time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Running a project that challenges mental health stigma and discrimination

A social contact toolkit for groups and organisations
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Who is this toolkit for?
This toolkit is for groups and organisations who are interested in running a project to combat mental health stigma and discrimination by improving attitudes and behaviour towards those of us experiencing mental health problems. It gives practical advice and real life examples from projects funded through the Time to Change grant fund (2012 to 2015).

This toolkit is for you if:
- Your organisation or group is passionate about challenging mental health stigma and discrimination
- You believe this work should be led by people with lived experience of mental health problems
- You want to run a series of activities, over at least 6 months (a project, rather than a one-off event)
- You are keen to learn from research and best practice
- You are looking for tips on planning and evaluating a project and working with volunteers
- You have funding or could apply for funding to employ staff, pay volunteer expenses and cover other project costs

For examples of projects, see section 5

Not for you?
- If you haven’t run a project before, or you are thinking about setting up a new group, see Time to Change’s Speak Out resource for information on everything from managing a budget to constituting your group: www.time-to-change.org.uk/speakout
- Time to Change also has guidance on running one-off events and campaigns with young people. To download these resources, go to: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
How does mental health stigma and discrimination affect people?

In any year one in four people are likely to experience a mental health problem. This includes conditions such as phobias, depression and anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. People from all communities and backgrounds can experience mental health problems.

Despite being very common, we still find it hard to talk about mental health problems. This has led to long-standing myths and misunderstandings. For example: many people mistakenly think it is not possible to recover from a mental health problem, that all people with mental health problems are dangerous, or that having a mental health problem is a sign of weakness. As a result, we can often feel ashamed about our own or our family members’ experiences of mental health problems. Some people may avoid acquaintances that have experienced a mental health problem or be wary about offering a job to someone they know has had a mental health problem.

In England, almost nine out of ten people affected by mental health problems experience discrimination. As a result:

- People become isolated
- They are excluded from everyday activities
- It is harder to get or keep a job
- People can be reluctant to seek help, which makes recovery slower and more difficult
- Their physical health is affected

Despite improvements since the launch of Time to Change, discrimination against people with mental health problems is still widespread. This is often worsened by the experience of additional discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, religion or disability.

What can we do to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination?

In many settings, mental health is still considered a taboo subject and, despite being happy to discuss physical health problems, people rarely mention mental health. To break this silence, we need to start talking about mental health.

One of the best ways to challenge stigma and discrimination is by creating opportunities for people with experience of mental health problems to share these with the public in informal one-to-one conversations. This coming together, and exchange of information, can change people’s attitudes and behaviour. Hearing about the reality of living with a mental health problem from someone with first-hand experience can challenge prejudices. We call this social contact.

Prior to becoming a ‘Voice of Experience’ for the Human Search Engine, I hadn’t really talked about my illness (apart from with some friends and family) and it was like carrying a hidden secret. I was going to work and people didn’t know about it.”

Volunteer, Human Search Engine project

For statistics on the impact of mental health stigma and discrimination, see the Time to Change social contact toolkit for funders: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
What do we mean by social contact?

In the context of anti-stigma work, social contact does not refer to social interaction, befriending or peer support. It refers to a one-to-one conversation where someone with relevant training talks about their experience of mental health problems - with the explicit aim of challenging stereotypes.

Social contact happens when someone with experience of a mental health problem comes together with someone who doesn’t have, or isn’t aware that they have, this experience. Information is exchanged, experiences shared, and people get to know each other. In this context, disclosure around mental health can lead to an increase in knowledge, a shift in perception, or even a complete change in beliefs, as this person reassesses their attitude towards people with mental health problems.

To run a social contact project, you could work alongside volunteers to plan activities to make these conversations happen in your community. The conversations could take place in community centres, in places of worship, at public events, or in workplaces. You will know busy places in your community and fun activities that will get people involved and start conversations about mental health.

In order to challenge stigma, social contact conversations must include disclosure of a mental health problem. In addition, certain circumstances make social contact more effective. In these, participants:

- **Have an equal status in the conversation or activity** - although volunteers may enter the conversation with the advantage of preparation, as much as possible, the aim is to have natural conversation.

- **Feel safe to share their experiences, ask questions, and explain their perspective**

- **Collaborate / have a common goal** - this could range from ‘getting to know each other’ over a cup of tea to singing together in a community choir.

In addition:

- **The person sharing their experience is able to provide information that challenges negative stereotypes** - this could be a postcard with statistics or an anecdote from the volunteer’s own experience.

- **There is some kind of institutional support for the activity** - a programme or body responsible for bringing the groups together and making the activity happen.
The evidence

We know social contact works because research has proved that it has a very real impact. In 2006 a review of over 500 studies in which social contact between different groups took place confirmed that it can help reduce prejudice (as cited in Hewstone, M. (2003). Intergroup contact: Panacea for prejudice? The Psychologist, 16,35205).

In 2005, Like Minds, Like Mine, a New Zealand based Project to Counter Stigma and Discrimination Associated with Mental Illness published The Power of Contact, a paper on the impact of social contact in challenging stigma and discrimination: www.likeminds.org.nz/assets/National-Plans/1power-of-contact.pdf

But why does it work?

Social contact helps people to realise that not everyone with a particular identity is the same. Many people stigmatise because they think they have never met anyone with this ‘other’ identity or because the experiences they have had were negative. People’s opinions may be influenced by external factors, such as newspapers, or characters on TV. However, having a conversation with someone with first-hand experience of the issues helps people realise that real people are a lot more complex than the two-dimensional stereotypes they find in society.

By running a social contact project, your group or organisation can challenge stigma and discrimination in a very straightforward way - by setting up opportunities for meaningful one-to-one conversations between volunteers with lived experience and members of the public.

