

# PEER POWER

Newsletter



**'In the 'spirit of the urban Fox'**

a powerful piece by peer supporter and founder of action in recovery, Garry Ellison, about being resourceful and using the services around us to help us move forward.



We are a group of peer supporters working across Lambeth to help grow and develop Peer Support in the borough..

### **What does Peer Support mean to us?**

A group of people with lived experience of crises, life and Mental health support needs who are actively involved in peer support initiatives came together in a series of focus groups between January and March to discuss this question. The group was made up of people involved in services such as the Lambeth Living Well Hub, Certitude's Solidarity in a Crisis and the Peer Support Network, Primary Care Peer Support and Recovery In Action. Read on to find out more...

Peer Support Network

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**Peer support** means listening with an empathetic ear. It can take place anywhere, amongst any group of people where support is being provided. It is acting with the understanding that for many people there are no quick fixes, recognizing that just being there, understanding and putting yourself in someone else's shoes can have a positive impact.

Peer Support often happens naturally, without the need of professionals or formal qualifications. It helps people to build relationships, feel valued and have an understanding of their condition from a non clinical perspective.

This is what a group of peers put together.  
(credit: Loy White, Julie Hansen, Elisabeth Silva, John Roberts, Sandra Tomlinson, Charlie Wright, Garry Ellison)

**'Honesty'**  
**'Optimism'**  
**'Reassurance'**  
**'Team Work'**  
**'Freedom'**

**'Respect'**  
**'Listening'**  
**'Choice'**  
**'Voice'**  
**'Equality'**  
**'Dignity'**  
**'Patience'**  
**'Flexibility'**  
**'Enabling'**  
**'Empowerment'**

## WHAT DOES PEER SUPPORT MEAN TO US?

“

I share my story to give hope and encouragement  
*Loy White*

”

“

If I had peer support when I was ill, I would have benefited and appreciated it. Would have made a difference then.  
*Charles Wright*

”

## In The 'Spirit' of the Urban Fox! By Garry Ellison



The urban fox manages to survive and to some degree thrive by constantly looking for ways to 'work with what's available' and maximize on them! They forage around making use of things that help them on their quest for survival. As I go jogging in my local park during the small hours I watch these guys doing their thing and it continues to inspire me!

I recall when I first began providing peer support, at a time where there were endless cuts to services and challenges around losing the welfare benefits I received at the time, thinking only of the things that were 'not there' or the things that I would lose. It was a lesson in resilience and I had to really make a concerted effort to see what would help me move forward. It was around that time, in the 'spirit' of the urban fox, I realized the real way forward was to 'find' what was available rather than focus solely on what was killing my spirit and making me uncomfortable.

I began to feel motivated to explore how service users like me could work with the resources that were available and use them therapeutically for

the wellbeing of ourselves and those we might try to help.

I began volunteering with SLAM which enabled me to gain experience of trying to be useful to patients in an inpatient ward settings. The experience led to the opportunity of a few hours paid work per week as a service user consultant. I began to realise there were an array of things available to 'try' that were not obvious to me before.

Since then I have continued to forage around like the urban fox and see how the things available 'right now' might help us on our recovery journeys. I can also, most of all, sense the potential of the peer support movement to really come into its own; led by people who really have it in their hearts to be useful to those still struggling with mental and emotional turmoil. This is my vision!

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## Coffee Mornings at Railton Road

Coffee mornings at the Connect & Do Space facilitated by Loy White  
(Come and join us every Wednesday from 10:30am-12pm and Fridays from 2pm-4pm at the Connect & Do Space in 107 Railton Road)

“

I believe my recovery would have been quicker if I had someone that was there and cared for me the way I am for people.

Loy White ”

'The coffee mornings/afternoons are a good place for people to come and meet new people, socialising in a relaxed and friendly environment over food, drink and games. It makes me happy to see people speaking, laughing, playing games and genuinely enjoying each others company. At times people wish to speak with me on a one to one basis. I am always happy and available to lend a listening ear. Facilitating the Coffee mornings has enabled me to grow in confidence. Giving back means so much to me.

