



## **Print on Prescription**

### **Name of Organisation**

Double Elephant Print Workshop

### **Title of project/programme**

Print on Prescription

### **Dates of project/programme**

January – December 2011

### **Summary**

Print on Prescription (POP) at Double Elephant Print Workshop (DEPW) makes printmaking accessible to adults dealing with mental health issues.

**Winner of the Arts & Health South West Award for an Arts Organisation in 2012.**

Two weekly printing sessions at the Double Elephant Print studio in Exeter enable two groups of participants (those new to print and those who want to continue to print on a long-term basis) to access a professional printmaking workshop to create their own work (screenprint, etching, drypoint, relief print) at their own pace. Participants can either self refer with a signature from their GP or be referred to the programme by Occupational Therapists, GPs, or Mental Health Support Workers. Participants are referred for 10 weeks at a time and the afternoon sessions are on a drop-in basis for the long-term participants. Double Elephant is a community printmaking resource and this project ensures the wider community can access us on an ongoing basis. Our portable print workshop and press enables us to take printmaking into hospital and community centre environments too.

### **Overview**

DEPW have been working with mental health service users for over 10 years running printing sessions at our studio and outreach work in hospitals, eating disorder units, psychiatric units and in supported housing. We recognised a need for stimulating, creative and high quality activity in Exeter for this client group. By 2010 we identified that short-term projects had limited success. Print on Prescription was the result of implementing a two-stage project, which participants knew they could access indefinitely and become as close to being an independent DEPW member as they could manage.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- Offer stimulating creative activity in an appropriately supportive environment
- Offer access to high quality professional print studio
- To make POP accessible to this client group
- Meaningful participation with long-term benefits
- Link printmaking to other projects and opportunities to help participants engage with other activities
- Work with NHS support workers, printmaker tutors, volunteers and Insider Art for supervision and support.
- Use DEPW as base, use trained artist printmakers as tutors, bring in specialist tutors for specific processes.
- Enable self-referrals with support from GP, enable referrals from healthcare professionals.
- Enable participants to choose from a wide range of printing processes, sessions delivered by experienced printmaker tutors, supported by volunteers and NHS support staff.
- Enable long-term access to DEPW through afternoon weekly sessions, link project to DEPW member activities and projects.
- Link to DEPW exhibitions and opportunities, form partnerships with local organisations and healthcare professionals, help participants access other opportunities and work.

DEPW can offer a very wide range of printmaking processes. Participants created work using the following printmaking processes – monotype, monoprint, collagraph, drypoint, woodcut, linocut, screenprint and textile screeprinting. As a studio we are very experimental and we wanted the project to have the same opportunities to combine printmaking with other artforms. We used tutors' printmaking expertise to help participants with their own projects. George Barron taught screenprinting on textiles, Emma Molony taught repeat pattern and etching, Amanda Sabin taught drypoint and monoprint. This resulted in projects where POP are now making a huge woodcut in partnership with Exeter University and material from the Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin archive. This has been displayed at The Ariel Centre in Totnes, Exeter University and will be shown at the RD&E Hospital, Exeter. We are also currently exploring print and animation!

We linked up with Organic Arts at West Town Farm in Ide outside Exeter to provide access to quiet rural space and to take printmaking outside the studio. We ran a series of excursions to rural seaside locations for social and inspirational stimulation and to help participants gain the confidence to make small trips. We also combined the project with many of DEPW's activities such as Open Studios and other opportunities to exhibit and sell work.

## **Intended health outcome**

The intended health outcome was for participants to enjoy more feelings of relaxation and pleasure, greater self-confidence, a boost to self-esteem and a more positive outlook. We also wanted to help with physical ill health by the few excursions to green spaces and to open opportunities to engage with outdoor activity and new places as well as creating artwork.

