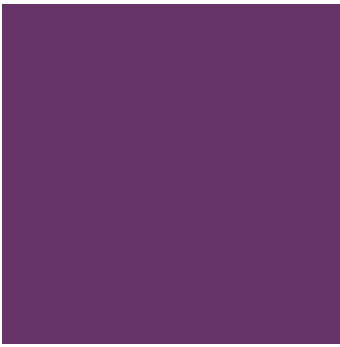


# Bristol & South West Bereavement Through Addiction Group



## 2014/15 Annual Report

The death of a loved one through drug or alcohol addiction can have a devastating impact on the lives of families and friends. The Bristol and SW Bereavement through Addiction Group is working to raise awareness of the problems people are facing and to set up services to help alleviate their suffering.



# BTA Support Group

## Support for Family & Friends

The most key aspect of the work of BTA is the Support Group. It takes place on alternate Wednesday from 7pm at the Bristol Drugs Project in Brunswick Square.

Joan and Paul continue to contribute a lot of time and energy into providing a safe and contained space for family and friends who have lost loved ones as a result of addiction.

The Group is open for people across the South West and has even seen people attend from overseas. There are a core group of attendees and membership continues to grow.

Often telephone support is also given to people prior to them coming into the group setting and many contacts are made via the website.

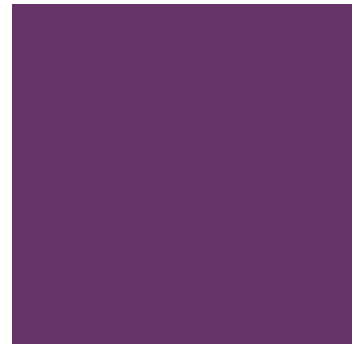
Group members are actively encouraged to express

feelings and support each other. There is a focus on positive movement through the grieving process – always understanding that each person experiences loss in their own way.

We have found that a group setting is a powerful tool for healing. People soon feel safe and are able to express all their feelings – from sadness to anger to laughter – knowing they are safe and that there will always be somebody that can identify.

The Group has helped BTA to achieve some of its core objectives including:

- Dealing with stigma
- Raising awareness
- Improving quality of life



# 4<sup>th</sup> Annual BTA Memorial Event

## St. James Priory, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013

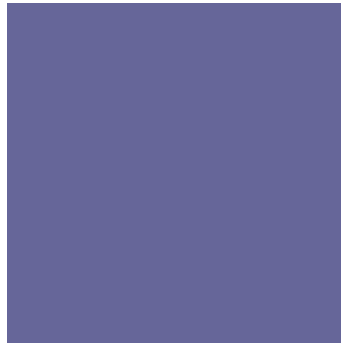
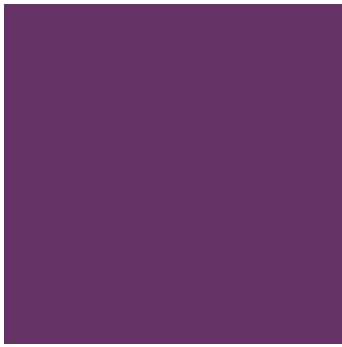
This was our 4<sup>th</sup> Memorial Event and we were grateful to be able to hold the Service in the newly refurbished Church at St. James Priory - many thanks must go to Sue and John Jotcham for their support.

The service built on the success of the previous years event. We were pleased to have the Bristol Voices Choir providing a beautiful vocal backdrop to the whole evening.

Cannon Tim and Paul and Joan facilitated the evening. Many people took to the

stage to play music, dance and read pieces in memory of loved ones.

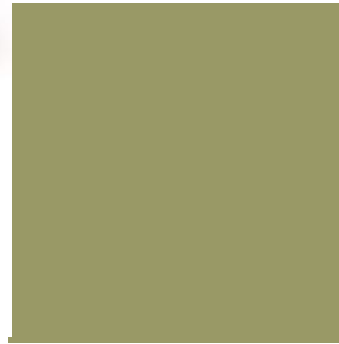
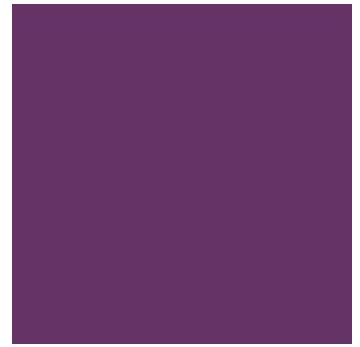
It was a truly moving experience for all present. Planning has already begun for the 2014 event. This started with a full review of the evening to help us identify how we can continue to improve the experience for everybody involved.,



# BSWBTA Charity Status

Since its inception the BSWBTA has survived through the vision of Joan and Paul, supported by group members, Maggie Telfer, Darren McEvoy, Dean Gustar and Dave Bradnock as well as various local and national organisations.

In order to operate in a more organised and professional manner the BSWBTA need to have some financial foundations in place. As such the decision was made to apply for Charity status. With the help of Paddy Nisbet



# Training & Conferences

## **CRUSE TRAINING**

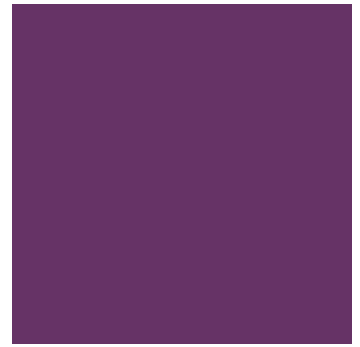
On 3<sup>rd</sup> March Joan and Dean put on a training event for CRUSE. The event was a great success. It was well attended and feedback was positive. Hopefully as well as improving the knowledge and awareness of CRUSE staff to the additional complex factors relating to bereavement through addiction, the event will help to drive up referrals to the BTA support group.

## **DRUGFAM BEREAVEMENT CONFERENCE 2013**

Joan and Paul attended and contributed to the Annual DrugFam conference in October. BTA continue to look to develop relationships and partnership working through such events.

## **POLICE LIASON**

We have had meetings with DCI Will White who is very supportive of our work and we now have a direct link to him and Dave Bradnock Drugs Coordinator.



## Research Project

From September 2012 for 3 years Joan will be working with researchers at the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath in collaboration with addiction studies' researchers from the Universities of Stirling and Glasgow on a research project that is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The research will investigate and raise awareness of the impact on bereaved family members of losing a loved one to drug or alcohol

misuse. To achieve this, the researchers are interviewing 100 bereaved family members and, on the basis of what they say about their experiences, go on to work with addiction and bereavement service providers and users to develop a set of practice guidelines to assist those who work to support this group of bereaved people.

# The Year Ahead & Special Thanks

We have thought about the year ahead and what the BSWBTA want to achieve during the next 12 months



## Fund Raising

With our charitable status in place we now hope to get some financial backing to help achieve the long term objectives of the group.



## Memorial Event

We want to build on previous success and make this year's Memorial Event the best yet



## Develop Partnerships

We've made some great links with other organisations and want to continue to develop these relationships to improve services for all.



Special Thanks to all the people and organisations that have supported the BSWBTA throughout the year – there are too many to name you all.

With love

Joan Hollywood & Paul Craig, Maggie Telfer, Darren McEvoy, Dean Gustar and Dave Bradnock.