

Wellspring News

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The Vision of Wellspring

Wellspring still going strong after 20 years!

Following a record year for number of counselling sessions provided to people in Nailsea, Backwell and surrounding villages in 2013, we can now reveal that in 2014 Wellspring Counselling provided **2179** sessions of counselling to people in the local community.

As we enter our third decade, demand for Wellspring's professional counselling services hasn't diminished and we are working to recruit new volunteer counsellors to help meet this demand. Whilst the need remains, Wellspring, we trust, will be here serving the local community to provide it.

Chris Daniels

Director, Wellspring Counselling

Mindfulness in the Moment

Mindfulness has become a real buzz-word, and has made the headlines in the press and media over the last few years. But what is Mindfulness, what are the benefits and how is it practised?

Mindfulness is not a technique although there are many ways to cultivate it. It's actually a way of being. It can be defined as the non-judgmental awareness of experiences in the present moment (definition from the Journal of Psychology).

From a very young age, we are trained to get into thinking. Thinking is wonderful stuff, very powerful. Some of the greatest achievements in humanity came out of thoughts, imagination and creativity. But we also have a great capacity in awareness. Unfortunately, we don't get trained in awareness. When we get to bed after a long day we often can't deal with our thoughts and we can't sleep. We get the same thought over and over again. We want to shut them out. The more we try to shut them out, the more they come in and pretty soon we don't get to sleep or we end up with chronic anxiety. All of those things, they are only thoughts but most of the time we think of them as the truth.

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Faith in Counselling

In counselling, the client seeks to find and exercise more of their own personal power so that they can understand actions in the past and the present as well as make decisions and progress in the future.

The counsellor aims to see the client as a whole person who has the resources to enable themselves to grow. Counselling recognises that we all have a spiritual dimension which is spoken or unspoken and is brought into the room in differing ways. This involves having the ability to be with clients in their world and not expect them to fit with what we understand.

What is faith if it is not uncertainty?

There is no right way and the basis of faith will vary with different people. It is however a part of people and gives rise to huge questions about the meaning and purpose of life. Counselling therefore involves sitting with clients to enable

exploration and wondering about their world including their spiritual dimension if they wish. Counselling is not spiritual direction.

“Faith is knowing that we don’t have the answer and that those with whom we work have the right to their own views.”

Our past impacts on us. Some openly want and need to explore their spirituality, past and present and want to recognise how issues such as their own faith or others impacts on them. Some don’t. Counselling involves working with clients on their own chosen issues and recognising that we as counsellors can be open to our own spirituality but must be able to be reflective enough not to impose that spirituality on others.

What is faith therefore and whose faith are we considering?

Faith is knowing that we don’t have

the answer and that those with whom we work have the right to their own views. It is about taking away our own interpretation of issues. It is about moving away from an exclusive view to a view where we are inclusive and accept the tensions between differing views allowing those who seek counselling to be whoever they are, wherever they are.

Sue Jenner

Wellspring Counsellor

Wellspring is charity providing professional counselling to all who seek it, irrespective of gender, sexual identity ethnic origin or religious belief.

If you are interested in receiving counselling, and would like more info, please call us on 01275 810879 or email: admin@wellspringcounselling.org.uk

A Message from the New Chair of Trustees

I’m thrilled to be taking over the chairmanship of Wellspring at a time when it’s in great shape. The Rev. Mandy Briggs, my predecessor, has moved to an important job at John Wesley’s Chapel in Bristol and has had to stand down as chair but luckily for us she’s agreed to carry on as a Trustee.

Don’t worry about the musical chairs. The important thing is that Wellspring’s work goes on, providing high-quality counselling, often at subsidised rates for those in genuine need. I’m fiercely proud of this little organisation which can turn round the lives of people who may have emotional challenges, who in some cases have reached the end of their tether, and help them find resolution. Nailsea and Backwell are very lucky to have this vital and unique service.

