

Partnership Working

Tackling Stigma Through Peer to Peer Work

What did we do?

See Me formed a partnership with Flourish House to pilot a piece of work that would support members to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. We supported them in finding out what the impact of stigma was for them, and supported them in having their voices heard in a way that was right for them.

This included a meeting with the Mental Health Minister, creating a video where people could share their stories, and supporting them in putting on an event to premiere the video.

Why did we get involved?

See Me highlights that one of the most effective ways to change minds and behaviour is by adopting a social contact based approach and sharing our experiences in a focused way to influence change.

Flourish House is an independent charity, which aims to enable people with mental illness to regain purposeful lives in the community. A big block to people living purposeful lives in communities is stigma and discrimination. Flourish House is a Clubhouse and has around 300 active members in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area. Members have all been referred through secondary mental health services and around 60 people a day attend to participate in working day tasks, well-being programme and work & learning activities.

Research was carried out by Flourish House into how comfortable their members felt talking about their mental health. Feedback from the group was that they would not speak about mental health, even more generally out with Flourish House for fear, judgement, stigma and discrimination.

The group highlighted the difference they felt in talking about mental health within Flourish House compared with wider society. Most said they felt comfortable and safe within Flourish House to say how they were feeling but would not want to do so out with.



How does this fit with See Me's work?

Mental health stigma and discrimination are major barriers that prevent people accessing supports within their community and achieving active citizenship.

As part of growing the wider movement for change and supporting community led action, See Me engages with community organisations to influence them to take action around tackling mental health stigma and discrimination and exploring what works. Building on the work that has already been done and acting on the recognition that peer support is a key element to the social movement's sustainability we explored options of working with organisations to grow the movement further locally.

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What was the process?

Working with a group of people from Flourish House highlighted the importance of reaching groups who are typically under represented and have different experiences of stigma and discrimination to share.

See Me worked with the action group over a period of around 6 months, building capacity and raising awareness of around mental health stigma and discrimination and what works in tackling it, as well as learning from members about their own experiences of stigma and discrimination and what was important to them.

This included supporting the action group to develop a peer survey to go out to all the members of clubhouse to ask about what makes flourish house special and gather any questions they wanted to ask the minister for mental health.

See Me also supported Flourish House on the day of their visit from Mental Health Minister in December 2018, supporting members with their key messages and points they wanted to raise during conversations with the minister. They created an overview of key points for the minister and engaged in conversations for over an hour. This was a unique chance for the group to begin to start to build confidence and feel increased empowerment as a movement, representing the views of their clubhouse peers.

From this the action group wanted to be able have their voices heard more around what works within Flourish House and how being part of a stigma free environment supports them in their recovery. We commissioned media education in partnership with ourselves and flourish house to co-create a video to amplify these messages and allow the members to use the video as a tool for influencing.

What was See Me's influence?

See Me supported the group in understanding why the focus on stigma and discrimination was so important and helped the members of the group understand what worked in tackling it.



What is the Impact?

Flourish House hosted a video launch in September 2019 and invited key influencers who they wanted to share their key messages with. Clubhouse members presented on the day on what was important to them and showcased the video. It was a very powerful day that allowed those who have felt like their voices didn't matter in the past to share their experiences. The live streaming of this event was also viewed over 300 times on Facebook as well.

The action group is still mobilised and meeting regularly as well as contributing their experiences to a podcast as part of sunny Govan radio and the video continues to being used for presentations and funding bids for the organisation as well as influencing Glasgow City Council Health and Social Care Partnership on what works in terms of supporting people with mental health problems.

Some of the participants have also linked with other See Me projects including LGBT Health, writing blogs and social media engagement which has been important to not only grow the social movement but also connect people within it too.