



THE BRIDGE COLLECTIVE C.I.C.

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014

Bridge Collective Mission Statement

To be a company whose members are creating:

A democratic community where people who have experiences, beliefs, and feelings that have sometimes been labelled as mental illness are welcomed and can talk about these experiences freely, safely and without judgement; a place to participate in friendship, support, learning, teaching, discussion, being active, and making a valid contribution both within the collective and the wider community.



How the Bridge Collective works

The Bridge Collective has a unique organizational structure. It is a flat organization set up as a Community Interest Company with members; with each member having shared control and all staff are paid the same hourly wage.

The Bridge Collective aims for everyone involved to have the same power to make decisions as everyone else. Decisions about the running of the collective are made at monthly directors' meetings open to all. Directors are appointed by vote by all members at the AGM. There is no executive director, chair or treasurer. The chair or co-chairs of the community meetings are chosen monthly by people volunteering to chair or co-chair.

There is no co-ordinator/manager of the organization: management is by peer/collective management.

The Bridge Collective has a small part time staff team and is run largely on good will and volunteer input.

The Bridge Collective achieves a lot of peer support on a small budget. Keyholders (volunteers and part time staff) open and lock up the building for a group/activity and are the responsible person whilst the activity is taking place.

There is no assessment/referral process to take part in Bridge activities: people decide for themselves if activities are something they would benefit from. People at the collective may have multiple roles including: director, employee, sessional worker, self employed, facilitator, keyholder, trainer, volunteer, member, attendee, visitor; and people take part as both providers and beneficiaries of the collective's activities.

The nature of the Bridge Collective is that it is about participating in something together.

In essence that participation is equal for everyone regardless of 'roles' they have.

Support, social and activity groups and projects:

Discussion group

Open Day

Rainbow mind

Underground Sound

Women's Art group

Wholefood project

Experts by Experience

Greenwood Project

Open Reflection

Activities at the Bridge

- Monthly Community meetings
- Time to Talk day – Mental Health Message Tree – Feb 2013
- Research into Individual Treatment Planning – focus group with Connie
- The Clay Collective – Women's Art Group collaborating with Spacex Gallery and Unearth Studio in clay workshops.
- A series of Yoga sessions at the Bridge with Rick Wolkers



- Drama students visiting underground sound for 6 weeks
- Drama student's performance of *'Sound mind'* at mint Methodist hall
- Participatory photography course with Clive from Meridian Raw
- Experiential Drama workshops with Ben
- Planning for spring Choices in Approaches event
- Film showing of Working to Recovery's: *'How to start and run a hearing voices group'* and talk afterwards
- July 2013 – Hearing voices event: Sharing hearing voices self-help resources
- Nov 2013 – Safeguarding Awareness Session
- Supervision / 'Open Reflection' sessions with Michelle Virgo
- Celebrating the Bridge Collective's sixth Birthday
- Greenwood's Escot camp
- Annual General Meeting with buffet provided by Maia Moss
- Quarterly newsletters
- Designing the Bridge website day July 13
- Group facilitator supervision with Mary Booker started January 2014



People at the Bridge

Members

Total members March 31st 2013: 24

Total members March 31st 2014: 19

Estimated number of people involved in the Bridge groups and activities: between 150 and 250

Experts by Experience have spoken to approximately 440 trainee health professionals: trainee doctors, psychologists.

