

Speakout



The Champions issue

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My journey as a Champion

How Steve Gilbert went from handing out packs to speaking at a global event

Championing Time to Talk Day

Three Champions tell us about the role they played in Time to Talk Day



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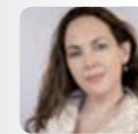
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Meet the guest editors

Champions are the lifeblood of Time to Change. There are thousands of people with direct experience of mental health problems campaigning for change. Six of them have guest edited this edition of the magazine and here they introduce themselves and tell us a bit about their involvement in the campaign.



Miranda de Barra

(Finding my voice to speak out, p5)

During my time as a Champion I have experienced a continuing positive change in myself but I have also witnessed an uplifting and inspirational change in others as a result of my efforts in tackling the stigma surrounding mental health problems. Sharing my story gives me confidence and a powerful voice.



Tom Renhard

(Time to Change in our Bristol community, p12)

I've been a Time to Change Champion for nearly three years. I have been involved in setting up a mental health campaign at my old university and also wrote a national policy for NUS National Conference, lobbying for improved support for Students' Unions to campaign on causes relating to mental health. I wanted to get involved with the magazine to give a flavour of the work that has taken place in Bristol and encourage others to share their experiences.



Steve Gilbert

(My journey as a Time to Change Champion, p8)

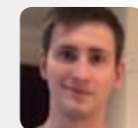
I first found out about Time to Change on Facebook. Seeing all the amazing stories and positive action of other people, I knew that I wanted to get involved and immediately signed up as a Champion. In my 18 months as a Champion, I have been as involved as possible, and writing for the magazine was another way to do this.



Sheila North

(Empowering Champions to speak out, p14)

My first Time to Change event was in Devon. Since then I've been involved in various regional events and have written several blogs. I've made friends through the campaign, and feel much more confident about talking about my own mental health.



Chris Jarrold

(Championing Time to Talk Day, p10)

I've been a Champion for two years now, going to events and meetings with people who have had similar experiences. I have also written a blog about my experiences. I believe volunteering has been positive for my own mental health and I wanted to share this message in the magazine.



Lisa Bittles

(What you can do, p16)

My role at Time to Change involves supporting people in tackling stigma and discrimination at a local level across the country. As Champions' officer at Time to Change, I support people to campaign across the country. I am pleased to contribute to Speak Out magazine as I hope it will encourage more people to get involved in speaking out about their mental health problems and to feel that their experience is important and valuable.



Time to Change Director Sue Baker reflects on the achievements of Champions.

Update from Sue Baker

Overturing generations of stigma would simply not be possible without the ever-increasing number of people with experience of mental health problems who challenge discrimination and speak openly about their experience. Champions have been working tirelessly from the very beginning of Time to Change and have helped to shift attitudes in family homes, friendship groups, in workplaces, schools, and in places of worship. They've volunteered at events and set up their own, and shared their stories on lots of different platforms.

It became clearer than ever that the voices of Champions and other mental health activists were not to be ignored when leading retailers were forced to withdraw stigmatising Halloween costumes from sale after a public outcry on social media. This demonstrated what we can really achieve when people feel empowered to challenge discrimination wherever they see it.

In March we launched the 'Get the Picture' campaign to offer alternative images to the stigmatising 'headclutcher' photo that often accompanies news stories about mental health issues. The campaign was launched after campaigners first raised the issue on Twitter and the results have been staggering, with lots of positive feedback from journalists and a commitment from many news outlets to avoid using the image.

Champions were also in the engine room on Time to Talk Day when we asked everyone to take 5 minutes to have a conversation about mental health. The day saw workplaces, individuals, schools and communities have enough conversations to fill a staggering 22 days 1 hour and 5 minutes – well above our target of 24 hours. Digital Champions were on hand throughout the day taking control

of our social media channels and monitoring the conversation online. Hear more about the day on p. 10.

