

Press Release:

Sign away your Stress

A self-help Sign Language DVD for the Deaf Community

Peter Gladwell, a physiotherapist based at the North Bristol NHS Trust has teamed up with a Bristol-based company called EyeGaze and a collective of other health specialists to produce the first ever self-help relaxation DVD for Deaf people who use British Sign Language. The DVD is entitled 'Stress and Relaxation' and can be purchased at <http://www.eyegaze.tv/health>.

The DVD explains the nature of stress, its causes and effects and also includes some innovative relaxation exercises to help the viewer reduce the harmful effects that stress can have - all in British Sign Language (English subtitles are available also).

"Stress is a factor in everybody's life but Deaf people more commonly experience depression and anxiety and other inevitable stress associated with being Deaf in a world geared towards the needs of hearing people', said Peter Gladwell, who works in the Pain Management Service and the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME Service. "Practising the relaxation exercises contained on this DVD can have a significant impact on your life by helping to manage stress in order to maintain and improve health and confidence, you now have opportunity to relax with information presented to you in your own language."

"We are delighted to have been involved in the production of such an important DVD", said Mick Canavan, a director of EyeGaze, and father of a Deaf teenager. "We hope Primary Care Trusts, hospitals, community services, pain management clinics, clinical therapists and all GP's will make this DVD available to Deaf patients because we believe it can really make a positive difference to people's lives."

The written word is a second language for the Deaf community with British Sign Language being their first. Whilst great care is often taken to prepare health related materials in numerous languages for the hearing population, relatively little is produced in British Sign Language. EyeGaze aims to ensure equal access to information and services for the Deaf community.

Useful websites:

EyeGaze – <http://www.eyegaze.tv/health>

Contact information:

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About Peter Gladwell

Peter is a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist in the Pain Management Service and the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME Service at the North Bristol NHS Trust.

Peter works in a varied role, which includes group and individual work in the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME Service, Pain Management Programmes, and Pain Management and rehabilitation work with individuals. He has been involved in a research programme investigating the management of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME, and also the Back to Work research project. He has a role in teaching General Practitioners about the management of CFS/ME, and is also involved in postgraduate education. He is the Public Relations Officer for the Physiotherapy Pain Association, a Clinical Interest Group of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and is currently carrying out research into chronic pain as part of a PhD.

About EyeGaze

EyeGaze Ltd, the accessible information specialist, is a social enterprise dedicated to enabling organisations communicate effectively with their clients, customers and users.

Through its EqualSign service, EyeGaze provides sign language translation work for smaller, often web-based, projects for clients wishing to make their information accessible to an audience of Deaf sign language users and to meet their commitments under the Disability Discrimination Act. Clients of EqualSign services include Bristol City Council, Cardiff Council, Gloucestershire County Council, the Department for Education and Skills, the Health Advocacy Partnership, University College London, and the University of Bristol.

Through [A+ Multimedia](#), EyeGaze provides innovative handheld eguides providing accessible information to deaf and disabled people at visitor attractions such as Museums and galleries. Clients of [A+ Multimedia](#) include Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, the SS Great Britain, Tate Britain and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

For more details, see www.eyegaze.co.uk and www.equalsign.co.uk

Other Specialists who contributed to the DVD:

Dr Mary Griggs, D.Clin.Psy

Mary Griggs completed a PhD in Deafness and Mental health in 1998 and since then has been involved in various related research projects. As a Chartered Clinical Psychologist, Mary now leads the Deaf mental health team based in Bristol.

Dr Joanna Atkinson, D.Clin.Psy, PG Dip Clin Neuropsych

A qualified clinical psychologist and post-doctoral researcher at the Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre, University College London. She has worked in the field of mental health and deafness, and neuropsychology research since 1998.

Dr Constanza Moreno, D.Clin Psy

Chartered Clinical Psychologist at the Deaf Child and Family Service at South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust

Siobhan O'Donovan

Deaf Community Care worker at the mental health team in Bristol, and also the presenter on this DVD.

General Information

Numbers of deaf people and BSL users in the UK

There are no precise statistics on the number of deaf people in the UK. Estimates usually vary from 50,000 to 75,000.

In January 2007 in the House of Commons, the Rt Hon Malcolm Bruce MP stated that there are 200,000 people communicating in British Sign language (BSL), many of whom who use it as their first language. This figure includes hearing people who use BSL to communicate with family and friends.

[See www.malcolmbruce.libdems.org.uk/news/000148.html](http://www.malcolmbruce.libdems.org.uk/news/000148.html)