

Imagine Inverness

SPEAKERS

1-1.05pm: Cath Smith – Opening remarks from host and co-founder of The Joshi Project

1.05-1.20pm: Sue Lyons – Manager at HUG Action for Mental Health

1.20-1.35pm: Mark S. Smith – Co-founder of The Joshi Project, author and journalist

1.35-1.55pm: Graham Morgan, MBE – Author and Engagement and participation officer (lived experience) at the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

1.55-2:00pm: Greg Hart's story – read by Mark S. Smith

2-2.20pm: Joanna Kerr – Board member of The Joshi Project with lived experience.

BREAK – 10 MINS

2.30-2.50pm: Lucy Irvine – Founder of Lucy Irvine Foundation Europe (LIFE)

2.50-3.10pm: Vincenzo Spaccapietra – Former Trieste “guest” who now works with the homeless in London

3.10-3.40pm: Dr Roberto Mezzina – Advisor to The Joshi Project, former Director of the Department of Mental Health in Trieste and current Vice President of the World Federation for Mental Health

3.40-4.10pm: Dr S.P. Sashidharan – Glasgow-based psychiatrist, former mental health consultant with the WHO and Honorary Professor at the Institute of Health & Wellbeing at University of Glasgow

4.10-4.30pm: Q&A

4.30pm Cath Smith – Closing remarks

Please complete our short questionnaire that you will have received by email (if not, please check your junk mail folder)!



The Joshi Project



Aims of the seminar

Welcome to “Imagine Inverness”, a seminar hosted by The Joshi Project and HUG Action for Mental Health. Today, we will introduce and lay out details of our plan to open Scotland’s first Trieste Model-based mental-wellbeing hub in Inverness, as well as our vision to roll out other hubs in communities throughout the Highlands, and ultimately across Scotland.

This hugely successful model is based on the therapeutic principles of human rights and individualised recovery plans. It is centred around walk-in community wellbeing hubs, which are interlinked to a myriad of community services, incorporating employment, job training, housing, the arts, recreation and the life aspirations of sufferers.

One of the strongest aspects of the Trieste model and the aims of The Joshi Project is that it works with people’s abilities, not their disabilities. This is what makes it a powerful social movement that benefits both the individual and the community, not just a treatment alternative.

The current system of mental health services in the Highlands and, indeed, throughout Scotland, is incapable of accomplishing true recovery for the vast majority of people who seek its help. It’s time to change what doesn’t work.

An online questionnaire will be sent to you, which will be used to collate your views and aspirations. Your answers will help us provide for the needs of those with lived experience, as well as help us to know what we can do to complement the NHS.



People you will hear from today

Catherine Smith – Catherine is the co-founder/co-chair of The Joshi Project, and Joshi's mum. Her working life has included teaching, marketing/business development and a multitude of part-time occupations when her children were little. Since Catherine and Mark lost Joshi, their focus has been on making her life count for something wonderful, and from this has grown the Joshi Project. Together with Mark and their son, Ethan, they hope to make this world a better place for those with mental health problems. Website: joshiproject.org.

Sue Lyons – Susan is the Manager of HUG Action for Mental Health, a collective advocacy charity working with people with learning disabilities and mental illness across the Highlands. Sue has 30 years of experience with advocacy and activism, and is passionate about mental health, rural poverty, community empowerment and democratic engagement. Sue is a graduate in Sustainable Development from the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and is involved in research into rural poverty. Sue also has a keen interest in Scottish History. She is a member of a medieval re-enactment group, and can often be seen in a wimple in castles around Scotland during the summer. Website: spiritadvocacy.org.uk

Mark S. Smith – Mark is the co-founder/co-chair of the Joshi Project, and Joshi's dad. Professionally, he has spent most of his working life as an international writer, journalist and author. His work has appeared in dozens of the world's major publications. He is the former long-time deputy business editor of The Herald newspaper in Glasgow, and the author of the bestselling Holocaust biography, "Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling," among other books. He co-founded The Joshi Project with his wife, Cath, after the tragic death of his daughter in 2020. Mark defines himself as a long-time advocate for human decency and compassion, a husband, son, brother, uncle, friend and father of Ethan. Website: joshiproject.org

Graham Morgan – Graham has worked in mental health for 30 years. He was awarded an MBE for services to mental health, and has played a part in creating the 2003 Mental Health Care and Treatment Act. He is the engagement and participation officer (lived experience) at the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. He was also a joint service user contributor of the year to the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Graham has helped highlight HUG's work in Romania, Poland, Catalonia, Portugal and Czech Republic as part of a European Project. He describes his best experiences as meeting people with mental health problems and trying to change the world in a way yet to be discovered! He has a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia and has been on a compulsory treatment order under the act for the past 12 years.