Also in February we held a celebration event for Champions in Birmingham to reflect on the achievements and impact that Champions have had. Many of the people involved shared their stories and came together to talk about how to take their campaigning to the next level.

Looking forward to the rest of the year, be sure to put Thursday 4 February 2016 in your diaries for the next Time to Talk Day and sign up to our newsletters online to find out more about how to get involved.

Together, we are starting to see significant changes in the way that those of us with mental health problems are treated, but we know we've still got a long way to go. To finish the job we need more Champions on board to challenge discrimination in their local communities, workplaces and beyond.

But for now and to celebrate how far we've come, we have dedicated this issue of the Speak Out Magazine to our Champions – to say thank you for all of their very brilliant work!

Sue Baker
Director, Time to Change

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“Champions have been working tirelessly from the very beginning of Time to Change and have helped to shift attitudes.”

Miranda de Barra talks about what being a Champion means to her.

Finding my voice to speak out



Miranda de Barra

I became a Champion after attending a Speaking Out course in Bristol. Immediately I was inspired by the day and by meeting the people who were there. This was the first time I had spoken out about my mental health and I discovered that I had a voice. A powerful voice. For many years I had kept an embarrassed silence, or sometimes choked on mumbled lies about difficult times in my life. I never dreamed that I could turn my experiences into a powerful force for good.

The first thing I did as a Champion was host and deliver a talk in my local community. I was interviewed on BBC Radio Gloucestershire to promote it. People rang in who had been afraid of looking for help before but after hearing mental health discussed by someone so openly and candidly they had found the courage to make the call.

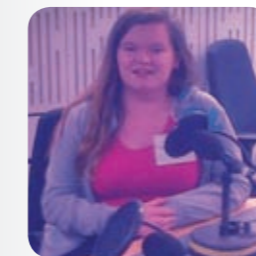
I have gone from being someone ashamed of who I was to someone who feels proud with a purpose and real identity in the world. Each audience I speak to is vastly different - from politicians to medical professionals or to my own local community. But every talk has the same thing in common. There is always someone who

is moved to share how hearing my story has affected them in a positive way - either because of their own issues with mental health or those of a loved one. We can all make a difference to each other and it is easier than we think to discover that we are not alone. Being a Time to Change Champion makes me feel like a true champion in every sense of the word.



“I have gone from being someone who was ashamed of who I was to someone who feels proud with a purpose and real identity in the world.”

Nikki Mattocks talks about changing the reporting of mental health



When my college ran a stall on World Mental Health Day I decided I wanted to get involved so I helped to hand out leaflets. After that day I wrote a blog for Time to Change, which was the first time I had spoken out about my experiences and it was incredible. I got a really good response from friends and family and felt really empowered. It showed me that it's a good thing to speak out and encouraged me to keep talking.

I've been involved in so many different events during my time as a Champion, from training teachers and running mental health sessions in their school, to volunteering at pop-up villages and running my own events in my

local area. But I've also been involved in tackling stigma in the media too. I was invited to a meeting at the Daily Mirror offices to speak to their journalists about the importance of choosing their words carefully when reporting about mental health problems. I told them of the time I had recently come out of hospital and was asking to stay at a friend's house. Her mum had seen a headline in the newspaper earlier that day about how dangerous people with mental health problems are, and so she said no because she thought I was going to kill her children. I lost my best friend because of that, which was really upsetting. The journalists in the meeting were really supportive, I even got a round of applause after I shared my story which they said rarely happens. It's a great feeling knowing that I may have made a difference to the reporting of mental health problems.

Steve Gilbert "Speaking at the International Conference, Together Against Stigma, in San Francisco. I co-presented two presentations and was incredibly proud to represent the Champions Network and the amazing work we all do."



Champions' highlights

Milly Rawley "Being a Time to Change Champion is not just a label, it's being a part of a wider family. A family that supports each other to help change the views of society and enforce equality. I have felt more accepted by the world around me."

Fiona Art "It's made me feel valuable and helped my confidence and self-worth. Time to Change has given me friends and concreted my belief that it's right to fight stigma."