Most of the referred participants are dealing with depression and anxiety as well as some with other chronic conditions such as bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia. POP aimed to help alleviate depression and anxiety through providing meaningful and engaging creative activity. Printmaking also uses a variety of skills and processes that help with self esteem and the because it bridges Fine Art and Craft, print is an ideal medium for those less confident in traditional art skills as they can get absorbed in the nature of the process and beautiful results with very little input.

### **Benefits for participants**

As a result of the project participants had new work and study opportunities (one participant went on to study Horticulture at Bicton Agriculture College, one got a voluntary placement at school, one got her first job since having children in a local supermarket, one now takes 2 other subsidised art classes each week).

The project achieved excellent attendance rates. For 70% of the participants, POP is the only weekly activity they participate in and for 2 clients it is the only time they leave their house. Participants benefited from having their work on display and NHS staff now have some of the participants' prints in their offices, the group's work has been exhibited at several Devon organisations, participants have been able to create a body of work each as well as exhibit and sell their prints.

The project provided a great sense of inclusion. Participants were able to be part of a professional print studio and have a say in how the project is managed as well as taking part in studio projects and opportunities.

### **Benefits for staff and volunteers**

Volunteers are supported in advancing their training within arts and health and printmaking skills. One volunteer is now paid to lead several sessions each term with additional support. We have been able to increase the number of volunteers we can take on. We have run training days to share new skills among volunteers and staff (drypoint, fabric screenprinting, experimental monoprints).

Studio staff have been able to challenge their printmaking skills with new exciting projects such as the Hughes-Baskin archive. Bringing in new tutors has helped train existing staff in new areas. We have linked up with other organisations also receiving Ecominds funding and made plans to combine our skills and what we can offer to create a consortium. We developed our work with dementia and mental health to create a new mental health outreach project and now run a separate project with lottery funding working with elderly patients dealing with dementia who are also rurally isolated.

POP has a mutually beneficial relationship with the workshop. DEPW can offer exciting opportunities for POP as well as the studio and materials and tutors' expertise. POP brings in funding, links with other organisations, conferences, training, supervision and in general it helps DEPW maintain an outward-thinking and inclusive ethos.

## **Partnerships and who was involved**

During the project we worked with Exeter NHS mental health services, West Town Farm, Organic Arts, CCANW, CEDA and Exeter CVS. We also worked with freelance artists who came and taught at DEPW such as George Barron and Dawn Dupree. Our partnership work resulted in current plans to establish a consortium with Exeter CVS, Organic Arts and Hub on the Green.

## **Location and activities**

POP took place at DEPW's studio in Exeter Phoenix. Regular sessions there meant participants could use all the professional equipment in the studio (etching press, relief press, screenprint exposure unit, screens, inks, rollers, etching facilities etc.). We ran two outdoor printing days with our portable press and equipment at West Town Farm in Idea, outside Exeter. We organised other day excursions to Exmouth beach and Branscombe and Beer beach to walk, collect materials and gather inspiration for prints.

## **Innovation**

Print on Prescription is innovative as there is no other programme using printmaking to help mental health service users in the UK. We give advice and suggestions to other UK and international print studios who also want to develop their printmaking within the mental health sector.

Most print studios do not focus on outreach or engagement with the wider community. DEPW has always been an inclusive, outward looking and entrepreneurial organisation that seeks to go beyond offering studio space for established artists. We know that everyone can find something exciting with printmaking and we're active in finding the funding to deliver this with socially excluded groups.

We are also the only organisation in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset or Somerset that offers access to high quality printmaking resources to this client group. There are many Art on Prescription programmes around the UK and we use this structure but specifically with printmaking – which we know as an artform has infinite possibilities and is exceptionally effective at reaching and engaging with people with varying levels of expertise and confidence in art.

## **Participation**

Participants were involved in the following areas of the project:

- Identifying the aims of the project at the beginning, when we were writing the funding application. They were also consulted about how we'd measure our objectives.
- Choosing printmaking processes and projects to focus on individually.
- Choosing where to visit and go on the inspirational excursions.
- Selecting which visiting tutors would visit based on which processes the group wanted to learn.
- Choosing whether they wanted to take on more responsibility in the studio. (One longterm participant now has such a good level of skill in screenprinting that he was able to help teach other participants.)

