



# Spirit in mind conference

June 2017

## Executive summary



Reverend Mike Gartland and Aziz-ur Rehman



“ *The Spirit in Mind framework is unique, bringing the language of spirituality and service provision together to faith and spirituality based communities, third sector and the NHS.* ”

**Steve Miller**

faith based community network consultant



# Executive summary: Spirit in Mind conference, June 2017

## Supporting people's mental wellbeing through the development of collaborative partnerships

*The first Spirit in Mind conference had over 80 attendees, including service users, volunteers, local community representatives, faith professionals, GPs, alternative therapy professionals, politicians, clergy, Imams, and staff from third sector community organisations, the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, CCGs, Healthwatch, local businesses, local authorities, Mosques, NHS hospitals and Trusts.*

---

### Reverend Michael Gartland

Head of pastoral and spiritual care for South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Reverend Michael Gartland opened the conference. He thanked everyone present and set the scene for the day saying that "Spirit in Mind was about creating collaborative partnerships between South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and locally based faith and spiritual organisations."



*“ Spirit in Mind is about creating collaborative partnerships between South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and locally based faith, spiritualist and humanist organisations. ”*

---

### Mark Burns-Williamson

Police and crime commissioner for West Yorkshire



The conference was launched by Mark, who said he was encouraged by the number of people present. He added, "I'm really happy to be here with my team including David Smith (third sector adviser) and the Viper unit. This conference has given us a platform to have conversations with spiritual and faith based organisations and I applaud the work that Spirit in Mind is doing and has done to bring this together. Mental health, spirituality and faith are a key part of West Yorkshire Police's work and we have made several advances in this area with the help of organisations such as South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and the local third sector community and faith organisations".

*“ This conference has given us a platform to have conversations with spirituality and faith based organisations and I applaud the work that Spirit in Mind is doing and has done to bring this together. ”*

---

## Steve Miller

Faith based community network consultant

Steve said that the vocabulary of spirituality and the motivation of those who came from a traditional faith background were sometimes misunderstood. He said that there was a pressing need therefore to find a common language that engaged both people from faith communities and those without any religion or spiritual affiliation.

“The Spirit in Mind project is unique,” said Steve, “It brings the language of spirituality and service provision together in a way that connects the NHS and third sector organisations at a deep and meaningful level.”

He went on to describe how Michael Bond, the creator of Paddington Bear – who had passed away just the day before – had said “Everyone is different – which means anyone can fit in!” To exclude anyone is one of the deficits in society; we must strive to contribute and should be able to engage in a meaningful way with the community and societies they belong to. He said that it was not about traditional religion but about belief and conviction systems. Spirit in Mind encompasses all belief systems by virtue of a common language which values that people with challenging mental health conditions need a sense of purpose, the confirmation of being valuable and of intrinsic self-worth, and the need to belong to a healthy community. Currently people with a mental health condition often feel socially isolated and excluded.



“ *The Spirit in Mind framework is unique, bringing the language of spirituality and service provision together to faith and spirituality based communities, third sector and the NHS.* ”

---

## Richard Parry

Chief executive, North Kirklees CCG and director of adult social care, Kirklees Council



Richard gave an enlightening talk about the health needs of people within the Kirklees area. He went on to talk about the more in-depth conversations that were needed. This included empowering people to take control of their own health. Faith organisations are a key part of the social assets of local communities and a source of support and encouragement when life is tough.

Mental health issues should be routinely on the agenda within conversations. There was a need to create a similar mass movement around mental health as there had been around cessation of smoking a few years ago. How do we mobilise a mass movement today? We too often talk about things that do not work rather than focusing on those that everyone can contribute to. Let's make sure we have a joined-up approach and get that conversation going. How do we recognise systemic drivers? And how do we mobilise third sector organisations in the mass movement of change needed towards understanding the underlying issues involved in mental health promotion and wellbeing?

“ *There was a need to create a similar mass movement around mental health as there was about no smoking a few years ago. Today is the start of that conversation within faith and spirituality. How do we recognise systemic drivers and how do we recognise the role of third sector organisations in this mass movement of change needed towards understanding mental health?* ”

---

## Councillor Viv Kendrick

Adult social care Kirklees

Viv talked about the needs of carers and the general lack of awareness within the community about mental health. This was contrasted with problems surrounding physical disability which were much better understood.