Edward Mullenger "Talking about my mental health gave me a great sense of pride and confidence, and in sharing my experiences with the public I am helping to beat stigma and breakdown barriers."

Mark Blackmore "My absolute highlight was returning to Exeter University, where I had graduated 10 years previously, in order to take part in their organisational pledge signing."



Lindsay Walker "Running a coffee morning and drop in centre at my place of work on Time to Talk Day was amazing. Over three hours we spoke to 150 people."

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Alison Maclean

"Since becoming a Time to Change Champion I have grown in confidence, and found a wonderfully supportive mental health community out there."



Stacey Miller "I organised a mental health youth conference with 80 young people, seven teachers and eight agencies. Afterwards, young people went back to their schools and colleges to spread the messages. Breaking down discrimination is all about talking and I think we did just that!"



Katie Ford "I attended Norwich Pride – it was such an accepting environment. I have also really enjoyed holding my own events with support from my regional co-ordinator. I have met some amazing volunteers who I can openly talk to and have such a fab time with!"

Time to Change Champions who volunteered at four or more events felt more empowered to challenge stigma and discrimination:

82% were more confident to speak up for their own rights.

86% were more confident to talk about mental health outside of their community or area.

83% were more confident to talk about mental health at work, school or college.

79% were more confident to talk about mental health with family and friends.

To find out more about becoming a Time to Change champion visit www.time-to-change.org.uk/champions



Steve Gilbert

I first found out about Time to Change on Facebook. Seeing all the amazing stories and positive action of other people, I knew that I wanted to get involved and immediately signed up as a Champion.

My journey as a Time to Change Champion

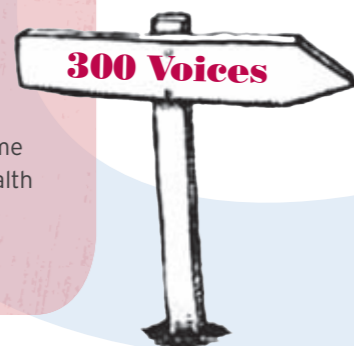
My first time volunteering was the launch of the 300 Voices project by handing out information packs. The project aims to improve the outcomes for young African and Caribbean men in the mental health system. Being one of those men, I was naturally interested in making a contribution. At the event, I met other people with lived experience of mental health problems who were taking action to combat stigma – it was so inspirational.

January 2014 - I got involved in the 'Can You Tell' campaign run by Rethink Mental Illness, one of the partner charities behind Time to Change. It was at an agriculture show in Peterborough and I was so nervous. It was the first time that I had shared my experiences of mental health problems with complete strangers so it was a little bit daunting. But I found that when I started to share and connect with people, many were willing to listen which gave me the confidence to continue.



March 2014 - I took part in a large event called Simmer Down, with 50 other volunteers and I met some of my now best friends. This was a significant event for me as it provided a space to talk with the team, share my vision for the 300 Voices project and start to build relationships.

May 2014 - I successfully applied for the role as one of three Lived Experience Consultants with the 300 Voices project, and helped to develop an engagement tool that enables young African and Caribbean men to share their stories. The role not only provided routine but gave me a sense of purpose. It allowed me to use my experiences of the mental health system, both good and bad, in a positive way, and aided my recovery.



July 2014 - As a result of co-developing the engagement model I was invited to join the 300 Voices team to play a more central role in the project. This involved attending team meetings and contributing to the strategic direction of the programme. I always feel that my contributions are valued and my confidence has increased.

Champions' Network

October 2014 - I was invited to speak on a panel discussing the portrayal of people with mental health problems from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the media. It was great to engage with the different parts of the media and gain a better understanding of the process they go through when reporting a story. I thoroughly enjoyed debating the key questions, especially in terms of "When is it right to mention a person's mental health when reporting a story."



