

# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

**Dr Catriona Stewart**



SWAN: Scottish Women's Autism Network

# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

**Dr Catriona Stewart**



in partnership with Scottish Autism





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

**Dr Catriona Stewart**



in partnership with Scottish Autism



with additional support by the Forestry Commission in Scotland



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

to evidence the benefits of peer-led mentoring for autistic women and girls





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

why peer-support?



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

SWAN: Scottish Women's Autism Network 2012

in response to research study 2011





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

SWAN: Scottish Women's Autism Network 2012

in response to research study 2011

Key drivers for qualitative methodology and innovative methods:

- facilitation of the authentic voices of autistic girls with anxiety
- lived experience narrative



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

Where can we be what we are?\*

Stewart C 2012 Where can we be what we are? Good Autism Practice 13 (1) May 2012 Birmingham: BILD



\*'Home' defined by Van Manen as 'where we can be what we are' Van Manen \*





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

UOW: a response to glaring gaps identified in education and pastoral care of young autistic women, gaps with lifelong impact on individuals as they have to navigate their way into adulthood in a world that doesn't understand or accommodate them, often hampered by poor mental health and without the necessary tools for positive self-care



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

why peer mentoring?





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

Game changer?



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

Game changer?

from - informing and advocating service providers and  
decision makers





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

Game changer?

from - informing and advocating service providers and  
decision makers

to - empowering and enabling autistic women and girls



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

the programme





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## the programme

stages: design - conceptual, ethical, practical  
building a pathway for participation  
processes and protocols, risk, safeguarding  
content  
delivery



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## the programme

content: co-production model

mentoring training: Dinah Bennett OBE FRSA (ICEE)

autism training: Project co-ordinator, me

outdoors forestry bush craft, creativity, team building:

Craig Thomson Operation Play Outdoors





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

the programme

key outcomes:

self identity  
confidence  
capacity  
citizenship



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## demographics

women aged 15 - 60

accessed through SWAN network and local school

ft employed; pt employed; unemployed;

ft parent; college student;

school student – in school, in school on reduced timetable,  
home-schooled

range of sexuality and gender ID including transgender and non-binary  
within reasonable reach of Glasgow (inc Inverclyde + Edin)





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## evaluation



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

evaluation





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

evaluation

External: Yolanda Gibb Durham University



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

evaluation

External: Yolanda Gibb Durham University

reflexive

flexible

iterative





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

evaluation

External: Yolanda Gibb Durham University

reflexive

flexible

iterative

developmental

innovative



# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## evaluation

ongoing feedback at every stage

reflective diaries (including co-ordinator and manager)

qualitative evaluation with interviews at stages throughout programme

entry interview - exit interview

existing QOL tool

building new QOL model specifically around the project





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

‘We had another amazing day in the Woodlands...we brought the mentor & the mentee groups together for a day of crafting, bushcraft & team building activities. A big thank you to Craig, of Operation Play Outdoors, our trainer, and to The Forestry Commission Scotland for ongoing support. Our day was described by one of our group as "magical mentoring".’





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

## LINKS

SWAN website <http://swanscotland.org/>

Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/swans.scotland/>

Scottish Autism's Right Click for Women and Girls

<https://www.scottishautism.org/services-support/support-families/women-and-girls-online-support>

Spectrum Women Book <http://www.jkp.com/jkpblog/2018/09/spectrum-women/>





# Under Our Wing Mentoring Programme

autistic led peer support and empowerment

Thank you



Dr Catriona Stewart Birmingham 2019