Directors on March 31st 2013:

Andrew Barkla

Ricardo Wolkers

Beverley Slade

Mike Rabjohns

Stuart Plant

Bridget Kelly

Directors Appointed:

Sarah Everson on 31th May 2013

Sarah Trickett on 9th January 2014

Directors Resignations on 30th May 2013:

Stuart Plant

Beverley Slade

Bridget Kelly

Keyholders:

We have a very part time staff and people doing activities voluntarily: for the Bridge to open, there needs to be a keyholder at each event/activity. Keyholders between April 2013 and March 2014:

Neil, Lena, Sarah, Bev, Andrew, Nicola, David, Fleur, Alex, Mike, Rick

Paid Employees: Project facilitators:

Community Development

Andrew Barkla: 4.5 hrs/pw

Bev Slade: 12.5 hrs/pw

Sarah Everson: 6 hrs/pw

Women's Art Group

Fleur Hardman: 2 hrs/pw

Underground Sound – Young Person's Music Project

David Lindsay: 6 hrs/pw

Alex Barton: 6 hrs/pw

Finance

Sarah Everson: 12 hrs/pw

The Greenwood Project

Andrew Barkla: 9 hrs/pw

Bev Slade: 9 hrs/pw

Experts by Experience – Project Development Worker

Nicola O-B: 5 hrs/pw

Experts by Experience – Facilitators and Trainers

0 hours contracts: Nicola, Anna, Ali, Sarah T, Chris

Cleaning

Nicola O-B: 1 hr/pw

Safeguarding

Nicola O-B: 1 hr/pw

Project volunteers:

Wholefood project:

Mike

Rainbowmind:

Lena

Social Anxiety Group:

Neil (until November 2013)

Discussion Group:

Nicola

Updating calendar:

Marcus

Cleaning:

Collective

Experts by Experience:

Volunteer trainers

Specific Designated Teams:

Health and Safety team:

Andrew Plus volunteers

Complaints team:

Andrew, Sarah and Nicola

Safeguarding team – safeguarding officer: Nicola

Help we've received – gratitude

- Core grant received from Devon Partnership Trust and Devon County Council.
- Clive from Meridian Raw securing funding from by The People Health Trust in partnership with Olive Tree Association, bringing Participatory photography course to the Bridge Collective for free.
- Website and computer know-how, help with getting Newsletter online December 2013
- Generous donation of sound recording booth and equipment from The X-Centre

- Individual donations of money, time and energy.
- Members sharing home grown fruit and veg produce and bringing in biscuits, cake and bread
- Michelle Virgo – Facilitating supervision and Open Reflection sessions and write-ups.
- Room use donations from:
 - Wolf and Water, Genki Music, Shine Music and Film
- Greenwood Camp – story telling from Chris Holland
- Rob playing guitar and leading campfire singing
- Newsletter contributors –
 - Articles/writings: Philip Goddard, John Allsup, Sarah Trickett
 - Natalie's Nature notes regular column
 - Poets: Joan, Steven David, Anna Louise, Rachel Schaufel
- Encouraging advice from Bruce Luxton, Dawn Rivers, Rob Simmonds at E.C.C. September 2013
- Input from Unearth Studio's Ek and Eunice, Spacex Gallery, artist Lula – collaboration in creating the Clay Collective
- Spontaneous contributions from Elaine at Bridge Collective Peer Support presentation at DRRIG presentation in March
- Delicious buffet from Maia Moss's Esh-Café, Exeter farmers market
- Donation of printers, ink and paper from Ian

Consultation and communication within the Bridge

- Started bi-monthly supervision for group facilitators with Mary Booker January 2014
- Safeguarding awareness session November 14th 2013
- Asked ourselves – *how do you see peer support* in preparation for the Peer Support event April 2013
- Open Reflection/Supervision sessions included:
 - What do we want from supervision? April 2013
 - Community Building at the Bridge – June 2013
 - Looking after ourselves and each other – July 2013
 - Supervision and what we want from it – September 2013
 - Defining community development role and what do we call these sessions – Nov 2013
 - On how we do things as a community – February 2014

April 2013: What do we want from supervision?

What do we want from supervision?

Progression, sharing, more of us here, a way to make processes in Bridge more accessible, valuable for everyone, a place to process things in a way that will lead to action

What do we want to keep?