February 2015 - In my 18 months as a Champion, I have been as involved as possible, driven by my belief in the aims of the Time to Change campaign to reduce the stigma and discrimination those of us with mental health problems face. So it was a great privilege to be selected to represent the Champions' Network at a global anti-stigma conference in San Francisco and share with other campaigns across the world the impact that we as Champions are making.



It has been an incredible year and I am so excited for the future. As Champions we all play a part in tackling stigma. Be it through writing blogs and sharing our experiences, joining the conversation on social media, volunteering at events, coordinating events, being a media volunteer, or simply wearing a badge, we have all contributed to the huge success of the campaign. Our courage to speak out, our unwillingness to accept stigma, our resilience and our support for one another are strong foundations. We should all be incredibly proud of the role we play.

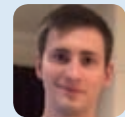


Time to Talk Day is an opportunity for everyone to come together to break the silence that surrounds mental health problems. Here, three Champions share their stories about why they got involved and what they got up to.

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 On 5 February 2015 we were aiming to reach 24 hours' worth of conversation. But together we ended up having enough conversations to fill **22 days 1 hour and 5 minutes** worth!

Championing Time to Talk Day

Catch up with the highlights of the day at: www.time-to-change.org.uk/timetotalkday



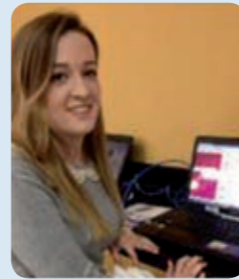
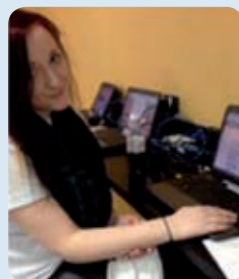
Chris Jarrold helped to run Time to Change's social media channels on Time to Talk Day.

When I saw that the first ever Time to Talk Day had reached over a million conversations I thought "Wow, Time to Change is really making a difference." It was an incredibly important day for talking about mental health, and it really encouraged me to jump at the chance to be involved this year.

The day itself was quite exciting and a group of us put ourselves forward to help out with social media. We arrived in the morning to a row of laptops set up to manage all the different social media platforms that Time to Change uses. We all took turns on the different platforms and it was great to see the amount of conversation that was happening online. Our main job was to scroll through the content and pick out the really great stories or inspiring conversations and images people had shared with us, so that we could capture it into one central location, called StoryStream. For the most part I was reading through the thousands of pictures and posts on Twitter. People

were voicing how they were spending their 5 minutes, and the notifications continued to flood in all day, it was amazing. Celebrities, doctors, banks and politicians were all talking about mental health. It was phenomenal. But a personal highlight of the day came from within the room. At one point there was a group session for Time to Change staff to talk about their own experiences while others listened. One guy spoke about his experience of talking about mental health to his father, which was then met with support and appreciation. To see people interact and support each other in such a way made me feel positive about the future.

For me, getting involved on the day was about helping others to support someone with a mental health problem. Time to Change is important to me and I believe volunteering has been positive for my own mental health. I felt really lucky to have this opportunity.



A few of the other Digital Champions on the day

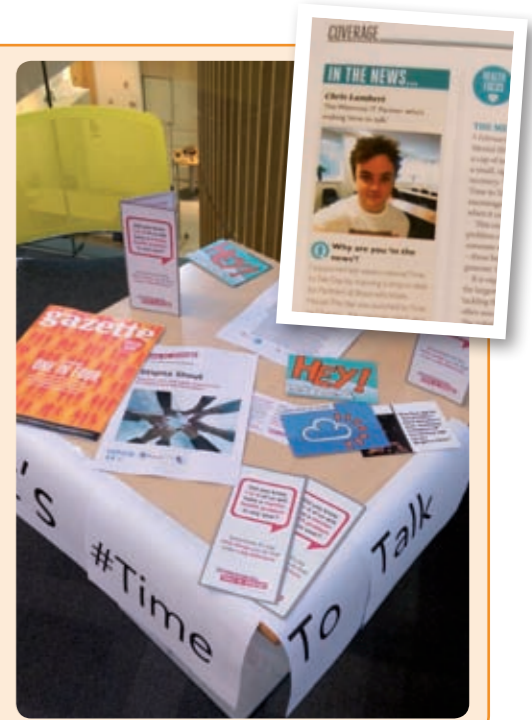


Chris Lambert works as a Head Office IT Service Centre Analyst at Waitrose and decided to organise an event in his workplace.

