

IN THE LOOP

We're back with what's happening at Assert

Welcome to the Assert newsletter! We are pleased to publish our February edition of the newsletter. This newsletter contains information about how our staff are providing support through different services, our upcoming activities and events and member stories. We hope you enjoy reading it, as much as we did writing it!

DONATING & FUNDRAISING MADE SIMPLE



Donations to Assert are vital in keeping the charity operational, and we are grateful for any donations received. Maintaining services free of charge is more and more challenging, and we need your support to ensure services are maintained in the future.

Give as you Live Online is the free and easy way to raise money for ASSERT (B&H) when you shop online with 6,000+ stores.

From holidays and travel to clothing and gifts, you can raise hundreds of pounds from your everyday shopping, all at no extra cost to you.

You can simply [sign up for an account](#) and start shopping to make a difference for ASSERT (B&H)!

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

by Mark Bromfield

It seems as if 2023 has a bite weather-wise. Nice weather, then awful.

Assert continues to provide the support that we can, with the resources we have. Our funders have been generous in the funding they give.

However, the need for Assert services is increasing all the time.

Assert will continue to do what we can with the resources we have.

ASSERT OPERATIONS

By Debbie Taylor

Hi everyone,

I hope you are benefiting from the lighter evenings. Just a little more sunshine would help.

I seem to have introduced a bit of a wildlife theme into my newsletter updates. I hope you enjoy the photos. I am delighted that a blackbird is now making a daily appearance, popping by for a quick bath. I've added another photo of a very friendly Robin and, of course, my fox who visits for tea. I've discovered she has a preference for eggs over chicken wings!!

I also couldn't resist including a couple of photos of one of the glorious sunsets we have had in Brighton recently, I hope you may have caught one too....good for the soul, in my opinion.

If you enjoy this, perhaps a dedicated nature/wildlife section could be included in the newsletter, with you sending in your experiences, photos, stories or poems...or anything else wildlife/nature related.

Please send to Prachi, who compiles our newsletter -
supporters@assertbh.org.uk





PPC (Parents, Partners, Carers Group)

We currently meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 7.00 PM upstairs at the Earth and Stars pub in Church Street, Brighton. If you haven't been along before, you would be very welcome to attend. It's very informal and friendly, and most attendees report it is really helpful to have a space where you don't have to explain yourself, don't feel judged, and may even have a bit of fun....but crying is fine too. This group was my first introduction to Assert over 12 years ago, and have made some really good friends as a result. We had our first Xmas meal together for 3 years, which was lovely, especially the return of a fun Secret Santa game, which has become a bit of an institution.

If you would like any more information, please do get in touch.

Debbie Taylor debbiet@assertbh.org.uk

Drop In

The Assert Drop-In is held on the second Tuesday evening of each month, in the Conference Room at Community Base at 7.00 PM. If you are interested in attending or would like to know more about this activity, please do get in touch. Look out for the regular mail chimp flyer which will be circulated by e-mail or by post. Do give the office a call and someone should be able to give you more details. 01273-234850 or 01273-234853.

Lastly I need to let you know that I will be leaving Assert soon, I will give you final details in the next Newsletter. Any queries can be sent to Assert Strategic Development Manager – Mark Bromfield sdm@assertbh.org.uk

Here are a couple of resources that may be of interest to some of you.

Dealing with Anxiety



a practical course to help **reduce** your anxiety levels

Anxiety affects **everyone** at some point, but for some people it interferes with daily life – and limits what we do.

This course is free to residents of Brighton & Hove age 19 or over who are in receipt of means tested benefits or on a low income.

For more information:

Email **AEH@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

Call **01273 292828**

What the course covers:

- Helps you Identify triggers for anxiety
- Explores how thoughts affect feelings, which affect behaviour
- What happens when we use avoidance as a way of coping
- Helps you challenge automatic, negative thoughts that keep you stuck
- Addresses barriers to making positive change
- Includes 'grounding' techniques to help focus on the here and now

Courses are available either online using Zoom, or face-to-face. Both are run in small groups.

Online Courses (3 x 1.5 hour sessions)

Face-to-Face Courses (4 x 2 hour sessions)

**You can enrol online on our website:
adulthoodeducation.brighton-hove.gov.uk**

For more information:

Email **AEH@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

Call **01273 292828**

Build Emotional Resilience

– get more out of life

Learn
new ways
to manage
stress



To enrol please visit:
adulteducation.brighton-hove.gov.uk

Build Emotional Resilience

– get more out of life

Groups are small and supportive

Do you often feel overwhelmed by everyday stresses that sap your energy and affect your motivation?

This practical, supportive course uses easy to understand language to explore healthier ways of thinking.

It will help you:

- Explore the effects of stress on you and your relationships
- Challenge your own negative thinking
- Develop skills to communicate assertively
- Build self-compassion, reduce stress and improve self-esteem
- Consider ways to live with uncertainty

If you would like further information, please email: AEH@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call: 01273 292 828.

