



OT 24 Hour Virtual Exchange

October 29/30/31

[Depending on where you are]

Exploring Balance



Ian Merrick is a senior occupational therapy lecturer at London South Bank University. Previously, he worked at Broadmoor hospital as a clinical specialist OT, where he and Alex teamed up for a number of projects including the vocal group. Prior to this, Ian worked as an OT and DBT therapist with people with eating disorders, acute mental health problems and personality disorders. He developed an interest in multidisciplinary collaborative working that has allowed him to work with and learn from outstanding clinicians in a variety of settings.



Alex Maguire is the senior music therapist at Broadmoor High Secure Hospital, having previously worked in the field of autistic spectrum disorders, medium secure services and the Prison Service. He has a particular interest in cross-disciplinary work, presently collaborating with psychologists, art therapy colleagues, and an ongoing working partnership in

Occupational Therapy with Ian Merrick to develop the mixed staff and patient choir. Alex has a distinguished parallel career as a jazz and improvising musician and in this capacity has performed, broadcast and recorded throughout Europe, the Americas and the Far East.

How to form a choir in a high secure hospital

This presentation reflects on the creation and development of a choir of staff and patients at Broadmoor High Secure Hospital (the Broadmoor Vocal Group) as a means of promoting the principles of social inclusion. The intention was to generate a leisure based occupation that staff and patients could engage with on an equal basis. The vocal group met weekly and worked towards a performance at the first ever service users' recovery conference in the hospital.

About mid way through the project, staff and patients were invited to contribute their feedback by means of focus groups. Those unable to attend were offered individual interviews which contained the same questions. The presentation provides a summary of staff and patient feedback, identifying the main themes that emerged. After initial confusion about the non-directive approach of the facilitators and the use of a "servant leadership" style, patients and staff principally found it inclusive, levelling, enjoyable and recovery focused.

There was some anxiety from both staff and patients about the facilitators' determination that the members would be involved in all the decision making, particularly when the group experienced conflict, but group members were also keen to be involved in the development of the vocal group, reflecting a sense of empowerment and ownership.