

## Gay and Lesbian SIG: Report to Council 2005

The Special Interest Group has again been active over the last year.

1. Several members of the SIG provided a session to the Scottish Regional Meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Psychotherapy for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People drew an audience of c. 40 psychiatrists and generated considerable discussion. This is the first time the SIG has undertaken an event out of London and it suggests that there might be considerable interest through other regional meetings.
2. A SIG Working Party, meeting regularly over the course of the last year, continued to develop the Training Pack "Gay and Lesbian Mental Health Matters". The five member Working Party consists both of SIG members and has additional medical educational input from QMUL. The pack, which constitutes a half-day workshop aimed at professionals working in multi-disciplinary teams, is now ready for piloting. This will happen over the next 8 months.

The workshop uses a multimedia approach. Its purpose is:

- a. To increase the confidence of all staff in talking with gay and lesbian people who have mental health problems.
- b. To increase knowledge patterns of mental health problems in gay and lesbian people.
- c. To enable staff to generate practical ideas to develop safe and friendly clinical environments for gay and lesbian patients.
- d. To learn and practice skills that may be useful in addressing homophobia in the workplace.

The intention is to pilot the Training Pack with NHS Mental Health Services, particularly community teams. However, following discussion with under-graduate and post-graduate teaching staff we will also pilot with pre-registration medical and other health care students and post-registration psychiatric trainees. An approach will also be made to the College for endorsement.

A concern of the SIG has been to ensure that the training pack is sustainable and not dependent on the willingness of individual members of the SIG to run workshops in the long term. Discussions have taken place with Dr Jennie Williams of the Inequality Agenda to establish whether her organisation could deliver the pack in a sustainable way. Preliminary talks suggest this may be a way forward. However, the SIG are also keen to explore whether or not Gaskell, as the College publishers, would be willing to market the Training Pack as an "off the shelf" workshop.

3. The SIG are pleased that it will not only have its AGM at the College meeting in June 2005 but that a session on Civil Partnership has been accepted. "The Impact on Psychological and Physical Health of Civil Partnerships for Same Sex Couples" will include a presentation from Mike King of the SIG as well as contributions from a legal perspective.
4. Work has been done over the last year to prepare the SIG's first large conference. The work has been led by Helen Killaspy and is now going forward with the assistance of Confer, a commercial company which has run successful events on gay mental health. "Are you Gay? Normalising the Therapeutic Relationship" will be run at the Tavistock on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2005. It is aimed at psychiatrists, psychotherapists and counsellors. It will:
  - a. Explore current thinking and re-interpretation of classic theorising on sexual orientation.
  - b. Examine similarities in the therapeutic needs of clients in different professional settings.
  - c. Provide perspectives on the issue of disclosure within the therapeutic relationship.

We hope to attract an audience of 100 to the day which will have speakers from inside and outside the College.

5. Annual College Meeting 2006: the SIG Executive has met recently and will be putting forward several suggestions for the College Meeting next year. These will be discussed at the AGM in June and then sent on to the Organising Committee.

Annie Bartlett on behalf of the SIG Executive (Mike King, Helen Killaspy, Ian Hall, Nick Walker, Steve Hopker, Annie Bartlett and Susanna Galea).