I decided to run drop-in stalls in Waitrose's Head Office. The stalls were staffed in two dining locations, taking maximum visibility during breakfast and lunch. I had permission to stick up some posters that I downloaded from the Time to Change resources page and together, the stall and posters got heads turning. I had a good amount of people talking to me and I got lots of conversations going.

To make sure I reached even more of the workforce, I did an interview for Waitrose's internal magazine as part of a mental health special. I didn't think I was going to be inundated due to the nature of the subject but it really got people talking and I got another offer for the John Lewis Partnership wide internal magazine which is seen by an estimated 90,000 employees.

Having a personal experience of mental health problems wasn't the only reason I wanted to get involved with Time to Talk Day. I felt compelled to take a stand and be part of the movement to support social change. Time to Talk Day is such an important day that consists of education, understanding and belief all about mental health issues. It's about breaking down myths that people have.



Robert Peacock has been a Time to Change Champion since the beginning of 2013 and got involved with Time to Talk Day in lots of different ways.

The day before Time to Talk Day 2014, I handed out tea bags at King's Cross Station, attempting to engage commuters with our giant teacups. The teacups were a real hook to hang conversation on and they helped to overcome the challenge of trying to get people to talk!

The following day, I also opened my house to neighbours, offering tea and a conversation about mental health issues. During the day, Harrow Radio did a live interview with my daughter and it really helped energise conversations, knowing that she was in the other room talking live on radio – I think it helped people open up.

This year, I attended an open evening at a secondary school in Kent to discuss the impact of mental health problems on young people with teachers, parents and students, encouraging everyone to be more open about mental illness.

Being part of the Time to Change campaign has been life-changing for me – there's a family feeling. On our quiet times during Villages and events, we all ask how we are feeling and discuss our mental health problems. It has brought my family closer together. My daughter is also a Champion, and my wife and son have embraced volunteering with the campaign. It's something we can talk openly about with each other.





Tom Renhard talks to Bristol Champions about how they have been tackling stigma in the city.

Time to Change in our Bristol community

The city of Bristol has made great strides in tackling stigma and discrimination. Time to Change Champions have been involved in this work for a number of years, meeting everyday people at pop-up shops and bigger events.

In July 2013 the Time to Change pop-up village came to the Bristol Harbour Festival, with support from University of West England (UWE) and UWE Students' Union. It was a fantastic success and saw over 1,500 conversations take place over two days, which attracted lots of new supporters who were keen to get involved and become a Champion too.

Liz Andrews, a long-standing Champion in Bristol and Volunteer Co-ordinator at the event said: "The Bristol Harbour Festival was for me, not only a turning point with my own personal recovery, it was inspirational, empowering, and very much highlighted the impact mental health stigma and discrimination was having on society nationally. It has been both a privilege and pleasure to work with such amazing fellow Champions.

"Following on from this, I worked with a group of students to launch a mental health campaign on campus to challenge

stigma and discrimination within the student community. This led to a series of meetings, focussing on engaging with the local community across six key events."

Champions also ran activity at some of Bristol's biggest summer events: Bristol Pride and St. Paul's Carnival. They sought to engage with people from the local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community and the Black and Minority Ethnic community. Both events represented a very positive step forward in engaging people from different parts of Bristol's rich and very diverse community.

