



Hearing Voices

“HEARING VOICES” is a play and a film made by Clare Summerskill and members of her theatre company, Artemis from interviews with mental health services users and mental health care professionals.

This resource pack is intended to be used in conjunction with the film “HEARING VOICES”. The film is for use in training and education settings. It is not for public screening.

The film was produced in 2010 by Clare Summerskill and directed by Lorae Parry.

Clare Summerskill gives **presentational talks** about the making of this production, combined with a screening of the film and a Q&A session. For booking details contact admin@claresummerskill.co.uk

The **script** of the play “HEARING VOICES” by Clare Summerskill has been published by Tollington Press (2010). The cost is £8.99 plus postage. To order your copy of the play please visit the online store at www.hearingvoicesplay.co.uk

Hearing Voices

Throughout this play, which has now been made into a film, we hear the stories of six real-life people who met as patients on a secure psychiatric ward in a London hospital, the writer of this piece being one of them. The entire script is taken from interviews conducted by the writer with each of these patients and combined with extracts from the writer’s own diary about her time on the ward. The film version also includes extracts from interviews with mental health professionals. The result is a unique and powerful piece of verbatim theatre, which explores the experiences of Mental Health Service Users behind locked doors.



The stories that are told in this piece represent the "voices" of the patients that were never heard by the consultants or the nurses on the ward. This ground-breaking work reveals the views and personal histories of a group of people who are often hidden and excluded from mainstream society and allows their voices to finally be heard.



“HEARING VOICES” toured to theatres in England for five weeks in the Spring of 2010. The tour was funded by THE ARTS COUNCIL.

Clare Summerskill appeared in the show alongside members of her theatre company, ARTEMIS.

The play was directed by Lorae Parry.

The Set and Costume Designer was Sophia Lovell Smith.

www.hearingvoicesplay.co.uk

Reviews

PADDY BAZELEY, Founding Director of Maytree, a sanctuary for the suicidal

“HEARING VOICES” is very very important and disturbing. I set up Maytree because of people saying what you are saying, and dying because the fear of hospital was so great.

DEB ELTHALION, Service User and play interviewee

The play was called “HEARING VOICES” and it was written by a friend I had met in a psychiatric ward, what I call the nut house... Please see this play! It’s got humour, it is funny to see the way the NHS staff acts like prison wardens with no offers of therapeutic help. What is your mood? High or low? Take these drugs see you on the next ward round. I was a character in this play and it was really good watching the actress play my bits.

Clare Summerskill’s play has opened my eyes because the treatment Clare perceived as wrong, inhumane, unjust, uncalled for, I had been accepting that as the norm because I was a bad naughty bipolar person I felt I deserved it, because I was hyper-manic. However, after watching the play seeing just how it was for all of us showed me and the rest of the audience that there is a big problem in the nut house with the NHS, that could be changed, should be changed...but I can’t see it getting any better any time soon. At least thanks to the massive talents of Clare Summerskill you’re hearing our voices.

Comments from Evaluation Forms

Psychotherapist:

“The script and acting were great, especially with the element of humour. I love the play and thought it a powerful indictment of the current system of ‘care’ around mental health and how this causes more harm and damage to those already suffering the damaging effects of trauma.”



NHS carer:

“Fantastic! This subject area MUST be brought into the public domain for understanding and stigma reduction.”

Health Care professional:

“I knew from the start that all I saw was true, not fiction based on a few facts. It was a disturbing experience for me as a carer. It did help me see things from a patients’ perspective but I think that

the policy makers are the ones directly responsible for the situation. Cuts in funding happen everywhere and this treatment and attitude from the staff is the result.”

Service Users:

“It was very good, well done! I was on the ward many times and I could relate to your feelings.”

“Very near the mark. As a service user I feel it is about time someone exposed the many faults of the system.”

The Intended Audience

Mental health care professionals

NHS staff

Psychiatrists

Psychotherapists

Counsellors

Mental health service users

Mental health service providers

CPNs

People who suffer from mental distress

Members of the general public with an interest in mental health

Issues Addressed



Treatment by staff towards patients on psychiatric wards

Treatment by psychiatrists towards patients on psychiatric wards

Non-hospital options of care for people who are feeling suicidal, such as Maytree, a sanctuary for the suicidal (see below)

Self-harm

Schizophrenia

Bi-Polar Disorder

Issues of sexuality and gender

Maytree

MAYTREE - A sanctuary for the suicidal



“If you feel you can't go on living or if you know somebody who is feeling actively suicidal, please contact Maytree. Maytree offers a brief stay in a safe place. People can self refer or be referred. It is free and aims to be quickly accessible to anyone in a suicidal crisis from anywhere in the UK subject to a discussion to make sure that Maytree is suitable.” - Maytree

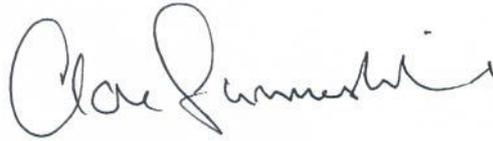
Telephone: 020 7263 7070

Email: maytree@maytree.org.uk

Website: www.maytree.org.uk

The Contributors

"This play has been written entirely from interviews with people with whom I was in hospital as well as certain professionals who offer more alternative ideas on how people in mental distress can be cared for and insights into why staff in the current NHS psychiatric system treat patients the way they do. These interviews have been woven between my own account of my stay in hospital. Aside from my story, everything else that is said in the play has been said, word for word by one of the interviewees."



