



# SDCAS NEWSLETTER

Southwark Day Centre  
for Asylum Seekers

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29/11/2011

## Changes in SDCAS

We've seen some changes to the SDCAS team over the last few months. Since the last issue of SDCAS' newsletter we have sadly said goodbye to EVS volunteer Maria Kozlowska and locum Crossway Day Centre Worker Frank Pleske. Thanks to both for all their efforts and contributions, they will be missed.

We would also like to welcome some new faces to the team. Thanks to funding from Trust for London we have been able to appointment a Counselling Psychologist, Marlene Cauchi. Marlene joined the organisation in August and is now offering a counselling service to SDCAS clients. More information on this great new service can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Dorota Grzegorek, our new fulltime EVS volunteer, started in September and is on placement for a year. She will be in all three centres and the office. Dorota will also be compiling SDCAS newsletters so if you have any contributions for future issues let her know!

Lastly Martha Singh Jennings, SDCAS Administrator has been appointed Day

Centre Worker at Crossway. Martha is already a familiar face at Crossway as she has been volunteering there for two and a half years.

## Funding Update

SDCAS would like to thank The Cicely Northcote Trust and The Wakefield and Tetley Trust for the funding we received for our Crossway day centre. We would also like to thank local resident and Copleston Centre user Ruth for organising a fundraising lunch event at her home in aid of SDCAS.

All contributions are welcome and help towards keeping the centres open.

## Robes Project

During October we were lucky enough to have Crispin and Olivia from the Robes project visit us at Peckham Settlement. Since this first meeting we have referred two clients onto the project, which provides shelter in a series of churches over the winter period. We are extremely excited about this new relationship and how it will help our homeless clients, now and in the future.

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### Upcoming Events

You are warmly invited to a concert at Copleston Centre on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2012 (Copleston Road, SE15 4AN) at 7.30pm. Several professional ensembles will present classical pieces of music. All proceeds from the concert will go to SDCAS. Tickets will cost £8. For more information please visit [www.sdcas.org.uk](http://www.sdcas.org.uk) or contact Martha on 020 7 7 3 2 0 5 0 5, [events@sdcas.org.uk](mailto:events@sdcas.org.uk).

Encouraged by the success of the last Parenting Course, we are planning another "Being a Parent" course in February. The course will consist of 8 sessions, each lasting 2 hours. If you are interested please let Vanessa know!

We are holding an Away Day for staff and volunteers on Tuesday 14th February 2012 at Princess Diana Memorial. The event will be a chance to meet up and discuss the organisation and its future.

## Centres **CLOSED** for Christmas

Please keep in mind that our centres are closed over the Christmas period.

The **last day** is on Thursday **15<sup>th</sup> December** at Crossway. The **first day** is on Tuesday **3<sup>rd</sup> January** at Copleston.

### Crisis at Christmas

Open 23—30 December 2011  
Drop in at one of 5 day centre.  
0844 251 0111

### Refugee Council

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays:  
9.30am – 1pm and 2 – 5pm,

Wednesdays 2-5pm.

Call 0808 808 2255 or 0808 808 2259 (text phone)

### Bail for Immigration Detainees

020 7247 3590 (please call between 10—12 Monday to Thursday - outside of these times leave a message)

## New Counselling Service at the SDCAS

SDCAS has recently introduced a **new counselling service** for asylum-seekers and refugees.

Many factors influence our mental health, especially as a refugee or an asylum seeker. It is not only about what might have happened to us and to our communities, but also about:

- the loss and separation we endured
- the guilt we feel about surviving
- the loss of our familiar environment
- adapting to a new way of life
- learning new languages

If we do not seek appropriate help, we may be left with invisible wounds or many unanswered questions, as well as practical problems in managing our day to day lives.

### What is Counselling

Counselling is:

- talking to someone who is very good at listening and who cares
- talking about important things about the past or from now
- help with things that make you feel upset
- help with making your own decisions
- help with understanding your life

A counselling psychologist will:

- be interested in everything that you say
- not tell people what you say unless you are in very bad danger
- meet with you regularly, until you want to stop

A counselling psychologist is:

- not a doctor, nor the police, nor a social worker, nor the Home Office
- not able to give you money

- not usually able to help a lot with practical things like benefits or housing

Seeing a counselling psychologist at the Centre is:

- free
- helpful
- your decision—you do not have to come to counselling

### How does it work?

You will meet the counselling psychologist:

- every week
- for 50 minutes
- at the same time and same day
- at one of the Centres
- for 6 to 24 sessions – you will decide this with the counselling psychologist

If you feel that counselling could be helpful for you, please contact any member of staff or a volunteer at any of the Centres.

