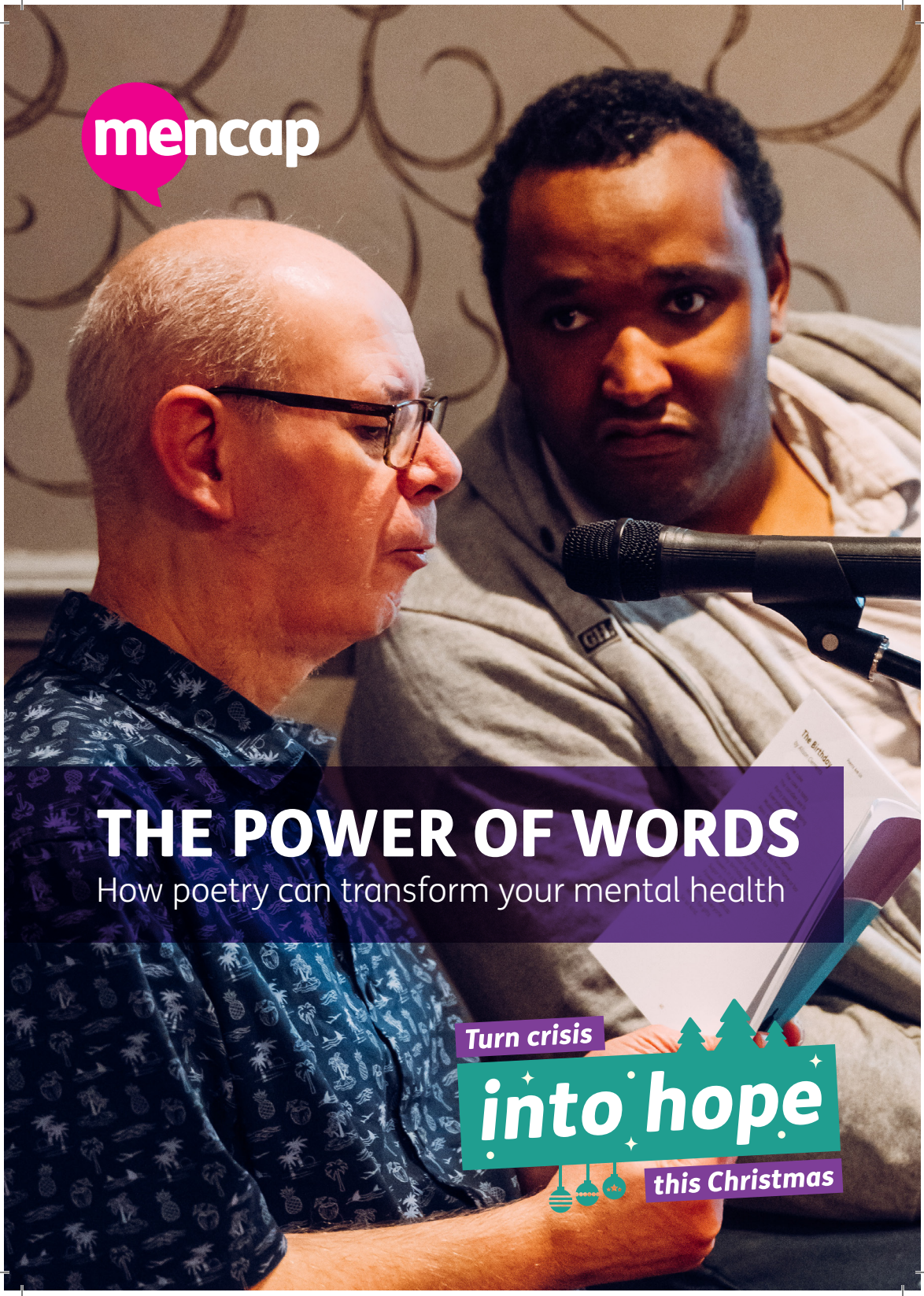


mencap

THE POWER OF WORDS

How poetry can transform your mental health

Turn crisis **into hope** this Christmas

Writing poetry together is a wonderful way to help tackle mental health struggles.