- A gathering of views and impartial reflect-back
- An opportunity to weave views and ideas together
- Structure – to keep an (already happy) group focused
- Foundation ideas and tangible outputs such as “What brings life to the Bridge”
- A focus on what's working
- Written summaries

June 2013: Community Building at the Bridge

What makes us a community?

- Keeping in touch
- Unconditional support
- Do things together
- Learn together
- Make music together
- Shared history
- “All the fun we had”
- Be genuine and honest
- Everybody brings something different
- Different and welcome
- We bring something to the outside community
- Identity and purpose
- Sense of belonging
- Can bring self to community – safe and secure
- Opportunity to transform

September 2013: Supervision and what we want from it

What helps me to do my job?

- Meaning
- Knowing I'm valued, the task is valued, validation, people taking an interest, trust made explicit (people knowing what I'm doing as well as trusting me to do it)
- Being part of a team
- Dedication
- Organisation and structure around what I do
- Knowing I'm accountable, getting feedback, knowing I'm getting it right
- Constructive criticism from others and self
- Accessible processes, knowing what to do and who to ask, having supportive people outside the Bridge (e.g. accountant)
- Informal talking, just relating, having breaks
- Interconnecting, practical awareness of each other's need

What support do I need?

- | | |
|---|--|
| • A co-worker / someone who understands | broken down |
| • Space outside the group I'm facilitating | • <i>Knowing</i> there will be a place to deal with it (i.e. a future supervision session) |
| • A “purging and processing” place as a step towards resolution on more difficult matters | • Having a shared structure e.g. non-violent communication or assertiveness |
| • Somewhere to go when communication has | |

What does The Bridge need?

- Happy, healthy, messy workforce, people to be who they are
- A functioning team
- Cost effective supervision, supervision that understand Bridge Collective
- An immediate supportive response when necessary
- Effective communication, consensus tools for clear communication (?)
- A process for actions arising from supervision
- Supervision that enables people to “put stuff back in the box”
- A focused “steering group” similar to current session

November 2013: Defining community development role and what do we call these sessions

❖ Everyone is a Community Developer

Elements of the community development role:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| • Anything can be an opportunity for community development | • Getting core tasks done in a way that fits our aspirations as a collective | • Supervision |
| • Petty cash | • Community of people creating something | • Sending accounts and reports |
| • Post, emails, phone messages | | • Companies House and company records |
| | | • Tax |

- Insurance
- Communicating legal & policies & otherwise
- Membership and mailing records
- Safeguarding
- Keyholder & facilitating
- Open day
- Defining what open day is all about
- Networking & reaching out
- Advertising and promotion
- Health and safety
- “Anchoring”
- Computer security
- Employment & recruitment
- Welcoming
- Facilitating
- Fundraising
- Infinite time
- Attending community meeting and participating in decision-making
- Presence
- Supporting each other
- Website, social networking, Facebook & Twitter
- Practical solutions
- Growing things
- Supporting things to get off the ground
- Facilitating opportunities to be involved
- Sit and knit – having time to be with people, innovation & creativity
- Shared defining – inclusive
- Choices

The difference between paid and not-paid work at the Bridge

Paid work:

- There's a guarantee it will be done – a commitment
- Some people want or need paid work
- A contractual arrangement – someone who has a “duty” to perform certain tasks

- Expected to manage (weeble-ise) own wobbles
- Comes with a responsibility to spot opportunities and develop them
- Provides a web to support opportunity spotting and development

Some creative suggestions on what to call sessions with Michelle.....

- An extraordinary gathering
- Pluto would love it
- Kind of get together thingy where we talk about what's important
- (Blank psychic post-it)
- Preserving moomin land & our identity
- Grown up people seem to be sitting still

Which led to...

Open Reflection

(On how we do things as a community)

Because:

- Open reflection is open to anyone
- The discussion topics tend to be quite open
- It's a chance to be still
- And look at ourselves
- Reflection is one part of a learning /

development cycle that includes action, observation, reflection and planning. These meetings might include observation and planning as well as reflection – but they are also our non-doing part of the cycle.

