



CONFERENCE REPORT
18th and 24th November, 2020
Digitally Via Zoom

- The Scottish Women's Convention -

WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

THE VOICES OF WOMEN

It is so important that the voices of women are heard by decision makers. Below are some key statements made by women attending both SWC Mental Health Conferences as well as submissions by women on email.

Comments

“Covid-19 has brought tremendous isolation. Women have become very negative about themselves and there is so much low self-esteem. Today has given the opportunity to share that and hear other people’s experiences that are the same as mine, so you know you’re not on your own. There is also something which we need to consider in the context through which COVID-19 arrived. We had just had 10 years of austerity and cuts to our NHS that were drastic and resulted in things like no PPE. We have care homes run for profit. Women are the key workers in this sector and earn low wages.

These women are struggling and terrified of losing their jobs but are also terrified of bringing the virus home if they continue to work. I think we need to turn some of our energy into getting angry at the political situation we are living under. It is related to the way we eat and live as a nation. COVID-19 will happen again if we don’t change those systems that we live under.”

“I suffer from PTSD and borderline personality disorder. I have found alternative ways of working through my illnesses. I started up a falconry centre where women can come along and see the birds. This focuses the mind and there are also woodland walks. I have also started a local crochet club. It allows women to focus on craft, meet others and build up their mental health.”

“I suffer from PTSD. I am lonely and isolated. I feel that there are no support services for people between the ages of 50 and 70. I’ve looked at a number of classes, but they are all online and I’m not digitally competent. I want to meet more people. Basically, I feel forgotten.”

“The Feel-Good Women’s Group are running online fitness classes which are good for mental health. They are also running a food programme for families in the Govanhill area of Glasgow.”

“There is no perinatal health team in the Highlands. It is hard to recruit staff due to issues around rural living. There is a lot of rural isolation due to the geography of the Highlands. It is very much left to the community and families to make sure everyone is safe and looked after. This is putting a strain on the mental health of those caring – with very little support from professional services. There is a decline in the cognitive abilities of those older people living on their own due to isolation and lack of company.”

“There is a dire lack of suicide prevention. The pandemic has seen an increase in suicide, and this will continue to rise. Women bear the brunt of the aftermath of suicide. There are no services to support families suffering grief. This will have an ongoing negative impact on mental health.”

“Some doctors label women as having mental health issues when there are other underlying issues which are not explored. When working with victims of domestic abuse, many of whom have trust issues, primary health care as well as support services could help rather than treating for mental ill health.”

“There needs to be more support from GPs for women showing symptoms of mental ill health. Support services and coping mechanisms need to be readily available and accessible to all.”