“We go out with a mobile print workshop and get members of the public making prints which have been designed by people with mental health problems. The images are starting points for the conversations, saying things such as ‘we all have a story.’”
Sarah, volunteer and member of the Conversation Station management group

“(I liked) that the activity was practical so offered a non-judgmental way into discussing or talking about the issues.”
Member of the public, Conversation Station project

For a Time to Change definition of social contact, refer to the glossary

For further research and a list of useful reading, see Funding social contact projects, a toolkit for funders: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
Leadership and involvement of people with experience of mental health problems

Those of us with mental health problems can feel disempowered and excluded from our society as a result of the stigma and discrimination we face.

By getting involved in a social contact project, people with lived experience can feel more confident and empowered to take further action in their communities. By setting up specific leadership opportunities (e.g. membership of a project steering group, a Project Coordinator or Lead Volunteer role) people will shape, develop and manage the project, building on their skills and using these to improve the project.

Some people may face increased discrimination towards aspects of their identity, in addition to their mental health, for example: their sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural heritage, or disability. In this context, speaking out about our mental health problems can be harder. Social contact isn’t a one-size fits all approach. In different communities, more time may be needed to build general awareness and understanding. In some contexts, recruiting volunteers may be more difficult or more support may need to be in place before volunteers are confident to speak about their mental health problems publically. All these factors will affect the number of people your project reaches.

"I have gained a lot. I can talk in front of an audience but this has given me a wider experience... I would like to take things further and organise a conference for African mental health professionals in the near future. This project gave me the confidence to attend an event at City University...
I am already talking to AHPN about doing more with them. This has made me realise I have a lot more to offer, and I have the confidence to offer it."
Amosi, Church Champion, AHPN
Many organisations ask for feedback from people using their services or consult with service users about aspects of a service. However, this toolkit will provide guidance on taking this further: setting up a project that not only involves, but is led by the people with most at stake – people with experience of mental health problems.

For a guide to measuring different levels of leadership and involvement, the ladder of participation is a useful tool: [www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/ideas.htm](http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/ideas.htm)

For guidance on leadership and involvement, see section 3 and examples in section 5


**Background to Time to Change**

Time to Change is England’s biggest ever programme to end the discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. It is run by the leading mental health charities, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness. Time to Change is funded by the Department of Health, Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund.

Time to Change has been running since 2007, and since the campaign started there has been a real change in the way that people with mental health problems are perceived by and treated in society. In recent years there has been a growing movement of people willing to speak out about their mental health and let others know what it really means to live with a mental health problem.

“It’s about changing attitudes and perceptions of mental health, so it becomes something that’s ‘normal’ to discuss openly.”

Nicola, Lead Volunteer, Challenging mental health myths project

**The Time to Change grant fund**

- Funded 65 social contact projects between 2012-2015
- Awarded more than £2 million
- A third of the money funded projects led by and reaching people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- All projects were led by people with lived experience of mental health problems

All projects worked towards these outcomes:

- **Outcome 1**: Improve public attitudes and behaviour towards mental health issues, leading to more people facing less discrimination in relation to their mental health
- **Outcome 2**: Improve the confidence and ability of people with mental health problems to take action to tackle stigma and discrimination
- **Outcome 3**: Improve the confidence of people with mental health problems to engage in and contribute to the life of their community

For case studies from funded projects, see section 5 of this toolkit
The results

Changes in public opinion:
Members of the public engaged in conversations about mental health were asked to complete a survey that measured attitudes and intended behaviour towards people with mental health problems. These results were compared with baseline figures from a 2014 Ipsos MORI ‘omnibus’ survey.
As of September 2014, after attending a social contact event:
- Audience attitudes improved by 9% compared to the 2014 baseline figures
- 84% of audience members are “more willing” to challenge unfairness towards someone with a mental health problem
- 81% of the total audience are “more willing” to speak more openly about their mental health problems

A follow-up survey completed by audience members 1-3 months after they attended a Time to Change event showed that:
- 58% of people have talked about their own mental health since the event - 4% for the first time. 71% have talked about someone else’s mental health since the event.
- Since the event, 31% say they’ve witnessed or experienced unfair treatment because of mental health. 62% of these people did something about the unfairness. Of those who said something, 91% said the Time to Change event helped them to do this.

Volunteer empowerment and social capital:
To measure the impact on people with mental health problems, volunteers were asked to rate changes in their feelings of confidence, empowerment and social capital.
- 45% of volunteers say they are more empowered after having participated in four or more Time to Change events. 35% indicated that their social capital had increased after four or more events.
- 63% of all volunteers say the experience has “definitely” given them confidence to try a similar activity in the future, and 26% replied that it “possibly” had.

For more information on the Time to Change grant fund, and descriptions of funded projects, see: www.time-to-change.org.uk/grants
For further detail on evaluation results, see the Time to Change social contact toolkit for funders: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
For case studies from other social contact projects, read section 5
This guidance was developed by organisations funded through the Time to Change grant fund (2012-15). Their projects lasted between 6 and 18 months and created opportunities for people with lived experience to take on leadership roles. Most projects had activities taking place every week.
**Step 1: Your audience: Deciding on a target audience. How will you reach them?**

You’ll need to reach out to the public, not people who are already sympathetic to your aims. If you want to reach people from a particular group or community, make sure people from this group are involved in the planning right from the start. Consider barriers people experience, especially groups that may experience discrimination.