## What we've been up to recently

### To Be or Not to Be

In October the Young Vic Theatre invited SDCAS staff and clients to attend the production of William Shakespeare's play "The Tragic History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark".

Set in the 14th Century the play recounts how Prince Hamlet exacts revenge on his uncle Claudius for murdering his father the old King Hamlet, marrying his mother Gertrude and becoming king.

A number of staff and clients took up this opportunity and on a chilly winter's evening met at the Young Vic Theatre situated a few hundred metres from Waterloo station. The play is written and performed in Elizabethan English and lasted a marathon 3 hours and 30 minutes. The majority of attendees managed to sit through the highly paced energetic performance and commented afterwards how easy it was to follow and understand the basic premise of the story.

The night on the whole was a tremendous success in which the performances of the lead actors were highly praised and future opportunities to get together and attend similar events outside the centres were welcomed.

Future trips are being arranged and we welcome all to attend and experience activities London and in particular Southwark has to offer. We'll also be happy to hear any suggestions you have on future trips.

## What we've been up to recently (continued)

### History of Beauty Workshop

In October several clients from SDCAS were invited by Museum of London to discover the History of Beauty. During the workshop we were given interesting information on how the way people clean themselves has changed throughout the centuries. For example, Romans used olive oil instead of water

for bathing and in the Tudor period people did not bathe regularly. The workshop was lead by Sally Pointer who did a short presentation on different kinds of soap. After that she explained how to make our own bar of soap. One of our clients shared with other participants knowledge of how her mother prepares soap in Africa using coconut oil and palm oil. Later, we were given different types of

ingredients, such as marigold, rose and lavender; sandalwood and geranium oils and oats. We started making our soaps by grating castile soap, then each of us added our chosen ingredients and made particular shapes. Our own bars of soap were ready!

Thanks a lot to Kirsty from Museum of London for inviting us for such enjoyable workshop.

## Activities at SDCAS

### English Classes

Teaching English is an important part of the services that SDCAS provides: English is the language of the United Kingdom (as well as being probably the most widely spoken international language in the world today), and those who are resident in Britain need to be able to speak, understand and write it.

English lessons take place at all three London centres (Copleston Centre; Peckham Settlement; Crossway Centre) in the afternoons from 2-4. We teach students how to speak and understand English, and write it. Conversation, vocabulary and grammar are all important in our lessons. We also offer practical help in things like writing application forms.

Most of the English teachers are native English speakers (like myself), or people with a languages background. Many of us are specifically trained to teach English, and we give our time as volun-

teers to teach the language.

For me it is always an interesting experience to meet people from other cultures and societies. Many of the people who come to SDCAS have experienced war and other traumatic events in their own countries and have an important story of their own to tell.

In addition to learning English, I think it is important that those who go to English lessons practise and hear the language being spoken outside lessons as much as possible (for example by speaking English to other asylum seekers, by going to see theatre and films in London or taking part in voluntary activities).

Shouvik Datta  
Volunteer ESOL Teacher at SDCAS

### Women's Dance Movement Therapy Group Tuesdays 2 -3 pm

This body based practice uses dance and movement to promote recovery, wellness and relaxation. It is a supportive environment in

which dances can be made together and stories can be shared. The group is open to all female SDCAS clients and is also open to women who would prefer to work from a chair.

### Men's Body Work Support Group Tuesdays 3.30 – 4.30pm

The work uses body based movement practice, yoga and relaxation techniques to promote self awareness and wellbeing. It can be useful for managing anxiety, stress and depression, for promoting recovery and for developing coping strategies. The group is for male clients of SDCAS .

Both groups are run by Claire Burrell who is a registered Dance Movement Psychotherapist and are funded by the Creative Therapies Project at the Copleston Centre.

It is ok to come along and try out a session and Claire is happy to talk to anyone who has any questions. about the groups on a Tuesday at Copleston Centre.

