Bristol mental health charity Self Injury Support begins oral history project, Women Listening To Women

Wednesday 2 June, 2021

Self Injury Support has been awarded £84,300 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to create an oral history archive of pioneering local charity Bristol Crisis Service for Women.

The project began and then abruptly stopped last year when the Covid 19 pandemic hit. It is now in full swing, however, with 10 volunteers interviewing the local women who set up the Bristol Crisis Service for Women as a feminist collective in the mid-1980s.

The interviews are being carried out remotely, using podcasting software, to keep volunteers and interviewees, some of whom are now in their 70s and 80s, safe.

Project worker Rosie Wild said: “Doing oral history during a pandemic has been quite a challenge, but it’s forced us to learn new computer skills and find creative solutions. We are now really keen to hear from women who worked and volunteered at Bristol Crisis Service for Women from 1986 onwards – come and tell us your story.”

The funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will pay for a=a permanent exhibition at the Glenside Museum in Fishponds, as well as pamphlets on the history of women’s mental health activism, a history website and a short film about Bristol Crisis Service for Women. All the interviews will be deposited at the Bishopsgate Institute in London to become part of a national archive of women’s mental health activism.

Bristol Crisis Service for women was set up in 1986 as a feminist collective. It became a registered charity in 1988 when it opened its first helpline for women in distress. Staffed entirely by volunteers, the charity’s motto was “women listening to women”. Offering peer-led non-judgmental helplines for distressed women, BCSW used what it learned from its callers and wider research to produce a series of groundbreaking guides on self injury. Awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in 2010, BCSW changed its name to Self Injury Support in 2014 to better reflect that it had become a national service.

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About Self Injury Support

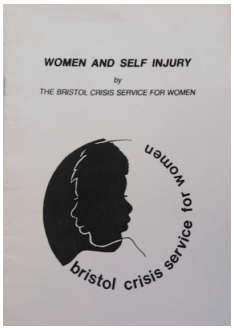
Self Injury Support is the mental health charity for those who use self harm. They offer free, non-judgemental, confidential support services via telephone, text, email and webchat, and experience-led self-help resources in several different languages. They also give expert advice to family and friends of those who self harm, as well as healthcare professionals. They have 30 years’ expertise in training around self harm and regularly deliver courses to professionals and individuals.

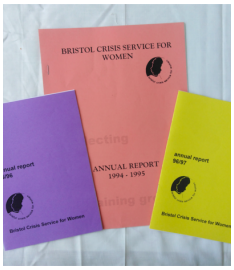
Registered charity no: 1092299

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