LIFE SKILLS COURSES

By Maria Riaza Fernandez

Hi everyone!

These are the courses we are offering in the next months if you are interested in joining any of them, please let me know.



Cookery Course: Cookery will be delivered from the 17th of March to the 21st April with a break for Good Friday. We also will be visiting an allotment to do a workshop as part of the course on the 3rd of April.



Life Skills 2: Organisation and Self -Management skills. During these sessions we explore different topics and discuss what strategies might be useful to feel in control of our home and daily responsibilities. We talk about household management, routine and wellbeing and organisation and planning, and how to set boundaries.



Exploring Autism: In these 7 sessions, we do learn about Autism and the diagnosis, the spectrum, sensory processing, routine and coping strategies, and communication styles. These sessions run on Thursday, 12.00-14.00 hours.



Short Courses: If you are interested in learning about Interception, self-management and resilience get in touch to do the short courses. These are delivered one to one, you will first receive a pack with all the information to read, and once this is completed you will be offered a virtual one to one session to talk about the pack.

Please let me know if you are interested in joining any of the above courses by emailing me at maria@assertbh.org.uk

Maria
Adult Learning Coordinator

BENEFITS SERVICE

By Megan Archer

Hi everyone,

I hope you are all well. A short update on the benefits service this time – it is very busy, and I have had to close my books for new cases until April due to high demand and ongoing casework.

In the meantime, you are welcome to email to request that you be put on my waiting list, and I will contact you to arrange an appointment in April.

If you have an urgent benefits query or need support before this time, please contact either of the following:

Possability People, at: <https://possabilitypeople.org.uk/about/contact-us/>

St. Lukes, at: <https://www.stlukesadvice.org.uk/>

Or there is further advice on local services is available here: <https://www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk/advice-and-support/>

Very best wishes,
Megan Archer
Benefits Case Worker
Benefits@assertbh.org.uk

AUTISM SUPPORT ADVISOR

By Alex Barbuti

Hi everyone,

As always, a very warm welcome to anyone who's met with me recently to register with Assert. We have so many people registering with us every month, and I really appreciate your patience and willingness to share your stories with me, welcome to Assert!

I meet so many different people in my role, yet certain topics are mentioned all the time. I'll be looking at some of those and sharing any resources that might be useful or interesting in this newsletter. So to start off, here are two that I've found some resources on recently:

GRIEF

Grief is a subject that is often raised in my meetings with new clients, in our groups, and in courses, and we are often asked if we have any resources on neurodiversity and grief.

For anyone who enjoys podcasts, **Griefcast** by Cariad Lloyd is a wonderful listen for different experiences and perspectives on all types of bereavement and grief, told through interviews by Cariad: <https://play.acast.com/s/griefcast>

Grief Meets is Switchboard's monthly group for LGBTQ people who have experienced bereavement. The group explores a particular theme each month, usually using a creative outlet, and is an opportunity to meet with others and explore grief. To book a place please email grief.encounters@switchboard.org.uk

Cruse is a charity that offers resources, opportunities to talk, and therapeutic support to anyone who has experienced grief or has a terminally ill loved one: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

PARENTING

We know it can be difficult to access groups when you have childcare responsibilities, particularly if your children aren't yet at school. "Writing Around the Kids" is a new series of creative writing workshops for mums with younger kids with author Anna Jefferson and writer Sam Johnson.

You can check their upcoming events here:

<https://writingaroundthekids.co.uk/events/>

If you have any resources to share or topics that you'd like recommendations on, please let me know.

Ahead of **World Autism Acceptance Week** from the 27th March - 2nd April, I'm putting another call out to hear what autism acceptance means to you. Thanks to those who've already contacted me. If you'd like to share your thoughts on autism acceptance, please email them to me at alexb@assertbh.org.uk. We'd love to feature your submissions in this newsletter. If you'd like to be featured but remain anonymous, please include this in your email.

If you are taking part in any events for World Autism Acceptance week please let us know!

Alex Barbuti,
Autism Support Advisor
alexb@assertbh.org.uk

AUTISM CASEWORKER

By Riley-Fynn Morrell

Hello everyone! I hope you are all doing well! I'm excited to be going into March – warmer weather, longer days and daffodils, and my birthday at the end of it!

Before I get started on updates just to say: if you have attended Coffee Club, Active Club, or PDG since I started in the role, please keep an eye on your emails this month: I will be sending everyone who has attended anonymous feedback forms. This is good information for us to collect to be able to ensure projects like these receive funding and is also a good opportunity to see that the activities are beneficial to you, and what we can do to improve them if they are not. And also any feedback you have for me!