People you will hear from today

Greg Hart – Greg is an Invernessian and former advertising, tourism and marketing executive. Early-life trauma left him with profound mental-health struggles that did not manifest themselves until many years later. He credits the power of mercy and forgiveness for pulling him out of the depths of his despair. He is a graduate of Paisley University and would love to return to the tourism profession as soon as possible. He enjoys foreign travel, especially his time in Israel, France and Italy. More recently, Greg has been volunteering in a café and charity shop. He loves music and sports, and is a good friend to many. He says he is dedicated, especially after his own lived experience with mental illness, to helping others in the mental health sector to learn from what helped him.

Joanna Kerr – Joanna is a highly valued board member of The Joshi Project. She was born in Edinburgh, but has lived most of her life in Inverness and considers herself a proud Highlander. Her honours degree in French and Italian from the University of Glasgow initially led her into the tourism industry, then secondary teaching via her postgraduate M.Phil in Psychology. She is now working to realise her dream of researching the impact of Emotional Intelligence in mental health conditions, with the positive impacts that the Trieste model can make included in her study. Joanna has struggled for many years with mental health and continues to receive regular psychiatric treatment in Inverness. She has also discovered the enormous therapeutic benefits of art, music, creative writing and walking. She says they have all vastly improved her mental wellbeing.

Lucy Irvine – Lucy was born in 1956 near London and attended various educational institutions before leaving the conventional system at age 13. She experimented with a number of different modes of living, including life in the Scottish Highlands, before deliberately reducing choices by moving to a remote, uninhabited tropical island with a man she hardly knew. She says she found this experience so beneficial, in terms of lending perspective to all aspects of existence, that later when she had children, she took two of them out of conventional education for a year to live on another remote island. She wrote the bestseller, “Castaway”, in 1982. A film of the same name, based loosely on the book, starred Amanda Donohoe and Oliver Reed. Lucy wrote a further bestseller, based on her second island experience, and worked as a writer and teacher before moving to Bulgaria in 2007. While there, she established the Lucy Irvine Foundation Europe (LIFE), a charity helping equines, dogs, cats and humans in need. Website: lucyirvinefoundationeurope.org

People you will hear from today

Vincenzo Spaccapietra – Vincenzo currently works with homeless people in London and has previously been a "guest" and a volunteer with Trieste's mental health services. He is a psychology postgraduate with a profound interest in mental health and a genuine passion for working in close contact with people. He has experience of a broad range of services in different countries, working in both a system without psychiatric hospitals, locked doors or restraints, as in Trieste, and within the UK system, which continues to adhere to the predominantly medical model of psychiatry and confinement. He says he is always looking for opportunities to develop further psychological competence, learn and unlearn, with a view to improving his clinical awareness and to give something back to society.

Dr Roberto Mezzina – Dr Mezzina is an advisor to The Joshi Project. He worked as a psychiatrist for 42 years in Trieste, where he was instrumental in developing the 24-hour Community Mental Health Centre (CMHC) model. He was also the Director of the Department of Mental Health in Trieste between 2012 and 2019, and Head of the World Health Organisation's Collaborating Centre for Research. He is currently Chair of the International Mental Health Collaborating Network, and Vice President of the World Federation for Mental Health, with responsibility for Program Development. He is also a member of WHO Advisory Groups, for the new World Health Report and for Covid-19 Impact on Mental Health.

Dr S.P. Sashidharan – Dr S.P. Sashidharan is an advisor to The Joshi Project. He is a Glasgow-based psychiatrist, and over the years, has worked in multiple roles within the NHS and in academia. After completing his psychiatric training at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, he worked as a Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Director of North Birmingham Mental Health Trust. He was also Professor of Community Psychiatry at the University of Birmingham. He was a member of the National Taskforce for Mental Health in England and was instrumental in developing and implementing the first fully functionalised model of community mental health services, later adopted as national policy in England. On his return to Scotland, he worked as a Consultant Psychiatrist with the Crisis Resolution & Home Treatment Service in NHS Lanarkshire and was a board member of the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and Honorary Professor at the Institute of Health & Wellbeing at the University of Glasgow. He has been a mental health consultant with the World Health Organisation and is actively involved in fostering progressive, community mental health care in several countries.