

Please note, the plaster is here as a symbol of healing and care. We are in no way trying to imply that cutting is the only form of self-harm!

S.I.S

SELF INJURY SUPPORT
IN NORTH CUMBRIA

Registered Charity No: 1106750

SIS News

Welcome to SIS News and to 2009!



Hi and happy new year! Welcome to the second issue of SIS News, the newsletter for Self-Injury Support in North Cumbria (SIS/S.I.S. for short)! In this issue ([next page](#)) we're pleased to introduce our two new members of staff who will make a huge difference to SIS and what we can achieve. Talking of change, in this issue we talk about **changes to the Mental Health/Capacity Act, and New Year's Resolutions.**

It's an exciting time of year with Self-Injury Awareness Day (SIAD) coming up on 1st March. **We're having an open day in the SIS office on 2nd March, so put that date in your diaries - we'd love to meet you. Find out more about SIAD on page 6.** All of us at SIS look forward to developing links with other organisations in 2009, you might be interested in joining us at one of our new workshop training events - more information on the next page! We also pleased to have an article written by Ann from SAFA a charity similar to SIS, but working in the south of Cumbria. Finally, apologies for the text-heavy nature of this issue - will do better next time!

Mary Hillery

Help in a Crisis!



We have had a number of people contacting SIS lately thinking that we are a crisis service. We are not!

If people are in crisis situations then they need to get medical help immediately and/or phone a helpline such as the Samaritans who are available on 08457 909090 - 24hrs a day, 365 days of the year

www.samaritans.org.uk E-mail - jo@samaritans.org More useful contacts can be found on the notice board and on the back page.

With thanks to our funders.



Issue 2

Jan-March 2009

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Contact Us:

Self-Injury Support
in North Cumbria
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(Service Coordinator)
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Carlisle,
Cumbria CA3 8JR
Tel:01228
525705/515500

sis-cumbria@btconnect.com

(if clicking on hyperlink remove
'mailto', otherwise it won't send)

New Staff

As part of the BIG Lottery Award Outreach Programme (to extend services to all CA postcodes) we are pleased to announce that Helen Watson is our new Development Worker. Helen says:



"I am delighted to join SIS as Development Worker and look forward to starting this exciting new role. I am familiar with the high quality services provided by SIS as I have worked as a SIS bank counsellor since August 2008. I have also heard excellent feedback from SIS service users and am looking forward to developing SIS services so more people affected by self harm can access the help and support they need. I have been employed by NSPCC since 2002 to develop, provide and promote therapeutic services for adults and children in West Allerdale for Sure Start / West Allerdale Children Centre. I feel this role has equipped me with a range of experience, skills and knowledge in individual and therapeutic group work valuable for my new post with SIS."

Helen will be mainly responsible for increasing professional and public awareness of S.I.S.'s activities throughout North Cumbria, and the development of our Support Groups and Counselling services. In particular, Helen is keen to establish and build on links with organisations in the West, and would welcome any opportunities to meet with you and explain the various ways in which S.I.S. can be of benefit to your organisation. Please ring 01228 515500 or email sis-cumbria@btconnect.com and ask for Helen.



S.I.S. have also appointed Steve Lax as Business Manager, responsible for keeping us financially on the right track, and exploring opportunities to generate more funding in order to maintain and expand our services in the long term.

SIS NEW Training Workshops!

Throughout 2009 we will be running one-day workshops in North Cumbria offering the opportunity to:

- ✦ develop a better awareness and understanding of issues associated with self-harm
- ✦ help professionals and carers feel more confident in supporting those who self-harm
- ✦ explain how to easily access more specialised support and counselling

Our workshops in the past have been well attended by a great variety of people involved at all levels in education, health and mental health, drug & alcohol services, youth work and support services, as well as many other walks of life. The new-style one-day workshops will run from 10am-4pm (refreshments from 9:30am) at a cost of just £80 per person (inc. VAT). This includes tea/coffee on arrival, buffet lunch and a comprehensive information pack.

Our first set of Awareness Training Day dates and locations are;

THURSDAY 5th MARCH 2009 - WHITEHAVEN - SENHOUSE CENTRE

TUESDAY 10th MARCH 2009 - CARLISLE - CARLISLE CARERS, FUSEHILL

WEDNESDAY 18th MARCH 2009 - PENRITH RUGBY CLUB

THURSDAY 26th MARCH 2009 - COCKERMOUTH (venue tbc)

If you wish to book one of these days, or require more information on awareness training please contact Ruth by phoning 01228 515500/525705 or e-mailing sis-cumbria@btconnect.com

Notice board

Self-Harm in the News

Finally, there has been some media awareness about self-harm which doesn't focus solely upon teenaged girls! A survey by mental health charity Sane found that some people started self-harming as young as four, and others didn't start until their fifties. Findings also included self-harm being a way to alleviate suicidal feelings, and the fact that people keep their self-harm hidden from others.