Through the events, the Champions in Bristol have been able to develop and grow personally. Tassmin Williamson writes about her experience of volunteering:

"It has been an amazing experience. I never thought I would meet so many great people, make some great friends and feel so supported by other Champions. I've also gained increased

“ It has been an amazing experience. I never thought I would meet so many great people, make some great friends and feel so supported by other Champions. ”

confidence in speaking to others about my own experiences which I have applied to both my professional and personal life."

Time to Change Champion Sue Ollis adds: "My two years of being a Time to Change Champion have provided me with a passion and confidence to speak out about my own experiences. This is now having a knock on effect and colleagues are being encouraged to share their stories in the workplace. Our team also has our own peer support network."

For me personally, working with other Champions has been an amazing experience, I have met some of the most inspiring individuals. Whilst there is still a lot of work to do in challenging stigma and discrimination, we can be proud of all the work we have achieved. Hats off to the Champions across the country – don't stop what you are doing.

Together we can achieve our aspiration of ensuring we live in a society that exists free from mental health stigma and discrimination.



Greg Rogers works on the 300 Voices project. Having personal experience of mental health problems, Greg has helped to design and guide the 300 Voices project that engages young African and Caribbean men in conversations with healthcare professionals and emergency services to reduce the stigma and discrimination that can exist within mental health services. Here Greg talks about why he decided to get involved.

“ It's been fulfilling to be involved in what I consider to be a very important movement. ”

“ I got involved with the 300 Voices project because of my own experience and wanted to make a difference in the lives of those who are experiencing mental ill health and as a result are marginalised by society. ”

Getting involved in Birmingham



“ It has been a challenging process. Nevertheless, I believe the project has played a pivotal role in influencing a shift in attitude in mental health services, the wider community as well as those accessing services. ”

Across the country individual Champions are tackling stigma and discrimination in partnership with organisations in their local areas. We find out how.

Empowering Champions to speak out

“We try and get as many volunteers involved as we can” says Tricia Thorpe. Tricia works as a coordinator for Time to Change Leeds, a partnership with Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

“Time to Change Leeds would not succeed without the volunteers who have their own personal experience of mental health problems. You have to work in partnership and you certainly have to have empowered volunteers - they are the core of the campaign.”

Some of the volunteers who get take part in the project have said that being involved really helps to improve their self-esteem and confidence. At first, many of them can't imagine feeling confident enough to speak in front of an audience, but through volunteering and opening up about their own experiences, it's something they're doing on a regular basis.

Tricia continues: “I have quite a lot of volunteers who go on to get jobs or go to university as a result of the project, but their successes are down to themselves. It's a very supportive team and any new volunteers are made to feel welcome and part of something great.”

Angela Slater is the North East Regional Coordinator for the national Time to Change programme and she works with people in her region who sign up to become a Champion. “We like to encourage Champions to think about areas where they would like to tackle mental health stigma.

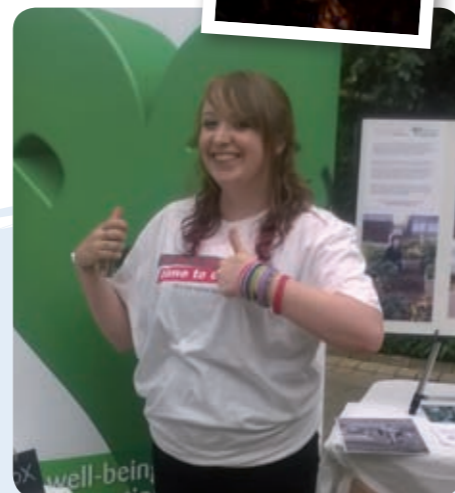
“One Champion wanted to start a conversation with her local ambulance service after a bad experience. I help to support those conversations and provide the tools for them to make change.”

The Champions Angela supports are delivering impactful anti-stigma activity. During an event at the Winter Gardens in Sheffield, a man who worked on site approached the Time to Change stall and started to discuss his mental health problems.