There are many different ways to reach the public. Below, you’ll find the benefits and challenges of three different approaches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Going to where people are:</strong> pre-arranged activities in businesses, places of worship or community centres</td>
<td>• Can target specific groups or communities</td>
<td>• Need to have, or develop, relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Institutional support: backing from the organisation / leaders gives status</td>
<td>• Time required to explain purpose, agree dates and times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Indoors – won’t be rained off, can have longer, more in-depth conversations</td>
<td>• Organisations’ priorities are different - last minute cancellations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Popping up’ in a public space or at pre-existing event</strong></td>
<td>• Takes mental health into the public sphere and reaches high numbers of people</td>
<td>• Public may not be interested or have time for a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No need to carry out promotion</td>
<td>• External factors can negatively impact on social contact e.g. loud music, bad weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can choose events that attract particular audiences</td>
<td>• Public may be reluctant to complete evaluation forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting people to a <strong>stand-alone social contact event</strong></td>
<td>• Control over location, venue layout, etc</td>
<td>• Very difficult to promote a social contact event without attracting people already interested in mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can target specific communities</td>
<td>• Resource required (staff, materials, venue hire etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A big event can highlight the importance of the issue</td>
<td>• A one-off event gives limited opportunities for learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ For examples of different approaches, see section 5.
Step 2: Working with others: Establishing partnerships with other organisations/stakeholders

Working in partnership with another organisation, group or individual can be a useful way of reaching your audience. If your group has identified a gap in your skills or networks, you could look for an organisation that has this expertise. The right partnership could also raise the profile of your work and be a good way to share resources.

“Having a close relationship with Reverend Shoshanya, a respected faith leader within the community, was our key link between the project and multi-denominational church leaders nationally.”
Deryck, Head of Policy, AHPN

For a partnership to be mutually beneficial, you need:

- A shared approach and values
- An agreement or Terms of Reference that covers project targets and deliverables, roles and responsibilities, expectations around communication, named contacts and resolution of disputes
- Both groups to be involved in decision-making (e.g. through the project steering group)
- Clear and regular communication channels
- To collate and share data (e.g. on volunteers, events, people you’ve engaged)
- To recognise and manage the politics (e.g. competition for funding)
- To be honest if the partnership stops being useful or if the agreement isn’t being met
- Attention to detail (e.g. using partners’ logos on documents)

For guidance on writing Terms of Reference, see: [www.invo.org.uk/getting-started/template-one/](http://www.invo.org.uk/getting-started/template-one/)
Step 3: Project activities

One-to-one conversations will be at the centre of your events. Any activities will need to set these up and provide time and space for people to feel comfortable and get to know one another. Volunteers involved in delivery should take a lead on planning any activities. You can build on people's skills and interests and anticipate any problems that might come up.

Here are some of the benefits and challenges of different ways of setting up social contact conversations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared activity</strong></td>
<td>• Longer conversations - breaking down barriers</td>
<td>• Some people may not be interested in the activity or have time to get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Volunteers use their skills and seen as ‘more than a diagnosis’</td>
<td>• Requires volunteers with specific skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People can take a ‘memento’ away, prompting further conversations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Creative hook</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Performance/film raises the profile and engages people</td>
<td>• Need two teams of volunteers - performers and social contact volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The hook introduces the subject of mental health - making conversations easier</td>
<td>• Conversations not prioritised - people leave after the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Volunteers create the hook, developing wider skills (e.g. in filmmaking)</td>
<td>• Time and money required to produce the hook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Just talking</strong></td>
<td>• Prioritises volunteers’ lived experience</td>
<td>• Volunteers may need more training and confidence in managing the conversations and telling their story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relaxed conversation, opportunity to ask questions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited resources required (can use a simple quiz as an ice-breaker)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Short films, statistics, leaflets and quizzes are all available free on the resources section of the Time to Change website: [www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources)

For examples of different approaches, see section 5.
### Step 4: Project timetable

Every project is different but below you’ll find some of the key stages and things to consider at each point in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial planning</strong></td>
<td>Work with potential volunteers and community members to start planning your project. Before deciding on activities, you’ll need to be aware of your starting point. In your community, how much awareness do people have of mental health problems? How much of a taboo is mental health? How is it talked about? Start thinking about who and how many people you want to engage in one-to-one conversations, the most effective way to do this, and how you could evaluate the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiting a steering group</strong></td>
<td>Recruiting people with a range of skills and experience will help the project succeed in its aims. Partners, potential volunteers and community leaders will all have a stake in your project. Make sure the steering group reflects the values of the project. In order for the project to be user-led, most people should have lived experience of mental health problems. <a href="#">For more information on steering groups, see section 3</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot a social contact activity</strong></td>
<td>If you are new to social contact trying it out in a ‘safe’ environment (i.e. somewhere you’re familiar with), will help you learn what works. You can then make changes to your project plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan support for volunteers</strong></td>
<td>After your pilot activity, you’ll have a good idea of the support that volunteers may need. Your steering group will need to look at the different options for providing this support – from paid staff, other volunteers and/or other agencies. <a href="#">For suggestions, see the Community Event toolkit: www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/community-event-toolkit.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make contact and build relationships with other organisations</strong></td>
<td>Depending on where and how you are planning to engage the public (in community settings, places of worship, workplaces) you’ll need to make plans with other organisations. Having clear information explaining what you are trying to achieve will make these initial contacts easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer recruitment, induction, training and support</strong></td>
<td>To recruit a diverse group of volunteers, you’ll need to advertise the opportunity widely, using your contacts in the community. Social contact volunteering isn’t easy and isn’t for everyone! Have clear information on your organisation, the project and what different roles involve. Don’t forget to provide information on travel expenses, health and safety and the different support available through the project. This may be good time to do a skills audit – working with volunteers to identify the skills they are bringing to the project and could share with others. Volunteers who are new to the project will need training in sharing their story and managing social contact conversations. Ask volunteers if there are other skills they'd like to develop, and what type of training would best meet their needs and interests. <a href="#">For more information, see section 3</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Deliver initial social contact activities

The overall direction of the project will be shaped by the steering group, but volunteers can be involved in planning individual events by attending planning meetings and taking on specific tasks. For example, volunteers could arrange media coverage of the event, create a list of local services to be used for signposting or plan how best to evaluate the activity.

