

Summary Report

Declaration Roundtable

Cast

Healthwatch Doncaster

Engage, inform, influence

07/06/2017

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of activity

Declaration on 7 June was a one woman curious, colourful and candid exploration of ADHD, Mental Health and Diagnosis. With autobiographical material, comedy, storytelling, and conversations with audiences, *Declaration* took us on vibrant and daring adventure that asked us to roll around in our weirdness, make a hat out of it and dance.

Cast and Healthwatch Doncaster hosted a preshow coffee and tea roundtable chat for up to 27 people (15 attended pre show) to get to know service users and staff from local groups that have access to Doncaster Healthwatch services and who may or may not already attend the theatre. The roundtable guests then became the audience for the *Declaration* - a one woman exploration of ADHD and metal health. Following the performance, a wellbeing room was available within the theatre with a Mental Health practitioner on hand to answer any questions inspired by the work.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Thank you to the cast and crew of Art with Heart who created *Declaration* and who embraced Cast's idea of using their work as a platform to speak about mental health in an interesting and innovative way. Art with Heart work to raise awareness of ADHD and are supported by the ADHA Foundation. Thank you also to the Healthwatch volunteers that facilitated the roundtable chats.

2 What was the purpose of the activity/session?

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this grant was to highlight the use of theatre as a creative platform to talk about mental health and ADHD. Cast in the past have looked for opportunities to invite subject related audiences to see shows within the Second Space. This has not always been successful and we also recognise that some of the groups need further guidance from service providers as they may have additional needs. This opportunity allowed Cast to offer subsidised tickets to groups and give a chance for a supported and structured visit in partnership with Healthwatch.

2.2 What did you do?

Groups were invited by Healthwatch, Cast and by Art with Heart to attend a preshow roundtable discussion about people's experiences of accessing health services, particularly those focusing on mental health. These are established groups within Doncaster and attended with a group leader or with colleagues.

The Dance Space at Cast was set up with 3 large round tables and visitors were invited to talk about their experiences in Doncaster of the services and could respond in a variety of ways including through writing feedback giving verbal accounts to Healthwatch Doncaster's volunteers.

2.3 Results of the activity/session(s)

Please see attached appendix for feedback from attendees during the session.

Feedback from people who took part



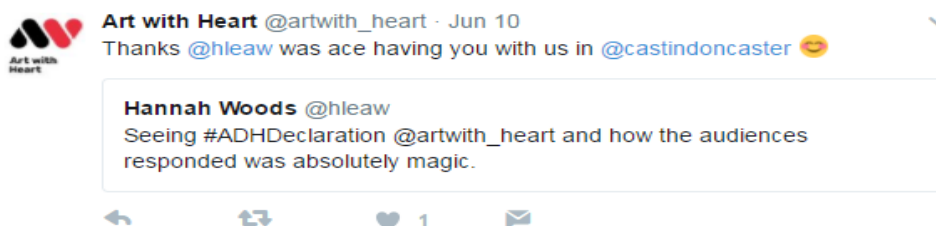
Hannah Woods
@hleaw

Seeing #ADHDeclaration @artwith_heart and how the audiences responded was absolutely magic.



Art with Heart
@artwith_heart

@dicecenterpris GOOD LUCK tonight! Wish we could be there but we're @HGtheatre. Lovely to meet you all at #ADHDeclaration @castindoncaster



This event has created a bridge between Healthwatch and Art with a Heart. The production of *Declaration* was a genuine and powerfully honest exploration of living with ADHD and one that provides a lot of information for service providers of what the service users are living with daily. Subsequently conversations between Art with Heart and Healthwatch Doncaster may lead to a further performance for mental health practitioners and those working with people to have ADHD.

Feedback from staff/volunteers who took part

This was certainly a successful exercise for Cast in engaging groups that have an interest in the subject matter. Cast has tried previously to match issued based shows in our Second Space with the corresponding community but has found that often the ticket price can be a barrier. Working with a funder in this way has allowed Cast to reach out to those affected by this issue and help them speak about issues that affect them.

