

DERBYSHIRE MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter



Free Your Mind

Why I created Hobby Talk

By Wayne

I was diagnosed with ASD as an adult, and you can imagine the impact this had on me. This along with a combat stress diagnosis is very difficult to manage at times as most people don't understand and are ignorant to both illnesses. I felt like a reject, genetically different from everyone else.

There was a time a few years ago when I didn't want to even be here anymore after a "car crash" of several very traumatic personal and professional events, which left me not mentally coping.

This left me in a very dark place, and on my own. Cut off from the people I knew and trusted, and disowned by my family all in one go, by events that were out of my control. I wanted it all to end as I couldn't mentally cope, and I very nearly acted upon this.

I lost everything I'd worked towards and held dearly, my job, my home, contact with my little girl and my self-respect and dignity all through no fault of my own.

I had no hobbies at the time, I started to live like a hermit and watched movies to escape the demons, who were constantly chipping and nagging away tearing me apart mentally. No interest whatsoever in the outside world, or anyone in it.

Then one day out of the blue, a friend, saw what a dark and dangerous place I was in. She said "Why don't you give archery a try? I'll take you". A date was set and I went to a range, with a heavy heart, sadness and full of anger.

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Why I created Hobby Talk - Continued

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Although I was very anxious and didn't want to be around strangers, I had found archery, or had archery found me? All it took was a few kind words from total stranger to boost me through the clouds...

"Wow, and you say you've never shot before mate? "

"You're a natural at this"

"You have the instinct to shoot well"

After a few more lessons, I was off to the archery shop with a small loan to buy my own bow. It wasn't a cheap hobby but I had found a hobby, some say a hobby finds you.

This hobby actually saved my life, alongside my new partner who has been a solid rock, and has stood by me. I felt good again, and started opening up to her.

One evening reflecting upon my own mental health I thought, I wonder how many men out there with mental health illnesses would be interested in Archery? I wonder what they do for a hobby? Or do they even have one?

I talked about my idea with some local community champions, and they gave me the courage and confidence to follow my idea up, which gathered pace. Endorsed by other local mental health champions, and the head of public health for Derbyshire.

My small idea grew and has grown beyond my wildest dreams now, it's kept me going, because if I can save someone, just one person from that dark place I was in I will, this group will.

It's still in its infancy but I would like it to become a local phenomenon, and specialise in hobbies, to help get other men on that long road to recovery.

My point is, if you just get out for a couple of hours a week and do something you enjoy, a hobby, no matter how big or small with like-minded men it will keep those demons at bay. Doing something together, having a hobby, and a regular meeting we might open up a bit more to each other.

Hobby-Talk was born.





About Hobby Talk

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Hobby-Talk has face to face meetings every two weeks, currently on a Wednesday evening at the football stadium in Chesterfield 7PM to 9PM. All men welcome ages 18 upwards. Lower ages can sometimes be considered depending upon circumstance, and maturity.

Peer to peer support either online or in person, and signposting is also available.

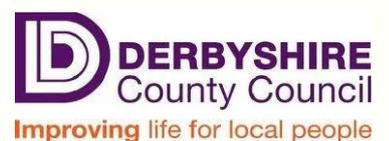
The format is a member volunteers at a meeting to talk about their hobby, then at the following meeting we all get involved, and try what that member has a passion for. Whoever volunteers is expected to do a short talk and introduction to their hobby, telling us all how they started, what got them interested, how long they've been doing it etc. Supporting anyone who struggles with any of this.

I thought long and hard about how and why I wanted to structure it this way and the simple answer was to build confidence, giving the members self-esteem and a direction in their life to build upon. The group helps build bridges between the taboo of mental health and talking about it and the divide it causes.

It helps men understand that they are not on their own, people do care, there's other men with mental health illnesses and they can be signposted to the right places should they need to be. All whilst having a bit of fun and putting their problems on the back burner for a few hours.

Hobby-Talk has brought local men together in a safe space. It's like a family of close friends rather than just acquaintances now.

I've put my heart, soul and time into this group, it hasn't been an easy task for me, but seeing the positive impact it has had on men who thought they were lost, and that nobody cared, and the positive change in character in them has been the most satisfying thing, as I have been there myself. It has been well worth the effort.

Joined Up Care
Derbyshire

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My name is Jodie Cook and I am the mental health policy officer for Derbyshire Mental Health Forum. I attend many meetings to represent the mental health groups and organisations across Derby and Derbyshire.

I am employed by Erewash Voluntary Action and my role is funded by Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

I work closely with Rachel Bounds at Derbyshire Voluntary Action and we have set up a new meeting for any type of group working with people to support their mental health to meet informally over zoom, share the work that you are doing and support one another.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 14th July at 1.30pm – 3.00pm via zoom. We would love to see you at this meeting - Meeting ID: 984 7944 9512
Passcode: 134958. However, if you cant attend and would like to get the notes and find out about future meeting dates please email Natalie - natalie@erewashcvs.org.uk

We also have a more formal forum which meets 6 times a year and has speakers from mental health services and from the commissioners who fund services. If you would like to know more about this please ask Christie - christie@erewashcvs.org.uk to sign you up to our forum news