She explained that everyone needs to be more supportive of people with mental health problems, and their families. People still often feel that mental illness is something to be ashamed about and hidden. This stigma needs to be addressed and eradicated.

We need to talk more in an open and informed way so that we can develop responsive and effective services. The number of young people prescribed anti-depressants continues to grow and the suicide rate amongst young men in particular remains unacceptably high. She urged us all to work together for the best health and wellbeing for all our communities.



*“ We need to talk more in an open and informed way so that we can develop responsive and effective services. The number of young people prescribed anti-depressants continues to grow and the suicide rate amongst young men in particular remains unacceptably high. ”*

---

## Dr Jo Sadgrove

Specialist in religion, identity and cross-cultural encounter, University of Leeds



Dr Sadgrove talked about the concept of religious assets within the public health arena. Although a relatively new concept it offered promising opportunities for a better understanding of the role of faith communities in promoting health and social agendas. Jo looked at the potential for health information dissemination within places of worship. Public health strategies need to engage more closely with faith communities especially in regard to the dissemination of health information.

She said there were a number of people who in surveys ticked the “no faith” option yet also signalled that they engaged in prayer – which raised interesting questions regarding religious identity.

*“ A number of people who in surveys ticked the “no faith” option yet also signaled that they engaged in prayer. ”*

---

## Paul Macey

Nurture Development Ltd, Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Paul talked about Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) which is an approach based on the principle of identifying and mobilising individual and community 'assets', rather than focusing on problems and needs. (ie 'deficits').

"Assets based approaches are an integral part of community development in the sense that they are concerned with facilitating people and communities to come together to achieve positive change using their own knowledge, skills and lived experience of the issues they encounter in their own lives."

*“ Assets based approaches are an integral part of community development in the sense that they are concerned with facilitating people and communities to come together to achieve positive change using their own knowledge, skills and lived experience of the issues they encounter in their own lives. ”*

---

## Aziz-ur Rehman

Spirit in Mind project lead



Aziz talked about the story so far for Spirit in Mind (SIM) and the events and programmes that have led to this conference. He added that Spirit in Mind was working with faith based organisations to develop pilot projects and to de-stigmatise mental health within the community. He also said, "I do not feel that disadvantaged communities are hard to reach but instead they are 'hidden in plain sight' and without grassroots community voices, transformation of mental health services becomes much more challenging. Transformation needs to be through variation, integration and collaboration. We can drive better patient experience, better patient safety and better clinical effectiveness if we work together and be person and patient-centred."

Aziz mentioned two recent SIM projects that demonstrated the potential for collaborative working.

Spirit in Mind delivered mental health awareness training to the congregation and volunteers of the Emmanuel Church in Barnsley.

Huddersfield Mission co-produced and co-funded with Spirit in Mind and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust counselling sessions for customers of the Mission.

*“ I do not feel that disadvantaged communities are hard to reach but instead they are 'hidden in plain sight' and without grassroots community voices, transformation of mental health services becomes much more challenging. Transformation needs to be through variation, integration and collaboration. ”*

---

## Paul Bridges

Manager of Huddersfield Mission

Paul spoke of how the counselling was helping its users and how the presence of a counsellor on site added value to the outreach of the Mission in many other ways.

“ We are delighted with our collaborative project with Spirit in Mind which started earlier this year is now showing really good signs of improvement. ”



---

## Reverend Martin Naylor



“ Now is the time to address depression. Having worked with Jo Cox MP previously we want to offer a regular commitment free to all faiths. Now is the time to address taboos and stigmas around mental health and bring them out in the open as a healing experience. The Church wants to connect up with other faiths, particularly the Muslim community. ”

---

## Faith Action

A video recently developed by 'Faith Action' was shown. This highlighted the variety and valuable contribution which faith based communities and volunteers played in supporting people with mental health challenges.

## Workshops

Four workshops offered conference members the opportunity to engage in reflecting on key areas of social and health concerns.



## Workshop 1

Looked at safeguarding issues, particularly in relation to 'out of hours' supplementary education and mental health.

