

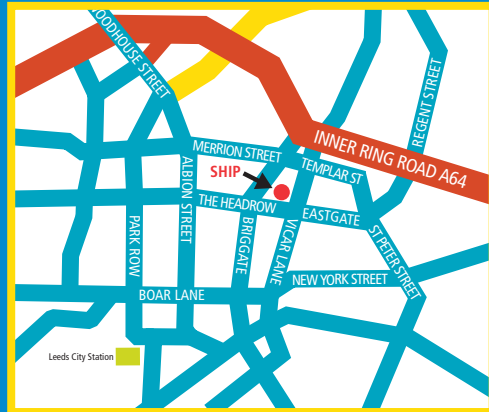
How To Find Us

Self Help Initiatives Project
3rd Floor, 6/8 The Headrow, Leeds LS1 6PT
(Opposite the Vine & Three Legs Pubs)

t: 0113 245 5151

e: ship@leedsmind.org.uk

w: www.selfhelpleeds.org.uk



Buses

SHIP is accessible by all buses that come into the city centre.

Train

Leeds City Station is 10 minutes walk away

Access

Access into the building is level via a push button entry system. There is a small lift which a small wheelchair will fit into.

We are based on the third and fourth floors. There is no disabled toilet in the building and the normal toilets are between floors so require people to negotiate 11 steps downwards or 5 steps upwards from the second floor.

Further copies of this leaflet are available online from www.selfhelpleeds.org.uk

A large print version of this leaflet is available on-line at www.leedsmind.org.uk

www.mentalhealthleeds.info
LEEDS MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORY ... on-line

Self Help Initiatives Project

Helping people to help themselves

a Leeds Mind project



For better
mental health



Our philosophy

We believe that individuals with mental health problems are experts in their own distress and recovery.

We seek to draw from a person's own strength and solutions to encourage each individual to take control of their life and to increase their self-esteem and self-worth in a safe, supportive environment.

By maintaining people's rights to safety, hope and respect, we strive to reduce the sense of isolation and vulnerability that many people feel. We aim to provide a forum to explore who we are and to look at our successes at a time when our self-esteem may be low.

We are a person-centred service and we encourage participation in the direction of the project. Facilitation of the groups is by people who have experienced mental health problems and /or emotional distress and believe in the power of self-help to facilitate growth and the ability to cope with stress and change.

Project



The Self Help Initiatives Project is made up of groups that are structured using the following core ground rules:

- It's ok not to take part
- It's ok to leave and come back
- It's ok to make mistakes
- What's said in the room, stays in the room
- Try to speak from the 'I' – for example 'I feel sad'
- Members are encouraged to share personal experiences rather than give unsolicited advice

What do we do?

SHIP provides support and personal development opportunities for anyone in the Leeds area who is experiencing self-defined emotional distress / mental health problems.

On-going support groups

By sharing experiences in an accepting, non-judgmental and non-advice giving environment, these groups provide members with an opportunity to come to terms with, and find their own solutions to, issues that are affecting them. The emphasis of the groups is on mutual respect, sharing and choice. Members choose for themselves how much they want to share and how for long they want to attend. Some people come to work on one particular issue, others come for longer term support.

Creative groups and workshops

These groups and workshops (including creative writing) encourage members to use creativity as a form of self-therapy, rather than purely as a distraction.

Personal development courses and workshops

These courses and workshops provide an opportunity for a more in depth look at confidence building, self-esteem, stress and anxiety management and assertiveness. The courses run for 6–12 weeks and are repeated throughout the year. We also run a range of 1–day workshops.

Training courses and workshops

These courses and workshops are for workers, carers and service users (either as existing members of self-help groups and people new to self-help) who want to learn and practise facilitation skills. These courses and workshops also look at the role of self-help and empowerment in working with, and supporting people with mental health problems.

How groups help people to help themselves

Through its programme of group-work activities, SHIP provides a safe environment for members to:

- Be with and relate to other people
- Develop support networks and strategies
- Ask and address questions
- Discover emotionally-healthy ways of living
- Look at positives and strengths as well as difficulties
- Explore personal alternatives for change and engage in problem solving
- Find direction and motivation
- Develop creativity and confidence
- Experience meaningful support through a process of sharing and listening (rather than instruction or advice giving)

Below are some of the words used by SHIP members (a term we prefer to 'users') in answer to the question "What does SHIP mean to me?"



What is self-help?

Self-help involves taking personal responsibility for our lives, feelings and mental health recovery. SHIP can offer emotional support to any individual wishing to embark upon dealing with the strong feelings brought up by the process of therapeutic healing. It is not about being left simply to do it alone but, with mutual support, through the groups we can facilitate a process which will allow individuals to move forward at their own pace.

