



Creating Wellbeing for All – Event Report (19th July 2022)

Aims of the Day

- VOX to create links within a local area to understand key issues for people within that area and build capacity.
- Local groups to come together to focus on mental health problems in Dundee.
- To provide a range of ways of giving people a voice, e.g. 'cuppa and chat', creative arts (through ArtAngel) and zine making (mini publications) and reflect on their local area and any wider issues.

What we Did

Participants were asked how they were getting on post covid, what they saw as negative factors in their communities, and what assets they had. We finished with a general discussion about opportunities. During the cuppa and chat we provided paper table cloths and 'post it' notes to write thoughts on.

Creative arts and Zine making were more relaxed in terms of focus but key issues were raised during these activities too. Prompts such as creating art under the theme of 'the beauty of small things' in the arts session enabled people to think of assets, and during Zine making participants were able to decide what they wanted to explore. This gave a voice to some people who would otherwise not have engaged.

During the discussion we wrote key points on 'post-it' notes to capture key issues.

16 participants took part, and the feedback we received was very positive.

The following key themes arose:

1. Post-Covid

In general there was a feeling that people have changed as a result of the pandemic. There was a sense of being more fragile, being less likely to engage than previously, and that levels of anxiety were still higher than before within the community.

One individual mentioned that they had long covid and talked about the implications on their health. Another individual talked about surgery which was required and that it had been delayed due to back-log.

The ongoing provision of painkillers to provide a stop-gap whilst surgery was on hold was discussed.

Not going for issues which you may have gone to the doctor about before was also mentioned.

It was stated that there is still a great degree of anxiety, and a sense of not wanting to go out as much as you used to, with someone stating the following:

"it's given me an excuse – I look for excuses now".

The need to connect to the community was felt to be key to driving change and improving mental health. However there was a sense that more is needed to help this to happen.



2. Problems within the community

a. Addiction

There was a feeling that there needs to be more effective, easily accessible support for people to tackle addiction issues. An example of a mixture of community support and talking therapies had helped one individual to get off of a path which he felt could have led to crime and more serious addiction issues.

Issues relating to past trauma were discussed, and it was felt that much more needs to be done to address this properly.

It was noted that "no one size fits all" so there needs to be a range of ways for people to be able to recover.

b. Crime and Aggression

Related to addiction issues, the problems around crime and aggression were highlighted.

Finding ways of working with people that focusses on building trust, utilises their areas of interest as a form of connection, and in ways individuals can relate to were noted as solutions – e.g. getting into boxing/sports as diversionary activities.

It was felt that people should never be written off and that more flexible approaches are needed to tackle crime.

c. Mental Health Problems

The year-long wait for accessing talking therapies was mentioned as being detrimental to people's lives, and the need for emotional support was stated a number of times.

CAMHS was also mentioned in relation to long waiting lists (a 2 year wait was noted) and the fact that young people's lives can be going downhill markedly whilst they are waiting, but that there is very little to access whilst waiting.

It was felt that the value of lived experience and community-based support could be more fully developed to provide early intervention, and to bridge the gap in accessing services.

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) was thought to be something which could be promoted and delivered further.

d. Media Portrayals

It was stated that the media really bring the community down and don't help people see the positive initiatives which are happening in their community. In particular, the negative stories around addictions and crime are sensationalised. Participants felt that it is important that the positive support which is trying to address these issues is highlighted.

e. Young People's Activities

It was thought that not many activities exist within the community for young people, and even where they do that there is animosity to those who use them from the community.

f. School-aged Children

There was a sense that there used to be more activities for children, but that now there are far fewer activities than there used to be (particularly free activities).

g. Stigma and Discrimination

There was a feeling that there is still a great deal of stigma towards people who seem "different". One example given was a bus driver who used terms to "other" people, and that this had made them feel excluded, upset, and angry.

h. City Planning

Participants stated that there was a large gap between what was seen as the development of the 'touristy areas' to try and improve the image of Dundee, and the reality for many people who are living in poverty.

There was discussion about better use of empty shops and the look of the high streets, which were felt to be run down. It was suggested that more opportunities are opened up for local businesses and community groups at reduced rates. Encouraging affordable, healthy food (and cafes) would be helpful.

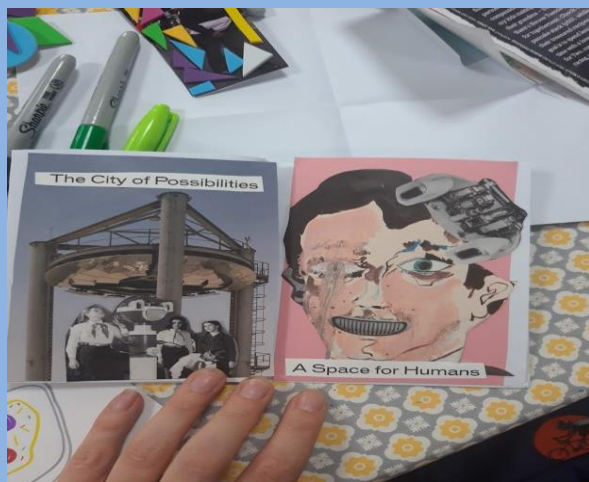
Increasing opportunities for gardening was also mentioned as something which would be an effective way to improve people's lives, as were outdoor gyms. Seagulls were an ongoing issue in Dundee city centre.

i. Cost of Living and Poverty

Food banks and the cost of living were seen as additional pressures which had an extremely negative impact on people's mental health, and exacerbated all of the other difficulties mentioned.

j. Support for Community Projects

It was mentioned that spending reviews aren't always leading to the correct areas of work being funded, and that some essential projects are threatened with closure.



3. Positive Assets in the Community

a. Current Support

Wellbeing Works was mentioned as being very friendly, and that this made a huge difference to people. People talked about the importance of feeling safe and calm, of having opportunities to relieve boredom, and being listened to. In particular knowing you can have a laugh and trust staff mattered a lot to people.

Many clubs and activities were highlighted (although it was noted that not everyone would know about them).

The following groups and organisations were felt to be positive assets to people's wellbeing;

- Dundee Bairns
- Church groups/St Pauls Church Café
- Maxwell Centre
- Singing groups/opera singing
- Hot chocolate café
- Just Bee programme
- Resolve and Evolve
- Community Toolboxes

A need to have somewhere which raises awareness of these activities and signpost was highlighted.

b. New Developments

New developments such as the Wellbeing Hub/Crisis Centre providing 24/7 non-referral support to those who are distressed were highlighted as positive improvements.

c. The People of Dundee

The people of Dundee were felt to be friendly and have a lot of desire to see positive change.

Individuals have been coming together to address what they feel are key issues, and are looking at models such as “training the trainer” to tackle social issues e.g. employer stigma around mental health, and using lived experience to develop training and create change (the Mental Wealth Academy).

d. Natural Beauty

It was also noted that the area itself is beautiful, and that this is a huge asset to the local community. However, there is an issue that the focus on the areas beauty seems to be on public image rather than enhancing the lives of local people.



Suggestions for the Future

- Intergenerational work - it was felt there are opportunities to look at bringing young people and older people together.
 - Third sector working more closely together and ensuring working together becomes a priority.
 - More effective signposting and sharing of information.
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- Further development of peer support and peer learning within the area.
 - Buddying and supporting people who aren't connected to the community.
 - Opportunities to run ongoing engagement work in inclusive ways, using participative methods to give people a voice. It was stated that sometimes it's hard to work out what you want unless you are given some ideas and structure for discussion.
 - Training and support for volunteers to help them play an active role in their communities.