We’re a charity and we depend on donations to do what we do. Let me immediately thank all the people who support us. Don’t forget you can give money at any time. Join the Friends of Wellspring; there’s a form attached to this newsletter. Come to one of our fund-raising events. There’s one on the evening of 14th June you won’t want to miss. The actor Ian Lavender, best known as Private Pike in Dad’s Army, has agreed to come to Nailsea to join me on stage and delight us with a hilarious evening of anecdotes and clips from some of his appearances on TV. Not to be missed! Turn over for information about how to get tickets.

Chris Serle

Chair of Trustees, Wellspring Counselling

FOLK FUNDRAISER

Join us at the **Tithe Barn** for a Folk Music fundraiser, with Jim Reynolds, Dave Griffiths and friends. (Proceeds to Wellspring Counselling).

Friday 18th July - 7.30pm

www.nailseatithebarn.co.uk

>> Mindfulness in the Moment (Continued)

Through Mindfulness we can learn to stop the thinking and develop our awareness and concentration. I believe this could be an extremely powerful tool for Counsellors as part of their personal development, and also for their clients to use on a daily basis to help them with their issues. Mindfulness has been practiced for 1000's of years and there is a reason why it is still around: it works and it's an effective practise that helps us experience peace.

The benefits are not just anecdotal. There is a growing body of evidence and research illustrating how scientists are discovering Mindfulness is working to help lower levels of stress, increase our mental capacity – memory, concentration, empathy, and decrease feelings of loneliness and sadness.

"Thinking is wonderful stuff, very powerful. Some of the greatest achievements in humanity came out of thoughts, imagination and creativity."

Mindfulness starts from a regular, sitting practice. This is the bedrock of our practice. It is important to try and sit each day for a short time. If we do this, we will not only experience peace and calm but we will also experience the benefit after we have practised. We will start to become more mindful of our everyday activities, more present and in the moment. Much of our time is spent revisiting the past or worrying about the future and we miss so much of our life. Mindfulness brings us in the present.

So firstly, we need to establish a daily sitting practice, practising either 5, 10 or 15 minutes. During this sitting time, we try not to be passive but we engage fully with the practice. We sit in a good upright posture and focus on the object of our meditation (our breath, gratitude, a mantra). When our mind wanders then we bring our attention back, over and over again.

We live in a world always switched on and connected to the newest gadget. Many people say that they are too busy to practise. Well, the good news is that we can practise many times throughout the day too. When making a cup of tea or coffee, just take a few breaths. Sit and be aware of where you are, listen to the sounds around you. Recognise where the coffee and tea has come from and how many people have been involved so that you can enjoy your drink. Experience the taste, savour the aroma and experience. Take your time. Between each sip just pause and breathe.

Just focus and be in the present. The same can be done with food and with most of your daily activities. If you practise this regularly, you will develop the strength of mind to be able to know how to make yourself happy, free of stress. You will slowly and naturally cultivate a peaceful and calm mind. Happy sitting!

Fabienne Vailes

fabienne@languageexperience.co.uk

Bath Male Choir concert in support of Wellspring (September 2013)

Bill Thomas

Bath Male Choir Member

I have sung with the Bath Male Choir since April 2006 – some 3 months after it was started by Grenville Jones and 10 intrepid singers in Bath. During that time, I have sung in the Guildhall in Bath, at our first concert, when we must have been the only choir in the history of choral music to receive a standing ovation without singing a note; famously been on the television in the BBC's 'Last Choir Standing' with an audience of 5 million; sung on the same stage as Jamie Cullum, Lee Mears and Aled Jones (not all at the same time!); and toured to Bavaria, France, Alkmar and Amsterdam, St Ives and the Isle of Wight.

But they do say that there is nowhere like home, so I was delighted when Grenville agreed that the Choir would sing in support of Wellspring in Nailsea. I should explain that my wife Heather has worked as part of the admin team at Wellspring for the last 4 years and had asked if the Choir would give a concert in support of the charity. We checked possible venues and after Grenville visited and liked St Francis Church, we were able to start planning for the concert.

Nailsea Musicals agreed to sing with us and well known broadcaster Chris Serle, who is a Trustee and good friend of Wellspring also agreed to act as MC. Tickets went on sale and with a week to go we sold out!