If someone asks for help and support directly then we will explain the various choices of support available. SHIP does not make the choice for any individual, we allow the person themselves to come to that decision. We view this as an essential part of allowing people to take back control in their lives, particularly if they feel, or have felt powerless. Through our own experiences, if someone is forced to come to SHIP before they are ready, because of the needs of others telling them what they should do, this can undermine the person's confidence and self-esteem.

We encourage people to self-refer rather than someone ring on their behalf, no matter how difficult this may seem for that person. Sometimes we may feel pressured and automatically follow our perception of what others are wishing or compelling us to do (rather than choosing for ourselves). Our experience at SHIP is that doing this can contribute significantly to our emotional distress. The person has to be ready themselves to take that first 'big' step and ask for help. It is what the Self Help Initiatives Project evolves around, a person being able to ask or reach out for help.

We as a Project believe that we all have the ability within ourselves to problem solve and find our own solutions. This may require asking directly for help / support from others (rather than expect it or manipulate in order to be rescued). Taking back control of problem solving allows us to build our self-esteem and increase our confidence. Others may be telling us that we cannot make a decision and we lose confidence in our ability to do so. →

Self-help with mutual support from others around us is a process of personal growth. The project encourages its members to take work on their own initiative be it as a group facilitator or eventually through structured volunteering. All members of the project are invited to take ownership of SHIP through active involvement and by contributions towards the running of the groups. All the groups at SHIP have started through the ideas of group members.

The project is a community resource for facilitating the growth and spread of self-help groups. SHIP is made up of many individuals who share their skills, knowledge and above all their lived experiences of emotional distress. In particular sharing is encouraged within the groups, then through attending the Steering Group. We want people to receive support first without feeling they have to suddenly give it back.



Groups and training run from or available at SHIP

General support groups

These groups provide a safe space in which individuals can talk about their experiences with the support of others who have personal experiences of similar issues. The types of issues discussed in the group include relationships, employment, medical issues, childhood experiences, coping with loss, depression, anxiety. These groups allow individuals to develop their own coping and problem solving strategies, to set their own (self-defined) recovery goals and to participate and make progress at their own chosen pace.

Reach-out Group

This is a self-help group, for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and people questioning their sexuality, who are experiencing emotional distress.

Men's Group

A personal development group for men who have previous experience in other SHIP self-help groups. We explore issues around masculinity and confidence using action methods, sharing, play, movement, drums, voice and art.

Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse group

The group offers support to men who have experienced child sexual abuse by men or women, incest, male rape or sexual assault. The topics normally discussed cover the consequences of the abuse and how we feel now. These include nightmares, lack of sleep, disassociation, abandonment, flashbacks, lack of support, grief, guilt, anger, trust, sex and body issues. Feelings are expressed, people are listened to and not judged.

Support Group for people who self-harm (Trust Group)

This group is a supportive space for anyone who harms themselves in any way, or who has harmed themselves in the past. We don't talk about the mechanics of self-harm but we do talk about what it means to us. We support each other around a large range of issues including difficulty with relationships or family, problems with food, stress at work, illness, and the aftermath of rape or childhood abuse.

Child Within Group

The child within is the creative, emotional, spontaneous, courageous, inquisitive, loving part of our selves that has been squashed by our life experiences. This group is about exploring the way our childhood experiences affect the way we behave in our everyday lives. This is done by using group work, games, exercises, role play, and discussion. (People who join have to have been involved in personal development groups.)

One in Four Theatre Company

One in Four advocates for people with direct experience of the mental health services. It uses theatre techniques, including improvisation and interactive forum theatre, to challenge low expectations and reduce the social stigma surrounding mental health. One in Four provides creative and stimulating opportunities through drama training, workshops, outreach activities and public performances. Drawing on members' own experiences, the company uses theatre to combat the negative images and messages associated with mental ill health.

Survivors of Abuse Forum

This group looks at ways forward for adult survivors of childhood abuse. It looks at the needs of survivors and how to get those needs met. Anyone is welcome who feels they can contribute practical support for Survivors in and around the Leeds area.

Women's Group

A weekly self-help group. It is a safe space for women to explore issues such as relationship difficulties. We share our experiences and support each other to develop coping strategies.

SHIP Steering Group

The Steering Group is a space where members of SHIP groups can have their say to influence the direction of **their** project. The group offers SHIP members a chance to meet people from different groups and explore ideas/ proposals for new groups and initiatives.