After each event, make time to debrief with volunteers and to hear back from other organisations that were involved.

### Review progress and recruit more volunteers

Regular reviews will make sure the project is on track and meeting its outcomes. As well as your steering group and external organisations, it’s good to involve the whole volunteer team.

Look at feedback and evaluation data you’ve gathered to answer key questions such as:
- Are you reaching people who aren’t already ‘warm’ to the issues?
- Are conversations making a difference to people’s attitudes?
- Are volunteers leading activities and building on their skills?
- Do volunteers feel supported?

If you need to, now is the time to make changes to how you deliver the project. If things are going well, celebrate!

As your initial volunteers develop their confidence some may move on to other opportunities and you will need to recruit more people to maintain a good sized team. Experienced volunteers are often the best people to promote the opportunity.

If you have activities planned why not invite potential volunteers along to meet the team and get an idea of what the project is really like.

### Support experienced volunteers

Experienced volunteers may be keen to take on specific roles in the project. This could mean training new volunteers, leading on project promotion or event planning. Put time aside to support volunteers into these roles by providing training or mentoring opportunities.
### Top up social contact training
New volunteers will need training, but experienced volunteers may also benefit from 'top up' training.

### Social activities
Plan in opportunities for the team to get to know each other outside of training and events. Social activities will help to build relationships and support.

### Deliver further social contact activities
Every time you deliver an event or activity, the team will develop their skills and learn more about the best ways to engage the public and have meaningful conversations. Make sure this learning is shared through the team.

### Drawing to a close
At some point, most projects draw to a close. It’s important to anticipate this and build in time to work with the team and external stakeholders to evaluate

- What have you achieved?
- What went well/what didn’t?
- What have individuals gained from the project and what do people want to do next?
- Are there new ways of working that your group/organisation can take forwards?

### Share and celebrate success
Don’t keep your evaluation results to yourself! Write a press release, update your website and celebrate success with volunteers, project partners and future funders.
Step 5: Planning your budget

Involving potential volunteers in budgeting to be sure you aren't overlooking any key areas. Before you start, make sure you are aware of what resources you already have access to. For example: a partner organisation may be able to provide a meeting room free of charge.

- **Salary, national insurance and pension:** Running a social contact project involves managing different relationships, supporting a team of volunteers and planning events. It’s important to have a good salary to attract the right candidate.

- **Training:** Staff and volunteers are essential to your project’s success. Make sure you invest in them by budgeting sufficient resource for social contact training and training for volunteers to take on leadership roles.

- **Travel:** Remember that staff and volunteers will need travel expenses to attend events, but also meetings and training sessions. Bear in mind different people’s access needs and include budget to cover taxis if necessary.

- **Direct costs:** Depending on the activity you carry out, you may need budget for stationery, materials, food and drink. To ensure everyone can participate, you may need to include budget for interpreters or other reasonable adjustments without which some people would not be able to fully participate (e.g. because of visual or other physical impairments, or because they need a carer with them).

- **Meeting costs:** If you don’t have access to a free meeting room, you’ll need to include this in your budget. Work out the number of meetings and training sessions you’ll be running in order to calculate this accurately.

- **Events:** Include budget for team building and celebration events with your volunteers.

- **Communications:** If you don’t already have one, you’ll need a mobile phone so volunteers can keep in touch on event days.

- **Promotion:** Having a blog or website can be useful for promoting your project, particularly if you are engaging other organisations.

- **Print costs:** You may need to print training materials, feedback forms, leaflets about the project, and signposting information.

- **Postage:** Some volunteers may not have email access so you may need to keep in touch via post.

- **Management costs:** Staff working on your project will need regular supervision and line management support. If you have a finance officer they may also spend time supporting the project.

- **Overheads:** If you are applying for funding, most funders would expect you to use Full Cost Recovery to calculate your overheads.
Step 6: Staffing for your project

Involving your steering group in the different stages of recruiting project staff by drafting the job description, promoting the role and sitting on the interview panel.

It is important to recruit staff who can demonstrate a commitment to the values of your project and an understanding of how social contact can be used to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. They'll need experience of engaging the public, managing relationships and working with volunteers. Being comfortable speaking about their own experience of mental health problems would be an asset, so you could consider including this as a desirable criteria. If your activities will take place at weekends or evenings, or the role involves travelling, make sure you are clear about this on the job description.

The social contact projects funded by Time to Change often had one person in the role of Project Coordinator or Project Manager. In some cases, there was also a Volunteer Coordinator who focused on supporting volunteers. However you decide to staff your project, it’s important to consider how many days a week people will need to carry out the role.

“Time restraints are the main problem I face in delivering this project. I have two days per week to coordinate this project. Since the project has developed and we have established ourselves more, the interest from businesses has increased. This is great but it can be difficult to manage. What has helped me immensely with this problem is the ongoing commitment and dedication of the volunteers I’ve recruited. Their support has been invaluable.”

Jodie, Project Coordinator, Managing mental health myths
**Step 7: Managing risk**

