

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

Project Information Sheet

Let me tell you about my Ability:

Challenging Stigma associated with Learning Disabilities through Creative Writing

The Mental Health of Learning Disability Team (MHLDT) are running a proactive Community Psychology project that aims to empower people with learning disabilities (LD) and tackle the misconceptions and stigma surrounding LD in the general population that perpetuates inequalities and leads to hate crime. Dr Aggie Moreno-Lopez (the Clinical Psychologist organising the project) was inspired by the "Poems in the Waiting Room" scheme, which sends poetry booklets by known authors to general practice surgeries throughout the country for people to read. Our project has a similar methodology but a different aim, with the view to create a bi-annual publication featuring poems and creative writing about LD, written by people with LD, which will then be shared with GP surgeries in West Kent and other public locations, such as libraries and the local council.

This project has been coproduced in partnership and collaboration with attendees and staff at Scotts Project Trust who have arranged a series of online workshops for students to write poems or pieces of creative writing about their experiences. The main focus of these writing workshops has been about sharing individuals' experiences of having a LD, the impact this has on their lives, their strengths as well as their difficulties and things that they wish other people, without LD, knew. This project has been designed to serve the dual functions of raising awareness and understanding of LD in the general population, while also giving those who take part a deserving platform to publish their work.

Research has shown that creative writing has many therapeutic effects, including increased emotional awareness, expression and regulation, providing space for reflection problem solving. Furthermore, writing has the potential to empower those with LD by providing a platform from which to express themselves and promote their individual voices. A further benefit of creative writing is its ability to stimulate conversation and challenge existing preconceptions and prejudice. As such it was thought that a bi-annual publication featuring the voices of individuals with LD would serve both of the previously stated aims.

We are hoping that you may consider supporting this project by simply subscribing to the publication (which is free of charge), meaning that you receive an email from us approximately twice per year featuring the submitted pieces of work. You can then share this publication with others if you should so choose. Alternatively, if you know anyone who may wish to submit a poem, short story or even a piece of artwork, then please do get in contact with us. Please note that we are only accepting submissions from individuals with LD and not their carers or family members at the current time.

To subscribe to the publication, or if you have any questions, please email us at kmpt.mhld.communitypsychologyproject@nhs.net.

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