

# A [REFRESHED] STRATEGY FOR CHANGING THE WORLD

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**PLATF** **FORM**

For mental health and social change  
Dros iechyd meddwl a newid cymdeithasol

Noun: Wellbeing

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**“WELLBEING INVOLVES A SENSE OF PURPOSE, OPTIMISM, HOPE, AGENCY, AND DIRECTION”**

**Shawn Ginwright**

**Hope, Healing, and Care:** Pushing the Boundaries of Civic Engagement for African American Youth.

Our vision

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## **Sustainable wellbeing for all**

**Sustainable** meaning long lasting

**Wellbeing** meaning a sense of purpose, optimism, hope, agency, and direction

**All** meaning us, our community, who we work with, and wider human and non-human communities.

Our mission

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## **To be a platform for connection, transformation, and social change.**

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In our actions we strive to be:  
**connected, compassionate, brave and curious**

**CONNECTED**

- We value deep connection to others
- Our connection includes people, nature, other organisations, the wider world and beyond
- We treat everyone as our equal and an individual

**COMPASSIONATE**

- Treat everyone with compassion and honesty
- Kindness and empathy is at the heart of our approach
- We don't judge people, we value difference and respect lived experience

**BRAVE**

- We are ambitious and bold about changing the current paradigm in approached to mental health
- We inspire and support 'alternative' approaches and are not afraid to swim against the tide to stand up for what we believe
- We are pioneering, disruptive, brave and determined in creating positive change in the world

**CURIOUS**

- We are explorers and are always interested in great ideas, wherever they may be from
- We are inquisitive and curious about others' research, evidence and approaches
- We want to be part of a social movement exploring new ways of approaching sustainable wellness for all

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## We work passionately in pursuit of two things.

1. To **change the narrative around mental health**, offering up an alternative to the dominant paradigm of psychiatric diagnosis. This alternative **focuses on the role that trauma, life experiences and socio-economic circumstances have on our mental health and our ability to recover.** We pursue this change to help broaden public perceptions, and to transform how people experiencing mental distress can ask for and receive help.
2. To **make society's 'helping systems' work better for people having the toughest times.** In the first stages of our strategy, we will focus on systems around mental health, housing, homelessness, and young people.

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## Driven by our two purposes, our organisational activities are:

### 1. PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION AND SYSTEM CHANGE

We know that the mental health system and wider health, social care and public sector systems are no longer fit for purpose. They are based on illness and deficit models that take power and agency away from the individual.

We are part of a growing social movement aiming to transform the way public services are delivered, and the way communities and individuals gain autonomy and agency over their own lives, growth, and recovery.

Building on existing knowledge, research, and emerging practice we will seek to develop our own theory of change underpinned by our asset based, **trauma informed, healing focused** approach. We will seek to evidence our approach to system change and show how individual and community engagement leads to significant improvements in quality of life. We will seek to use this to influence future design of public services in the UK.

### 2. PROJECTS AND SERVICES

We are developing trauma aware, strengths based mental health and wellbeing work in and with communities. The experience we gain from this work is the foundation of our evidence base, showing what works and enabling us to be agents of change in systems we know to be broken.

We work with around 6,000 people a year, primarily in South Wales.

**Our work can be grouped into the following broad areas:**

- Crisis prevention and home
- Children, young people, and families.
- Volunteering, skills development, and employment.
- Therapies, training, and learning.

**Most of this work is procured by the Public Sector. We know that we have the greatest impact in areas where:**

- We have a range of services people can access and move between, based on what they want and choose. For example, crisis prevention: somewhere safe to go as an alternative to hospital when things get tough, support to live independently at home, access to self-management peer support groups, and access to training and skill development to increase confidence and give meaning and purpose to life.
- The commissioning conditions allow support to be delivered in line with our values and method of working: asset based, trauma informed, healing focused and are costed in a way that meets our full cost recovery criteria.
- Contracts managed in a way that puts the person, and their aspirations for the future, at the centre and in the lead.
- Strategic relationships welcome a collaborative approach to identifying and shaping solutions. These relationships are agile and open to experimentation and learning.

We will seek to develop our work with people and communities where these conditions can be achieved, in Wales and beyond.

