

# Sept 2015 AFFECT

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## NEWS BULLETIN

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### AGM 18th July 2015

Emily Rose was elected as Chair. Stephen retired after 2 years as Chairman. We would all like to thank him for the time and effort he put in. Attendance was quite good, including two university student volunteers. Unfortunately the speaker was not able to be there due to family reasons.

An interesting point was raised: charitable organisations which survive for at least 15 years are likely to carry on for a good while. As Affect has been running for 14 years, we should all support it to make 15.

### WAITING

As we wait in the reception area of the local mental health unit, I look across at my ex whom I haven't seen for about 15 years and realise that that we are now so much older. Tonight I have had to forget the past and phone him for help.

It started off as such a normal day; if any day looking out for my psychotic son could be called "normal". He had been over the day before to pick up his clean clothes for the week as usual, but he clearly wasn't well. In the previous weeks he had been threatening, talking about violence, saying he wanted to hurt someone. I had started phoning his psychiatrist saying I thought he was going downhill.

But today my son was seeing his psychiatrist and had promised he would talk to him about his violent thoughts. I thought I had better not phone again and be thought of as a fussing Mum. I regretted this as soon as my son phoned me from outside the doctor's office and told me that, sorry, he couldn't talk about it after all. It was then too late for me to phone.

Things started to go wrong almost immediately. He came out of the psychiatrist's office and phoned me to say he would not come over for his evening meal as I was poisoning his food!

At about 10 tonight he rushed into my flat and straight into the bathroom where I could hear the

taps running full on. I walked in to see him washing blood off his arms." I think I've killed ---" he said.

He said he was going to give himself up, but not to worry, everything would be alright now he had done what "they" wanted.

I was shocked and shaking, but somehow not really surprised. It seemed to fit with his mental state, but what to do? I could not let him walk out as he was clearly dangerous and who knew what else he might do? I don't have a car and I felt I couldn't deal with this alone so I phoned his Dad.

We decided that we really had to turn him in but did not have a chance to talk privately in my small flat. We felt that if we drove him to the police station in his agitated state he might just get out of the car and run away. We decided to drive him to the Mental Health Unit where my son thought he might get help.

I have gone quietly to the desk while my son was talking to his father and told them what he had done.

So here we are: Paul waiting to see a psychiatrist but his Dad and I know we are waiting for the police.

Previously my only encounter with the police has been the friendly village bobby I had been at school with so I am not prepared for what happens next.

Paul sees the flashing blue lights first and says he thought he would have had longer. Then it goes quiet and the lights are dimmed. Suddenly the doors burst open and eight or nine armed police run in, surrounding Paul, who is walking forward to meet them. "GET DOWN, GET DOWN". Then when I go forward saying something like "There's no need for this, he's giving himself up", they turn the guns on me. "BACK... BACK". They drag him away in handcuffs.

Now I am alone except for a police guard. My flat is a "crime scene" apparently and, though it is five in the morning, I can't go home so here I am still.... waiting,  
waiting. A.G.

### A Mother's Grief

I am a mother of 3.

I have lost my son.

He's 17

Everywhere are reminders of him. A song on the radio takes me back to when we used to dance in the kitchen without a care in the world. Or, Elton John's 'Daniel', that I used to sing to him after that last feed at night. Rocking him to sleep in that twilight world of mother and baby, milk and bath time bubbles, *well* before the *bubble* burst.

He remains in the outgrown football shirt that hangs in his wardrobe. Am grateful now that I never parted with it, though it's presence a reminder of happier times. Memories are cruel. They lure you with beckoning hands bathed in sunlight, only to grab you by the throat and pull you into the darkness. I know

their tricks and yet am unable to resist their pull. Sometimes, pain is a reminder that I'm still alive.

The world is constantly changing, moving forward, moving on. My world is stuck fast, as though the calendar printer ran out of ink on that specific date. Caught in limbo, the past days marked off and no future to be planned.

I've always been a keeper of treasures, those that can never be replicated or replaced. I have a lock of hair from his first haircut, all golden blonde and innocent. 'Lilly' the soft toy duck that he couldn't sleep without, first pictures, first drawings and writing of names. Of no consequence or value to anyone else, but, priceless to me. These things bring sadness but small comfort too, proof of a life before 'The Date'

Outgrown football boots and jeans have long since been passed on as he finally started to grow. However, he never outgrew being hugged, telling me he loved me or being seen out shopping with his Mum! He never outgrew "Good night – sleep tight" or his love of Christmas. As my last born he always seemed to understand that even though he was a teenager, life was about sometimes being childish and fun!

I have routine reminders of my lost boy too. Forms to complete, information to be forwarded, and arrangements to be made. I spend my time either lost in grief or battling with a system and process I do not understand.

I am a Mother of 2 daughters, each with their own grief and pain, which I cannot protect them from. I am a wife, I work, I have responsibilities, bills to pay. I am aware of others needs but can do little for my own. My public face wins out. Not for me the look of kindness on a friend's face, the comfort of a hug. Not for me, the late night chats when grief steals sleep. Not for me, the services that offer support and comfort when the cliff edge is approaching. Not for me, the understanding of a boss, who can tell when it's a tough day. Not for me, the acceptance by society for a Mother's loss.

Not For Me

He did not die...he's in prison you see...

### Helping AFFECT survive.

Has AFFECT helped you? Is it an organisation you would like to see grow and support others in similar circumstances to you? Have you ever said "I would like to give something back"? Then maybe you can help develop the future of AFFECT.

How? Perhaps you might consider becoming a telephone support worker for us. Interested? If you are, then write to the Chair indicating your interest and we will let you know how you can become a part of the future of AFFECT. Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number and your email address if you have one.

Send your letter to: The Chair, PO Box 454, Southampton SO31 0BQ

### GROUP GATHERINGS

Will be held at 12.30 on:

Saturday:

05/09/2015, 05/12/2015,

03/03/2016, 04/06/2016

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the editor or of AFFECT.

I would like to thank everyone who has sent pieces for the bulletin. Lack of space has prevented me from printing them all this time, but they will be included in the next news bulletin.

If you have any comments or anything you would like included in the next newsletter please contact us:

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