

Sociology of Mental Health Study Group

Convenors: Lydia Lewis, University of Wolverhampton and Angela Cotton, Edge Hill University

Annual Report 2012-13

The group's aims are to:

- Heighten the profile of study in the area of sociology of mental health;
- Provide a forum for the communication and discussion of work being carried out in the area;
- Facilitate networking and information-sharing between those working within or having an interest in the sociology of mental health;
- Provide a forum of support for those interested in studying mental health and distress from a sociological perspective;
- Provide a core of expertise in the area of sociology of mental health.

Membership and networking

The Group's membership currently stands at 243. This includes international members and a mixture of BSA members (107) and non-members (136). The membership includes members of third sector mental health organisations, mental health practitioners, students, academics and unaffiliated people with an interest in the area. Some members' areas of interest and contact details are provided on the web site and this document serves a valued networking function for the Group. At the end of 2012, LL updated these membership details through a circulation to the whole membership and removing out of date contact details.

Events

This year we did not host our own day conference/symposium as LL was involved in organising a one day event on "Public and patient involvement in health care: Implications of the 'Big Society'" at the University of Leicester which was intended to include a session specifically on mental health and to provide an opportunity for publicising the Group. The event took place in May 2012 and this latter aim was met, but unfortunately the speaker on the subject of mental health had to withdraw for health reasons.

A Study Group AGM was held at the BSA Medical Sociology Group conference in Leicester in September 2012. This gave an overview of the Group, its aims and activities, and provided an opportunity for new members to join and to review the Group's activities. The meeting then moved to a presentation of a research briefing by Lydia Lewis entitled, "*You become a person again*": *mental health and community learning* (available at: <http://www.wea.org.uk/resources/research>). The presentation generated lively discussion. A report of the AGM is available on the Group's web site.

Publishing

Ex Study Group co-convenor Patsy Staddon took forward her editorship of a book arising from a seminar series organised by the Group in partnership with the Survivor Researcher Network in 2009, *Researching in Mental Health: Sociological and Survivor/Service User Perspectives*. Entitled *Mental Health Service Users in Research: Critical Perspectives*, the book draws together contributions to the seminar series along with additional chapters from researchers working in a variety of contexts. LL has supported Patsy with this project and the book is due for publication in June 2013. We are currently considering publicity for the publication, and will be targeting BSA conferences for this, and are also planning a launch event.

Future activities

We are planning a symposium in June on the subject of 'What Sociology can contribute towards (or against) the well-being agenda' and also have a speaker organised for our AGM at Med Soc in September 2013.

Lydia Lewis and Angela Cotton, Co-convenors, 2012-13

Study Group web

site: <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/medsoc/MedSocMentalHealth.aspx>