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## Driven by our two purposes, our organisational activities are:

### 3. SOCIAL CHANGE

We believe there is a need to change the narrative around mental health, offering up an alternative to the dominant paradigm of psychiatric diagnosis. This alternative focuses on the role that trauma, life experiences and socio-economic circumstances have on our mental health and our ability to recover. We do this in pursuit of broadening public perceptions, and to transform how people experiencing mental distress can ask for and receive help.

We will use our platform to communicate, influence and work alongside others who share our mission to achieve change.

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Our asset based approaches emphasise the need to redress the balance between meeting needs and nurturing the strengths and resources of people and communities. These approaches build on a dynamic picture of personal and community assets, connect people to each other and to wider communities, grow and mobilise community assets where relevant, and monitor impact to learn from evidence.

Adopting a trauma informed approach is not accomplished through any single technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, and sensitivity, but the principles we work to are: **safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment and choice and cultural, historical and gender issues.**

A healing focused approach moves beyond “what happened to you” to “what’s right with you” and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own wellbeing rather than solely as victims of traumatic events. It focuses on our interdependence, collective engagement and need for meaning and purpose and comes from the idea that there is always a wider context to the harm people have experienced.

Wellbeing comes from participating in transforming the root causes of the harm within institutions – so activism can be healing, and also advance the move to strengths based approaches and away from the deficit based mental health models that often drive therapeutic interventions.

We believe that each of us has innate strengths to build on, whatever our past experience, life circumstances or current situation. These assets, or strengths, are found in individuals, families, communities, and organisations. Equally, our lives and feelings are informed by the traumas we have experienced.

We will develop asset and strengths based, trauma informed and healing focused approaches to all our work and in everything we do.



### **A Straight Talking Introduction to Psychiatric Diagnosis (Dr Lucy Johnstone)**

A revolution is underway in mental health. If the authors of the diagnostic manuals are admitting that psychiatric diagnoses are not supported by evidence, then no one should be forced to accept them. If many mental health workers are openly questioning diagnosis and saying we need a different and better system, then service users and carers should be allowed to do so too. This book is about choice. It is about giving people the information to make up their own minds, and exploring alternatives for those who wish to do so.

### **Drop The Disorder! Challenging The Culture Of Psychiatric Diagnosis (Jo Watson)**

In 2016 Jo Watson hosted the very first 'A Disorder for Everyone!' event with psychologist Dr Lucy Johnstone, to explore (and explode) the culture of psychiatric diagnosis in mental health. Since then, they have delivered events in towns and cities across the UK, bringing together activists, survivors and professionals to debate psychiatric diagnosis.

This book takes the themes, energy and passions of the AD4E events – bringing together many of the event speakers with others who have stories to tell and messages to share in the struggle to challenge diagnosis.

### **Hope, Healing, and Care: Pushing the Boundaries of Civic Engagement for African American Youth (Shawn Ginwright Ph.D.)**

Healing is the process of restoring health and well-being to individuals and communities. Conceptually, healing is an important dimension of civic engagement given the ways in which poverty, racism, and violence have threatened vibrant community life in black neighborhoods. Daily trauma, hopelessness, and nihilism “prevent us from participating in organized collective struggle aimed at ending domination and transforming society” (hooks 1993)... community organizations provide pathways to well-being. Well-being is a result of power and control over internal and external forms of oppression... Building pathways to well-being requires collective power and control in order to create the conditions that foster a higher quality of life.

### **Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression - and the Unexpected Solutions (Johann Hari)**

#### **New System Alliance**

#### **Psychiatry's Very Own Delusion (Dr. Joanna Moncrieff)**

#### **Kinder Communities (Carnegie Trust)**

#### **Asset Based Community Development (Nurture Development)**

#### **Trauma informed care and why it matters (Psychology Today)**

#### **A New Future (Scottish Recovery Network)**

#### **What does Relational Welfare mean? (Hilary Cottam)**

#### **Families - The Life Programme (Participle)**

#### **What's wrong with resilience (Tailored Thinking)**

### **We must address the socioeconomic causes of psychological distress - (Psychologists for Social Change)**

### **The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement (Shawn Ginwright Ph.D.)**

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