### Key points

- Government planning and prioritisation need to engage with faith communities much more effectively.
- Ignorance relating to mental health needs to be tackled much more robustly at all levels. More training around mental health awareness and first aid needs to be offered to faith communities.
- Christians and Muslims had much to learn from each other. There were more similarities than differences in the ways they sought to support and enable their communities.
- The sharing of resources between different faith organisations had a lot of potential and could be a very significant vehicle for building bridges between communities.
- Better ways for people to access mental health services need to be developed. Single point of access has its strengths, but also its limitations.
- Faith communities can play a vital role in helping people access services. They are a natural point of first contact - as are voluntary organisations such as Samaritans, Women's Centres etc.
- CAMHS are doing good work re-educating school children about mental health. Lots that can be built on and further developed.



## Workshop 2

Following the presentations on religious assets and Asset Based Community Development, this workshop explored the strengths and weaknesses of adopting an asset based approach in a local community context.

### Key points

- Sustainability issues are at the heart of any planning and need always to be kept in focus.
- Co-production was an idea that came of age and opened up many opportunities for community development progress.
- Good ABCD required a readiness to open up to, understand and respect different value systems and beliefs.
- Need to recognise the barriers to successful ABCD.
- Key to success is motivation and commitment of empowered volunteers.
- Need to recognise and address organisational defects and deficits.



## Workshop 3

Provided an opportunity to reflect further on issues raised earlier in the conference relating to funding and public health planning.

### Key points

- Public health approach needs widening – go beyond “needs assessment”.
- Need for better information and signposting.
- Faith communities have important contribution to make in providing spaces and framework for psycho-social support.
- Opportunities for partnership co-working with public health services.
- Need to think of accompaniment befriending/ mentoring as key areas for public health involvement.



## Workshop 4

Reflected on the question of how best local faith communities could respond to the mental health needs of their membership and the wider community.

### Key points

- Need to create open and safe spaces for conversations of all levels about spirituality and its role in promoting health and well-being.
- Communication issues are central to success.
- Professionals across the board need to be helped to a deeper awareness and understanding of the significance of addressing spiritual issues when thinking about recovery and wellbeing.
- Comoodle – sharing site – what’s on, where etc. Great asset for developing community awareness and cohesion.
- Mental health local forums bringing together faith communities and mental health professionals have great potential for identifying and addressing local mental health priorities.



- Need for better recruitment systems to give broader spectrum demography.
- Ensure local initiatives mentioned by Reverend Martin Naylor – e.g. depression, self-support group models are fully supported and further developed.

## Key action points



- Explore feasibility of locally based 'faith and mental health' hubs – to bring together faith representatives and mental health professionals in identifying and responding to local mental health priorities
- Develop format for bringing key stakeholders together (CCGs, faith communities, community organisations, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, GPs, Healthwatch etc) either in context of a hub (as above) or annual SIM conference.
- SIM to develop a newsletter for networking and showing important information re local initiatives, fundraising etc.
- 'All on Board' to reduce stigma surrounding mental health. Need for broad spectrum community faith and statutory authority initiatives.
- The more faith communities can work together, the more cohesive local communities will be. Common concerns re health and wellbeing particularly in relation to mental health can be key drivers of emerging new networks of collaboration.
- Co-working between faith and statutory organisations offers new pathways for stress management initiatives
- Fundraising opportunities in a difficult financial climate are likely to be much enhanced by evidence of co-working between different faith organisations' response to recognised individual and social needs (isolation, community cohesion etc).
- Local faith communities and the wider community need to be more aware of the ABCD approach and concepts of religious assets.
- SIM has a potentially important role to play in terms of helping develop protocols around 'faith healing' and training re safeguarding issues.
- Developing community cohesion and integration through health and wellbeing initiatives has great potential which SIM is well placed to take a lead in.

“ It was good to meet all the different people here and I have been honoured over the last year to be involved with Spirit in Mind as a user ambassador. I feel grateful to be able to contribute to such an exciting project which brings all different faiths, spiritualities and communities together under one banner. ”

**Craig Fallis**  
SIM ambassador



**Our thanks** go to all the speakers, conference participants, organisers, hosts, projects and also the stall holders which included VAC (Voluntary Action Calderdale), West Yorkshire Police, Creative Minds, Saathi/Locorum Social Enterprise, Viper, Nurture Development Ltd, Near Neighbours and particularly IMWS, Al Hikmah Centre, Chairman, Saied Laher for the hospitality and warmth they showed us.

Workshop photographs from the day used by kind permission of John Popham, digital storyteller: [www.johnpopham.com](http://www.johnpopham.com)

