

Womens Health Matters Spring 2009 Newsletter

Leeds 16 Days of Action 25th November-10th December

To raise awareness of violence against women



We decided to bring together disabled women from the SEEN Project (Seen, Enabled, Empowered and Noticed) and older women from the Purple Project to discuss issues around domestic violence.

Funding of £350 was given from Leeds Inter-Agency Project towards an event for the 16 Days of Action. The event was held at Hawthorn Mill Sheltered Housing Scheme and we had a fantastic discussion looking at the issues women had in common around domestic violence. One issue that was highlighted was that older and disabled women disclosing domestic violence are often not believed, and the attitude of

'no one would do that to an older or disabled woman'

can still be a barrier. We talked about how this response might stop us from ever talking about it again and feeling like we are to blame.

This blaming attitude needs to be challenged if women are to feel comfortable, safe and confident that something will be done about the issue, for them to be able to disclose such personal information.

We chatted about how we can support each other and shared information about what services could support us in Leeds if we are experiencing violence. It was a very positive day, with some upset but also lots of laughter. We shared a fantastic lunch and all the women attending said how much they had enjoyed it, even if it was difficult for them at times.



Womens Health Matters

Womens Health Matters works with women across Leeds so that they can together take control of their lives and their health

THE IMPACT OF THE BIRTH OF A FIRST BABY ON A COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP

One of our volunteers recently undertook some research as part of her midwifery degree at the University of Leeds. Lynda was invited to present her research at the International Confederation of Midwives Conference in Glasgow and was supported by Womens Health Matters to go. The following article outlines Lynda Bateman's systematic review of the research, which focused on the impact of the birth of the first baby on heterosexual relationships.

The birth of the first baby impacts greatly on a couple's relationship, the evidence suggests that following the birth of a first baby most couples experience a significant decline in the quality of their relationship, indeed the transition to parenthood has been described as an intense 'crisis' for parents. As a midwife and qualified counsellor working with couples and their new born infants I heard expressions of dissatisfaction with their relationship and this informed my choice to research this phenomenon; a summary of findings are detailed below.

The birth of a child affects the dynamic of the relationship as it changes to include a third person; this affects the functioning of parents and the marital family system (Cowan & Cowan 1999).

The first baby, as opposed to subsequent progeny is more impactful as the couples' relationship system increases in complexity (Belsky & Pensky 1988, Raphael Leff 1991:376).

Raphael-Leff (1991:375) noted that couples in the transition to parenthood may experience potential dangers to their relationship due to loss of sexual and intimate relationships, a reduction in the time spent with each other and less mutual nurturing. Ahlborg and Strandmark (2001) found that couples reported a loss of intimacy which resulted in parents reporting 'missing tenderness' and 'yearning' for affection. Ahlborg

et al (2005) noted that both parents were often too tired for sexual activity and reported this as being a problem with their relationship.

Additionally research evidence has indicated a decline in mental stability and depression in both men and women post delivery, which can affect bonding and attachment to the newborn and unbalance the family system (Perren et al 2003, Killoran Ross 2001).

The effect of marital dissatisfaction following the birth of the first child can lead to dissolution of the relationship with 125,000 children under 16 affected by divorce, 25,000 of these children were less than 4 years old (Office for National Statistics, 2006). These statistics do not include the number of unmarried couples and we could extrapolate that a similar percentage of relationship dissolutions occur.

These figures demand attention. Research into transition to first time parenthood reveals a pinch-point for crisis for the couple's relationship and the well being of parents. The decline in relationship satisfaction is a serious threat to family well being and places a responsibility on healthcare professionals to ease this transition.

A copy of the full published article is available from Lynda.

Email: lyndabateman@onetel.com



WELCOME & CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations Jodie & Anthony!

We can't let another newsletter go by without congratulating Jodie (WHM's fantastic Administrator & Marketing Worker) and Anthony (her lucky beau) on their marriage in last summer; a beautiful, romantic and ultra-efficiently organised affair.

To celebrate, here are a couple of photos from their big day and their adventures on honeymoon in Goa, India from this February. Congratulations!



Welcome Megan!

My name is Megan and I joined the Womens Health Matters team at the beginning of March. I started out as a volunteer with WHM more than ten years ago and have worked and volunteered in and around health issues ever since. Some of my previous jobs have included working as a ward clerk on a children's ward at the LGI, reporting on health and local government stories for the Wakefield Express volunteering as a breast feeding peer supporter with Surestart and a member of a Patient Public Involvement Forum in Leeds and working as a researcher with an arts and mental health group in Huddersfield.

I am now the Mothers In Exile Co-ordinator and for the next nine months I will be working with women who are refugees or who are seeking asylum, gathering their experiences of maternity services in Leeds. As this newsletter goes to print, I have finished my second week in the job and am beginning to make contact with just some of the many groups and individuals in Leeds who will be contributing to this project. I will be carrying out in depth interviews with women to discover their experiences of pregnancy and giving birth in Leeds and we hope their stories will have an impact on how these important services are delivered. If you feel your experiences could contribute to this project, or if you are in contact with any groups or individuals who might be prepared to share their stories with us please contact Megan Waugh on 0113 276 2851 or megan@womenshealthmatters.org.uk

Congratulations Leeanne & Zak! Welcome Arlo!

