

Anti-Stigma Summer Sessions 2020

Growing our social movement

In summer 2020 we created a series of online events, called the Anti Stigma Summer Sessions (ASSS), aimed at creating a platform for See Me, it's volunteers and partners to continue to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination during lockdown..

The ASSS were developed following Mental Health Awareness Week in May, where See Me had trialled a new online approach to help engage those who wanted to keep talking and take action.

In the wider context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social restrictions that impacted on everyone in a range of ways, the ASSS offered a way for people who wanted to talk about their own and other's mental health and stay connected during lockdown and beyond. See Me has ambitions to grow this online community, inline with our offline community, to continue to reach more people, create wider awareness and expand the social movement to end stigma and discrimination.

As a pilot it has demonstrated that people do want to engage with us in this way and it should be embedded into our digital engagement strategies moving forward. We aim to share the learning from the summer sessions to inspire, encourage and promote future activity, action and engagement.

How do we grow our social movement online?

This extension of our online social movement comprises of virtual events and activity led by See Me and partners, and the conversations and interactions that the events generate. We know that lived experience and social contact are the two elements at the heart of a successful social movement. As we develop a vision for how we continue to grow the social movement online, we need to ensure that lived experience voices are involved in the planning, design and delivery of events, and that social contact -is present in everything we create and support.

Types of online event:

Some events were recorded remotely via Zoom ahead of time and played out through another platform, Live Reacting, which streams the video onto Facebook Live. This worked particularly well for us and kept us free to facilitate conversations and encourage participation in the comments. We also ran two live virtual workshops via Zoom with registered participants, breakout rooms and activities. These were 1.5 hours in length.

How these were evaluated:

We are currently exploring how best to evaluate activities in the virtual space. For ASSS, our evaluation partners, Mental Health Foundation (MHF), created a survey which was included in online event pages, invites, our website and follow on emails. They also conducted a series of interviews with participants and provided an in-depth impact report. Our Communications Team also prepared an analysis of our social media data which gives us insight into reach, engagement and audience participation for the live streaming events.

Key findings from the Anti-Stigma Summer Sessions

- **Normalising mental health conversations:** Online events can enable participants and viewers to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. These events can normalise conversations about mental health which participants will continue to apply in their work and lives.
- **Behaviour change:** Online events can inspire people to make change. More consideration needs to be given to ensure that this change translates into action.
- **Wider context of the pandemic:** there is a real opportunity to capitalise on high levels of engagement from people who wanted to talk about mental health in the current circumstances and beyond.
- **Audience engagement:** There is the opportunity to reach new audiences virtually and engage them in new ways. Consideration need to be given to diversify audience participants, particularly reaching those without lived experience of mental health problems, those with physical disabilities, rural communities, people aged under 30 and over 60 years of age
- **Lived experience and social contact:** Involvement of people with lived experience is powerful and a key factor in creating conditions for normalising mental health problems. Further reflection can be given to the role of social contact in online settings and resources can be developed around this.
- **Event considerations:** See Me has developed some guidance for online events to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. There is

recognition that this is an area of ongoing development of best practice, internally and externally.

- **Online social movements:** The desire from audiences to continue to be involved in online anti stigma and discrimination activities should be maximised. We have the opportunity to build on this initial success, understand and apply proxy social contact approaches during these uncertain times, and beyond. Recent research suggests that movements for social justice have been particularly active during this period.

Overview of online live-stream events

Other Tongues - See Me in Conversation with Spencer Mason (09/07/20)

We did a book reading with author Spencer Mason, who shared extracts from his book *Other Tongues* as part of our Anti-Stigma Summer Sessions. We spoke to Spencer about his experiences of schizoaffective disorder and the reactions he has received when speaking about his diagnosis.

Let's Celebrate: This is a great example of our social movement inspiring others to action as Spencer heard about the work of See Me through one of our volunteers sharing their story. It was great to partner with an external activist who aligns with our messages and a young man is outside our usual volunteer characteristic which can support us to reach new audiences.

Total views: 5.7K, Peak live viewers: 118

"So worthwhile to talk about this subject and such important work <3"

More Than My Mental Health: Poetry Edition (05/08/20)

We were joined by our volunteers Bridget, Chik and Angela, who along with Social Movement Officer Lynn spoke about mental health, poetry, writing, stigma, how poetry and arts have helped everyone to think differently about their own mental health, and why it is so important we see an entire individual and don't judge people for their mental health.