It reminds me of a time in my life when I was ill. If I had someone that was there and cared for me the way I am there for people, I believe my recovery would have been much quicker. The feeling I get from empowering people to gain back their self confidence fills me with so much joy'



**Karen Bell is a peer facilitator currently delivering a creative writing workshop at the Connect and Do space.**

I started my voluntary work with The Beth Centre back in 2014, working as a Peer Mentor supporting women who have been involved within the criminal justice system, to discover new aspects of themselves using a creative and holistic approach mainly through the use of peer support and holistic workshops.

As a volunteer at the Connect and Do Space, I have had the privilege of meeting an abundance of people who dared to believe in my ability to make a difference. As part of my future plans, I intend to offer further Holistic workshop and taster sessions, such as jewellery making, positive touch and healthy eating sessions at the Connect and Do space.

*Karen Bell*

## A Poem written by the creative writing workshop participants.

*'I travelled, travelled alone on this seamless path called my life's journey  
Where do I begin, where do I start? I suppose at the start,  
With each unsuspecting footstep, i discovered new essence of self,  
MY SELF.*

*Oh how the world changes, what you sow, is what you reap,  
Oh how the world changes, you said it in your heart. I'll show her just you wait and see.  
Not you, But me.*

*Fanon House, is that my address at present? And I have got my own room, Even to call home.  
Flowers are exclusive,  
the colours are unique.  
Each one has its own scent, its own season,  
its own life.*

*The different scents come to life in the form of perfumes, both in beauty products  
i.e. skin care, hair products, essential oils and toiletries.*

*Today I fulfilled a dream, by getting my S6 Edge,  
one of the best phones that can be had.*

*Music is the art that says so much in a short space of time.  
Its an art saved for GOD, that empowers.*

*From a young age I grew to learn this.*

*However my soul can't just have music.*

*It requires LOVE of a passionate kind.*

*From my boyfriend or family members,*

*to sustain all my needs and LOVE is a different kind of music that is played.*

*It maintains highs and lows. The joys of spring are held within. I*

*feel the glow of blossoms flow, hidden under the bed of soil waiting patiently to unfold,  
Our Life Journey'*



## Telefono de la esperanza UK

<http://www.telefonodelaesperanza.org.uk/>

Contact Tel: 020 7733 0471

The Telefono de la esperanza UK is a voluntary Organisation, offering numerous programs to improve the emotional health of individuals, families and society as a whole focusing on the Spanish-Portuguese speaking communities.

- **Crisis Intervention** to address situations of crisis with immediate, free, anonymous and specialized help.
- **Permanent Counselling Telephone Service:** which operates from 2pm-8pm, Monday to Friday. The telephone service is staffed by volunteers who are trained specialists in listening to help people.
- **Professional Counseling and Intervention Consultation:** it is a service given by a multidisciplinary team of professionals that include psychologists, social workers, lawyers and other specialists.
- **Family Counseling Service:** This service is provided by family counselors and therapists in an intimate consultation with family members to meet family needs.
- **Workshops for specific crisis:** Includes several group programs to connect with people who are going through similar crises like Coping with grief, Affective separation, Learning to live chronic illness, domestic violence, Mature friendship groups, etc.

### **"GROWING TO HELP, HELPING TO GROW"**

People possess the ability to help other people in need. The exercise of this capacity is a major source of development and personal satisfaction.

The two basic ways to promote this natural qualities are self-development and training. We offer a space for personal growth and specific training to act as aid agents.



