

# STARS

Support, training and recovery systems

NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2024

STARS

TVI  
TRAINING & VOCATIONAL  
INITIATIVES IN  
PERSONALITY DISORDER

STARS are all Experts by experience in Personality Disorders, having completed an intensive therapy for Personality Disorder. We collaborate with TVI (Training and Vocational Initiatives) Professionals and Complex Needs Staff to develop and present training to groups of professionals across the country. STARS also work alongside clients, encouraging engagement in services and the benefit of group work.

## Moving On Group: First Time as A Lone STAR in MOG

After having shadowed a fellow STAR who had been co facilitating the group for a number of years I logged on to Zoom for the pre brief with mixed feelings. My predecessor had been so well liked and was very knowledgeable about what MOG was all about, how was I able to follow that? I felt somewhat insecure with my inner voice telling me that I was going to be rubbish and possibly replaced in my role sooner than later. I reminded myself that this wasn't a popularity contest, and I could add value through my own experiences to this group.

I think that my main feeling as MOG members were let into the room was excitement. The check ins were very flat, members going through the motions, I was worried that it was going to be a difficult hour and a half. Down to the questions in the workbook. Again a very flat response from the members to the questions. Then disaster struck. Although I thought that it was a disaster it wasn't more than my mind working overtime. I tried to challenge a member's response to a question but found myself getting thoroughly lost in my chain of thought. Had I lost the group already?  
NO.

As I shared my thoughts and experiences of how I related to the questions in the workbook and challenged where I thought it was appropriate I settled in, feeling on a similar level to the other members and no longer having to control the session. I valued my own input into the conversation, I valued myself as a STAR. I hope the members liked me but I was no longer driven by my need to be liked.  
I am looking forward to my next MOG. ~ **Andrew**

## PDPOP – Swindon

In early June I helped Co facilitate a PDPOP adapted training session for GP's, trainee GP's and nurses who were a part of a development group who choose trainings to help further their education and knowledge.

It was one of the first sessions that I participated on using an online platform there was a little apprehension going into the training that it wouldn't be as valuable online I was heavily mistaken.

It was a proactive group full of discussion with lots of participation and questions from the group. The feedback was that they feel more skilled, knowledgeable and comfortable working with PD patients and using the tools and concepts we shared. ~ **Kristina**

**"ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT AFTERNOON...thank you so much. In my 25 years of being a GP I have never had any training in PD... I feel this training should be mandatory for all health professionals. Thank you so much."**

**"Will have to leave but it was great training. Special thanks to Kristina as hearing the patient perspective will definitely improve my practice."**



## A New Look At Prisons: My Time With Stars

Last June, I joined STARS, after completing my intense therapy with Oxford TC in 2021. Stars, work together with professionals from TVI (training and Vocational Initiatives) and experts who know a lot about helping people with complex needs. The shared goal is to share knowledge and training with professionals all over the country.

This April, Stars gave me the opportunity to share my own lived experience at a training session on Personality Disorder at Grendon Underwood Prison. a Category B men's prison, located near the village of Grendon Underwood, in Buckinghamshire, England. I wasn't sure what to expect. The prison is known for treating inmates differently, focusing on therapy and support rather than just punishment. When my colleague and I arrived, we had to leave all our personal stuff at the door, which was a bit nerve-wracking. But then, we were warmly greeted by one the of prison officers, which helped ease my nerves.

Learning together with Mary Hayley, who oversees the training and development at the prison, hosted us and lead the training on the day, she knows a lot about personality disorders and shared her knowledge, especially regarding the prison population over tea and coffee.

We then went on to meet the trainees which included several Prison officers and TC prison Facilitators, that worked both at Grendon and another Prison in the north of England.

My colleague Steve and I were there to share our own experiences with Personality Disorder, which I was nervous about, but equally eager to share my lived experience, feeling passionate about tackling and breaking down the

stigma of PD. Many inmates at Grendon have been diagnosed with personality disorders, and the prison is one of few that acts like a Therapeutic Community. This means they focus on therapy and support to help inmates.

