



Abstract Nr: 230
Internet ID: 544

Type of Presentation: Workshop

Isolation and Alienation for Family Members of Those Experiencing Psychosis- and What Can Help

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Learning Goal:

Having a better understanding of family perspective on psychosis

Abstract Text:

“When psychosis comes to a loved one you soon find out who your real friends are” I’ve heard this so many times from family members. Other relatives can be uncomfortable and confused when this happens and even sometimes question our parenting skills which can cause difficulties and rifts. For some carers, giving up work can lead to loss of income as well as connection with colleagues. All this can lead to feelings of being an ‘Outsider’ with not much common ground to share with people who are living a so-called ‘normal life’.

At times we can find ourselves at a distance from our loved ones who may be terrified by distressing voices or visions and completely change in the way they relate to us.

We frequently feel completely excluded and alienated from mental health services when we seek help and support. Our worry and anxiety about the impact/adverse effects on our loved one by medication and institutionalisation is not recognised or validated.

We often feel very isolated and in despair as very few people understand our situation. I’ve known some family members feel suicidal and beginning to lose all sense of themselves.

It’s when we meet others in the same situation that we can truly feel we’ve found a friend- someone who we know ‘gets it’.

A group of family members in the UK who have knowledge and experience of Open Dialogue have come together with a common cause - campaigning for inclusive family friendly services. Our group is called Open Dialogue Champions and our mission is to bring an Open Dialogue Service to all Mental Health Trusts in the UK. We have been meeting and communicating since August 2018 on a regular basis and are passionate about our endeavour to bring about change.

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**