

Wimbledon Guild welcomes BBC's In The Mind season

Local welfare charity Wimbledon Guild today welcomes the BBC's decision to highlight mental health issues with a season of programmes devoted to promoting greater awareness of these conditions.

Head of Talking Therapies for Wimbledon Guild, Georgina Hoare, praised comedian, actor, writer and presenter Stephen Fry for his continuing honesty surrounding his own mental health and diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

BBC 1 documentary *The Not So Secret Life of The Manic Depressive: 10 Years On* looks at the experiences of Stephen and others living with bipolar disorder now and airs on Monday 15 February. It will launch two weeks of programming, called *In The Mind*, exploring mental health issues.

Georgina said: "Stephen Fry's openness in discussing his own experience is enlightening and helpful to demystify some of the stereotypes around this illness. More than that he clearly demonstrates how someone with this diagnosis can lead a full, healthy, happy life, which at times may have challenges which can be overcome."

And she appealed for anyone across Merton to seek support should they identify with any of the issues in the programme or if they know someone who might benefit from the Guild's support.

Georgina added: "At Wimbledon Guild, we see clients for individual counselling, group therapy, family and couples therapy, who have a range of experiences and diagnosis. Many of them may be managing their day to day life relatively well, including their work, study and relationships, but want to develop more understanding about their experiences perhaps due to a period of depression, anxiety, a bereavement, or trauma.

"We also support many people who may be struggling or finding day-to-day activities challenging and might have more complex mental health conditions. In these cases we are able to help and support their diagnosis by medication or other services alongside their counselling, group therapy or family therapy here at WG.

"We really are here to help right across Merton and we would urge anyone to just get in touch, sometimes making the first contact is the hard part."

Wimbledon Guild also provides talking therapies in time of bereavement, for young people and family counselling.

BBC One will dedicate two weeks of the schedule to explore this important subject in closer detail across a range of programming from news and drama to documentaries and features.

Starting on Monday 15 February, the season will include stories of life and death, hope, scientific discovery and much more to help raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health.

James Harding, Director of BBC News, says: “This is a moment when we stop and reflect on one of the big issues of our time, one that touches all of us. We will report and examine – with all the BBC’s expertise, insight and understanding – on what’s really happening in mental health.

Charlotte Moore, Controller BBC TV Channels and iPlayer, says: “Ten years on since Stephen Fry's Emmy-award-winning film about manic depression, it now feels like the right time to bring this important subject to a mainstream audience on BBC One. To find out what has changed, what progress has been made and what the future holds for people living with mental health conditions in the UK.

"Over the last decade, we've broken down taboos, and medical advances mean we have a greater understanding of the brain than ever before, but we're not there yet. There is still so much more that needs to be done.”

Visit www.wimbledonguild.co.uk for more information about how to access their services.

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