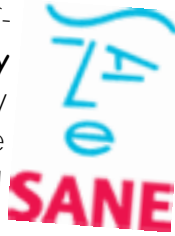
While the survey doesn't actually tell us anything new (after all, we already knew this anyway), it's positive that these issues are being highlighted in the national news!

Find out more here:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7783347.stm>

The full report can be downloaded here:

www.sane.org.uk/Research/SelfHarmIntro



Submitting Articles

If you've got something that you'd like included in SIS News, please get in touch. We'd like articles for the April edition to be with us by mid-March!

SIS Open Day - 2nd March

The SIS office will be open to the public from 11am on Monday 2nd March - there will be drinks and nibbles provided! The office is above the One World Shop in Lowthians Lane, the lane behind HSBC in the city centre.



Citizens Advice Bureau Contact Information

The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) can help with a range of issues and will provide advocacy. Each CAB may provide different services. Here are the contact details for local CABs:

Barrow 0870 1264016

Carlisle 01228 633900

Kendal 0870 1264061

Millom 01229 772395

Penrith & Eden 01768 863564

Ulverston 01229 585585

Whitehaven 01946 693321

Windermere 015394 46464

Workington 01900 604735

More useful contacts can be found on the back page.

EveryClick

You can support SIS financially at no cost to yourself by using the search engine EveryClick. Visit the site to find out more!

www.everyclick.com/selfinjury/supportinnorthcumbria



New Year & Unrealistic Resolutions

As I chatted with people on the Internet towards the end of the year, discussion turned to **New Year's resolutions**. **After years of broken resolutions I wondered if a written promise to myself** to eat more healthily, exercise more and moan less about work actually achieved anything. **If past experience tells me anything it's that all they serve to do is make me feel guilty if I don't succeed.** **Therefore in 2009 aside from resolving to make no resolutions, I reckon that if I don't set myself up for failure, then I can't fail!**

It concerns me when I come across people who have resolved that in the coming year they will stop self-injuring. It concerns me when I come across people (at any time of the year) who have made promises to people that they will not self-injure again. But, what concerns me the most is when demands are made on people (often by healthcare professionals) to stop self-injuring. **I have heard from those who have been refused treatment on the basis that they couldn't adhere to a 'No Harm Contract'. It never ceases to amaze me how little understanding there is of self-injury, especially from professionals (of course there are many excellent professionals out there too!)** To me it is common sense that self-injury is not something which can be given up just like that - **but perhaps that's because I have personal experience of self-injury.**

Imagine that you've had a particularly bad day at work. You arrive home feeling tired, angry, upset, stressed. So, what do you do? Perhaps you have a long hot bath, read a good book, watch a film? Perhaps you go to the gym, or maybe argue with your partner about who has had the worst day? Perhaps you settle down on the sofa with a glass of wine, a cigarette or a bar of chocolate? These are **your coping mechanisms when you've had a bad day.** **Some of them you'll notice are not particularly healthy - a glass of wine can soon lead to a bottle, and an argument with your partner will only make things worse in the long run (in the short term shouting at someone might make you feel better).**



Self-injury is also a coping mechanism. It's not a healthy coping mechanism, but it helps people all the same (at least temporarily). Tell someone to stop self-injuring and **you're taking away their means of coping.** Many people who self-injure see it as an alternative to suicide - something which keeps them alive. **Take self-injury away and it's possible that the risk of suicide attempts will increase for some people.** Some might wonder why those who self-injure **can't use more healthy coping mechanisms.** Hopefully with the right support, time and commitment, most people who self-injure will be able to find more constructive ways to deal with their emotional distress. But that is the thing - it takes support, time and commitment to find the right coping mechanisms. Remember that every individual is different, and what helps one person might not help another. Recovery will also depend upon the underlying issues behind the self-injury.

Of course we all have different coping mechanisms in different situations. There will be times that people who self-injure do use other ways to cope. But there will be times that they feel

they have tried everything, but still feel the need to hurt themselves. It is important not to make generalisations as every individual experiences self-injury differently - for some it might be a sporadic occurrence, happening only in times of immense distress and in crisis situations, and often impulsively. But for others it can become something which they come to rely on regularly, and use as a way to deal with a bad day, or as a response to something (such as a minor argument with a friend) which to others might seem quite trivial.