Womens Health Matters would like to send their congratulations to our Include Coordinator Leeanne and her partner Zak on the safe arrival of their son, Arlo. Arlo couldn't wait to make an appearance and arrived the day after Leeanne broke up for her maternity leave instead of giving her the two weeks preparation time she'd been looking forward to!

All that said, the family are doing really well. We send out our love and look forward to having Leeanne back at work!



Your Feedback Counts

Many of you reading this will have been involved in some of our activities when we have asked you what you think of Womens Health Matters. Some of you will have attended our 21st Birthday celebration event last year at the Thackray Medical Museum or the focus group in 2007 at the Salvation Army Hall or our AGMs. We want to take this opportunity to let you know what we have found out from women attending our events about what you want from WHM... and what we are doing about it.

We got lots of responses from women who asked us not to change anything as they think WHM is great as it is now! It is always lovely to hear that we are doing some things right and we will work hard to keep doing it.

Some women made suggestions about things they would like us to do or that they would like more of. You said that you like pampering sessions, art projects, drama workshops, role playing activities, diet, nutrition and weight loss support and individual support. We already offer pampering, arts and crafts and drama workshops but we are also looking at how we can do more of it and where there are particular gaps. For example, we have not been able to do as much pampering with the young women we work with in schools. Next year we plan to include more of this in our schools programme as we have got funding from a charitable trust and we made sure that it would include this possibility. We offer some individual support but much of our work is in groups so it can be difficult for staff to provide as much individual support as they would like. We have developed

some one-to-one support projects at WHM and we now have a balance between group work and individual support and this is something that we will keep looking at. WHM is fundamentally about offering women the chance to get together to support each other and women can have a very strong voice when they work together. A group is not right for everyone though and we will help women to find other individual support that is available when they need it.



There was a strong interest in general for opportunities to learn new skills and for doing training and awareness raising activities. Some women made specific suggestions - for example computer training, NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) awareness and home remedies. We already offer a range of opportunities to learn new skills from budgeting to training community development volunteers. We also try to keep up to date on training available in the community, including computer training, so that we can support women to join in. We will work with training partners to highlight issues to make existing training opportunities more accessible to women - for example by campaigning for women-only sessions and childcare to be provided. We will also include in our future planning some more opportunities for women to learn a wide range of new skills.



Your Feedback Counts

There was also strong feedback in favour of physical activities such as exercise, walking and breathing exercises. We offer a range of opportunities including yoga, self defence and horse riding and we also support women to attend leisure activities in their communities. We will be looking at how we can provide more opportunities for physical exercise and support women to become confident enough to join in.



The thing that came up most in the feedback was that women would like more trips out. Examples given include day trips, trips to the theatre and concerts, parks, activity days, and swimming with the children. We have had lots of successful trips out but trips can be costly and we also need to make sure that the group is at its regular meeting place enough for new members that want to join. As this topic was so popular we plan to try our best to include trips for groups in our future funding bids for projects as we know from experience that it is a great way for women to bond together, learn new skills, share experiences, get inspired and so offer support to each other.

We were also told that transport and using multicultural resources including sharing language, food and culture is valued by women

we work with. We will continue to make sure that we include transport costs in our project budgets as far as possible as we know that we need this so that women can join in our activities. We will also look at as many ways as possible to bring women together from different groups and backgrounds as this is a really important part of being a 'community of women'.

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who has given us feedback – we really appreciate it and we need it to show funders that we are doing what is needed and to encourage them to continue funding our work.

Of course funding is often the barrier to providing everything that women need and want. However, we will do our best to incorporate your thoughts into our planning for the future alongside other feedback we get through our research projects and through feedback from staff working with women.

If anyone would like to give us any feedback, it is always welcome so please contact WHM

Tel: 0113 276 2851

Email: admin@womenshealthmatters.org.uk

Text: 07504 232 989

and tell us what **YOU** think.

You can also visit our website on www.womenshealthmatters.org.uk to leave feedback



Barbara Hepworth

Barbara Hepworth was born in Wakefield, Yorkshire. She won a scholarship to study at Leeds School of Art in 1920, where she first met Henry Moore. The following year she was awarded a county major scholarship to study sculpture at the Royal College of Art, London.

She graduated in 1924 and was awarded a further scholarship for one year's study abroad and went to Italy where she stayed for two years. She lived first in Florence and then Rome where she learnt the traditional Italian technique of marble carving. Her first solo exhibition was at the Beaux Art Gallery, London in 1928. As her work moved towards abstraction in the early 1930s, she began associating closely with leading British and European modernists. She was invited to join the internationalist group Abstraction-Création in 1933, and the following year became a member of Unit One, a group of progressive artists and architects based in London (Moore was also a member, as was Ben Nicholson).

She married Nicholson in 1938 and they moved to St Ives, Cornwall in 1939. Hepworth's first retrospective exhibition was held at Temple Newsam, Leeds in 1943, and she represented Britain at the XXV Venice Biennale in 1950. During the 1950s she became increasingly established, receiving several major commissions for public sculpture, including a commission for the Festival of Britain in 1951. She had further retrospectives at Wakefield City Art Gallery in 1951 and the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 1953. Her international standing was confirmed when she was awarded the Grand Prize.

