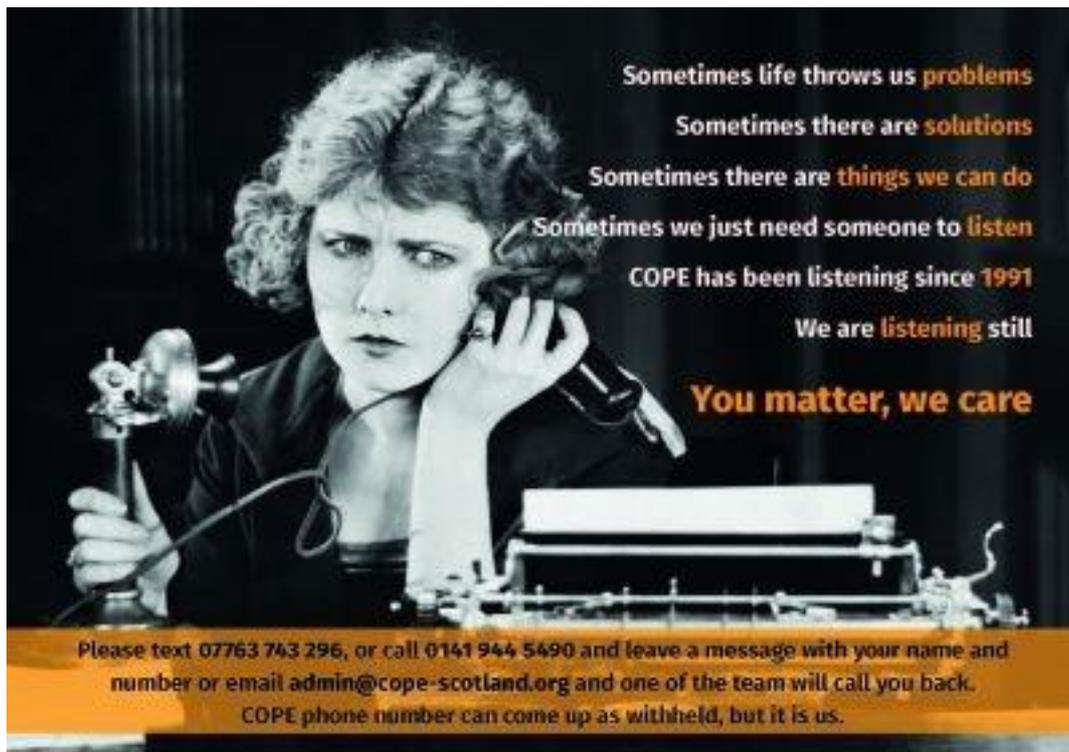




Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Learning from practice

Hilda Campbell, CEO, COPE Scotland – ‘Surviving the COVID emotional roller coaster’

How have you been able to keep a focus on what matters to people during COVID?



COPE is led by the voices of lived experience of mental, emotional, distress and health inequalities. We look to co-design solutions towards health, wellbeing and quality of life.

We have continued to be led by lived experience on a variety of levels. Our focus has included responses to specific situations created by COVID. This included co designing materials such as a tips sheet for managing chronic pain. We were led to design this as a result of the challenges people faced in managing chronic pain in lockdown (bad enough at best of times but with clinics etc cancelled some people felt abandoned).

To build capacity we shared a tips sheet on the art of conversation to encourage people to feel comfortable talking about how they feel, and to offer tips on how to listen. Motivation behind this was around building capacity for people to talk/listen who maybe at this time aren't accessing services.

We are picking up uncertainty and worries about the future. People are worried about their jobs, their health, their relationships and about their families and what the future holds. We

are talking to partners about how we make best use of our resources in continuing to provide support.

What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

During lockdown we noted a reduction in our usual rates of referral (we think because GP practices aren't operating as usual and 50% of our referrals come from GP's). People don't always think to come to us, so we invested a lot of effort in marketing, targeting specific places to raise awareness that we are still here, postcards in food parcels etc. This still didn't get us back to where we were, so we also put together a blog to let people know how to get in touch. We are striving to be proactive and reach out to avoid people waiting until they are really struggling to get the support they need.

What have you noticed that has been better?

I think COVID19 has made more people aware that we all have a state of mental health and it can be challenged by unexpected and alarming events. We need to manage the feelings generated by such a crisis because there are challenges which need to be responded to. We need to collectively support each other to deal with these feelings.

How did this make you feel?

I feel concerned about the emotional and wellbeing implications of all of this in the long term but hopeful that a continued focus on proactive, co-designed solutions can help.

What have you learned through this?

The emotional impact of COVID19 is huge and our emotions have a huge impact on our mental health. We need to build capacity to problem solve, strategise, and not be overwhelmed. The challenges are real, the stresses are real and we may need to invest more in ensuring that people can connect and access support when they need it. Mental health services need to evolve to enable people to build resilience to the emotional, social and financial challenges ahead. Kindness is more important than ever, and that includes us being kind to ourselves!

Anything else you want to tell us?

Please feel free to access our many freely available resources to support the wellbeing of people who are struggling just now including practitioners
www.cope-scotland.org

Stories of changing practice under COVID: bit.ly/2AmLyOi Hilda, director @COPEscotland on 'Surviving the COVID emotional roller coaster.' The challenges and stresses of COVID are real, we need to collectively support each other to deal with these feelings. Being proactive & co-designing resources