SHIP also runs courses and one day training workshops several times a year (advertised separately). These are:

Confidence Building/Advanced Confidence Building

SHIP has developed an effective structure for its confidence building courses. Our approach is to offer courses that are person /student centred and which include a flexible 'menu' of personal development topics. Organisations / groups / individuals are encouraged to 'home-in' on those topics or issues relevant to their particular needs. We are in a position to provide courses (and one-day workshops) in respect of the following:

- **Confidence-building (all, or a combination of the below).**
- **Introduction to confidence and self-esteem**
- **Stress management**
- **Assertiveness**
- **Communication skills**
- **Anxiety / panic attacks**
- **Anger**

Training Workshops

The workshops are run as self-help confidence-building groups and the learning process draws on individuals' experiences and feelings. They include workshops relating to:

- **Creativity**
- **Anxiety, panic attacks**
- **Working with survivors of abuse**
- **Empowerment**
- **The child within**
- **Men's issues**

Training in Groupwork Facilitation

Training underpins and informs all SHIP'S groupwork.

We can only provide a limited number of groups ourselves. We provide facilitator training for others so they can understand the self-help model to enable them to set up groups of their own in the community.

Why we feel training/peer supervision is important:

There are only so many groups we can run and it is important to learn how to help without being drawn in. It demonstrates techniques to help people cope with their distress and to enable good practice. It offers people the opportunity to be with others who want to learn /improve their skills and helps develop our confidence with running a group. It allows people to be a member, not a leader, for a while in which time we can look at our blind spots and difficulties.

These are the areas we aim to cover in the facilitator training:

- **Introduction to self-help and empowerment**
- **Problems that come with helping (drama triangle)**
- **Models of training and facilitation**
- **The importance of structure & ground rules – the role of permission in empowerment**
- **Problem solving – separating issues from people**
- **Perception & dichotomies**
- **Self-assessment & positive feedback**
- **Coping strategies & looking after ourselves**
- **Confidence & self-esteem**
- **Stress – the effects of expectations and normality**
- **Assertiveness**
- **Communication skills**
- **Sharing of experiences – creating empathy not sympathy**

What is SHIP?

SHIP is...

a user-led voluntary organisation – a project of Leeds Mind.



entirely run by, and on behalf of, individuals who are experiencing (or have experienced) some form of self-defined emotional distress.



open to individuals (ie group members) at certain advertised times when their groups, etc, are running.



accessed by self-referral (users self-define their distress and regardless of any diagnosis decide when they need and access support).



SHIP is not...

part of statutory services



run (or managed) by doctors, professional therapists or counsellors etc.



a crisis centre or 24/7 'rescue agency'
a 'drop-in' or 'day centre' type project.
an advice or advocacy project.



somewhere people are sent only when a doctor considers them ill enough (or have suffered long enough) to warrant some form of 'treatment'.



SHIP is...

a groupwork project.



a space in which group members agree through personal choice (and negotiation) to certain personal/collective responsibilities and entitlements (as contained in group ground rules).



a space in which all activities (groupwork, training, volunteering, employment etc) are recovery oriented.



SHIP is not...

a one-to-one counselling agency.



somewhere 'ill' people spend their time being looked after by professionals or carers (Day Hospital or Treatment Units)



A project that reinforces the belief that people cannot recover from mental health difficulties, even if they have received a diagnosis of a serious and enduring mental illness.



What SHIP offers its members

- The chance to take control of their own recovery process rather than being told what to do.
- The opportunity to access support through the group work programme.
- The opportunity to access training and education through the group work programme.
- The scope to influence and direct the development of the project through being part of the steering group.

What SHIP requires of its members

- Each member follows and respects the ground rules of the project.
- Each member takes responsibility for their own feelings, actions and recovery.
- Each member is willing to listen to others as well as share their own emotional distress.
- Each member remembers that SHIP is not a replacement for hospital.
- Each member must be willing to ask for help and not expect others to rescue them.



How to join

Contact the SHIP office on: 0113 245 5151

to arrange an appointment with the facilitator of the group you wish to join.

SHIP operates mainly through part-time / volunteer resources, so an answerphone operates when no-one is available to answer your call. Please leave a message and a member of the team will get back in touch with you.

Access to the project is by self-referral, so we prefer, where possible, to speak to the person who needs support.

SHIP operates on a needs-led non-profit basis. At present, the available funding allows SHIP to run its groupwork programme without insistence on fees. The project welcomes contributions (at a level that is affordable and reasonable) from members towards the running costs of groups and activities.

SHIP believes that people with mental health problems are 'experts' in their own distress. Groups are facilitated by individuals who have experienced emotional distress/mental health problems.

SHIP is a project of Leeds Mind, in partnership with Leeds PCT.

Leeds Mind supports people with mental health problems in a variety of ways. We value the experience and expertise of the people who use our services and we work creatively together on their journey of recovery.

We believe everybody has mental health needs and everyone can recover from mental health problems.

Leeds Mind is affiliated to Mind (The National Association for Mental Health) www.mind.org.uk

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