Any community project will have risks, but with good planning, most risks can be anticipated, avoided or managed. You’ll need to identify risks specific to your own project, but the list below may be a useful starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Description</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Volunteers leave the project or aren’t available to participate                   | - Recruit a large pool of volunteers  
- Plan at least two recruitment drives  
- Communicate event dates well in advance |
| Reaching people who already have positive attitudes (not your target audience)     | - Check promotional materials aren’t attracting people already knowledgeable about mental health  
- Be part of another event that you know is likely to reach the wider public  
- Go to where people are (workplaces, places of worship, community venues) |
| Project Officer/Coordinator struggles in her/his role                             | - Regular supervision sessions with line manager  
- Peer mentoring  
- External supervision  
- Ensure sufficient administrative support |
| Volunteers lack confidence in sharing their experience of mental health problems   | - Revisit training sessions, using role-play  
- Peer mentoring  
- Storytelling training to build volunteers’ awareness of the power of their stories |
| Member of the public is distressed                                                | - Have signposting information to hand  
- Ensure that project staff are confident in managing this situation  
- Ensure volunteers are trained in referring people to project staff  
- Debrief after the event |
| Member of the public has negative attitudes and challenges a volunteer, causing distress | - Have a pre-agreed sign, for another member of the team to intervene  
- Have a quiet space for volunteers to take time out  
- Debrief after the event |
| Location not suitable for social contact                                          | - Visit in advance to ensure location is accessible, comfortable, has an appropriate space for conversations, a quiet space for volunteers, and will reach sufficient members of the public |
| Members of the public don’t wish to engage in conversation                        | - Consider a ‘hook’ to engage people or a simple activity that acts as an icebreaker  
- Identify what the barriers are, consulting with community partners and making the most of their support |
| Problems gathering evaluation data                                                | - Make sure volunteers know how important this is and plan the best way to do it  
- Change your approach if it isn’t working  
- Offer refreshments or freebie to people who take part in your evaluation |
Step 8: Evaluating impact

You will want to know what difference your project is making and be able to communicate this to your partners, volunteers, steering group, trustees, and funders. Receiving more funding and support for your project may depend on having good evaluation results.

To plan any evaluation, you need to know what impact you want to have. With a social contact project, you’d expect to see change in two groups:

- **The public**: An improvement in the public’s attitudes and intended behaviour towards people with mental health problems. People are more likely to support a friend, family member or colleague, more likely to speak about mental health (their own and others), and to access support

- **Volunteers with lived experience**: An increase in volunteers’ confidence and ability to take action to tackle stigma and discrimination, and a reduction in self-stigma.

At Time to Change, we measured these changes using two different surveys. Volunteers completed surveys before they started taking part in events and again towards the middle and/or end of the project. Members of the public completed a survey after they’d been involved in an activity. They could do this on paper or online, by giving their email address. These were compared to baseline data Time to Change had collected.

**Tips on evaluation**

- Involve the whole team in deciding what information you need to collect, and the best way to do this. Plan this at the beginning of the project

- Think about access. If you use surveys, will everyone be able to complete them? Will you need translated forms or an interpreter to be present?

- Tell people why you need the information, and what you plan to do with it

- Only collect information you need and keep personal and sensitive data securely

- Thank people for giving their time

- Analyse the information you have collected. What is working and why? What isn’t working? What can you learn from this?

- Use the information you’ve collected to improve your activities, feed back to the team and your partners, and celebrate your achievements

For access to Time to Change’s baseline data, email: info@time-to-change.org.uk

For general tools and resources relating to evaluation, see the Charities Evaluation Service website: www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources or Inspiring Impact website inspiringimpact.org

“Greg (Lead Volunteer) did an excellent job on summarising the (evaluation data) in a really accessible presentation. We put this on the agenda at one of the planning meetings which I encouraged volunteers to attend to find out what excellent results and feedback we were getting. I also made this presentation available to those who were unable to attend.”

Project Coordinator, Mind in Brighton and Hove.
Running a project led by people with lived experience of mental health problems (a user-led project)

“Having the project led by Champions with experience of mental health issues was such a key asset that we think it provides a ‘what works’ template for this type of work.”
Deryk, Head of Policy, AHPN

If your organisation is used to providing services to people with mental health problems, inviting service users to get involved and lead a project may mean a change in your relationship: you will be sharing decision-making and power. You may have reservations about ‘letting go’, be unaware of the skills people can bring to the project, or be concerned about the impact the project could have on participants’ health. However, making sure your project is meaningfully led by people with lived experience, throughout the project, and at all levels, is key to your project’s success and could be the start of a new way of working for your organisation.

What might this look like?

- A steering group that includes volunteer representatives and where most people have lived experience
- People with lived experience employed to work on the project e.g. Project Coordinator
- Volunteers responsible for specific aspects of the project e.g. evaluation, promotion, peer-support
- Volunteers take a lead on planning specific events

Tips on establishing a steering group

It’s important that people with lived experience of mental health problems shape the project from the initial stages. One of the ways to do this is by setting up a steering group where most members have lived experience.

- Be clear on the purpose of the group. A steering group will steer the project and make key decisions about its direction
- Create a clear Terms of Reference for the group. This should include background on the project (values, outcomes, delivery model and targets), as well as the practicalities (list of members, their responsibilities, decision-making process, frequency of meetings etc.). There are many examples online. For example: www.invo.org.uk/getting-started/template-one/
- Write a clear role description, and use this in the recruitment process. To recruit people with lived experience of mental health problems or people from a specific group or community e.g. South Asian women, plan how you will promote the opportunity
- When recruiting, be clear about what skills you are looking for, the level of commitment needed (i.e. the number of meetings to attend) and include information about expenses, training and support
- Have a good balance of different stakeholders. For example, a good ratio of volunteers, representatives of partner organisations, and members of the community
- If people are new to this role, they may benefit from training and support. This could be particularly relevant if one member is representing a wider group of people and feeding in their ideas. Work as a group to identify any training needs the group has, and plan how best to meet these
- The steering group should meet regularly throughout the project: it can be useful to decide the dates well in advance
Tips for running a steering group meeting:

- To ensure meetings run smoothly and everyone’s voice is heard, consider drawing up a working agreement as a group. This could cover confidentiality, respect and timekeeping.
- Make sure the meeting is accessible to everyone. Consider location, timings, childcare/work responsibilities. Skype or conference calls can be a good solution if someone would not otherwise be able to participate.
- Value everyone’s time by setting up a pleasant environment, providing refreshments and expenses.
- Consider rotating key roles (chair, minutes, timekeeping).
- Maintain momentum through the project by celebrating successes, changing the format of the meetings (e.g. short presentations, break out groups etc).
- Make sure the group have real ownership over the project and access to all the information they need to make good decisions. Bring the budget and updates on activities and targets to the meetings.
- Give clear feedback on the impact of decisions made by the group. If suggestions can’t be implemented, explain why.
- Keep on top of the admin! Share the agenda and updates in advance and circulate notes promptly.
- Make the most of people’s skills and contacts.

