Creating magic

Harnessing the power of parent/carer peer support

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About us

Charlie Waller was a strong, funny, popular, good-looking and kind young man, with a close and loving family. To the outside world, he had everything to live for. Yet in 1997, at the age of 28, Charlie took his own life. He was suffering from depression.

In response to this tragedy, his family founded The Charlie Waller Trust, to open up the conversation around depression, and to ensure that young people are able to understand and look after their mental health and to spot the signs in others.

Charlie sits at the heart of our story, our vision and our purpose.
Rollercoaster Parent Support Model County Durham
Supporting parents to support children & young people with emotional and mental health issues
Parent Led, Professionally Supported

Support Groups
- 2 per month
- CAMHS partnership
- Multi-agency input

Advisory Work
- Parent voice
- Service developments & improvements
- Local & National

Digital Support
- E-Network
- Facebook-closed & open group
- Advice, information & signposting

Training
- Parent training around mental health issues
- Peer support training
- Signposting to E-learning
- Workforce training
Journey in parent/carer support

The journey from needing support to supporting others
PLACE Network

Always a place for parents and carers in CYPMH

Share learning, experience and identify models of good practice and any gaps in this area

- Meet virtually on a monthly basis
- Peer support/reflective practice sessions
- Monthly Drop-ins

https://charliewaller.org/parent-support/
Making the Vision Happen!
Parent Carer Peer Support (PCPS) Training

- What parents/carers want and need - Focus groups
- CYPMH and adult models of peer support - are they different?
- Adapted competencies developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health for adult peer support workers
- Agreed values and ethos of parent/carer peer support training
- 8 day training course - 20 PCPS taking part + supervisor training
- MindEd-e-learning pathways, evaluation Centre for Mental Health

Calm Connections
Parents of Revolution
Mental Health Support Teams Bradford
Fresh+ Group
Breathe support Harrow
Parental Minds
CAMHS Network

Derby CAMHS
PEGIS
Rollercoaster
Parent Council National CYPMH Task Force
Parents Voices in Wales
Central NW London Foundation Trust
HOPE Project
Define Fine

North East & North West CYP IAPT
Collaboratives
Holding Space
Platform, Wales
Parent-Carer Support Group Saddleworth
And from the national perspective ......

- Rising need and demand by children and young people, with parents and carers seeking help
- Heroic efforts by all parts of the CYPMH system including health, social, education and VCSE to meet demand but access remains an issue
- Workforce is a rate limiting factor to expansion
- Benefits of lived experience workforce, outcomes, delivery and career entry in so many settings – Family Hubs, CYPMHS
- Health Education England sees the huge potential benefit of lived experience practitioners with appropriate support
- The action learning will inform future plans in England
Parent Carer Peer Support Role

• 1-1 peer support via telephone, messenger or Facebook
• Coordinating parent/carer support groups (face to face & digital)
• Help families navigate CYPMH and community services and systems
• Work in partnership with CYPMH services to arrange and coordinate a wide range of parent advisory work
• Co-facilitate parent/carer training sessions alongside CYPMH professionals
What is possible-one to one Peer Support

- 1 x 16 hour week post (Band 4 NHS)
- **1173** one to ones Jan 21- Jan 22
- **264** individuals
- Responsive, flexible, needs led & lived experience

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Very good, understood, validated

Got right support

You have given us as a family so much support knowledge and understanding. I don’t know where we would be now without your help.

It’s a life line I can honestly say the peer supporter is brilliant - she listens, is very supportive.
“Several years ago, my daughter was struggling with her mental health the impact on our family was huge. I felt lost, alone and totally out of my depth. I had to give up work as she was unable to access school, I lost me. I joined a support group and started volunteering to help - it was a lifeline. Fast forward to now- my daughter is in a much better place; family life is back again. I work as a Parent Peer Supporter, and I cannot begin to describe how proud I am to be helping and supporting families who are struggling just like I had. I’ve come full circle from needing support to supporting others and along the way I found me again”

Parent Peer Supporter
What do children and young people think?

“The group has and continues to have a positive impact on me, mum and our relationship. Before my mum began attending these groups I felt like she didn’t understand my difficulties, which left me feeling less able to talk openly about issues I was having. My mum has a much better understanding of what is going on and feels she is understanding me more which makes me feel more listened too, understood and less alone.”
Young person

“It makes me feel better that you go to the group Mam, I’m pleased you are getting support, I know how hard it is for you”
Young Person

“The training has been such a vital tool in my recovery, without me even knowing it! It gave my mum tools to help me when I needed it”.
Young person
I see parents come into the support groups feeling hopeless and ‘broken’; after an hour or so of receiving the support of other parents who can offer their own knowledge and experience, parents leave the group with (in their words) a weight lifted from their shoulders, renewed hope and direction and strength to continue managing their challenges.

They work with parents with some of the most complex difficulties, often both in what their children are experiencing, but also the personal difficulties of the parents. The skills, experience and wealth of knowledge the peer supporters offer other parents in negotiating services for their children and accessing support for themselves is remarkable.

Community Matron
Building the Evidence

Over 80% agreed that a parent/carer peer support service knew how to help with their problems or were working together to help with their problems.

94% of parents agreed that “if a friend needed similar help, I would recommend that they use Rollercoaster”

https://charliewaller.org/parent-peer-support-workers/rollercoaster-evaluation-briefing-paper

Training-formal Evaluation- Centre for Mental Health

Testing outcome measures with PLACE Network members

I can remember one night, being outside of a hospital at 3 o’clock in the morning, feeling wretched...and I can remember putting a post on [Facebook closed group], and [name] straightaway inboxed me, one of the members, and so all of a sudden, I wasn’t alone...On those darkest of times, having somebody there, it’s magic”

Parent interview