



Mental Health  
Foundation  
Scotland

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Videos available for online use at <https://www.seemescotland.org/news-and-blogs/caring-conversations/>**

### **Exhibition of Masks and Tea Cups Part of National Arts Festival Aiming To Tackle Mental Health Stigma**

AN ART exhibition is using masks and tea cups to explore mental health stigma in health and social care.

Artist Josie Vallely has been working with See Me, the national programme to end mental health discrimination, and The Mental Health Foundation, to explore the boundaries and difficulties that can exist in this area.

The Caring Conversations project has involved health and social care staff, students and people who have used mental health services to explore what stigma exists here.

The participants have created work that looks at the difference between professional masks, and people's true selves, while looking at how we care for ourselves and act towards others.

Through that the groups have created prints and ceramics, which will be on display at a two and a half week exhibition in Paisley as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival.

Josie said: "There's still so much stigma and so much discrimination attached to these conditions. And it's only through starting the conversations that we can see change happen.

"See Me have done a lot of work that has explored where people are facing discrimination and stigma in regards to their mental health. And something that crops up quite a lot for people is at the point where they're asking for support.

"It's a situation in which people are very vulnerable. But it's also a situation in which staff and people delivering health and social care are under quite a lot of pressure and have their own challenges with mental health in the workplace and their own personal lives. "So it's about trying to open up a conversation between those two groups. And just take steps towards creating a culture of more caring conversations.

"The exhibition is going to be a really lively space and I'm going to be there chatting to people about the different themes and we're going to have guest artists coming in to deliver workshops. So I'd really encourage everyone to come on down and see what it's like."

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: "An environment in which there is stigma isn't good for patients, service users or staff and we want to see this change.

"This project shows how creative work helps to tackle stigma by opening mental health up to a new audience."

The exhibition will launch on May 8th, at 12pm at Wevolution Paisley hub, 25 Moss Street, Paisley, PA1 1DJ. As well as the artwork on display there will be local musicians and poets performing.

**ENDS...**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**See Me** is Scotland's National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

**We do this by:**

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
- Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
- Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld

**The Mental Health Foundation** is the UK's charity for everyone's mental health. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive. The Foundation is a UK charity that relies on public donations and grant funding to deliver its work. The Foundation is proud of the vital role it plays in hosting, developing and managing the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival. [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

**About SMHAF:** The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival is one of Scotland's most striking and provocative cultural events, encompassing music, film, visual art, performing arts, dance, and literature. The annual Festival takes place in venues across Scotland throughout May (previously October), aiming to support the arts and challenge preconceived ideas about mental health. By engaging artists, connecting with communities and forming collaborations, the Festival celebrates the artistic achievements of people with experience of mental health problems, explores the relationship between creativity and the mind, and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