Her early work was concerned with the human figure, developing through abstraction in the early 1930s into sculpture exploring the relationship between the figure and the landscape. The rosewood carving Rhythmic Form of 1949 has the characteristic of an abstracted standing figure whilst at the same time conveying a sense of rhythm and movement through the carving. It is also pierced with a hole, an essential element in Hepworth's sculpture from 1931 onwards and a device she used for creating abstract form and space which also united the front and back of the work. Other major developments in her work were in her exploration of colour and in the use of strings for sculpture.



The bronze sculptures Curved Form (Trevalgan), 1956, and Sea Form (Porthmeor), 1958, both include Cornish place names in their titles. She had begun to use bronze in the mid 1950s, and for the remainder of her career she divided her work between direct carving in wood or stone and creating sculpture to be cast in bronze. The use of bronze also enabled Hepworth to work on an increased scale and during the 1960s she embarked on an ambitious programme of sculpture series and major public commissions. Maquette for Winged Figure, 1957, was to be eventually enlarged for one of her best known and most prominent commissions, for the John Lewis Partnership building on Oxford Street, London, inaugurated in April 1963. Her work may be seen at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in West Bretton, West Yorkshire. Contact 01924 832631.



Open daily: Grounds, Centre & Shop 10am-5pm, Restaurant 10am-4pm, (Hot food served 11.30am-3pm)
Indoor Galleries 10am-4pm during exhibitions, Car park locked 5.30pm.
Visit www.yssp.co.uk for more information.



SHINe & Sunshine

We have been very busy this last couple of months. Here's some of what we have been up to:

Tracey, Julie and Jane went to the Sex in the City conference organised by Leeds Sexual Health on February 26th and came back with news of great workshops, new types of condoms and loads of information. They attended workshops delivered by Genesis and Base 10 as well as on teenage pregnancy and the impact of pornography on young people, and all in all said it had been a fantastic day.

Sabrina and Julie did a stall at Getaway Girls' 21st Birthday event at Hillcrest in Chapelton on 11th

March which was packed and lively and really good fun to be part of. Happy Birthday Getaway Girls and thanks for inviting us.

Julie, Jane and Abi also did 2 stalls at Belle Isle Family Centre's International Women's day event on 13th March. The day was really well attended and lots and lots of women talked to us about cervical screening and breast awareness as well as picking up a few condoms, femidoms, leaflets etc! Thanks to Belle Isle Family centre, and Leanne and Sharon in particular for a fantastic day.



What you told us about Local Health Services!

Between November and January WHM did some consultation work for NHS Leeds to find out more about women's experiences of health services and how they can be improved. This is as part of the development of the NHS Leeds 'Fairness Scheme 2009 -2012' which aims to identify what can be done to improve services for different groups in the community and begin to tackle the inequalities people experience in accessing health services. Although the timescale for this piece of work was very short about 60 women shared their views through group discussion, individual interviews and by completing questionnaires. Their views and the issues identified formed the basis of two reports:

- **Asking Women!** – which highlights overall the experiences of women in using health services and their ideas for improvements.
- **What Lesbian and Bisexual Women in Leeds told us!** – focusing on the particular issues for lesbian and bisexual women in their use of local health services and how these could be addressed.

Summaries of both of the reports will be available on the WHM website www.womenshealthmatters.org.uk Many of the women we spoke to have never shared their views before either because they haven't been asked or because these experiences are so personal. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience to contribute to improving health services in Leeds for themselves and other women. They highlight the need for a more women-centred approach to service development and delivery and for access to women only spaces where women feel safe to share their views. The consultation also highlights the need for further work with women around specific issues – for example issues faced by lesbian and bisexual women when using maternity services. We are very grateful to all those who took part in and supported this consultation – the women themselves and the staff and volunteers of WHM who made it possible. We hope this is a chance not just to ask women what they think but really listen to them and act upon what they have to say. If you would like to know more about this or future opportunities to be involved in consultation and putting women's views forward I would be happy to hear from you.

Please contact me on sue@womenshealthmatters.org.uk or call 0113 2762851.



Web Watch

www.bbc.co.uk/health/womens

information on a wide range of women's health issues and lots of related topics, including 'getting the best from your GP' and how to make a complaint

www.eatwell.gov.uk

masses of information on healthy eating, food facts, recipes, including a downloadable healthy eating 'fridge' – easy to use and very informative

www.drinkaware.co.uk

useful information about alcohol and drinking, full of facts, trends and features

WHM Newsletter Articles

If you or someone you know would like to write an article for our newsletter, or you have any comments on the contents within, please contact us by one of the methods below.

Do you know any individual or organisation that would benefit from what's happening at Womens Health Matters?

Then why not join our contact list?

As a contact you will receive 3 newsletters a year, plus publicity and information on our forthcoming events which you could be part of completely **FREE!** All you need to do is contact us through one of the methods below and give us a few details - it's that simple.

Contact Us

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