

PPG TALK 15TH SEPTEMBER 2016
"COPING WITH STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION"
A guide to Wellbeing.

We were delighted to welcome JOANNA BAWA, Cognitive Behavioural Therapist who works within the Wellbeing Service. This in turn is part of IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapy) which is a free and confidential short-term psychological support service offered by Manor View Practice.

- About one in four of us in Britain will experience at least one significant mental health problem in any one year.
- One in six of us will be suffering mental health problems at any one time!
- 75 – 90% visits to the GP will be with stress-related ailments.

These may include:

- Headaches – High Blood Pressure – Heart Problems – Skin Problems – Asthma – Arthritis – Diabetes – Mood Disturbances.

Common symptoms may be:

- Worry – Poor Sleep – Low Energy – Restlessness – Irritability – Poor Appetite or Overeating – Poor Memory.
- Feeling Low – Poor Concentration – Lack of Motivation – Feeling Overwhelmed – Stress – Avoiding other people.

Joanna then spoke about What is Available if we have any of these ailments or symptoms, and how we can learn to look after ourselves, getting therapy and when might we need more help?

Firstly we learned what is Meant by :

Stress (an adverse reaction to excess pressures on a person);

Anxiety (Feeling of worry, unease or nervousness about something with an uncertain outcome):

Depression (Always feeling in a low mood, little interest, reduced energy and reduced activity.

She then discussed "What makes us feel so anxious?"

- Maybe going out alone or to busy places.
- Socialising or speaking in a group.
- Work
- Health or physical symptoms.
- Deadlines or expectations (by ourselves or others).

"What makes us low?"

- The ending of a relationship.
- A life event – perhaps a break-in or a divorce.
- Loss of a person – by relocation or by death.
- Unemployment.
- Failing a test or examination – loss, failure, rejection.

"Why are we all so stressed?"

- Maybe it is a difficult economy.
- A difficult social environment.
- Social media.
- Depressing broadcast news/ disasters

As you can see from the above Life has an effect on us all.

So what can we do in these difficult circumstances? We have to understand that there is no single fix. Maybe medications can help settle the underlying biological basis, but personal wellbeing depends on separate, inter-related acts. We should recognise that we do have some choice over how we think and feel.

Joanna offered us 5 ways to Wellbeing:

- ✓ **Connect** – with friends, family, people.
- ✓ **Be Active** – physically – walk, dance, exercise – to the best of your ability.
- ✓ **Take Notice** – look around you and be aware.
- ✓ **Keep Learning** – attend classes, learn a language, how to arrange flowers, anything new.
- ✓ **Give** – do something nice for someone, smile, volunteer.

However for MORE SEVERE or CHRONIC mood disorders including

- Depression and
- Anxiety

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is the therapy of choice, as recommended by NICE. CBT looks at how we think and behave and if we can modify both the outcome should be that we start feeling better. We all have our own way of responding to events and clients learn to recognise obstacles and challenge negative thoughts. We can learn more realistic ways of thinking and behaving (more positive) and also learn to practice these skills.

At the end of her presentation Joanna suggested some other sources of information and help including:

BOOKS www.overcoming.co.uk

WEBSITES www.lltft.co.uk

CHARITIES www.mind.org.uk

Plus modifying our diet, sleep and exercise.

The Wellbeing Team (Single Point of Access) is available on: 0300 777 0707

Or www.hertspartsft.nhs.uk/wellbeing-service

We thanked Joanna for a most informative and interesting evening.

We, the PPG, also thank those patients who arrived for the presentation despite a torrential downpour which started 30 minutes before we were due to start. We hope you felt it was worth it.