Outcomes and achievements for the company

Bridge Collective 6th Birthday 3rd April 2013

Establishing supervision

Room hire process set up

2013 – 2014 core funding received

Nice meal at Herbies

Two new directors

Keeping the Bridge running

Writing article for Asylum magazine in October 2013 for spring 2014 issue: *'Creative responses to difficult times'*

Making new connections – meeting new people and organization

Outcomes and achievements in groups

- Rainbowmind celebrating 5th birthday on 7th August 2013
- Pond made in the Escot garden – the Greenwood project
- Set up Facebook and twitter accounts
- Greenwood camp and making at camp
- Lovely leaf art at Greenwood
- Sharing Circle Themes:
 - (Winter/Spring) – kindling new life
 - (Winter) – Descent, protection



(Autumn) – Harvest

(Autumn/Winter) – Honouring the old, preparing for the new

(Summer/Autumn) – Fruitfulness and gratitude

(Summer) – Wildness

- David and Alex constructing the donated recording booth from the X-centre – Underground sound
- Supervision redefined as Open reflection facilitated by Michelle Virgo
- Individual Treatment Planning Research Focus Group at Bridge with Connie February and March 2014
- The Clay Collective: collaboration between – Unearth Studio, Spacex Gallery and the Women's Art Group continued
- Clay Collective visit to Layla Curtis
- Sound Mind CD produced
- Discussion group topics have included:
 - Talking to someone
 - Boundaries
 - Community
 - Hearing voices
- Experts by Experience work 2013/2014:
 - 3 new Experts by Experience team members in October 2013

- New Expert by Experience employee: Chris Twose – Welcome
- October 2013 New Experts by Experience sessions for MA students in Foundations of Clinical Psychology at the University of Plymouth: beliefs, isolation and belonging, coping strategies and meaning of experience
- March 2014 – session for junior psychiatrists from different branches of psychiatry at Brimpts Farm: looking at alternative ways of understanding and dealing with experience which may have been labelled psychosis
- Lived Experience Module sessions at Plymouth University with student mental health nurses
- Taking part in sessions about suicide and self harm at Peninsula Medical School, Wonford
- University of Exeter, workshop sessions with trainee psychologists. Speaking about experiences of voices, visions and unusual beliefs that have sometimes been labeled as psychosis.
- Hearing Voices workshop to trainee psychologists on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Programme at Plymouth University
- We've delivered: 21 training sessions
- We've spoken to approximately 440 trainee health professionals: trainee doctors, psychologists and student nurses.
- Experts by Experience training has brought approximately £6575 into the Bridge this year. Big thank you to all.

Outcomes and achievements for people within the Bridge Collective

- Members speaking at outside events for the first time
- Members attending Open Dialogue weekend in London – March 2013
- Member attending Protective Behaviours course – June 2013

Challenges we have faced

- Letting the Greenwood allotment go.
- Saying farewell to Social Anxiety Group
- Communication difficulties/ miscommunications.
- Stigma about mental illness within society and non-understanding being ignored or forced into an emergency situation.

Challenges and hopes for the future

- Crowd funding
- Handprint counting numbers of people who come project
- Clear communication
- One-to-one supervision in some situations
 - “occasional” supervision for the times when someone has had a particularly challenging experience and needs to check in with someone the same day
 - “stepping-stone” supervision for anyone who doesn't yet feel able to bring their thoughts or concerns to group supervision; an opportunity to offload and work out what to do next
 - This is made difficult because of limited paid time and therefore limited availability of potential peer supervisors within Bridge. A general sense that this is a resolvable challenge.