The performance itself was something of a blur for me. We sang some old favourites – 'Sloop John B' and the theme from 'Rawhide' and the Choir's signature piece 'I believe'. Unusually, I was conscious of seeing many faces in the audience that I recognised. The Nailsea Musicals group sang a varied selection of show songs and were excellent.

Altogether the evening was a great success and around £2000 was raised for Wellspring funds. Most of the Choir hail from Bath and the immediate surrounding area. They all enjoyed the enthusiastic Nailsea welcome and are looking forward to the next visit!



Left, below: BMC at a recent performance



The Vision of Wellspring: Past, Present and Future

Wellspring started out as a collaboration between the local churches and the local medical profession. The vision was to provide a readily accessible and affordable Christian counselling service to local people, based on the example of Christ, and founded on the belief that every person is valued equally, because he or she is created in the image of God and is precious in His sight.

Christ met people "where they were" both metaphorically and physically. For example, he met with the Samaritan woman at the well and listened to her, spoke with her and opened up her life story; in so doing, her life was helped and changed. Time and again, in the Gospel accounts, we see Christ meeting people with total compassion and understanding. There is no better counselling model.

This understanding of the person, and individual need, is implicit in what Wellspring stands for and how it operates. However, there is no attempt to force feed people with Christianity. Rather, the ethos is an inclusive one of compassion and understanding for all, regardless of any human distinction, within a totally professional framework.

The churches of Nailsea and the district continue to support the work of Wellspring in different ways. Local clergy and church members sit on the Board of Trustees. Wellspring is supported financially by many of the local churches, and within the last year, the churches have established a bursary fund, which ensures that anyone in need of counselling receives the help needed regardless of their ability to pay. The churches also pray for the work of Wellspring on a regular basis.

The original vision for Wellspring remains in place. There have been changes over the years, as there always are in any organisation. Nonetheless, the one constant has been the desire to see people helped towards wholeness. Wellspring does this day in day out through the dedication and professionalism of the counsellors, the receptionists and the office staff, all of whom show compassion and understanding to those in need. We are grateful for their commitment and dedication; without them, there would be no Wellspring.

Tony Roake

Rector of Christ Church, Nailsea and Tickenham

Latest Fundraiser

On 14th June, join Wellspring in a unique chance to hear Ian Lavender discuss, in his own words, what it was like being in one of the UK's favourite comedies for more than a decade, playing one of our best-loved comedy characters: 'Private Pike' in Dad's Army.

Ian will be onstage with writer/broadcaster Chris Serle, and the evening will include favourite clips from the timeless Dad's Army series, Ian's career both on television and onstage, plus a special Q&A session where you get the chance to ask Ian a question.

Join us for this delightful evening of family entertainment, in celebration of one of our best-loved television series.



Want to be involved?

We would welcome your contributions for future editions of Wellspring News. Please address correspondence to **Mariza Churchfield**, our Editor, at the address below:

admin@wellspringcounselling.org.uk

Celebrating
DAD'S ARMY
with
Ian Lavender
"Private Pike"

14 JUNE 2014 *at* 7:30PM
NAILSEA METHODIST CHURCH

Tickets £12.50 *Call* 01275 810879
Visit wellspringcounselling.eventbrite.co.uk

A BIG THANK YOU...

The Nani Huyu Trust
Supportive local Churches
Friends of Wellspring
Nailsea Town Council
Backwell Parish Council
Volunteer counsellors and receptionists
Bath Male Choir
Tim Brooke-Taylor
Aardman Animations
Slapstick Festival
Nailsea Community Trust
Burchells (Fruit & Veg)
The Quartet Foundation

and to all of
our supporters.

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Become a friend of Wellspring.

- £2 per month helps provide two sessions of youth counselling.
- £5 per month helps us provide a counselling room for 20 sessions.
- £10 per month will help provide counselling for 1 client (based on an average of six sessions).

I would like to donate now.

I would like to donate regularly - please send me information about setting up a Standing Order.

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