While the idea of a 'No Harm Contract' worries me, I think (although I'm not a therapist) that contracts can be used in certain circumstances in therapy - very much depending on what is right for the individual. However, rather than a no-harm contract, I am talking about contracts where a therapist and client will agree that the client must try a number of agreed tasks first (for instance phoning a friend or a helpline) and that they can only self-injure if they have done these things first and then still feel the need to hurt themselves.



When a relative or friend is self-injuring it can be easy to say "if you loved me then you wouldn't hurt yourself" and to tell them to stop. The fact is that if demands and ultimatums are issued, then this leads to increased guilt for the person who self-injures (self-injury usually carries enormous amounts of guilt with it anyway). If promises to stop self-injuring are made this can lead to more secretive behaviour, and the damage (physical and emotional) can be worse. The important thing is that friends and relatives are there to listen, not judge, and to offer unconditional support.

There is hope for people who self-injure, and many people do move away from hurting themselves for good. For others it might be something which they come back to rely on during emotionally **difficult times. Personally I don't think that making New Year's resolutions or promises to people is really the right way forward.**

I'll leave you with the following points to keep in mind:

- People can only stop self-injuring for themselves - not because they have promised someone.
- **People can't stop self-injuring** until they have reliable and effective alternative coping mechanisms in place.
- Telling a person to stop doing something often makes them want to do it more.
- It takes support, time and commitment to stop self-injuring - it is a gradual process.
- Most people have setbacks - **these shouldn't be seen as failures.**
- Self-injury needs to be talked about and not kept secret. By talking we can reduce the stigma and guilt surrounding self-injury. Hopefully S I S will be able to go a long way in spreading awareness across Cumbria during 2009!

Take every day as it comes and enjoy 2009. And, if you have made New Year's Resolutions then Good luck!

Mary Hillery

SIAD 2009 - 1st March



You might or might not be aware that 1st March is Self-Injury Awareness Day (SIAD). SIAD is an international awareness day which has been going on now for at least 5 years. It is a day where those with an interest in self-harm try to spread awareness about it - by writing letters to MPs, featuring in newspapers, radio and TV broadcasts, and telling everyone they know about self-harm. While we can raise awareness all year round, it is nice to have a specific day to particularly focus upon.

Although I have no idea where it came from, orange is the agreed colour for self-injury/self-harm awareness, and many people choose to wear orange ribbons (like the red ribbons for AIDS) on SIAD to show their support.

You can help us to spread the word about SIAD by forwarding this newsletter to just one person who you think might be interested to learn more, and also to find out about the services which SIS offers. Or, even better still if you work in a company or organisation, see if you can get this newsletter forwarded to everyone. There must be hundreds of people in Cumbria who would **benefit from our services, but just don't know about us. I'm particularly thinking of parents and partners of people who are self-harming.** We want people to know just how easy it is to access SIS counselling.

Since SIAD this year is on a Sunday we're having a SIS Open Day at our office in Lowthians Lane on Monday 2nd March from 11am onwards. There's no reason why we can't have a whole week or month for awareness raising anyway! We'd love to meet you if you'd like to pop into the office for a drink and nibbles! In the next issue we'll tell you how it went!

THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 2007 - AMENDMENTS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1983 AND MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005



You may know that there have been some changes to the Mental Health Act. This is about something that can touch any one of us, so we have included the key changes here. If you want to learn more, there is a link to the full act.

The changes to the act have been introduced gradually. The bulk of the act was in place by November 2008.

1. Background:

The Mental Health Act 2007 updates existing mental health legislation. It aims to:

- Ensure that people with serious mental disorders can receive the treatment they need to protect them and the public from harm
- Bring mental health legislation into line with modern service provision
- Strengthen patient safeguards and tackle human rights incompatibilities

The Act sets out the new codes of practice. The new Act includes seven amendments to the 1983 Act, and one amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

2. Key Amendments:

A single definition of mental disorder - A new single definition replaces four separate categories of mental disorder.

Criteria for detention - **The Act includes an "appropriate treatment" test, to apply to all the longer-term powers of detention.**

Introducing supervised community treatment (SCT) - New community treatment orders will be introduced for patients to be treated in the community following a period of detention in hospital.

Providing additional safeguard for service users - Service users could not refuse the appointment of their nearest relative to have power of attorney over them. This was an infringement of the Human Rights Act 1998. The new Act allows service users to apply to the court to remove their nearest relative and adds civil partners to the nearest relative list.