Each session has 8 participants so we work with 16 participants each week. Over the year we worked with 35 participants at the studio and approximately 80 outside the studio (outreach workshops in hospital, community centres).

## Outcomes

Outcomes	Evidence
Increased stability of mental health	Reports from support workers and feedback from participants. Attendance of participants and decreased periods in hospital
More positive mental health	As above plus... Participants' involvement in other projects, take up of voluntary work and jobs and courses
Taking on additional workshop responsibilities	Number of participants learning to take on new responsibilities in the studio – teaching the group printing processes, cleaning, preparing materials, learning to use equipment independently
Taking up other opportunities outside POP	References done by DEPW staff for participants applications for jobs and voluntary positions. Participants' involvement in other courses and projects
Trying new processes and developing skills	100% of participants have learned more than 3 kinds of printmaking processes. 2 can now teach the group and 4 have moved from the beginners to advanced session.
Increased number of young men participating	30% increase in men aged 18 – 30 joining the project and attending for over 5 weeks.

An unexpected outcome was the positive reaction to DEPW members working alongside POP participants. On one occasion a member who had to finish printing drypoints for a deadline was permitted to use the studio alongside the group. Having a professional printmaker with their own work in the studio provided additional inspiration and stimulus for the participants and resulted in 3 hard to reach participants exploring new processes and learning from the member. We have now built this into the project that once a month a DEPW works in the studio on a Monday as inspiration and to bring together more closely the POP project and DEPW as a studio.

## Evaluation

We are still in the process of evaluating the project as Ecominds extended our funding to continue with the project and to invest in extensive

evaluation over one year. We are currently meeting with researchers at Exeter University and compiling a means of evaluating the long-term impact of POP on the participants and clearer health outcomes that we can present to NHS services.

Our evaluation so far indicates that the project was very successful in engaging the participants and making a marked difference to their lives. They value the scheme and attendance and feedback support this. It shows that there are limitations however in the aims of many funders with expectations of participants returning to work. POP is not going to enable participants to move smoothly into becoming DEPW members and the group does not want to aim towards this. It does allow however, participants to reach their own goals of creative achievement and take up other opportunities. Most of the group however will always want the support that POP gives alongside independent participation.

The evaluation highlights the potential for the project to expand and operate in more rurally isolated areas with our portable print studio if funding was found.

### **Learning**

The main challenges were

- Funding – we are never going to be able to deliver POP without funding to subsidise the cost of the project. Despite participants paying for their weekly sessions (£2 in the morning and £5 in the afternoon) as well as paying for all their materials, this will not cover the cost of the studio overheads, core materials, NHS support staff, volunteer expenses and printmaker tutor. We have successfully raised funding from Ecominds and several other smaller charitable trusts. The NHS cover the cost of their staff's involvement in the project.
- Flexibility with client group – Dealing with mental health issues mean that over the course of the year, many participants will be in hospital, have bad days or relapse and we needed to be flexible and understanding. The afternoon group who had been with the project longer have 100% attendance. The morning group with new referrals was a more challenging session as participants are frequently more acutely unwell, are new to the project and experiencing other difficulties in their own lives (housing, relationships, jobs, family).
- Meeting the needs of diverse range of participants – mental ill health can affect anyone so our project needed to accommodate participants of all ages and backgrounds. (There are ex-art teachers, artists and designers working alongside participants who were too unwell to attend school or college and have no formal artistic background.) There are also varying degrees of mental ill health. Both these factors present a challenge for the tutors and volunteers as well as the group but it has only been positive in our experience and created a richly diverse and supportive group. We worked hard to make sure we had processes that were suitable for everyone.
- Support workers and relationship with NHS – Reliable and regular support from NHS staff was an issue during the project at times. It was hard to establish a link with senior staff in the mental health service and units continually changed. However we have very good relations

- with the referring personnel and with our support workers.
- Gathering evidence and feedback – despite participants being involved in how we would gather feedback, it was hard to always implement forms being filled in each week. Part of the challenge was not wanting to cut short the printing sessions. Other times, participants did not want to have to think about words and writing and just wanted to concentrate on their artwork. Other participants had issues with talking about themselves or passing on personal information.
  - Making the project wider and reaching more people. We have developed the project into an outreach strand that works rurally with elderly patients with dementia and mental health issues.
  - To be restricted due to the size of the studio in how many participants can work with us at the studio.