"The steering group was instrumental in helping us in many ways, for example: creating a format and structure for the project events, finding the right image and wording for our publicity and taking part in our pilot event. They were an invaluable source of ideas and always ready to give whatever they could to support the project.”

Mina, Project Coordinator, Human Search Engine project
Volunteer journey

In a social contact project, volunteers are your most important resource. Volunteers can gain a lot from projects by building on their skills and gaining confidence. However, to make this happen, you’ll need to work alongside the team to think through the volunteers’ journey from recruitment to active volunteering to moving on.

When should we recruit volunteers?

It’s important to recruit some volunteers in the early stages so they can be involved in planning and piloting events. Some volunteers will naturally move on, so you may need to recruit more at a later date.

How do we find the ‘right’ volunteers?

Tell people who you are, what you are doing, and why – this can be very inspiring!

When recruiting, be clear about what the different roles involve. Promote the opportunities widely to make sure you recruit volunteers from different backgrounds. Monitor this and carry out targeted recruitment, if necessary.

An info session will give people the chance to ask questions face to face. Try and anticipate any barriers potential volunteers might face and be open to discussing these. Also, run more than one session at different times of the day to accommodate those who may not be able to attend a daytime session due to work commitments, childcare or medication restrictions.

Recruit a large pool of volunteers to allow for the fact that not all volunteers will attend each event.

Be upfront about expectations. Volunteers will need to be comfortable talking about their mental health problems with the public. This isn’t an easy thing to do! Acknowledge this, but explain the difference it will make.

Tell people how they will benefit from volunteering for the project (e.g. experience, training, support, fun!)

Consider access. For example: if you are working in a rural area, how will volunteers attend training sessions and events? Remember that potential volunteers may have work or family responsibilities and bear this in mind when considering timings.

For more info on working with volunteers, see the Event Toolkit: www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/community-event-toolkit.pdf
Volunteers’ ownership of the project and activities

Volunteers will be more motivated if they are involved in planning and decision making for the project. Not all volunteers will be able to inform the overall direction of the project by sitting on the steering group. However, they may be able to feed into this through a volunteers’ meeting. Plan the best way to do this and be clear what aspects of the project can be changed, and what can’t (e.g. the budget may be limited).

In addition, there may be opportunities for experienced volunteers to have ownership of specific events or responsibility for areas such as media work or mentoring new volunteers.

Training and support for volunteers

As with all areas of your social contact project, volunteers should identify what training and support they would find most useful. Why not carry out a skills audit to work out what skills people can share?

General sessions would include:

- Mental health awareness
- Mental health stigma and discrimination
- Starting, managing and ending conversations
- Sharing your story to challenge stigma, whilst keeping safe
- Working as part of a team
- Health and safety

If the activity takes place in a specific setting, volunteers may be interested in training around this. For example: AHPN provided training in church etiquette.

Although sharing our lived experience publically can be empowering, it’s important to acknowledge that it is a ‘big ask’ of volunteers and is especially difficult for people that may experience discrimination on more than one front e.g. mental health discrimination and homophobia. Initially volunteers may well be nervous and need more support around starting conversations. It’s worth considering this when you plan the ratio of people in social contact roles with those in support roles.

It is good practice to offer training before an event and to debrief after the event. Some people may have additional support needs. Make sure there is space for people to discuss these and that you are aware of the resources needed to support the team.

Volunteers may wish to set up a group to support each other in their role. Your organisation may be able to facilitate this by providing meeting space and refreshments.

“Before the first event I was quite nervous and didn’t know what to expect, but in fact it had a double effect: speaking to the public was very cathartic but what I hadn’t expected was how much I would get from meeting other volunteers with similar experiences to myself.”

Voice of Experience, Human Search Engine project
Maintaining a high number of volunteers

Some volunteers in your team may move on from the project as they take up other opportunities or their circumstances change. However, the success of your project will depend on having sufficient people available to take part in activities. We asked volunteers and project staff for their tips on managing ongoing volunteer recruitment:

- When people move on to other opportunities (other volunteering or campaigning activity, paid work etc), keep in touch and record these success stories as part of your evaluation. This is the project’s legacy and should be celebrated and shared with funders and other stakeholders.

- Volunteers’ ability to attend events may change with time. Keep the door open and maintain contact with people who are unwell or have other commitments. Try to have events on different days at times to accommodate people who are working.

- Be flexible about roles, some volunteers may wish to take public-facing roles; others may prefer a support role. This may change through the project.

- Make sure volunteers’ expenses are paid and that their contribution is recognised. Celebrate the project’s successes with the team.

- Provide opportunities for people to use and develop their skills and interests. Experienced volunteers could mentor people who are less confident, take on specific roles, or lead on a particular event.

- Social activities are a good way of building good relationships across the team.

- Don’t wait for numbers to drop before you carry out more recruitment. Involve existing volunteers in this as they’ll be the best advocates for your project.

“A strong sense of community and peer support developed between the volunteers over the course of the events - which many said was an unexpected bonus.”

Mina, Project Coordinator, Human Search Engine

Running a project that challenges mental health stigma and discrimination
If your project ends:

With any project there is sure to be a lot of learning that your group or organisation can take forwards. This might relate to what you’ve achieved and how you’ve delivered the project. Taking time to reflect on this is a good way of embedding good practice within your organisation.