At the end of the training, we had the opportunity to visit one of the wings of the prison, having the opportunity be shown around the prison and meet and have a chat with some of the inmates. I had a profound interaction with one individual who deeply impacted me. This Inmate shared that he had never experienced such an emotional journey before, expressing that he had shed more tears and experienced a wide range of emotions during his time in the program. He emphasised that his experience had been life-changing for him.

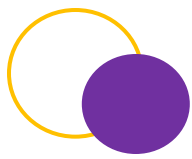
The interaction reminded me of the power of rehabilitation programs in correctional facilities. It highlighted the importance of providing inmates with opportunities for personal development and emotional healing, ultimately preparing them for successful reintegration into society upon release.

Sharing my own story of being diagnosed with personality disorder and being part of a therapeutic community I was optimistic that the inmates would empathise and share common ground. I was interested in Grendon's approach not only from a personal perspective but because I had studied a module on Crime and Punishment when I undertook my Undergraduate Degree at University (UCL), so I was really interested in how Grendon's approached worked.

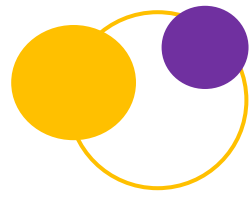
Sharing my story and hearing about the prison's success stories made me believe even more that therapy and support can truly help people change for the better, because personality disorder does not discriminate.

Visiting Grendon and participating in the training session was an eye-opening experience. It showed me the importance of understanding and treating personality disorders, especially in places like prisons. Therapeutic communities like Grendon can really make a difference in people's lives. I hope more people learn about and support these kinds of programs, they show us that change is possible, even in the most unexpected places.

~ **Darnella**



## STARS Input into Training at HMP Grendon



Following the success of STARS trainers into KUF and the PDPOP work that is being done by TVI in Oxford Health, I spoke with Gill Attwood about the possibility having their/your input into the prison's training on Personality Disorder.

This was agreed and organized and has been in place now for about 18 months and a number of STARS have been kind enough to do this. It has been a resounding success!

Every time that the input is given, course members consistently state on their evaluations of the training that one of the best parts of the course was the input from STARS.

They have all spoken, eloquently, knowledgeably and with warmth and humanity that their presentations have not only increased the knowledge of the course but greatly enhanced their ability to understand the problems of having a personality disorder and therefore helped them to work better with the people in prison who also suffer in this way.

I want to express my huge thanks, not only from myself but from all those who attended the courses. You have made a huge difference to our understanding of this complex issue. ~**Mary Haley**

## Mental Health Familiarisation

On June 29th 2024 The Bowlby Centre held an all day workshop for psychotherapy students both at the Bowlby Centre and from other training organisations, to gain an awareness of the mental health services in England and Wales. The Bowlby Centre is a centre which delivers for people wishing to become attachment based psychoanalytic psychotherapists, and we are accredited by the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

The event was led by Dr Gwen Adshead, a prominent and well respected forensic psychiatrist and psychotherapist, who works in different kinds of clinical settings; from high secure services to the community. We were delighted to have delivering alongside Gwen, Laura and Cordy from STARS.

They both shared their stories with us and their ideas about good practice and areas which they feel could be improved upon. Their personal delivery was inspiring for us, especially discussing the impact of labels on both the individual and the service providers, their thoughts and feelings about assessments, and the usefulness of group therapy. There is no doubt that they both made the workshop more accessible, helpful and stimulating for our students. I hope that we can continue to work with them both and others from The Stars in the future.

~**Written by Bertie Witt**

**Chair of the Clinical Training Committee at The Bowlby Centre**

### Upcoming Training

**Personality Disorder training at Whiteleaf on 30<sup>th</sup> August**

***We have availability for our upcoming online courses. For more information or to book onto a course please contact Debbie Stirzaker on 01865 901979***



01865 901979



tvi-pd@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk



[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/service\\_description](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/service_description)