Discovering your inner strength

Secure Services People Participation Lead Su Pashley talks about courage, resilience and inner strength

Working alongside patients and carers within the Secure Care Group I am reminded daily of the power of personal courage and resilience in the face of adversity.

Many of our patients have experienced, or continue to endure, years of Mental Health Act detainment and uncertainty and, for some, their loved ones continue to tirelessly travel that journey with them.

Despite living with an enduring mental illness and the consequences of the chaotic and traumatic circumstances that brought them into our service, they continue to adapt to their losses and find ways to draw on their ‘inner strength’.

No matter what our personal journeys have been, we have all at varying points in our lives been forced to draw upon this inner strength to help us get through our own periods of adversity.

As we face another week of lockdown, COVID continues to prove itself to be one of our greatest personal and collective challenges, testing our mental endurance, our own resilience and power of our inner strength.

Undoubtedly, these are incredibly difficult times. Every day we are challenged to cope with altered ways of living, isolation and separation from those we love, restriction and ongoing uncertainty.

For many of us, this current situation has increased the intensity of the battle we have with ourselves, our voices and our illness, or similarly the worry we have for those we love who are suffering but we cannot visit.

We are encouraged to remain hopeful and connected, which is critical to maintaining a positive state of wellbeing. But I want to take this opportunity to reach out to those of you who do not have others to connect with and those whose experience of loneliness is impacting upon your sense of hope. It is so important that we acknowledge you and your lived experience of these COVID circumstances, as well as offering advice and signposting services that might be able to help you.

You are not alone, you are not forgotten and your lived experience right now really matters. Whether you are a service user or a carer, please do not suffer in silence believing that your struggle is any less important than the next person’s. You really matter, so please reach out and pick up the phone. We are available to listen and offer you reassurance to help you get through the coming weeks. There is a number for you to call below.
I am humbled each day by the commitment, compassion and selflessness of our wonderful NSFT staff and my colleagues. They are working tirelessly to support our inpatients and community service users, as well as reassure our carers, despite their own anxieties around COVID and the challenges and restrictions they face to adapt their practices to meet individual’s needs. We thank you for finding your inner strength and resilience at this testing time.

Life is different right now, and we may face this for a little while longer, but this situation is not forever, it will pass, and we will get through this. Always try to remember that the “the task ahead of you is never greater than the strength within you”.

I have turned to some of our secure service users and carers for them to share advice with you and this is what they have said:

"Be kind to yourself, one bad day does not make you a failure” JB

“Times are tough but that doesn’t stop us from becoming even stronger” DM

Positivity Mast

The amazing structure was built by service users and staff on Drayton Ward at Northside House (Norvic Clinic).

It was constructed during a Secure Services inter-ward challenge.

"We built this to distribute messages of positivity, hope, good health and mental wellbeing to everyone in the community. We hope our messages reached you!"