



stayed in contact with a few. This course ignited my interest in mental health, and by the end of the year I realised that psychiatry is not the caring and compassionate profession it claims to be. I was shocked and amazed to hear service users speak openly, honestly and constructively about our mental health system, and realised I had isolated myself in a bubble of fear by believing the fabrications fed to me by psychiatry! It was a wonderfully liberating moment when I realised I had been fearful of the wrong people for all these years.

What is a Trialogue Meeting?

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"It's an open, honest, frank, non hierarchical discussion about mental wellbeing and if you're going to go, go with an open mind and an open mind and leave your prejudices outside..." (Participant from last Trialogue)

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It's a meeting where **everybody is equal, and everybody's opinion matters**

It's a space to share experiences, questions and stories

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Tallaght Trialogue group

Who Comes to a Trialogue?

Everybody is welcome.

People who have mental health difficulties:
Their friends, family and neighbours;
People who work in mental health...

Everyone who cares about positive mental health in Tallaght community

Dates & Times:
Tuesdays @ 7pm-8.30
Place: Threshold Training Network
(in the old Bank of Ireland building, beside Spar)
Bruce House, Main Rd, Tallaght, Dublin 24
phone 01- 4940502
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tallaght-Trialogue-Group/322433011118244>

What did people say about the last Trialogue?

"I found it very informative and insightful"
"I felt very comfortable actually, and I felt heard"
"I felt challenged and informed and it was a very worthwhile experience"
"I think the Trialogue is a really good idea, it empowers the community"

What Will We Talk About?

10 January Topic for Discussion is talking about talking about mental health?

Tell us about Tallaght Trialogue?

Trialogue was founded in Ireland in 2010 by Dr Liam MacGabhann, Paddy McGowan, Jim Walsh, Orla O'Reilly and Lorna Nicheirin from Dublin City University, with funding from Genio.

Six places in Ireland were chosen: Mayo, Galway, West Cork, Midlands, Dublin South Central and Dublin South West (Tallaght)! Dr MacGabhann, Mr McGowan and Ms Nicheirin initially attended our monthly meetings, but after six months we were on our own! Thankfully, we have survived and flourished since. While it is hard to get service providers to attend, we endeavour to continue trying!

Trialogue is a productive exchange of ideas between three groups with different origins, philosophies, and principles. We talk about topical and relevant issues in the field of mental health e.g. recovery; the importance of hope, stigma and community responsibility; and the role of medication. Trialogue participants include people who have mental health difficulties, their family, their friends, their neighbours, people who work or volunteer in the



mental health field, and everyone who cares about positive mental health in their community.

What has been some of the personal highlights of your time with Tallaght Triologue?

First and foremost, repairing my relationship with my son <3
Hosting a safe and neutral space for frank, thoughtful, multi-faceted discussions on mental health.

What projects are you currently working on with Tallaght Triologue?

The establishment of a social media strategy. We have set up Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest pages to raise awareness of the issues, and encourage more people to attend. We are involved in the process of setting up the first community-based hearing voices group in Dublin at Hill Street family Resource Centre.

Do you have any 'coping strategies' that you use?

Keep an open mind and try look for the positives in every situation.

What does the future hold for you?

I hope to remain involved with Tallaght Triologue and Hearing Voices Dublin.

Favourite Quote?

"Courage in women is often mistaken for insanity."

- Alice Paul

"If meds were all it took to recover from mental illness, everyone would be recovered by now."

- Corinna West

Interview with Gavin Bushe

Please, tell us about yourself, where were you born and raised? What did your family do for a living? Did you have any siblings? What was life like growing up in childhood?

My name is Gavin Bushe. I was born in the Rotunda Hospital in North Dublin in 1979, and I was raised in an inner-suburb of South Dublin called Inchicore. My father is a lorry driver and my mother worked as a charge-hand in a cd-manufacturing plant when I was in my teenage years. I have three sisters, all of whom are younger than me. Life growing up in Inchicore was wonderful. I had many friends and I spent my youth wandering through the lanes, fields and factory sites looking for adventure, and often finding it. My favourite pastime was playing football in the streets with my friends and on many occasions with my



sister Colleen (who later played for the Irish ladies soccer team!). Life in Inchicore involved long Summer times playing with the other kids on the street, climbing trees in the park, making tents and hideouts, and generally exploring the district along the canal. It was the very best of times. I moved to a suburb called Firhouse when I was twelve and began a new life in a new area. I found better times in solitude pursuing intellectual development in light of my newfound situation of isolation and I delighted in reading fantasy books and getting to know a rich inner life through role-playing games with some very geeky new friends. All of them were beyond beautiful in their diversity and genius. However I was bullied a lot at school.