“Due to the skills of one of the volunteers around social media, (the project) made us make more use of twitter when promoting events and raising awareness. Aspects of the volunteer training material that I devised has also informed a new standardised training pack for all volunteers working on any project. This project has also demonstrated the importance and the value of recognising volunteer’s strengths and providing them with opportunities to use and develop these.”

Jodie, Project Coordinator, Challenging mental health myths project

Any time of change can be difficult, so if your project is going to end, it’s good to plan time to discuss this with volunteers well in advance and give people the opportunity to talk about how they are feeling. If possible, involve volunteers in decisions about the project’s future and be honest about what your organisation can do. Support the team to reflect on what they have gained from the project and what they would like to do next. This will be very different for each individual. Volunteers in some projects funded by Time to Change have gone on to be trustees in the organisation, others have formed a group to continue campaigning activities or are volunteering on different projects. For some people, discovering new skills has led to a new job or even career change. As an organisation, one of the best ways you can support this is providing the time and space for volunteers to reflect and discuss their different options.

“Some volunteers have said that they have discovered personal talents they didn’t know they had as a result of participating on this project; others have said how much they have grown in confidence, and as a result, are now looking into volunteering on other similar projects.”

Mina, Project Coordinator, Human Search Engine
Applying for funding

If you are looking for funding for a social contact project, this webpage may be a useful starting point: www.time-to-change.org.uk/grants/other-sources-of-funding

As with any project, your application should be clear about:

- The outcomes – what will change as a result of your project
- What you will deliver, and when
- How many people will be involved, and how many people you will reach.
- If you are targeting people from groups that experience higher levels of discrimination e.g refugees and asylum seekers, you may need more time to carry out initial development work: building relationships and trust, raising awareness of mental health and recruiting volunteers. You may also reach lower numbers of people. Explain to the funder why this is the case.
- How you will demonstrate the impact of your work (see step 8, evaluating impact)
- How people with lived experience have fed into the project design and application
- Your budget – provide a breakdown showing how you’ve calculated costs. If there are good reasons why some budget lines are high, explain this to the funder. For example, if you are working in rural communities and anticipate high travel costs, make this clear.

In addition, it may be useful to refer funders to research relating to social contact. Time to Change has produced a toolkit for grant-making bodies and charitable trusts interested in supporting social contact projects. This contains a summary of evaluation findings and research on social contact: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
Bringing it to life

Time to Change funded 65 social contact projects. Every community is different, and therefore every group or organisation delivered a unique project. We’ve picked 5 examples to show you how these organisations used social contact to change attitudes. Whether you are a small arts organisation like Double Elephant CIC, a national campaigning organisation like AHPN, or a mental health charity like AWAAZ, Oxfordshire Mind, and Mind in Brighton and Hove, we hope these examples will give you ideas on running your own social contact project.

- Mind in Brighton and Hove
- AWAAZ
- Double Elephant CIC
- Oxfordshire Mind
- African Health Policy Network (AHPN)
Mind in Brighton and Hove, Challenging Mental Health Myths in the workplace

The project
Volunteers with lived experience of mental health problems visited workplaces, engaging employers and employees in conversations about mental health over tea, cake and a quiz.

Approach
Activities took place in employers’ staff rooms, at ‘Wellbeing Fairs’ or other informal events. Events started with a short presentation from a member of the team, and one of Time to Change’s short films. Following this, volunteers and staff members mingled informally. Interactive and creative activities such as Myth/Fact quizzes and ‘stress dots’ were light hearted ways of opening up conversations on a one-to-one basis.

“ This project is a great idea. Due to my own lived experience I’m all for helping employers to understand mental health... Discussing it in a more informal and relaxed way, with tea and cake, would be helpful for all parties concerned.”
Member of Listening to the Voice of Experience (LiVE) project

Learning
The first few months of the project were challenging as the Project Coordinator had to develop new relationships with employers. As the project progressed, the Project Coordinator supported volunteers to lead on specific areas. For example, one volunteer took the lead in planning and delivering an event for small businesses. Another volunteer led on making initial contacts with businesses and keeping records of this.
AWAAZ, Shared Voices project

The project
Shared Voices was led by people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Volunteers with personal experience of mental health problems worked alongside Nottingham's Change Makers Health Champions to deliver 'pop-up' social contact activities in public spaces, community events, community centres, learning centres and faith settings.

Approach
AWAAZ chose this approach because it allowed volunteers to go into the heart of the community and engage with people where they feel most comfortable. Activities were adapted for the different settings volunteers had conversations in. For example, at local faith groups the team spoke to people after religious prayers over a drink and snack.

"The success of achieving our target has been due to our wide established contacts and trust within BME communities in Nottingham."
Angela, Executive Director, AWAAZ

Learning
More support was provided to volunteers than originally anticipated. The Project Coordinator was always there to ensure their safety and enable them to have meaningful conversations. Training was provided more than once to practice conversations using role play. It was also important that the project was flexible, and that volunteers were able to attend events over weekends and in the evening.
Double Elephant CIC, The Conversation Station

The project
The Conversation Station is a print-making trailer. It ‘popped up’ at over 30 events and busy public spaces in Exeter and the surrounding area. The trailer was staffed by members with lived experience of mental health problems who invited the public to try out printmaking, using designs created by project participants.

The approach
The approach was successful because it breaks down power dynamics. Participants are sharing their expertise and experience in both printmaking and mental health. Also, people take away a memento of their visit. The images and text were deliberatively thought-provoking so these could prompt further conversations about mental health.

“(I liked) that the activity was practical so offered a non-judgmental way into discussing or talking about the issues.”
Member of the public

Learning
Approaching a member of the public and starting a conversation is challenging. Some people were involved in the project because of their interest in printmaking and were less confident about social contact. However, there were enough people in the group with different skills and interests to cover different roles. Regular management meetings, flexibility and understanding the fact that people's mental health fluctuates were important.
Oxfordshire Mind, the Human Search Engine project

The project
Members of the public attending Human Search Engine events submitted questions about mental health to ‘Search Engineers’. They were matched with a volunteer who could answer their questions using their first-hand experience of the issues.

