

Helping to Build Carer Friendly Communities.

RECOVERY EDUCATION CENTRE (REC)

Covid19 pandemic service update: We have different online learning options including podcasts, worksheets, and videos. Discover Bitesize skills resources on our webpage under "Learn Online" Courses are available to people with personal experience of mental health difficulties as well as carers, friends, family, and supporters including staff. For more information about the REC and to enroll please contact the team on 02020 584478. If you would like to access resources "offline" please contact us. You can access our REC webpage by visiting [Dorset Recovery Education Centre](#). Here you can find out more about our services and access podcasts, worksheets, videos and our online registration form.
dhc.recovery.education.centre@nhs.net
Phone - 01202 584478

ADVOCACY information from Simon

Due to the impact of Covid19 and advice from UK government, the Dorset Mental Health Advocacy staff are working from home. The service is still open and you are welcome to get in touch in the usual way. More information is on our website – <http://www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/advocacy.html>
To contact us, telephone 01305 261483 or email dmha@dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk
The advocacy service also have a very helpful sign posting list that can be accessed on <http://www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/pdfs/other/Signposting%20during%20covid.pdf>

THINGS TO DO FROM HOME -

www.youtube.com- The Show Must Go On, and National Theatre Live are both showing one of their stage shows each week for free

www.wildlifetrusts.org/webcams wildlife webcams to relax watching nature.

www.cntraveler.com/story/all-museum-exhibits-symphonies-and-operas-you-can-enjoy-from-home free virtual tours and concerts.

www.livewelldorset.co.uk/ 5 ways to wellbeing challenge. Be active, Connect, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give.

www.futurelearn.com free courses.



Who Are We?

The Dorset Mental Health Carers Project.

We are carers known as Peer Carer Specialists, it means we are still carers or have been carers, supporting someone with a serious mental health problem and have been through a crisis, often several times. During our time as carers we have learnt coping skills and ways to look after ourselves as well. Though that is not suggesting it becomes easier, you just learn how to deal with things and look at them differently. Peer Carers can listen to your fears and worries. They understand what you are saying because they have more than likely been through something similar. They can give you support, sign post you to further help, send you information and meet up with you for a chat.

Peer Carers also work together with professional and third sector organisations to help improve the carer's experience and communication with mental health professionals. We listen to carers and pass on what has worked for carers and what doesn't. Make contact with the appropriate mental health department when required. We attend mental health meetings and act as the voice of the carer. We are involved in co-production, in various ways involving carers. Our Carers Crisis Line is still operating.

For the East of the County call 01202 373305

For the West of the County 01305 340045

Line is open week days, and an answer phone operates at other times. Messages will be picked up within 24 hours and we will get back to you if your leave contact details. We are aware that it may be difficult to phone, when the person you support is close. Then please send a Text Babs 07961 159854. Joy 07508 776410 Email

carer@dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk

DORSET MENTAL HEALTH CARERS PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Autumn/Winter 2020



Athelhampton House Carers Day when we could meet up

Dorset Mental Health Carers Project.

KEEPING IN TOUCH.

It has been a few years since I have found myself putting a newsletter together. We were asked to put it on hold as ideas were being spoken about amalgamating with another newsletter.

Like many things people became too busy and the idea was shelved. I feel we have waited long enough. Especially at this difficult time for carers and the people they support. Group meetings are now virtual if you have the facilities and know how to join in. For others it is not so easy to keep in contact and their lives have become more isolated. For all of us our world has shrunk. Some carers have not known that there was mental health support out there from CMHTs and other supporting organizations. Other carers have not made contact for fear of putting too much pressure on the services. Some organizations closed without prior notice, others were able to take calls and give support by phone or email, but the message never reached every carer. CMHTs, Advocacy, Rethink, Carers Project Crisis Line and many others are still working to support carers, we are all working from home and are available to take your calls or emails. Contact has seriously dropped off since April in all support areas, but it is still out there, just being done differently. In this newsletter we will try to update you as much as we can on things you may feel could be helpful.

Leonardo Trust

Carers Helpline 10am to 2pm 01202 698325
24hr Mental Health Support including carers Connection 0300 123 5440

Carer Support Dorset
0800 368849

CRISP East Dorset carer support

01202 458204

Rethink –West/North Dorset carer support
01305 257172



Carers Lunch at the Crown Blandford Forum
Two years ago.