What is the earliest childhood memory you can remember? (Optional to answer)

My earliest childhood memory involves looking at a swirling washing machine while my mother hung out clothes on the backyard line. I remember coming into consciousness and wondering who I was, why I was looking at the washing machine swirling, and why had my mother gone out to the washing line. I concluded that she was a silly woman but that she would be back soon and so I laughed. My mum came in after dropping the washing basket at the doorstep. I was very happy.

What education course did you follow? Where did life take you after this?

I attended three secondary schools, each one a great blessing and benefit to me in getting a broad education. The first was St. James' Christian Brothers School in Basin Lane, a rough working class school. I excelled at computing and all of my subjects and achieved three major awards. I passed my Junior Certificate with 8 honours and a compromising A pass in woodwork. I thought the Christian Brothers were very noble people who taught with outstanding determination and patience. Later I moved to a secular community school with a startling realisation of a huge female student contingent. This was my introduction to the late 20th century "gender quake". I somehow managed two awards in my first year of school at Firhouse Community College but my success dipped in the important fifth year, which is the start of the Leaving Certificate. This was due to bullying. I decided to leave the school and attend a famous private school, a Jesuit College in North Dublin the following year. I remember looking in awe at what was available to people in this school, Belvedere College. I very quickly realised that I had made a mistake in trying to complete effectively two year's study in one year and I resigned from the school without the proper grade. After a brief spell in psychiatric hospital, I attended FÁS the Irish Labour Schooling Authority to learn computer applications programming. I learned COBOL, BASIC, C, and Visual Basic and passed my exams with some very interesting and very capable classmates. Later I worked in industry since the medication I was given did not allow me to stay awake long enough to do my computing work. My favourite job was in a warehouse in Dublin where I combined expertise in warehousing with reading books such as "Leviathan" by Thomas Hobbes, and "Capital" by Karl Marx.

I saved my money and returned to full-time education in 2003 to take a National Foundation Course at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. I studied under some wonderful teachers, especially a communications teacher who is an artist herself and she



introduced me to the art of the Dadaists. I am very indebted to her for her brilliant insight into human behaviour. Without the help of my teachers I could not have passed my exams as well as I did. They deserve the credit for inspiring me to move onto my next educational episode at Trinity College Dublin where I had the pleasure of studying Economic and Social Studies. My insight into life was continuously developing.

After a brief year of voluntary work with a charitable body I followed a path which led me to attend University College Dublin as a student librarian. I also attended a course in mental health leadership at Dublin City University. Upon graduation I moved to the United Kingdom where I reside with my wife.

Would you like to share how you got involved in Mental Health?

I became involved in mental health when, as a teenager, I was bullied in school and referred to psychiatric services. I was given several diagnoses and a book called, "Life and How to Survive it" by John Cleese and John Skinner. The book was notable for its advocacy of Tony Blair as a role model for balanced mental health, a fact which did not encourage me to take it seriously. The last experience I had with psychiatry was in January 2013.

I became involved in mental health in an activist way due to the help of my mother, Bernadette, who provided me with the opportunity to attend the Dublin City University "Cooperative Leadership: Service Improvement Leadership Course for Mental Health Service Users, Carers & Service Providers" class. I applied and was accepted onto the programme. My co-learners on the course were all very inspiring people with amazing abilities and the bravery to explore issues of great depth and sometimes great personal difficulty. All of the contributors worked in unison along the lines of equality and diversity. The classes lasted for nine months and the teams gave of their cooperative learning and experience to produce an array of projects for the improvement of the mental health services in Ireland. As a unique course it brought together the best of service providers' professional ability, carers' untapped and often unrecognised expertise, and of course the service users' knowledge of problems and their solutions. I was very blessed to be able to benefit from the course. My team produced a system of using mobile phone technology to empower and inform service users, those on the periphery of the service in particular, about the service options available to them. It was hoped that this would form a part of the health services outreach and recovery programme. The course also taught valuable lessons in business dealings, time-management and team collaboration.