The approach
There was an eye-catching ‘question tree’ with example questions such as ‘What’s it like to hear voices?’ This attracted people and gave permission to ask questions that might otherwise be considered taboo. Rooms were set up with small café style tables, and everyone was provided with refreshments. This created a warm, relaxed and safe space to have a 20 minute conversation.

“...The approach was open and non-threatening. I was with my two daughters 10 & 12 and it increased their awareness. A human search engine (volunteer name) clearly described the history of labelling schizophrenia and what (it) is like, she answered our question clearly.”
Member of the public

Learning
It was quite challenging to get people to actually come to events if they were stand-alone events and not part of another community activity. Festivals worked well, although fees could be high. It was harder to predict numbers at theatres and arts centres. Workplaces were an ideal location as there were no costs involved and there were fewer risks in terms of numbers and the weather.
African Health Policy Network (AHPN), Changing Perspectives through Church Champions project

The project
The Church Champions, volunteers with lived experience of mental health problems, used drama, presentations and testimonials to engage congregations in African faith settings. Following services, Church Champions shared their personal stories and the impact of mental health stigma and discrimination on their lives.

The approach
The team co-ordinated their visit with each faith leader who sometimes preached to a specific health/mental health theme, guided by a ‘Sermon Pack’ developed in conjunction with RevD David Shosanya from the Baptist faith. The faith leader would advise congregants of the time slot for the conversations. These took place when people mill around and talk/network/take tea and coffee before heading home. Having the buy-in from faith leaders was really important, as congregants were more willing to talk to Champions openly when faith leaders actively encouraged this.

Learning
Having the project led by Champions with experience of mental health issues was such a key asset that AHPN think it provides a ‘what works’ template for this type of work. In faith settings there seemed to be something about the personal ‘testimony’ or story, no matter how expressed, which resonated greatly with audiences.

“We were talking with churchgoers before the service. One mentioned something like he had come to ‘hear the word of God, not chat about mental health’... the same member of the congregation came back to speak to me afterwards, following the service and apologised and we had a lengthy conversation. That was really satisfying.”
Volunteer from AHPN’s Church Champions project
Thanks

Time to Change wishes to thank all the organisations funded through the Time to Change grant fund that generously shared their expertise through monitoring reports and shared learning sessions. With particular thanks to African Health Policy Network, AWAAZ, Double Elephant CIC, Mind in Brighton and Hove and Oxfordshire Mind.

More info

- Toolkits and guides for delivering activities: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/guides-toolkits
- Short films to show at events: www.youtube.com/user/ttcnow2008
- Volunteer training films: www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/events/training-volunteers
- Free leaflets, quizzes and posters: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources Time to Change reports and research into stigma and discrimination: www.time-to-change.org.uk/research-reports-publications
- For more information on Time to Change and social contact, email: info@time-to-change.org.uk or call 020 8215 2356
The definitions below relate to the meaning of these words in the context of this toolkit.

- **Baseline** - a starting point used to make comparisons. Baseline data can be compared with data collected after an activity to show the impact of the activity.

- **Debrief** - a discussion after and activity, covering what happened, what worked, what did not work and what to improve.

- **Direct costs** - The costs that relate clearly and directly to a project. These can include training, salaries of project staff and volunteer expenses.

- **Disclosure** - to reveal something. When someone discloses a mental health problem to someone else they are telling this person about it for the first time.

- **Discrimination** - when someone dislikes, or is prejudiced against, a certain group of people and treats people from this group unfairly. People can face discrimination because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or because they have a mental health problem.

- **Empower** - To give power or authority to a person or group. This could be through handing over resources and information or providing opportunities to take control and make change happen.

- **Full cost recovery** - Paying the full cost of a project to an organisation. This could include management costs, heating and lighting.

- **Lived experience** - First-hand experience of something. Someone with lived experience of mental health problems will have experienced mental health problems themselves.

- **Multiple discrimination** - to experience more than one form of unfair treatment such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and mental health discrimination.

- **Self-stigma** - Negative thoughts or feelings towards yourself because you have a mental health problem. Believing that the negative stereotypes (see below) linked to people with mental health problems apply to you.

- **Social capital** - The value of the relationship between people and the knowledge and skills that they have and share.

- **Social contact** - What Time to Change terms social contact happens when someone with experience of a mental health problem comes together with someone who doesn’t have, or isn’t aware that they have, this experience. Information is exchanged, experiences shared, and people get to know each other. In this context, disclosure around mental health can lead to an increase in knowledge, a shift in perception, or even a complete change in beliefs, as this person reassesses their attitude towards people with mental health problems.

- **Steering group** - a group of people responsible for managing a project.

- **Stigma** - When a person, group or condition has very negative or bad associations attached to it. There is a powerful stigma attached to mental illness, which causes people to discriminate against (see above) or stereotype (see below) people with mental health problems.

- **Stereotype** - when someone has an idea about what people from a particular group are like that is too simple or general, which leads them to believe that people from this group are all the same. Saying that all people with mental health problems are violent is an example of negative stereotyping.

- **Supervision** - regular meetings to support a volunteer or member of staff by looking at what they have done to achieve their tasks and goals and any problems they have had.

- **Taboo** - when something is not spoken about in the open.

- **Terms of reference** - a document that describes the objectives and structure of a meeting or project.

- **User-led** - a group or project where most people managing the activity and making key decisions are service users. In this toolkit, we use the term more broadly to include anyone with experience of mental health problems, whether they currently access services or not.
To receive this information in an alternative format, contact
Time to Change on info@time-to-change.org.uk, 020 8215 2356
or Mind, 15-19 The Broadway, London, E15 4BQ.