

Partners in Care Campaign

Dr. Larry Culliford

The SIG executive is increasingly being approached for comments or contributions from both within and outside the College. I was asked to join the committee of the Partners in Care campaign and made contact with both the Head of Policy for the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Peter Tihanyi, and the Campaign Administrator on behalf of the College, Alexi Wedderburn, at the Harrogate meeting in July 2004.

I found myself attending my first committee meeting at Belgrave Square soon afterwards. The campaign was launched in January 2004, and a pattern of activities had already developed. My help was requested in helping to draft one of the campaign leaflets. At another committee meeting, I was given a few minutes to speak about spirituality and mental health care. As a result of this, I was invited to write a chapter for the Resource Pack on this topic, with particular reference to carers. It appears in the 'Partnerships Module' section, and here is a taste: 'The spiritual approach permits, indeed fosters, a positive attitude even in the most heart-rending situations. Focusing on both inner and external sources of strength, spiritual awareness thereby encourages confidence in place of anxiety and hope in place of despair'.

From the responses I have already had, ideas like these seem to resonate positively with many people. The Partners in Care campaign was officially concluded on 19th September 2005, but strong positive waves continue to expand outwards in many directions. The Royal College of General Practitioners, for example, is planning a similar partnership with the Princess Royal Trust in the near future. Close contact with a number of carers has certainly enlarged my worldview significantly. I increasingly recognize carers as valuable colleagues, all the more so for being unpaid. They do indeed deserve our respect, admiration and thanks.

**Partners in Care Training Resource, edited by Mike McClure.
London, Gaskell 2005 [ISBN 1-904671-28-4] Price £45.00 (RCPsych
members £40.50)
Ring Binder containing 257 pages with free CD-ROM.**

The training pack about carer issues is for use by mental health professionals and has been compiled following the success of the College's 'Partners in Care' campaign (see: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/campaigns/pinc/index.htm). The folder contains essential written information relating to carers of people with mental health problems and learning difficulties. HRH The Princess Royal has written a preface, and the material is divided into six modules: carers; partnerships; young carers and families; caring for specific conditions; communication; and carers in training. An article, 'Healing from Within: Spirituality and Mental Health' was contributed by the Spirituality and Psychiatry SIG's representative on the campaign committee, Larry Culliford. The accompanying CD-ROM contains an electronic version of all the printed material plus some MS PowerPoint presentations for use by trainers.