Peer Discussion Group

Unfortunately, PDG had to be canceled in February, and I understand there were a couple of people who signed up on the day and therefore didn't receive notification of the cancellation. As a result, upon registration I will be asking for people's phone numbers as well as emails, to ensure we have other means of contact in case they're needed. Giving your phone number will be optional.

I'm very sorry to anyone who was due to attend the PDG on Late Diagnosis / Self Diagnosis. I want to assure everyone that this topic will be carried over to March's PDG on Tuesday 21st March, 7 PM-8:30 PM. I will be sending the registration form out to everyone shortly but will first be emailing everyone who signed up for February to give them a priority.

I'm really keen to have everyone's feedback for PDG. Currently, Assert receives no funding for PDG, and yet it is a group that has always been popular among our service users. We have received a few requests for the group to move back to Friday evenings, as they once were, and I know people are keen to have the opportunity to decide on future topics even if they haven't been able to attend previous sessions.

So, similar to Active Club, I have made a poll for PDG, asking what sorts of topics you'd like to see and when you'd like it to be run. I will keep this poll open, so there is no rush to fill it in. Any thoughts will be greatly appreciated and taken into consideration for the future. [Click here to access the poll.](#)

Active Club

This month for Active Club we did Chair Yoga with Lou from BodyBitsBrighton!



The activity was received really well; Lou's accessible approach allowed us to relax and for those of us who are less mobile to still be able to partake in yoga; I had a conversation with a couple of attendees who said that when they've done yoga in the past they've been very self-conscious, always looking around the room at what other people were doing, but that they didn't feel that this time! We learned a lot about the practice and the history of it too.

Active Club will continue to run on the last Friday of every month in the afternoon/early evening. This month, it will be Friday 31st March. I will send out the invitation email sometime next week.

Thank you to those of you who have filled in the poll on which activities you would like to see at Active Club. It's really helpful for me to see exactly what you want to do and therefore I can seek out those opportunities for you. If you haven't done so already, please [click here](#) to contribute to the poll. There is no deadline for this.

Casework

Casework with me might benefit you if:

- You're struggling with organisation, timekeeping, motivation or prioritising tasks in your day-to-day life
- You have a specific goal or task you've been putting off because you don't know how to get started (goals might include applying for a job, moving house, getting a pet, booking a holiday, taking classes, preparing for a big social event like a wedding, a personal project like writing a book or completing a DIY job)
- You're keen to develop social skills or find out more about social activities in the city
- You would benefit from support from a fellow autistic person, who understands what support you need and why – who may have even experienced it themselves
- You want to be in charge of the support you get, and learn skills that you can apply to other areas of life even after you've finished casework

If you're interested in 1-1 casework with me or have any other questions about it, you can email me at riley-fynn@assertbh.org.uk. Please bear in mind that the current waitlist is approximately 5 months.

Coffee Club

Coffee Club continues to meet every fortnight at the Ledward Centre, Wednesdays 11-1. Keep checking your emails if you want to sign up!

Here is a lovely photo Debbie took at our last Coffee Club:



Thanks everyone!

DIGITAL AND MARKETING ASSISTANT

By Prachi Pal

Hi everyone,

Thank you for continuously sharing your submissions in the newsletter; super helpful for us at Assert. **Yours is the most important voice in this newsletter!**

We keep trying something new with the newsletter - such as embedding links, icons, pictures, theme-based design, etc., to make it more engaging for you. Your feedback is very welcome.

If there's anything that you want this newsletter to have, please write to me at supporters@assertbh.org.uk with your suggestions! We would love to make it more customized according to your preferences.



SHARE YOUR VOICE AND FEEDBACK IN THE ASSERT NEWSLETTER

Assert would love to hear more from you!

Your voice and feedback are important to us and this newsletter is a space to amplify your voices, experiences, opinions and contributions. We would love to receive your write ups, drawings, puzzles, poems, photographs, articles etc. on topics that interest you and which can benefit other clients too. If you would like to be anonymous, we will respect your decision. Please email your submissions at supporters@assertbh.org.uk.

DONATE



DONATE TO ASSERT: YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL TO US

Donations to Assert are vital in keeping the charity operational and free at the point of service. We are incredibly grateful for any donations received. You can donate to us through PayPal or the 'donate' button on our Facebook page. You could also make donations in cash, via cheque or bank transfer, host your own fundraiser or use the link below:

<https://www.paypal.com/uk/fundraiser/charity/2333838>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGULAR UPDATES, FOLLOW US
ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS:**



/ASSERTBANDH



@ASSERT_BH



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

DROP IN

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY EVENING

COFFEE CLUB

FORTNIGHTLY AT 11AM - 1PM

PARENT, PARTNERS AND CARERS GROUP

EVERY 4TH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

PEER DISCUSSION GROUP

EVERY 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

ACTIVE CLUB

LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH, NEXT
ONE SCHEDULED FOR 31ST MARCH

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US VIA

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