Carers Project during Covid19

We are here to just call for a chat about whatever you like, if you are missing your groups or visiting friends. We can also sign post you to other forms of support and help. If you ask a question and we don't know the answer we will do the research and get back to you. We are here if you just want to sound off about your caring role. We understand because we are carers too. If it is difficult to speak due to the person you support being nearby you can Email us on carers@dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk

Text

For the East 07961159854

For the rest of Dorset 07508776410

R.E.A.C.H. reported by Con -

Sport and Social for the people you support. With Covid19 many things have had to change. When the government restrictions were relaxed we started to test activities that would work for small numbers and at a social distance and now can roll these out across the county. Our new amended program will give everyone the chance to get out and do something active, or stay home and connect virtually with our online gaming groups of book-club. There are a lot of little one off things happening that do not go on line. As things are so fluid and changeable. To find out what is happening in your area call 01305 257172 and leave your name and contact number Dave or Con will give you a call back. As always every group is coordinated by a Forum Sports and Social Peer who can help with signposting and support if required but also crucially who can help people to focus on and enjoy the activity itself.

www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/sportsandsocial.html

Phone 01305 257172 and leave your name and contact number, Dave or Con will get back to you.

You may have noticed the photos showing events for Carers. The Carers Project usually finance and help arrange two events in Dorset during Carers Week in June each year and an evening event for working carers near to Carers Rights Day. We haven't been able to do that this year, but are looking into finding a way to do something virtual, but also include those that are unable to use the computer as well. As soon as it is arranged we will get the message out to CMHTs etc. and email those carers I have contact details. If you are interested in being involved please email us or phone with your name and contact details.

carers@dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk

dorsetmentalhealthcarersproject@yahoo.co.uk

NEWS FROM LEWIS - RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS, WEST/NORTH DORSET

The service is currently operating as normal Providing telephone support, wellbeing plans, Signposting, access to respite and trusted carers assessment. We are also offering a lean on service on the carer's terms. This means that they can initiate engagement when required.

We are currently looking at supporting carers to connect virtually. I am hoping to talk more with you around this once Olivia starts as she will be leading on virtual engagement and what our offer looks like. We currently have over 150 carers on caseload which is the largest amount we have supported. This means we will be looking at how best to support those individuals accessing our service.

Lewis Chambers service manager for Dorset Carers Support 07483332523 or 01305 262771

PODCASTS AND WEBINARS from the REC

<https://soundcloud.com/user-186630975/looking-after-your-wellbeing-as-a-carer-1-2>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-186630975/am-i-a-carer-or-a-i-just-a-mum-a-daughter-a-so-a-wife-husband-a-friend>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-186630975/mental-health-awareness-week-kindnessmatters>

<https://www.youtube/watch?v=14PPv94CU&feature=youtu.be>

If you have a problem making these links work, find access by visiting the REC webpage by visiting Dorset Recovery Education Centre, where you will also find more podcasts and videos links.

News about, Help for Mental Health

North Dorset, From Amanda Sadler

Realising from personal experience that there was a need for one, I set up a Mental Health Peer Support Group in Shaftesbury in April 2018. This was very successful but unfortunately, with Coronavirus everything changed.

During lockdown I realised how hard it was in North Dorset and surrounding counties to find support for mental health that is actually available in this area and not just in the west, south and east of the county, often inaccessible to us due to distance and lack of transport. I decided to start a website which identified all National help available online and by telephone alongside those services that are actually available locally. I also added pages of Resources, Campaigning and a Gallery as well as a page for Peer Support Group as a way of keeping in touch.

There is information for carers on a separate "tabs" as an "urgent" page for crisis situations, including the "7 Tractor Facts to Save a Life" from YANA, worth a look if you haven't seen it before. I did intend to have a separate page for Carers but in the end had to forego this, it is something I do hope to have in the future though.

At the beginning of November I intend to start a Zoom Peer Support Group which may run a long side a face-to-face one in the future. People outside the area would be welcome to join in. Carers are welcome at both face-to-face and Zoom Groups.

I try and update the News page of the website regularly with national and local mental health news and I will shortly be launching a membership scheme so that I can email members when there is news to share and to enable me to market the website effectively. To find out more please go to the website www.mentalhealthnd.org

EAR SAVERS FREE TO CARERS.



It looks like masks are here to stay, so ear savers really helps keep mask secure and stops sores behind the ear. Invaluable if you wear specs or a hearing aid. Text your details to Babs 07961 159854 for your free ear saver.

From CARERS U.K. Caring Behind Closed Doors

Throughout the Covid19 pandemic, the majority of carers have had to provide more care. It has left many exhausted and close to burning out. They urgently need more support to help them through the winter.

The Covid19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the lives of carers and those they are caring for. A majority have had to provide extraordinary hours of care for their loved ones with increasing needs during the crises, often without the usual help from family and friends, with limited or no support from local services.