Networking and communication outside the Bridge

- Member attended the depression puzzle open day at the mood disorder clinic Exeter university Oct 2013
- Bridge Collective presentation at – DRRIG (Devon Recovery Research and Innovations Group) 28th Feb 2013 Open Meeting –Topic for the day: “Recovery though activity and activism”

- DRRIG March 2013 Peer support presentation by Bridge Collective members
- Presenting at Connecting minds – Peer support event at the Rougemont Hotel on 17th April 2013 – presentation about Peer Support at the Bridge Collective – including a video made by Underground Sound
- Women's Art Group continued collaboration with Unearth Studio and SpaceX, forming the Clay Collective
- Bridge Collective peer support presentation at Recovery Devon Open Meeting September 2013
- Meeting and visiting RSPB in Topsham (Greenwood)
- Oct 2013 – Attending Third Sector Mental Health Providers Forum – Mental Health and Wellbeing Network
- Asylum article on '*Creating a Community*' by The Bridge Collective – October 2013 submission for the spring 2014 Asylum edition: '*Creative responses to difficult times*'.
- Meeting with Bruce Luxton, Dawn Rivers and Rob Simmonds at Exeter City Council
- December 2013 Bridge Collective Stall at Tea and Talk launch
- Connection made with Soteria Network Southwest leading to meeting – Feb 2014 ☺ to plan a Choices in Approaches event in the spring.

Feedback

“Thank you because the Bridge let me borrow a camera”

“We’ve really enjoyed working with people from Underground Sound” – *‘Sound Mind’ drama students*

“Some delicious recipes in the Newsletters”

“I always enjoy reading quotes in Newsletter”

“Thank you music and guitar from Rob”

“Pleased with the turn out for last session, thought that Michelle held the space really well, particularly considering there was some stuff that was said that was quite charged and powerful. I felt I was learning a lot simply by observing how Michelle managed the space.”

“Women’s Art Group inspired by a visit to Antipodes, the Clay Collective created some beautiful ceramic work this morning, during their regular Monday session which is co-hosted with Unearth Pottery Studio next door to SpaceX.” – June 17 2013

“The day went very well and everyone gave a valuable contribution. I’m looking forward to future similar events” – from peer support event April 2013

“Thank you Neil for facilitating the social anxiety group up until now – farewell”

“Supervision” has different connotations for different people. How about Super Visioning!

“Believe in what we’re doing”

Comment on Underground Sound video and peer support presentation. “the Bridge Collective looks like a festival”

Answers from members of the Bridge Collective to – *how do you see peer support* – questions:

What does peer support at the Bridge mean to you?

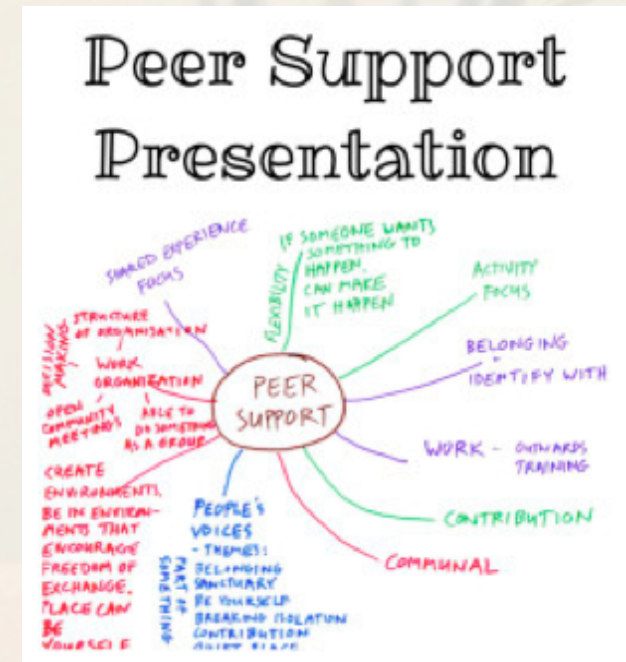
Can you give any examples of how peer support happens here?

How does it impact you having access to a peer support group?