We did make some changes during the delivery of the project. Additional funding meant we could extend the project and delivery full printmaking days (excursions) during the summer.

We met with support workers following feedback from participants to establish ground rules in the studio (no mobiles or in depth discussions of personal issues between participants and workers).

In the future, we would try to find a simpler and effective way of gathering feedback. We would like to avoid forms and perhaps develop a more clear and simple means of gathering feedback in an informal way that suits the atmosphere of the sessions.

### **Critical Success Factors**

The main achievements of the project were the impact on the participants in terms of their improved mental health, the long-term outcomes – partnerships, funding, participants' input and attendance and the sustainability of the project (funding and partnership developments). Most importantly, the project proved that it is mutually beneficial and vital part of DEPW. We are an inclusive print studio and POP is now very much part of the workshop's activities – open studios, projects with the university and other artists and that it brings energy and fresh approaches to the workshop and in return DEPW enables access to printmaking for a socially excluded group of adults.

The aspects of the planning that were most successful were making the referral process very simple. Participants can request a form from us and email it back and healthcare professionals can do the same. We also allocated funding to meeting and showing participants around the workshop before the sessions began. This was successful in introducing them to the studio space and helping them become familiar with print and our studio before the sessions began.

The delivery aspects that were most successful were enabling the participants to create their own work in the studio under professional guidance. Each participant has a large professional folder that we provide and this helps give a sense of value to the body of prints that they create over the term. Working alongside professional artists and in a professional

space gives the participants inspiration, confidence and most importantly excellent results. It's crucial that they are able to make high quality work and not just taster or introductory level artwork. They can see by this opportunity that they are as capable as any DEPW member or course participant in their printmaking abilities.

The project outcomes that were most successful were twofold – the impact on the participants and the long-term potential for the project. There has been a huge impact on the participants in terms of their mental health stability and confidence and value of the project. Individual progression has been brilliant (participants have gained experience of teaching, exhibiting, selling, trying new processes). The opportunities that the project has provided for further funding, research and evaluation have meant that we have confidence that we can continue to develop POP with the participants' input and advice.

The project has led to further work. It has led to the development of an Arts and Health consortium with DEPW, Hub on the Green, Organic Arts and Exeter CSV. It has also led to projects with Exeter University and Heritage Lottery Fund. We are currently working on an HLF funding bid to work with Exeter museum (RAMM) to combine print and animation in celebrating the 400 year old anniversary of Northernhay gardens in Exeter. The POP groups have been using the gardens to create new prints and are shaping the proposal to HLF in how the gardens could be represented in print.

### **Funding and Resources**

Our project budget was £13000 for a year's activity. We were able to keep material and overhead costs down through running the project at DEPW where we can order wholesale materials and use our office space for project management.

The main funding body for POP was Ecominds who gave us £19,000 over two years. They are currently funding us to continue and evaluate the project over a further 6 months.

We also received additional funding from:

- PLUSS (a social enterprise helping disabled people achieve work opportunities) - £500
- Waitrose - £300
- Devon Adult and Community Learning - £900
- Small Green Steps Awards - £1000 (proportion of a larger grant to DEPW allocated to POP project)
- Arts Council England - £1000 (proportion of a larger grant to DEPW allocated to POP project)
- Exeter Arts Council - £500
- NHS – support in kind for mental health workers (worth £1800)
- Participants themselves - £600