As a result, many people providing care have been left exhausted, socially isolated and close to burnout, carers have also taken a financial hit, seen their health and wellbeing decline.

4 in 5 carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before lockdown.

More than three quarters (78%) of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased recently.

Most carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months.

More than half (58%) of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic, while (64%) said their mental health has worsened.

We are calling on the government to do the following

In the short term, we are calling on the government to continue to introduce measures to support carers including:

Making sure that carers can take breaks and return of essential services is prioritised.

Providing clear guidance, information and advice for carers.

Raising the level of Carer's Allowance.

Supporting carers' to look after their own health and wellbeing providing targeted funding for carers mental health support.

Ensuring that carers are better able to juggle work and care remain and remain in work.

Providing sufficient funding for social care over winter.

But we're not just focusing on the immediate action. After what carers have experienced during the pandemic, we also want the government to implement a New Deal for Carers, with medium term tangible action to support carers and those they care for.

Longer term, carers also need to be placed at the heart of a reformed and sustainable social care system that provides more support to both those giving care and receiving care.

To raise awareness of increased support carers urgently need to help them through the winter, we are asking you to write to your M.P. to share with them your personal experiences of caring during Covid19 pandemic. It is vital that M.P.s hear firsthand how the pandemic has made it harder for their constituents to care for those close to them.

Carers UK <http://www.carersuk.org>

Eight Tips from DORSET MIND HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

We are living in unprecedented times. Due to the outbreak of coronavirus, we've seen a huge increase in anxiety and poor mental health. It's normal to feel confused, stressed, scared or angry, whether you are a carer or the person that is being supported, many people who are neither of these feel the same.

But wherever possible, try to remain positive and take conscious steps to manage your wellbeing. Focus on what you can do rather than dwell on what you can't. It will help you get through this difficult time.

STEP 1 – ROUTINE

When your world is disrupted, it can take a while to get to a new routine. Don't compare yourself to others, try to follow your usual routine as closely as possible.

If you work from home, it's important to make your workspace comfortable and well lit. Don't forget to make time to relax, ensure to keep boundaries between work and downtime. Respect each other's privacy and need for space.

STEP 2 – MAINTAIN A HEALTH LIFE STYLE

Whether you share a house with the person you care for and other members of the family, or live alone. Ensure you eat well and drink plenty of water. Try to vary what you eat so you look forward to it. Plan ahead, and use what you have in your cupboards to avoid the need for shopping for small things. The ritual of savoring a hot drink can be comforting, so take time to enjoy your coffee or tea.

STEP 3- SLEEP

It is important more than ever to get the right amount of sleep. Don't worry if you're not getting a full eight hours, the focus needs to be on quality not quantity. Try to sleep at a regular time each night if possible. Make sure your bedroom is well ventilated and welcoming. If the person you support has restless nights, try where ever possible to have a nap during the day.

STEP 4- EXERCISE

While following the government guidelines, try to get outside each day. Daylight is important for our wellbeing especially at this time of the year, when it is dark when you wake and dark in the early evening. Open your curtains or blinds fully. Even if you are not someone who does exercise on a regular bases try to do something around in doors, while doing the housework use it to stretch and bend, put on some music and dance, try online workouts to keep you moving. Encourage the person you support to join you if they live with you. It will have an positive, uplifting effect on your mood.

STEP 5 – STAY CONNECTED

It is important to connect with people you know and trust. There are many ways of keeping in contact, although it does not replace face-to-face contact. Pick up the phone, use FaceTime or Zoom or Skype when you need to see someone. If you are feeling anxious or stressed call someone, even a carer's support line, they are there for you and will listen. Keep in touch. Interaction with family and friends will also understand how you feel.

STEP 6 – GET CREATIVE

Rediscover a hobby, or learn a new language, try a new recipe, make a puzzle or paint. You can get lost in a book, or watch a favorite film, listen to a podcast. Getting immersed in something can be beneficial as you fully concentrate on what you are doing, it helps relax your mind, and takes you away from your concerns for a while.

STEP 7 – MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION

Mindfulness and meditation are two methods that can help anxiety. Find a quiet place, concentrate on your breathing, try to let go of things. Acknowledge your thoughts but choose to let them go. Think about your breathing, breath in slowly to the count of four, hold the breath for the count of four, and release the breath for a count of four. This will help you relax.

STEP 8 – LIMIT SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE NEWS

Watch the news once a day. It is incredibly easy to distract yourself online. But you can waste hours scrolling feeds. Not everything we see online is trustworthy. Check the facts. Think about limiting your screen time.

It's normal in times like these for our emotions to be extremely erratic. One day can be completely different to the following, but it's worth remembering that difficult times will pass. And we will get through this.

