

BowHaven is a community based mental health charity which serves the local community in Tower Hamlets, and the borough has one of the highest levels of mental health need in England. Our clients have a wide range of mental health conditions ranging from anxiety and depression to bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia.

We help and support our clients (referred to as members) in coping with their mental health conditions, and we provide practical and emotional support via a range of activities. This also helps to tackle the isolation caused by the breakdown of family and social networks.

Our experience also shows that clients are often offered standard treatment plans on the NHS, which do not take an individual's needs into account. Through our model of co-production, we work on the understanding that allowing, and indeed encouraging, members to play an active role in the services and activities being offered at BowHaven will significantly improve mental well-being.

We are also a member centred charity and our co-production model ensures authenticity and effectiveness of our services

Receiving a grant from the Dominic Beer Memorial Trust has allowed us to continue our vital services which improve the skills, confidence and motivational levels of our members.

Through our services members are also able to talk honestly and openly about their experience of mental health difficulties, as they are in a non-judgemental environment where they feel respected and valued. In essence, at BowHaven our members feel part of a community and philosophy where true recovery and well-being is rooted in a sense of belonging.

The service provision itself includes a variety of groups and one to one support. In terms of the groups they holistically cover a number of areas including self-harm; hearing voices; social phobia; paranoia and distressing beliefs; peer support; music; art; handicrafts; beauty therapy and self-care; an Asian Women's group; healthy eating, cultural cooking and physical exercise.

Since we have received the grant from the Dominic Beer Memorial Trust, we have also been able to start up two new groups.

The first is a Gym group in partnership with Ability Bow, a local organisation that specialises in providing health and fitness sessions to clients with mental and physical health needs. The second is a Creative Writing Group which helps members develop their writing, to be able to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings through poetry and short stories.

Both of these groups have been successful right from their inception, and we believe they will continue to flourish going forward.

In terms of future plans, within the next 3 to 6 months we aim to develop workshops that focus on employability skills and improve soft skills, which will help to further empower our members.