The  
COLLABORATIVE

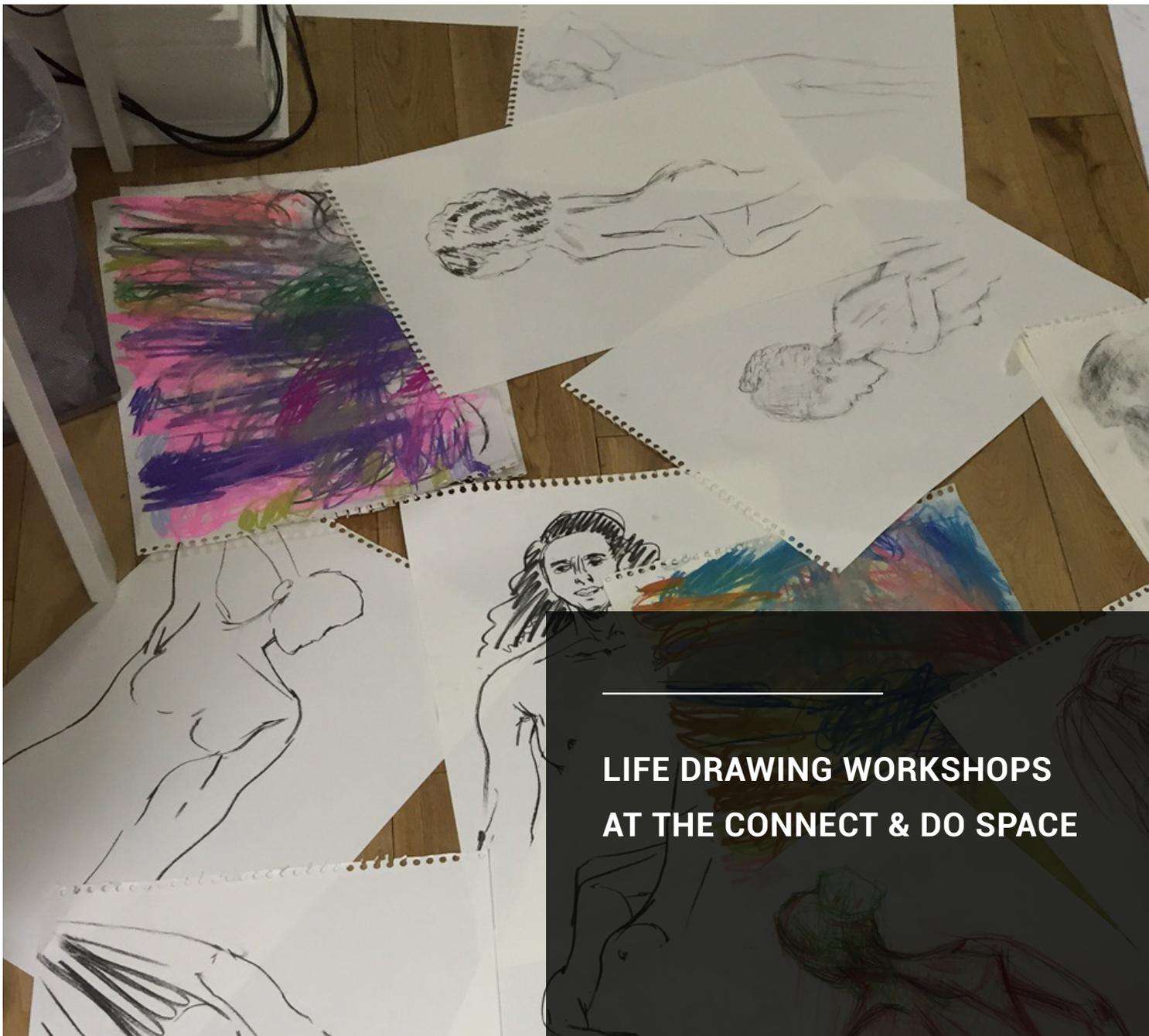
## The Lambeth Collaborative update by Karen Hooper

SLaM has launched a 24-hour mental health support line ([0800 731 2864](tel:08007312864)); an Evening Sanctuary supports people who turn up to A&E in crisis. It's open Wed-Fri, 6pm-2am and will soon open at weekends. It's at the Living Well Partnership (hosted by Mosaic Clubhouse). People can talk to peer supporters from Mosaic and Solidarity in a cosy and safe setting and get transport home if needed. It encourages people to get involved during the day at Mosaic or in activities with Community Connecting.

The Collaborative believes in valuing people's assets and supporting people to be more resilient. It recognises that we all have wobbly days and wants to put resources into 'primary' care (that's with the GP). It has developed the Living Well Network Hub, a multi-disciplinary team where people can get additional support before they reach crisis. This is part of the Living Well Network - there is an Open Morning on the last Thursday of the month 11am-12.30pm, usually at 65 Effra Road, Brixton - but check as there are plans to hold it in the community occasionally.

