



‘She let me be the expert so I could manage my mental health’

Mental health survivor Dean has found out as much as he can about his mental health issues so he can live his life to the full. He says his relationship with his Second Step support worker Rachel is crucial: “She totally sees I am the expert in all of this.”

Dean and Rachel’s relationship is powerful. You just have to talk to them to see that. And it’s this connection of trust and respect which has helped Dean discover strong coping mechanisms – even on bad days.

Second Step is championing strong relationships like Dean and Rachel’s during **Mental Health Awareness Week from 16 – 22 May**.

Taking control

This year’s theme is relationships – the relationships we have with friends, colleagues, neighbours and others. When these relationships are strong it is easier to feel more in control of our lives, with or without the symptoms of mental ill-health.

Aileen Edwards, the Chief Executive of Second Step, said: “Strong relationships are at the heart of the work we do with people. We offer our clients real hope that their lives can change for the better.”

Service user as expert

Dean says his relationship with Rachel is based on honesty and respect.

“She totally sees that I am the expert in all of this. I live with my symptoms all day, every day. And she has empathy for me for this”.

Rachel says Dean, who lives in Weston, has developed brilliant coping strategies to deal with his ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder), personality disorder and bipolar and she supports him with a positive mental attitude

Dean used to be a successful athlete at national standard as a teenager but fell into a life of chaos when his mental health issues took over. He turned to drink and drugs to block out how he was feeling. “Rachel helps me remain hopeful even when I have tough days – and that means my life feels more manageable and I feel more in control,” says Dean.

Keeping mentally well

Dean has coping mechanisms to help overcome his mental health issues. He understands his triggers and knows to avoid them. He eats a vegan diet and doesn’t smoke or drink so that he can give himself the best chance of being mentally well. Rachel encourages Dean to think about being a survivor rather than a victim and describes it as giving him “fire in his belly”. Rachel says her job is about listening and not judging.

Welcome to Second Step News



Why do strong relationships matter?

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week (from 16 to 22 May) and in this issue of Second Step News, we look at strong support relationships and focus on one in particular between Dean and his Second Step support worker Rachel.

One of our service users, Pearl Raymond, and Second Step's Chief Executive Aileen Edwards spoke to Made in Bristol TV about the power of strong relationships. Made in Bristol also spoke to members of the Second Step Media Group and to Cath and Lea, one of our Recovery Navigators, about how their relationship helped Cath get her family back on track. To find out more go to Made in Bristol's website www.madeinbristol.tv/

We also have news from Positive Step, our psychological therapies colleagues in Weston and updates from our Volunteering Service and our Allotment Group.

This is your Second Step News, the newsletter for staff, volunteers and people who use our services. Please do get in touch to share your news and stories for our next edition in September.

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Golden Key host Home Office at National Event

The Big Lottery who fund Golden Key have twelve similar projects around the country, and they have all set up their own advisory groups.

Golden Key are advised by a group called Independent Futures which is made up of people with lived experience of mental health issues, addiction and homelessness. This group are hosting a meeting of all the twelve panels of experts in Bristol on 24 May. The group meet on a regular basis to share ideas and learning and they are called the National Experts Citizens Group (NECG).

Earlier in the year NECG members met with Home Office representatives to share their thoughts and experience for the National Drug Strategy Review. Ben, from the IF Group, has blogged about the experience and key issues raised by the group - such as housing and the unregulated dry house and supported housing system.

A Home Office representative will be attending the meeting on 24 May to feedback on how the NECG's comments have influenced government plans.

Photo: The IF Group with Alex their support officer, second from left.



Congratulations to the new Mayor of Bristol

Bristol has a new Mayor. On Thursday 5 May Bristolians voted in Marvin Rees, Labour's candidate. He beat the incumbent George Ferguson promising to reach out, to be: "transparent, inclusive, sharing power and empowering".

Marvin Rees, a father of three, is the son of an English mother and Jamaican father, rooted in the community and social fabric of St Pauls in his native Bristol, dedicated to youth work and much else, educated in local schools, then university in Swansea and the USA.

In his Election Day address, he spoke about housing and mental health:

'We know we need to emphasise building a strong economy – one that is inclusive – and to do that we need to build homes, we need to protect people in the private rental sector, we need to solve our transport crisis, protect our children and young people, investing in their mental health and well-being.'

'Mental Health Awareness Week'

This year, 'Mental Health Awareness Week' takes place from **16-22 May**. It is a week of events across the country and a great chance to debate various aspects of mental health and a platform from which to get it into the press.

This year the theme is relationships and how important they are to our health and wellbeing. We cannot flourish without them and they are as vital as exercise, sleep and healthy eating for good mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation which is co-ordinating events during the week is asking people to make their relationship resolutions. To find out more visit: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/relationships/my-relationships-resolution

Allotment group blooms



Second Step's Allotment group is growing from strength to strength with one of its members saying it is the highlight of their week. The group, which is part of Second Step's Recovery College, is small and friendly and hopes to be welcoming a few more participants over the next few weeks.

The group has planted their raised bed in Horfield with runner beans, lettuce, carrots, beetroot, plus some pots with corgettes, kale, chives and nasturtiums.

There are plans to visit Feed Bristol for ideas, plant up some hanging baskets to install at the Second Step offices using willow and get cooking once the vegetables are ready.

If you'd like to find out more about the group, please call **0117 914 5498** or email recovery.college@second-step.co.uk

Positive Step expand their services into the evening

Positive Step has been running a pilot for the past three months providing treatment sessions in the evenings. These sessions have proved very successful with very few people not attending or cancelling compared to daytime appointments.

As a result Positive Step, which offers psychological therapies to people across North Somerset, will now be running evening sessions on a permanent basis on a Monday and Tuesday evening from 5-8pm.

Patients refer in the normal way by visiting their GP or by calling our self referral line on **0300 3000834**

Trainee turns trainer for Service Improvement Group

In April Second Step's Service Improvement Group (SIG) recruited two new members, Paul and Stuart. They successfully completed the induction training day which ended with them carrying out a role play interview to with a service user about the support they receive.

Current SIG members, Pearl and Ewelina, wrote and delivered the training.

Ewelina said: "When I attended SIG training in August 2013, I never imagined that I'd ever be able to deliver the training to other people – but I have. It shows how much progress I've made and doing it has boosted my confidence enormously. I am really proud of myself and really appreciate the opportunities that SIG and Second Step have offered me."

St Paul's marketing agency wins rebranding pitch

After a rigorous process of selection and pitching, we have chosen local marketing agency Proctor Stevenson to work on our positioning and rebranding work.

Proctors Head of Strategy and Planning Kevin Mason said:

"We're incredibly pleased to be working with Second Step – as a Bristol-based independent marketing agency, from just round the corner no less, we have a strong affiliation and passion for the causes Second Step stands for – and we hope to meet more of the team during our work in the weeks to come."



Stop Press

Great news – we have just heard that Second Step has been awarded the Investors in People standard following a recent assessment. The evaluators were very complimentary about our staff and will give us a full report soon which we will share with you.



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