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## **BIGSPD values and philosophy**

Our ambition is to be the 'go to' organisation in Britain and Ireland in this field of practice. We endeavour to represent the collective views of those involved in BIGSPD in order to positively influence practice.

As an organisation we pride ourselves on our promotion of co-production, which embraces the involvement of people with lived experience (which additionally includes family and friends), multi-disciplinary practitioners, academics, clinicians and researchers. We do this to influence the commissioning of better services using evidence-based practice; the removal of the treatment postcode lottery, the reduction of health inequalities, progressive research that enhances practice and service user experience; raising the knowledge and awareness of personality disorder and related difficulties. We are committed to reducing stigma and prejudice and to enhancing the diversity within the organisation. We bring together a wide range of partners who shape the agenda and debate relating to this field of practice and this is encouraged by adopting, as an organisation, a stance that all opinions are valued and welcomed, and that healthy debate can only improve practice, treatment and service experiences of those who are likely to receive a diagnosis of personality disorder or related difficulties.

Our values include:

- **The way people choose to define themselves is an integral part of their identity.** The diagnostic label is a contentious one and one that continues to cause distress to many. We recognise this distress whilst also acknowledging others find the label useful.
- **How we help people is more important than how we label their problems.** As such a variety of diagnostic labels associated with personality disorders are considered important to the work of BIGSPD as are the differential diagnoses that are becoming increasingly used such as Complex-PTSD and dissociative disorders.
- **The past impacts on people's lives - what has happened to people is important.** We acknowledge the high prevalence of trauma and other forms of adverse experiences in both childhood and adulthood in the lives of people who go on to be diagnosed with personality disorders.
- **Relationships are essential for working together.** We strive to create as safe an environment as possible for debate and reflection.
- **We respect a range of views from a diverse multidisciplinary group.** We value the bringing together and shared learning opportunities from mental health services, criminal justice sector and those accessing these services.
- **The lived experience of the diagnosis is as valid as clinical and academic experience.** To realise this, BIGSPD strives to include people with a lived experience in all levels of the organisation as well as delivering inclusive events and decision-making processes. We will therefore invest in improving access for those with a lived experience.
- **We strive to recognise and end health inequalities of all forms and to promote equality and diversity,** particularly around the inclusion of ethnic, gender and sexual identity minorities.
- **Positive discrimination towards people with a lived experience is not a helpful approach to co-production, but positive action is.** We work to lower barriers to co-production, including valuing involvement and rewarding people for their time and expertise, whilst making such adjustments universally applied.

- **There is still much to learn about this area of work.** It is a quickly evolving field of practice that requires a wide-ranging evidence-based approach that is explored via an iterative process that is always under review. We provide an annual conference and regular events in order to help people disseminate and contribute to knowledge.
- **Critical reflection is important to us.** We challenge, test and interrogate ideas by taking a critical but reflective stance.
- **BIGSPD is both a forum for disseminating new research findings and a crucible for developing ideas that can generate novel advances.** We have a great deal to learn about the whole range of personality dysfunction and this is unlikely to be achieved by a single discipline working in isolation. BIGSPD encourages both interdisciplinary and cross- disciplinary research and its wide membership represents an excellent pool of talent.
- **We welcome differences - diversity adds to knowledge.** We strive to support people to have their voices heard. We work to ensure that debates and points of view are respectfully heard and reflected upon in a safe space.
- **We are committed to supporting change that enhances the experiences and responses of services.** People who receive this diagnostic label can be helped and are deserving of help. Stigma continues to negatively influence people's experiences of services and lived experiences should be valued alongside professional experience in this area.

Often people ask, 'what is the stance of BIGSPD?' on, for example, the diagnostic term 'personality disorder', diagnostic manuals, treatment preferences, or the future direction of treatments. We hope our values provide some clarity in relation to these questions. All our members, conference delegates and executive members have a unique range of views and opinions but collectively BIGSPD as an organisation does not hold a position on these debates. Instead, our focus is on providing a safe platform which encourages and facilitates inclusive debate, where all views, opinions and discussions relating to personality disorder and related difficulties are explored.

We acknowledge the sensitivity relating to the debate around the diagnostic label in particular, but also endeavour to represent those who find this construct helpful. Where there is consensus, is that we are working to improve understanding, and address stigma. As an organisation, we aim to bring people with interest in this field together to form networks and collaborations. By adopting this stance we facilitate and actively encourage healthy and respectful debate. Central to achieving our values is the practice of co-production. We are working to embed this throughout the organisation with a greater representation of lived experience within the executive team, our members, speakers and delegates.

The Executive Members - The BIGSPD executive has a broad range of expertise and experiences and holds different views and opinions about various current and topical debates in this field of practice. Those views held by individuals are not representative of BIGSPD as an organisation and no one person or the executive can speak for all. However, the executive team will adopt a position of influence and information provider with all the complexities of debate carefully considered before statements or organisation representation is made in public forums.