



## Living and Learning with M.E.

### Project information

Following our digital storytelling project in 2013-14, Action for M.E. and Michael Williams StoryCoaching have teamed up again to offer a series of facilitated sessions on living with M.E. and managing M.E. symptoms.

The new Action for M.E. project: **'Living and learning with M.E.'** is funded from the Scottish Health and Social Care Alliance Impact Fund. This summary sheet provides information about the project and details of how to get involved.

#### **Why run this project?**

An estimated 20,000 people in Scotland have M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis). Understanding of the condition and treatment options is slowly improving, but remains limited. People with M.E. have to learn to manage a range of challenging, fluctuating symptoms, often with little support or with contradictory advice from health practitioners.

As a national organisation, Action for M.E. provides information on symptom management advice, research developments, welfare and sources of social support. In this project, we will work with local groups and individuals – as experts in their condition – to explore in detail the approaches to managing M.E. symptoms that work best in practice for different people with M.E..

Our aim is to build a knowledge base of lived experience that can be shared with others who are new to – or struggling with – the condition, and to inform the work of health and care professionals providing services to people with M.E. in Scotland currently or in the future.

#### **About the facilitated sessions...**

We will run a series of 5 facilitated sessions during August to November 2015 with 2 small groups (up to 8) of voluntary participants. Each session will be 2.5 hours in length, including refreshments and a short rest break.

The sessions will suit people who have experience of living with M.E. symptoms. Facilitators will use storytelling techniques to explore different experiences and identify learning that participants would like to pass on to others. These sessions are *not* designed to teach individual participants how to manage their condition. They will give participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences, concerns and ideas in a supportive environment and to learn about strategies that others are using. We recognise that M.E. is complex and that different approaches may work better for different people.

Participants will also have the opportunity to explore and practise different storytelling techniques, which can be used to help others who may be struggling to manage their condition and/or to cope with their changed circumstances. We aim to make the sessions enjoyable and informative for everybody.

Carers of people with M.E. who are too severely affected to attend in person (or unaccompanied) are welcome, as well as people with M.E. on their own. Please let us know in advance about any restrictions or specific needs you have – we will do our best to accommodate them so that you can participate.

### **What will happen after the sessions?**

We will use the learning from the sessions to create a **person-centred written resource** which we will publish at the end of the project in April 2016. The resource will be shared with local support groups, individuals with M.E., carers and health care services for people with M.E..

Participants will help to shape the resource and its contents and will receive a copy of the final publication.

Project participants – and support groups to which they are attached – will also be offered ongoing support throughout the project (ends March 2016) to apply their learning in supporting other people with M.E..

### **How can I sign up or get further information?**

We are keen to work with existing local support groups and their members to set-up group sessions in two areas of Scotland. Once we have identified a core group of people wanting to participate in an area we will discuss suitable dates and venues with them.

**For further information or to discuss setting up sessions in your area, please contact (asap):  
Kat Allen, Action for M.E. Project Co-ordinator Scotland  
Email: [katrina@actionforme.org.uk](mailto:katrina@actionforme.org.uk) Tel: 0131 629 3690.**

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Kat Allen (Action for M.E.) & Michael Williams (Michael Williams StoryCoaching).