

APEX BIO's to be uploaded to the website:

### **Ash Mowat**

My name is Ash and I've recently been warmly welcomed to join APEX. I've both lived and live experience of mental illness and have accessed both NHS and third sector psychology, counselling and therapies, with a perspective of what works well and where things could improve. I'm keen to bring my voice, insights and constructive enthusiasm to help shape best practice in the design and delivery of treatments, from a person-centred focus. I volunteer also in peer support for Health in Mind, on the NHS Lothian Arts Therapy Empowerment Group, with the University of Edinburgh Centre for Research (Heritage) Collections. I am also passionate about the role of arts and creativity in the wellbeing and recovery in everyone's mental health.

### **Kirsten Mutch**

I got involved with APEX when it was first formed following the difficulties my autistic daughter was having with psychology and accessing help for her mental health issues. I was keen to share her bad experiences and the lack of understanding of autism with the clinical psychology programme. Thankfully she has since received positive psychology experiences and this has enabled me to talk to the trainees about how to have successful therapy sessions with autistic adults.

I am a Trustee of the charity Pasda that supports families with autistic adults. Through this role I am involved with supporting other carers and raising understanding of autism in adults to improve the quality of life for autistic adults and their families.

My background is in nursing and I have been a volunteer with the cancer charity CLIC Sargent for 17 years - after my youngest son recovered from treatment for leukaemia. I have also worked as a volunteer with a postnatal depression charity as a creche worker and with a dementia singing group. In addition to my caring role I run my daughter's online art business and I volunteer at my local church where I am a trustee, my main roles being Junior church leader and a lunch club coordinator.

I enjoy being a member of APEX and feel that we are making a positive contribution to ensuring that the training reflects the views of people with experience of mental health difficulties. We have been successful in bringing about several changes to the recruitment and training and have opportunities to speak to the trainees which they find extremely helpful. This year most of us took part in assessing the interpersonal task section of the recruitment interviews following two training sessions. I would encourage you to join APEX as we really need more members and with a wider range of experiences of mental health issues to give the trainees a better insight into all aspects of mental and physical health. I am sure you would find volunteering with us interesting, enjoyable and rewarding.

### **Dan Jackson**

Hello,

I'm Dan one APEX's Experts by Experience. Over the last 3 years I have had to use various mental health services both in Edinburgh and in England. I enjoy the different perspectives on the mental

health service I gain from working with APEX. The teaching events particularly give me a chance to reflect on my own condition in a way that is hopefully useful to future clinical psychologists as well.

### **Ellie Rae**

My name is Ellie and I recently joined APEX after hearing about it through the university of Edinburgh website. I'm an undergraduate psychology student and hope to train as a clinical psychologist in the future. I have accessed both child and adult mental health services and hope to use my experience to improve the delivery of clinical support.

### **Robert Cook**

My name is Robert but often go by Rob. It's much more informal.

I joined APEX in March 2022 through the NHS Tayside Public Partners programme, where members of the public who have experience using NHS services or will do in the future, are invited to input and influence the service provision of the NHS and how it can be improved.

I have lived experience of mental health problems and indeed continue to do. Every day is a struggle to overcome obstacles that can derail you in your daily life. I have experienced heavy disturbing psychological trauma most of my life at the hands of those I implicitly trusted, which has affected my interaction with others to this day. I have used NHS Adult Psychological services, but have not received any official diagnosis about my mental health.

I first became interested in Mental Health after watching a film called "Resilience" about the impact of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). It opened my eyes. Reading "The Spirit Level" by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett made me aware of the struggle people face in life to be accepted as part of society as a whole.

I volunteer with Wellbeing Works in Dundee, formerly Dundee Association for Mental Health as a peer volunteer working with vulnerable adults in group activities designed to instil confidence and self-esteem in individuals. This helps me to receive the same support I can give, a sort of mutual understanding and acceptance, which is the essence of Peer Support. I completed a year with the NHS as a Peer Support Volunteer as well in a day-care facility for people with mental health problems.

I recently completed a Diploma in Health and Social Care with the Open University and a PDA in Peer Support Mental Health with UHI Perth College which has given me a great deal of insight into the sector and Mental Health in particular. I am a firm believer in ensuring people receive the right support, which is both holistic and self-centred, and that a lot can be done to ensure that the future of the NHS and Psychological services in particular can be placed in the hands of those who are able to provide such a service. People's experiences need validated, not judged.

### **Andrew Love**

I use my lived experience of mental health and experiences of services to help inform and educate

on how we can better adapt some of our practices to the specific needs of individuals. As someone who has experienced countless adversities and incorrect diagnoses over my life time, I have had to work extremely hard in understanding what has been going on with me. I am actively engaged in advocacy projects and I am passionate about person centred support. I believe a lot has been missed with myself from professionals not listening in the right places. I feel purposeful in sharing experiences of trauma and methods for others to heal and feel more complete within themselves. Grateful to be invited to join the Apex team.

**Amy McArthur, Co-convenor:**

I am a clinical psychologist who has worked for many years in adult mental health services, mainly with individuals who have experience of psychosis. I now work as a clinical tutor on the doctorate in clinical psychology programme and in a clinical role, supporting patients and the teams that care for them, in a physical health care setting.

**Tom**

Understanding the position of parents/carers is really important and being able to support trainees with this is very rewarding.  
(Tom, APEX member)