

WFWP Watford/UK: Mental Health Today, an Information Afternoon

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Mental health is often talked about in the media. Dealing with mental illness is very challenging for those who suffer from it and for their families. The increase in mental health issues especially among young people is alarming. Young people are bullied on social media, self-harm and even commit suicide. The Watford Bridge of Peace decided to take on the topic and invited some professionals to give us information on the issue and the services available.

On Saturday 4th March 2017, the ladies of the Bridge of Peace and some new guests (over 30 of us) attended an information afternoon. After a brief introduction of the Watford Bridge of Peace, a project of the WFWP, our speakers were presented: Rachel Brown and Bridie McDonald from the Wellbeing Service in partnership with the charity Mind and Christine Gilham from Carers Hertfordshire. Through a powerpoint presentation Rachel and Bridie highlighted some astonishing facts about public mental health such as: 1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental problem in a year, 4 to 10% of people will experience depression in their lifetime and men are more inclined to commit suicide than women - 78% to 22% women. They described the various services available to support those who suffer from mental issues and introduced us to their very helpful website: www.talkwellbeing.co.uk.

Our next speaker was Christine Gilham from Carers Hertfordshire, a charity to support all carers paid and not paid. Christine gave tips to carers on how to take care of themselves and where to find support www.carersinherts.org.uk.

After a break with some refreshments we met again and had round table discussion answering 3 questions: What physical factors can help us keep good mental health? What tips do you have to keep a positive atmosphere in our families and deal with challenging situations? If you have a faith, how has your faith contributed to helping you in time of crisis? The ladies had an interesting exchange of ideas and advice like the importance of exercise, healthy eating and living, the value of being positive and grateful, taking the time to communicate and listen to each other, the significance of belonging to a community, the strength they receive through their faith and more.

Some of the ladies who attended also had one on one conversations with the speakers receiving personal advice for their particular situation. We learned a lot and all were very grateful for this most informative afternoon.

Reported by
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