The new Act also offers the ability for service users to refuse some treatments e.g. electro convulsive therapy.

The Act gives service users detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 a statutory right to an advocacy service*.

Changing professional Roles - The functions performed by the Approved Social Worker and Responsible Medical Officer can now be carried out by other professionals, providing they are appropriately trained and experienced.

Improved access to review tribunals - The Act introduces the power to reduce the time before a case has to be referred to the Mental Health Review Tribunal by the hospital managers. It also introduces a single Tribunal for England.

Age appropriate services - The new legislation requires hospital managers to ensure that patients aged under 18 admitted to hospital for mental disorder are placed in an environment that is suitable for their age (subject to their needs). This amendment has yet to be fully implemented.

Amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005:

The key amendment is a safeguard for people with a disorder or disability, who lack capacity to give informed consent to care or treatment, and who may be, detained in a hospital or care home but do **not come under the 1983 Act. Amendments to the Mental Capacity Act will require PCT's or LA's to become supervisory bodies that will authorise the 'deprivation of liberty' of those services users who fall under the Act.**

Key service providers will need to ensure changes are implemented by the target dates.

The Mental Health Act 2007 is available on:

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070012_en.pdf

Care Services Improvement Partnership and National Institute for Mental Health in England implementation programme - www.nimhe.csip.org.uk

*For Advocacy Services in Cumbria, contact your local area Mind for more details

Sue Howard



SAFA

SAFA (Self-Harm Awareness for the Furness Area) is a charity based in the south of Cumbria (address - SAFA, F8 Waterside House, Bridge Approach, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2HE) and has similar services to SIS. SAFA covers the Furness, South Lakeland and Lancaster areas. We recognise self-harm on its entire continuum from self neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, to risk taking behaviours and eating disorders. Individuals can contact us directly to access our services or can be referred through their GP, mental health services, schools or voluntary agencies.

SAFA is committed to making a positive difference to the lives of the individuals who support those who self-harm. Our primary goal is to empower the individual to take responsibility for their own lives by offering counselling and trusting support. Also we seek to eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with self-harm by creating greater awareness through training and adult education.

Our main service is to offer free individual counselling for those that self-harm or are affected by their self-harm. They are seen by qualified counsellors and the number of sessions are based on individual need and subject to reviews. Our project managers are at present working towards their Master Practitioner in Eating Disorders Diploma which is validated by the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

We offer training to professionals from health, education, carers and anyone who comes into contact with those who self-harm. Courses are continually being developed to meet the needs of those who attend. Our current courses are: Self-harm Awareness, An Introduction to Eating Disorders and Risk Assessment of Suicide and Self-harm. Building on the success of these courses we will be launching two new courses in the New Year: Anorexia, and Writing as for Personal Development and as a Therapeutic Tool

We provide an information service and we have brochures that provide information on self-harm, our services and a guide to help you stop self-harming. This range of brochures is in the process of being extended at present. We are hoping to employ a support worker in the New Year subject to funding. If this happens we will be able to extend our services further.

Ann Mills

Useful Contacts

For people who have mental health issues:

To access advocacy support phone:

Carlisle District: Tara Quinn - 01228 543111 Eden: Jim Rhodes - 01768 840566

West Cumbria: Chris Rodgers - 01900 66518



For families/carers:

Carlisle Carers: First Floor, Fusehill Medical Centre, Fusehill Street, Carlisle, CA1 2HE. Tel 01228 542156

email: enquiries@carlislecarers.co.uk

Furness Carers Association: Hindpool Community Centre, Nelson Street, Barrow In Furness, Cumbria LA14 1NF. Tel 01229 822822. email: info@furnesscarers.co.uk

Furness Young Carers - Project Website: www.natterjacks.org.uk

South Lakeland Carers Association: 5, Castle Street, Kendal, LA9 7AD Tel 01539 815970

West Cumbria Carers: Maryport Resource Centre, 12a Selby Terrace, Maryport CA15 6NF Tel 01900 810101. email: general@westcumbriacarers.co.uk

Princess Royal Trust for Carers: Northern Office, Suite 4, Oak House, High Street, Chorley, Lancashire. PR7 1DW. Tel 01257 234 070. email info@carers.org Website: www.carers.org and also check out their Young Carers information at www.youngcarers.net

Carers UK: 20/25 Glasshouse Yard, London EC1A 4JT. Tel: 020 7490 8818. Website: www.carersuk.org "Carers UK is the voice of carers and the leading campaigning, policy and information organisation for carers."