

Examples of transition work at Queen Margaret University

Title: *Mad People's History and Identity*

A free course by, about and for people with experience of mental health issues

Transition(s) the practice supports: Transition into a study environment for non-traditional participants

Abstract: The Mad People's History and Identity 6-week programme offers an engaging and community-based avenue into study and possibly university entrance for those who might otherwise be outside traditional intake groups. Besides a requirement to have experience of mental health issues, anyone is eligible to attend. The course provides an example of community and university collaboration in its funding model, and an example of student participation in curriculum design and development.

Description: This course is a six-week programme funded by NHS Lothian Mental Health and Wellbeing and the Consultation and Advocacy Promotion Service (CAPS), a local voluntary organisation. It is designed jointly by university academics, people with lived experience of mental health issues and CAPS. There are no fees to students, and in some cases, childcare costs may be funded, so that there are as few barriers as possible to participation. The only condition of entry is that participants should have personal experience of mental health issues.

The programme is delivered at Queen Margaret, and for many students, this is the first time they have been inside a university's premises. During the six weeks, students cover topics including: language and labelling; a history of treatments, power and discrimination; madness and gender, class, race and sexuality; a history of mental health activism; and relevant sociological theory. The programme is designed to help students develop a positive identity, and confidence in the value of their knowledge and their ability to participate in a further education study programme. They are encouraged to consider options after the programme, and discuss entry into college or university.

The programme carries 20 credits at SCQF level 7. It ran for the first time in May of the 2013/14 academic year with 15 students. Some of these went on to further study and others to work or volunteer in related areas, such as mental health activism and advocacy.

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