Clare Summerskill

PAM BLACKWOOD was Head of Operations with Samaritans between 2003 and 2009 and was also a member of the Guideline Development Group for the 2005 NICE report on Self-Harm.

DR. RUFUS MAY works as a clinical psychologist in Bradford. He was once diagnosed as a "paranoid schizophrenic" but hasn't taken any medication in twenty two years.

DR. RACHEL PERKINS worked as a clinical psychologist and Director of Quality Assurance and User Experience in South West London and St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust. She is a member of the Disability Rights Commission's Mental Health Advisory Group and a Trustee of Rethink and she is a user of Mental Health Services because she has Bi-Polar Disorder. ***(nb: Rachel's interview extracts are in the script but not in the film version of Hearing Voices)***

PADDY BAZELEY was one of the founding Directors of Maytree, a sanctuary for the suicidal in London where people can stay up to four nights at no cost. Maytree is run by a few full-time people and over sixty volunteers.

DEB ELTHALION is a singer and musician and mother of five who has been diagnosed as having Bi-Polar Disorder.

EILEEN, ALISON, MARY and **TONY** have all given their permission for their testimonies to be used in this production.

CLARE SUMMERSKILL is a stand-up, a singer/songwriter and a playwright.

www.claresummerskill.co.uk

The Writer

Clare Summerskill is the Artistic Director of Artemis Theatre Company. She has written and produced several plays using the verbatim theatre technique. For several years she worked for the



Reminiscence theatre company, Age Exchange, based in London, writing plays from interviews with older people about their memories on specific subjects, which were then enacted by Age Exchange's professional theatre company. For the last few years she has mainly been writing scripts in a similar manner for her own theatre company, Artemis.

Five years ago she toured a play that she had written, called "GATEWAY TO HEAVEN" to theatres around the country. This piece was based entirely on the memories of older lesbians and gay men whom Clare interviewed (www.gatewaytoheaven.co.uk)

The research, writing and then the full production were funded entirely by The Arts Council. The play was then commissioned by Age Concern England – Opening Doors, to be made into a training film for Age Concern staff as well as to be available to the general public. After the introduction of the Hate Crime Bill, Clare was commissioned by THE METROPOLITAN POLICE and AGE CONCERN to write and produce a film about the relationship between the older LGBT people and the police over the last seventy years. This piece was based entirely on interviews and was made into a DVD entitled "QUEENS' EVIDENCE".

Clare has also written several commissioned plays and films for social sector organisations, which have been performed at various conferences and AGMS. For the NHS she wrote, and with members of her theatre company performed, two short plays. One was for a Chief Nursing Officers Conference and the issues that were tackled dramatically were around Inequality and Social Exclusion. The other NHS play was performed to nurses at a national NHS conference, which addressed the theme of "Shifting the Balance of Power". Issues covered in this piece included: Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and Securing Clinical and Professional Leadership.

For MOSAIC Housing Association Clare produced a short play addressing issues around older tenants. Areas addressed in this piece included Housing Associations' communication with older tenants: Provision of aids and adaptations in older people's homes: Minimalisation of disruption when repairs are carried out in older people's homes.



For an AGE CONCERN national AGM Clare, in partnership with Women And Theatre Company, wrote a short play addressing issues such as images of older people in the media, grey power, the financial and emotional costs of nursing home provision, older people and sexuality and older people and their transport needs.

As well as a writer, Clare is also a stand-up comedienne and has been touring for many years to mainly gay and lesbian audiences on the cabaret circuit as well taking her latest one- woman shows to theatres around the country every couple of years. Her acting and comedy credits range from appearances on “Richard and Judy” C4, to The Royal Variety Show, to playing a lead in the West End musical BUDDY. Dubbed “A lesbian Victoria Wood” by Radio 4 Woman’s Hour, Clare performs her own unique style of humour combining original comedy songs, stand-up material and character monologues. What’s On magazine called her “One of the funniest women in the country” and the Independent claims that she is “Unorthodox and uninhibited.”

If you are interested in BOOKING Clare to give a talk about her play and to show the screening of the DVD version, followed by a Q&A session please contact admin@claresummerskill.co.uk.

Clare's website: www.claresummerskill.co.uk

Hearing Voices website: www.hearingvoicesplay.co.uk