Is it important to you and if so why?

sanctuary, quiet place

- Being with others who also have mental health issues.
- Friendly and non-judgmental contact with other people with mental health problems.
- Uplifting, friendly place, which gives moral support and tea: a sanctuary
- A nice atmosphere where you can chat in an often hectic and impersonal world.
- Reminds me of a tipi: very cosy, it reminds me of the Indians’ way of life – that’s what draws me to it. People’s minds are quiet.
- It’s non-judgemental and a place of safety.
- Being with others who also have mental health issues.



- Sometimes not saying anything.

be yourself

- It means having friends I can trust.
- A place to come to where we can be accepted.
- There is no sigma here!
- I can be open with no fear of reprisals or repercussions.
- It is important because I'm not being judged for being out of work and I can be myself and still be accepted even if I'm depressed, so it basically cheers me up as well as helping me with photography.
- I'm looking forward to the day the lunatics take over the asylum

Breaking isolation

- Having the company of others.
- To feel less isolated.
- Without it I would have hardly any friends and nowhere to go to which means that I could wind up spending all day indoors seeing and speaking to no one.
- Improves my isolation and depression.
- Great to have somewhere to go to whilst being unemployed.

Learning together

- I will have honest and supportive interactions helping me to explore and question my ideas and emotions
- A place of rest where I can have a conversation to learn about what is mental illness and why we are all taking pills.
- I can question my disease and its treatment
- I can use information in library to keep up to date with mental health.
- Get ideas
- In photography group get and give feedback and encouragement on own work
- I can share and listen to stories from my peers free of professional monitoring.

Contribution, belonging, part of something

- This happens by people getting alongside of each other
- Experts by Experience enables sharing of experiences of mental illness and treatment increasing awareness of patient's experience with future professionals
- The opportunity to make new friends
- Creative art on a Monday and through photography, more casually in the coffee area.
- Drama group, women's art group, open day on a Thursday

Our Lives, Our Community, Our Voice

FREE 14 week PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE

at The Bridge Collective
Unit 4,
7-9 King Street Business Centre
Exeter, Devon EX1 1BQ

The first of 14 workshops begins
March 17th
1pm - 3:30pm

For more information please contact:
Telephone: 07968 080969
Email: clive@meridianraw.com

Time to Talk Day Event
www.time-to-change.org.uk/talkday
Thursday 6th Feb, 2- 4pm

Mental Health Message Tree

- Write a message on a leaf
- Read other people's messages
- A chance to talk about experiences, beliefs, and feelings that have sometimes been labelled as mental illness.
- Part of creating places where these experiences can be talked about freely, safely and without judgement.
- Being aware that people who are not speaking may still have an opinion
- Join us for a cuppa at the Bridge Collective close to the High Street in Exeter.
- Unit 4, King St Business Centre, 7-9 King St, EX1 1BQ Tel: 01392 433358
- Thursday 6th February, 2 - 4pm
- All welcome ☺

YOGA
AT THE BRIDGE COLLECTIVE
MONDAYS 1 - 2:30 pm

Voluntary contributions to the Bridge Welcome

"I have been practicing Yoga for quite a number of years but have recently qualified as a Yoga Alliance level 1 teacher. The training for level 1 qualification was undertaken in Bali with Yoga Arts. I am also currently enrolled on a 2 year level 2 training with Devon School of Yoga. I am very passionate about all aspects of 'yogi' life and enjoy nothing more than sharing this."

Film showing:
Thursday, 5 September 2013
at 14:30-16:30

Knowing you, knowing you

WORKING TO RECOVERY PRESENTS

Sound Mind

Mint Methodist Church (Rowe Hall)
21st March @ 2pm
FREE ENTRY!
(Optional Donation of £1)

In Association with



The Bridge Collective C.I.C. Unit 4 King Street Bus. Centre, 7 - 9 King Street, Exeter, EX1 1BQ Tel: 01392 433358

Company number: 6201528