Let's Celebrate: This event idea came directly from volunteers talking about what was important to them. Many of our volunteers supported the event in the

chat function of the event. The volunteers involved had various experience of sharing their poetry and this event encouraged relationship building and skill-sharing which would not have been afforded in a non-remote world.

Total views: 3.6K, Peak live viewers: 137

'Definitely thinking about exploring poetry as self-therapy and will also share this stream with others. Thank you everyone for sharing'

Meaningful Movies and Wise Words (13/08/20)

For this event See Me volunteers Susan, Gemma, Liam, Bridget and Chik spoke about the books and films that have been most significant to them, and how they connect to challenging mental health stigma. We also encouraged people to join the discussion and let us know what books and films have been important to them.

Let's Celebrate: This conversation was facilitated by 2 of the volunteers taking part in the conversation. And so the event was entirely driven and created by lived experience volunteers. The resultant conversation is not just a great exploration of depictions of mental health, but a model of how to conduct a respectful, open and good natured conversation about topics that many people still struggle to broach.

Total views: 4.1K, Peak live viewers: 163

'That was brilliant. I am crying happy tears. You are all so inspirational xx'

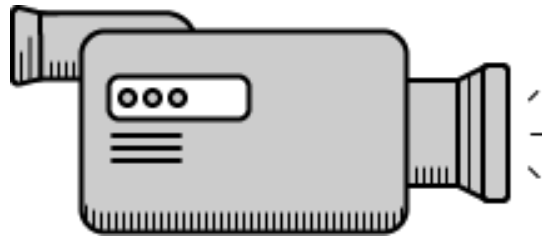
Artist Conversations (09/09/20)

We spoke to artists, Chris Sav and Elizabeth Ellis-Huddleston, about how their mental health has influenced their artwork and how they want to use their work

to tackle stigma. Chris and Elizabeth are two of the artists taking part in this year's All Entire Whole exhibit, as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, which has been created by our champion Sean.

Total views: 5.5k, Peak live viewers: 172

'Loving Chris and Elizabeth's work! Can't wait to see Sean's exhibition!'



Overview of virtual workshop: 'Creating Stigma-free Communities'

This workshop ran twice. It was open to all audiences with the second event being oversubscribed. There were approximately 20 participants at each session, along with 2 staff and 2 volunteers. Attendees included people working in mental health services, people affected by mental health issues, people in education settings, a mental health Tribunal Member and See Me partners.

The workshop gave participants the opportunity to:

- learn more about what mental health stigma and discrimination is and hear about the impact it has on peoples lives.
- learn practical hints and tips on what you can do in your own communities.
- get access to tools and resources to join the social movement for change.

Key successes:

- Positive feedback was given via the chat function, demonstrating workshops can be an effective way to connect people.
- Six participants from workshops then became involved in a volunteer project called 'Pass the Parcel', demonstrating that we can inspire people to take action.
- When participants were asked what change they were going to make after attending the workshop, several behaviour changes were shared in the chat, showing online events can inspire actions.

Next steps

- See me have an opportunity to scope out and **develop resources** to support others to join our online movement for change. There is room for learning and sharing practice about online social movements and how these are **sustained beyond the pandemic situation**.
- Consideration needs to be given to **diversify audience participants**, particularly reaching those without lived experience of mental health problems, those with physical disabilities, rural communities, people aged under 30 and over 60 years of age.
- Further reflection can be given to the **role of social contact in online settings** to ensure best practice is embedded.
- Ongoing development around **online event best practice** should be continued and adopted, including accessibility guidance.
- The **Supporters Facebook Group** will be considered as part of developing the online movement.
- See Me can work with **partners and stakeholders** to share knowledge and learn from their activities.
- **Effective evaluation methods** for tracking impact in the online space will be identified.

Anti-Stigma Sessions

The Anti-Stigma Sessions will replace the Summer Sessions as a way to take forward this work but in a more planned and targeted way. We would love for you to join us.

In addition to the above information, we have some resources that you can use to help tackle stigma and discrimination, and be part of the social movement.

<https://www.seemescotland.org/resources/>

How can you join our movement?

- Help us develop resources to support our online movement to grow.
- Join our Supporters' Facebook Group.
- Throw your own Anti-Stigma event and let us know about it.