“He always felt that he couldn't tell his wife in fear she would think less of him. After the conversation, he went away and later returned to the stall to tell us that he had discussed everything with his wife and had booked an appointment with their GP.”

Many of the Champions are delivering creative and effective work without Angela's support as well. “One particular Champion makes sculptures out of crates and sells them at a local market. Each one is bespoke and different, but all are inspired by how he is feeling on that particular day. When he sells a sculpture, he will tell the customer why he made it and about his mental health problems”.

“It's a very supportive team and any new volunteers are made to feel welcome and part of something great.”



I never thought I'd speak alongside the Deputy Prime Minister

Vithuja Balasingam tells us what it was like to speak about her experiences at a high profile event on World Mental Health Day.



“It was a real privilege to speak at the Deputy Prime Ministers event on World Mental Health Day.”

When I first got involved with Time to Change I was so shy, I couldn't have imagined that I would become a public speaker, let alone speak alongside the Deputy Prime Minister! And that's all because of the support and enthusiasm from Time to Change and the people I've come into contact with.

The first time I took part in anything was at a Stereohype training event. I was the youngest person there and really nervous. But it was really interesting and motivating and I noticed just how supportive the staff and volunteers were after I had my first ever conversation with a stranger about mental health. This flood of support showed me that it's ok to talk openly, even if it's difficult to do.

From there I've gone on to be involved in so many different ways, including speaking in schools about my experiences to groups of young people. It's really interesting to see how they respond after I get up to speak.

I notice just how much more passionate, engaged and enthusiastic they all are. That reaction really drives me to keep speaking out.

It was a real privilege to speak at the Deputy Prime Minister's event on World Mental Health Day. I was amazed at how much attention I was given. When I was talking you could have heard a pin drop and I noticed there were a few tears during my speech too. It was really validating to have my voice heard, and so many people told me how moved they were by it and how important the issue of tackling mental health stigma is.

I've really valued the opportunity to build confidence in speaking out, and getting involved with Time to Change has been a great way to turn negative experiences into something really positive.





I'm Lisa, the Time to Change Champions Officer. I support people with experience of mental health problems to get involved in campaigning against mental health stigma and discrimination.

What you can do

If reading this magazine has got you thinking about how you can get involved in tackling the stigma and discrimination that people with mental health problems face, here are just a few ideas:

Sign up as a Time to Change Champion – join our network of campaigners and you will receive a regular newsletter with details of local and national opportunities. Champions volunteer to talk to the public about their experiences at events and conferences, they run stalls and share their stories in workplaces across the country. We hold networking sessions for you to get to know other Champions and provide training on how to speak about your own experience. You can sign up here: www.time-to-change.org.uk/become-a-champion.

Speak out on social media – social media can be a powerful tool for tackling mental health stigma. This is because you already have relationships and connections with people and the most powerful impact can be made when someone we know speaks about their own experience. Here are some ideas:

- Use our images as your Facebook or Twitter profile picture or cover image, www.time-to-change.org.uk/downloads.
- If you feel comfortable, update your Facebook status or tweet about your experience of mental health or stigma and discrimination.
- Tweet a friend who has supported you or tag them in a Facebook post and say what they did to make a difference.

Run your own event – You might consider running your own Time to Change event. This could be anything from handing out leaflets, to setting up a stall at an event, to organising your own community event. Our Community Event Toolkit, has lots of tips and ideas: www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/community-event-toolkit.pdf. Order your free Time to Change materials here: www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/posters-leaflets.

Be an activist every day – you don't need to take part in events to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. Sometimes, it's as simple as speaking up when you hear something stigmatising or being open about your own experiences with friends, family members and colleagues. These conversations can be so powerful and help to improve attitudes.

If you decide to share your experiences, it is important to only share what feels safe and to think through what you are and aren't prepared to talk about. Sometimes the words "I have a mental health problem" or "that's me/my brother/my best friend you're talking about" can be powerful enough to shift attitudes.

For more tips on talking about mental health visit: www.time-to-change.org.uk/talking.