Feedback from the Company

“We were delighted with the turn out in the end and that so many groups whom we'd spoken with made it down, many of which were visiting Cast for the first time and loved it :). We were grateful for the opportunity to work with Healthwatch [Doncaster] to provide free tickets to audiences too” – Racheal Moorhouse Producer, Director and Theatremaker of Declaration

2.4 Conclusion

Responding to and using arts and culture as a conduit to discussion is a vital link between service users and providers. Sometimes very sensitive and private subjects can be clearly articulated on stage helping people feel that they are not alone and showing that others have courage to speak about issues that are affecting them. This is the key message that we would like to share after the project.

In hindsight, it may have been more beneficial and informative to invite all ticket holders to the pre-show talk as this would have broadened the feedback beyond the organised groups that attended. Going forward if we were to repeat this, we would encourage as many people as possible to speak with Healthwatch. Having a roundtable discussion post show may have also been a better solution and ideally the show could have been a matinee to allow more people to attend.

Appendix

Summary of Pre-show Discussion

Introduction

On Wednesday 7th June 2017 Healthwatch Doncaster in partnership with CAST subsidised a performance of a one woman play called *Declaration*, an autobiographical look at one woman's experience of living with ADHD. This moving and humorous account was developed in conjunction with medical professionals, ADHD and mental health support groups.

There was a pre-show discussion that 13 people attended, which provided the opportunity to discuss people's experiences of accessing health services, particularly those focusing on mental health.

Feedback

The discussions were as diverse as they were lively and the comments are summarised below:

4 people filled out a simple questionnaire, 3 of the respondents were service users and one was a professional. Comments from the individuals were as follows:

- "The services I use are good."
- "Colin at DICE is a good support with mental health"
- "CPN is sporadic."
- "Some good psychiatrists."
- "Peer support is very good but needs funding."

The comments from a professional were:

- "The families I work with struggle to understand why the waiting list is so long."
- "A young person can be 'struck off' for not attending without the services following up why this has happened"
- "Sometimes services aren't easy to access, sometimes people have to travel long distances with a number of small children."
- "Difficult to access, such a long time to get diagnosed and once do have one support has been poor in some cases."
- "There is a gap from children's services to adult services and people say 'it's not my remit' "

Volunteers and staff from Healthwatch Doncaster facilitated table top discussions and these were the key points arising from those discussions:

- Participants recognised the value of Peer Support and one participant highlighted the PFG (based at The Wellness Centre, Intake) in Doncaster and their valuable contribution.

- Some individuals pointed out the stress caused by The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) re-assessments for benefit support, especially for people already experiencing poor mental health.
- Two local organisations DIAL (Disability Information Advice Line) and Doncaster Partnership for Carers/Parents Voice were quoted by participants as being a valuable resource.

Participants committed their thoughts to postcards about various aspects of services. Here is what they said:

- “DICE are helpful and I feel happy and calm”
- “My CPN seems to be on holiday a lot, I see a psychiatrist and get a CPN from Stapleton Road. I attend the PFG in Intake which has helped me a lot – opportunities, support. I get support from DICE. Peer support needs more funding.”
- “My support is with D.I.C.E Doncaster Inclusive Centre of Excellence and Altogether 4 Autism, which has helped me a lot, such as opportunities and more support. There is also Bubble, which is a coffee morning every Friday morning in Rossington for anyone who has Autism and we get to discuss our problems we like to discuss.”
- “Your Life Doncaster website use to research groups/support.”
- “Many GP’s and specialist give me a different diagnosis. I got a diagnosis in London but Doncaster didn’t agree”
- “Wouldn’t use social media and the internet – I wouldn’t trust it, deadly for me with stalkers and trolls. Closed groups that are moderated would be good and supportive.”
- “My health problems don’t cause me issues accessing doctors and dentists.”
- “I have epilepsy but I don’t have an epilepsy nurse.”
- “DICE support me well.”
- “Big Society started things – needs more funding.”
- “CHaD group are good.”

Conclusion

Although the event was not as well attended as had been hoped, despite the efforts of Healthwatch and CAST to promote the event. The group of people that did attend the pre-show event were very forthcoming in the discussions. The discussions highlighted the support available through sources other than the health service, such as peer support and a range of other topics.

I would like to thank all participants, volunteers and staff at CAST who contributed to this event.

Sandra Hodson
8.6.17

