

Guest blog: Project Dare

Posted by Sarah Wilson
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By Ursula Joy, Founder

Ursula is a service-user at the Lambeth Collaborative, having battled severe depression, anxiety and low self-esteem after a breakdown in 2012. She has founded a new mental health service Project Dare through the Lambeth Incubator Experiment, which supports people in recovery to design and deliver new mental health services based on their experiences. She is guest-blogging for us as part of our Inspiring Health Campaign.

Daring Ways to Inner Confidence & Body Adoration

Imagine if you will a healthy young woman crash dieting on cabbage soup for days on end trying to shed some extra pounds. Consider a lady terrified to leave the house without make-up, who won't speak out in front of a group as she's embarrassed about the way she looks. Think for a moment about a mother who's 5-year old daughter rips her heart in two when she comes to her and says "mummy, do I look fat?" Sadly, these situations are all too frequent.

Body image pressures in our society are way out of hand. Low self-esteem, depression, eating disorders, unhealthy behaviours and thoughts are all on the increase. 60% of adults in the UK feel ashamed of the way they look and 2/3rds of adults suffer from varying forms of negative body image (Department for Mental Health).

Welcome to Project Dare – a new Lambeth based initiative that is providing funded places for women of Coldharbour (16 years +) to participate in "Dare Sessions". These sessions are a series of workshops, which are drama based and all tasks are designed to celebrate the human body, be lots of fun and just a little bit daring. The project is responding to society's obsession with the female form and darers (participants) can expect to engage in performance and theatre arts including:

- Training in skills used by actors (including practical confidence tools you can take away)
- Discussion and exploration of Augusto Boal technique
- Learn a burlesque routine

The 'Dare' is an attitude. It's a way of life. We will achieve because we dare to. The workshops are fun, empowering and get the darers feeling fabulous and overflowing with gumption. The sessions can act as a catalyst for improving other areas of darer's (participant's) lives, helping women to grow in confidence, therefore putting them in the driving seat.

After experiencing a breakdown in 2012, Ursula began a journey of self-discovery as she tried to figure out how to move forward with her life. After battling severe low self-esteem and depression, Ursula discovered there were 3 things she loved most about herself and these are: passion, energy and creativity. Ursula decided that if she lived these out on a daily basis, she would be reinforcing her positive traits and be more content as a result. Project Dare is built upon these 3 words: passion, energy and creativity. By the end of the workshops each participant will also, like Ursula, come away with their own 3 words of self-love.