do we live in a ‘quick-fix pill for every ill’ culture?

Who can come?

The group is limited to 15 people but is **open to anyone** – you might have experienced mental health services or know people who have, you may work in these services or just have an interest in these areas.

Priority will be given to people who can come to all of the sessions.

Who are we?

The group will be organised by Ian Yates, Phil Jenkinson and Guy Holmes. Ian and Guy are local psychologists, Phil is former social worker in the mental health field.

When and where will we meet?

Sessions will take place at **The Lantern, Shrewsbury** and run from **11.00am - 1.30pm on a fortnightly basis from October 19th until 8th March.**

Interested? email guy.holmes@nhs.net or phone **01743 254050** to reserve a place or get more information

The types of questions we might collectively explore...

- When we feel out of balance is it because of bio-chemical imbalances in our brains or something in our life that might be out of synch?
- If homosexuality was listed as a mental illness until relatively recently might all psychiatric diagnoses just be labels put on behaviours some people find unacceptable?
- Are psychiatric drugs that different to other mood and mind altering drugs?
- Do anti-depressants make people tolerant of intolerable things in society?
- Is there enough help for people to come off medication?
- Is ECT a life changing treatment or barbaric? Not so different to wacking a tv when it's not working properly?
- Are people we call alcoholics just 'people who we don't like who drink as much as we do'?
- What helps us in crisis and do crisis teams, acute wards and crisis houses provide this?
- Are mental health services, governments and the media part of the problem or part of the solution when it comes to stigma? What might be done to reduce stigma?
- Who needs help – individual people or society?

Relevant people with expertise in each area will be invited to come along to each meeting, provide information about the topics, listen to what people say and join in the debates.

Each session will end with opportunities for people to think about and (in small groups or individually) plan any strategy they feel might help to bring about some changes in services and the local area relevant to each topic discussed. It is hoped that the group will provide support for people who want to try and change things locally or nationally.

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