At the other end, the Integrated Personalised Support Alliance (IPSA) is bringing hope to people who have lived in residential care homes or on hospital wards for long periods and who want to live more independently.

You can read more about the collaborative at [www.lambethcollaborative.org.uk](http://www.lambethcollaborative.org.uk)



## LIFE DRAWING WORKSHOPS AT THE CONNECT & DO SPACE

A life drawing art therapy class. Open to beginners and the more experienced. A safe and fun space to meet others.

The sessions will run on the last Tuesday of each month 6-9pm.

The next session is booked in for June 28th.

Future sessions be held on: July 26th, August 30th, Sept 27th, Oct 25th, Nov 29th and Dec 13th 2016

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these sessions  
will bring the  
residents and the  
local community  
closer together.

*Session Attendee* ”



## My Journey across Northern Spain By Charlie Wright

It's called St James' Way, known as The Camino: an old pilgrimage route in Europe, leading to the city of Santiago in Galicia, North West Spain.

Although this was a religious pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, today many people do it for different reasons. I did it to see how far I could push myself, a real physical challenge. I had been ill for some time and on strong medication. This situation led to greatly reduced physical and social activity. The idea of having to walk 800 kilometres/ 500 miles over 31 days across open country, through Spain. Mixing and sharing this experience with strangers was an appealing challenge.

The most popular route is called The French Way, it starts at the base of the Pyrenees by the Spanish/ French border and snakes its way across North West Spain, passing through six historic towns, dramatic rugged terrain and open country. All along the way, there are pilgrims' inns, which are low cost, basic hostels – centuries old. Some can find these a bit too basic.

A typical day would start at 6 am with a wash then breakfast, consisting of croissant and coffee. Then the pilgrims would set off in darkness after checking the map for the daily walk. The walk itself could vary between 16 km to 30 km or 8-10 hours including lunch breaks. People would usually carry a backpack of an average of 10 kgs. The terrain can

vary: from steep hills, woods, rivers, motorways and through some historic towns such as Leon, Burgos and Pamplona.

Pilgrims flock from all over the world. I myself met some of the loveliest people – from Brazil to Canada, South Korea, Japan and Australia and all over Europe. I seriously injured my foot on one of my walks. I was very lucky that I met a French nurse, who kindly cared for my foot every morning and evening. It had now become red raw from a huge blister and could have been dangerous if it had become infected. I was able to continue thanks to the nurse. The weather can also play havoc. One day it could be sunny and hot and the next rainy and windy. This would make the ground muddy and very difficult to walk on. The fact that the pilgrims are focused on the same thing builds strong bonds and people encourage each other to reach the final destination.

Reaching Santiago is an emotional moment of real joy and celebration, having achieved the goal. The journey was testing with highs and lows which are shared amongst everyone who embarks on this journey.

Sometimes I look back and wonder how the hell I have done it three times – and on strong medication that makes you feel so-oo drowsy!!! But I would do it again!!!!



## Useful Resources:

### Living Well Network

<http://lambethcollaborative.org.uk>

Tel: 020 7924 9657

### The Connect and Do Space on Railton Road

Opening Hours:

Monday-Friday 10am - 4pm

Saturday & Sunday - Closed

Te: 0207 737 2888

### Solidarity in a crisis

Line opening hours:

Monday - Friday 6pm - 12am midnight

Saturday & Sunday 12pm midday to 12 midnight

Freephone: 0300 123 1922

### Lambeth Community Connecting Team

Tel: 020 7737 2888

### The sanctuary at Mosaic Clubhouse

<http://www.mosaic-clubhouse.org/sanctuary>

Tel: 020 7924 9657

### Telefono de la esperanza

<http://www.telefonodelaesperanza.org.uk/>

Tel: 020 7733 0471

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**We invite peer supporters and groups from the local  
community to contribute to the Peer Power  
Quarterly newsletter.**

**Share your good news stories or update us on your  
project To get involved contact the team via email on:**

**[peernetworklambeth@certitude.org.uk](mailto:peernetworklambeth@certitude.org.uk)**

**Connect and Do Space  
107 Railton Road  
SE24 0LR  
Open from 10am-4pm**

**Peer Support Network**

**PEER POWER**

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