Tell us about Tallaght Trialogue?

Tallaght Trialogue is an initiative that sprang from the Dublin City University Leadership Course organisers, Jim Walsh, Orla O'Reilly, Liam MacGabhann, Paddy McGowan, Lorna Ni Cheirin, and others. It was officially set up in March 2011 and emerged as part of the Trialogue Network in Ireland. Trialogue is a technique, which is often very therapeutic, that seeks to share insights about recovery and mental illness between three constituencies that make up a voluntary and egalitarian space. These constituencies are the service providers, carers, and service users. Together they discuss in a shared circle the meaning of stigma, medication, diagnosis, relationships to psychiatric services, theories of mental health, art, philosophy, social problems, indeed any problems or circumstances that people face in care



and life in society as a mental health service user. Service professionals report believing the experience to be eye-opening and a learning experience. Often the Trialogue represents the first time that service users feel meaningfully listened to by service professionals – and carers often feel empowered that their input is valued for the reality that it is, i.e. a very essential and highly important one. While some of the stories are distressing at first, they reveal a great triumph of unity and cooperative spirit over the distress and conflict. People stand to gain much more than they could lose by sharing their thoughts and experiences in a non-compulsive, non-obligatory setting. Trialogue is a brilliant way to get to know yourself and others, and to develop, share and blend personal realities in a forum that is successful due to the leaving behind of “hats” at the door where people can be as they are.

What has been some of the personal highlights of your time with Tallaght Trialogue?

I personally love to argue and debate. Tallaght Trialogue has offered me the great opportunity to discuss the issues of the vast subject respectfully and with dignity to others. I remember a lot of funny moments when members of the service user constituency were able to contradict through their own learning the standard arguments about the “safe” nature of medication by simply reading the label and reciting the truth about lactating men’s breasts, foetal abnormalities, brain damage, weight gain, etc. My personal favourite “harmless” side effect of Olanzapine was “sudden unexplained death” as stated on the medication’s inlay leaflet. The service professionals were good about the ribbing we gave them over that one! In a court of law we might extract a settlement for lack of informed consent to these drugs, but I digress... In any case concerns over capacity, ability to understand, emergency medication, suicide prevention, hyperactivity, risk to themselves and others, form part of a long queue of considerations which a group of guardians must give in relation to the desperation of a human being in terrible emotional distress. These are the considerations of psychiatrists and their teams. Only once has a psychiatrist been present at the Tallaght Trialogue so unfortunately we could not acquire a broad understanding of the position of those at the head of psychiatric services to these very important moral, health, and safety questions. On a more simple level there is always room for fun and reconciliation at the biscuits and beverage table during the tea break. I find that there is so much to learn and discover about life at the Trialogue.

What projects are you currently working on with Tallaght Trialogue?

Now that I live in London I am only an infrequent “service user” at the Tallaght Trialogue. I visit when I can and see it as an opportunity to facilitate inclusion and the giving of a platform to others.

Do you have any ‘coping strategies’ that you use?



Meditation and spirituality give me great support in times of stress. I also reflect on my condition and the condition of others. I like to help others through voluntary work such as mental health advocacy for a patient friend of mine, and using my information skills for a charity that seeks to improve the health of Irish immigrants to the UK.

What does the future hold for you?

I hope to continue my charity work involvement. I hope to bring to others my insights from my library studies, and the access I have to resource catalogues that may provide some benefit. Often I find that books are the greatest liberating force at the disposal of any man, woman or child.

Favourite Quote?

“...Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains...”
– Jean Jacques Rousseau, *the Social Contract*.

You can catch all this and more of Tallaght Trialogue: (website address)

<http://tallatrialogue.blogspot.ie/2012/01/our-first-trialogue.html>

(Facebook page)

<https://www.facebook.com/Tallaght-Trialogue-Advocacy-Group-32243301118244/?ref=hl>

(Pinterest) <http://pinterest.com/tallatrialogue/boards/>