**Many thanks to contributors: Dorota, Pauline, Martha, Marlene, Maya, Claire, Beatrice, Shouvik & Ahmed.**

## Coping at Christmas

For many, Christmas is a time of joy and celebration with friends and family but for others it may be a time of sadness or anxiety caused by the loss or illness of a loved one, stress, financial hardship or pressure. It is important to remember to look after your own mental well-being and that of others.

Family issues can add to the stress of Christmas. Not only are there many domestic tasks but also spending concentrated periods of time with family members can increase the risk of conflict.

Christmas can also leave people feeling even more alone and isolated from their family and friends.

Loneliness and isolation are particular issues at Christmas. NHS Choices says that, as Christmas is associated with friends and family, it can be difficult for those on their own to avoid feeling lonely at this time. In fact, for people

who are on their own Christmas can be the loneliest time of the year. A sense of isolation can be felt much more acutely when the rest of the population appears to be celebrating and having a good time. In particular, Christmas can be a sad and nostalgic time, when the loss or distance from family members may become especially painful (Curtis, 2002).

### Advice for people spending Christmas alone:

Keep busy - try to stop Christmas taking over your life and make time for enjoyable activities, such as reading, country walks and going to the cinema.

Ask for help - don't be afraid to ask for help or accept it

Be a volunteer - many charities and organisations need help at Christmas and you could spend a few hours working as a volunteer.

Take some physical exercise

- this reduces stress and enhances mood. Just getting off the sofa and getting outside should improve mood.

Eat and drink healthily - traditional Christmas food and drink can be excessive and lead to lethargy. Healthy eating with plenty of fruit and vegetables can lift mood significantly.

Be sensible around alcohol - alcohol can act as a depressant

Be with people - keep communicating and interacting, and perhaps tell those you trust how you are feeling. See whether there is a good day or time to visit friends or relatives if you crave company.

Find a listening ear - people who are lonely can find it helpful to speak to someone removed from their situation. Some organisations, such as Mind or the Samaritans, have befriending services and offer

confidential support by telephone.

### Useful telephone helplines include:

- Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90
- Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87
- NHS 24: 08454 24 24 24
- NHS Helpline: 0800 22 44 88

### Other useful helplines are:

Domestic Abuse helpline: 0800 027 1234

Childline: 0800 1111

Parentline: 0808 800 2222

Source: NHS Choices/ Mind (2008)

### Sources:

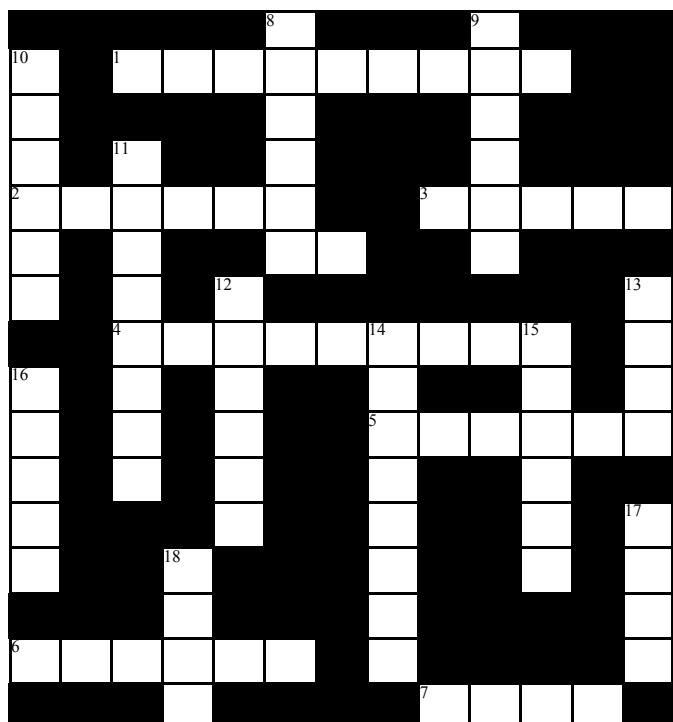
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### Crossword: European Capital Cities



### Across:

1. Holland
2. Germany
3. France
4. Sweden
5. UK
6. Czech Republic
7. Italy

### Down:

8. Greece
9. Poland
10. Portugal
11. Belgium
12. Russia
13. Switzerland
14. Finland
15. Spain
16. Bulgaria
17. Norway
18. Estonia