Mike and other members of his Mencap group take part in poetry workshops, and share their verses at open mic events in the community. As you can see and read here, their words can be powerful, moving and a lot of fun too.

With your support, Mencap can continue to make a real difference. 7 in 10 people with a learning disability who have engaged with a Mencap programme say this has had a positive impact on their quality of life.

Mike's moving poem in memory of his late sister, who meant the world to him.

GOOD-BYE LAURA

by Mike Knowles

I have nothing
but happy memories
About my sister, Laura

She helped me grow
throughout my life
My friend, how I adored her

We used to fight
like cat and dog
Like brothers and sisters do

But even then
it's true to say
I had nothing but love
for you

Ice cream at the beach
Or Domino pizza
Or a caravan holiday

My Laura laughed
As I freaked out
To scare the geese away

If only I
could talk to Laura
Just for one last time
Then there are things
I'd like to say
That I've written in
this rhyme

I hope you know
How grateful I am
For everything you did
for me

And I hope that I
was a good brother to you
I did my best, you see

Goodbye Laura
Such a lovely sister
Who always made me
laugh

Sadly missed
Forever loved
My poetic epitaph.

The poetry group is helping other people with a learning disability to express their frustrations with everyday inequality, along with their hopes, improving mental wellbeing.

HELPING OTHERS

by Paul May

I wish I could help others
My father, my brother, my sister, my mother
It would make me satisfied
Giving information from inside to outside
My sponsored silence was tough
2 hours for me was enough
Sometimes it's hard to make people understand
That I want to help and have plans
Mencap staff help me when I'm frustrated
When I've needed their help, I've never waited
Helping makes me happy
If and when I'm needed.

MENCAP

by Claire Morton

When I think of Mencap
I can smell some beautiful flowers
I can hear gentle music
And taste my favourite tuna baked potato
As I sit and watch the sea
I cuddle my favourite teddy bear.

Community poet Andy N

June with David Hassall

Krishna Patel reading out her poem

Mike with friends and Mencap staff

John Hartley and Mike

Alison Clements shares her words

A selection of humorous verses, which had everyone belly laughing! As well as helping to tackle difficult issues, the poetry sessions are a great opportunity for people with a learning disability to get together and have fun.

LIMERICKS

From the group

There once was a
man named Jon
Who fed his face with a scone
But a seagull took it
And broke it into bits
And now it's magically gone.

I went on a bus
to Specsavers
I ate some cheesy Quavers
I shoved them in quick
My eyes played a trick
I'd chosen the wrong
flippin' flavour.

Have you ever
seen a tree
Bending on its knee
When the wind is strong
And the branches are long
They shake and they
shudder with glee.

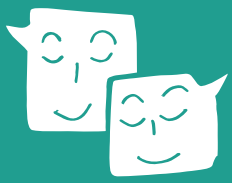
"It's helped a lot, helping others in the group to find their voices. And I know we're helping people to understand disabled people a bit more."

Mike, shown here with June from Mencap

Mike spends hours working closely with group members with limited speech to find the words to express themselves. One short poem was three weeks in the making.

Mencap staff member, June, calls Mike her 'right-hand man,' and volunteering alongside June makes a huge difference to Mike's own mental health.

Your donations help mencap to:



Run services that bring people with a learning disability together, preventing loneliness and improving mental wellbeing.

Operate our Learning Disability Helpline in England which provides vital support when people with a learning disability and their loved ones are finding it harder to know where to turn.

Grant the wishes of people with a learning disability to have experiences that make their lives healthier and happier, often enhancing wellbeing.

Campaign for fairness for people with a learning disability, from the right to receive quality social and health care to more workplace equality.

TURN CRISIS INTO HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS

Please donate to our Christmas appeal by filling in the form in your pack and returning it in the freepost envelope provided.

Or call us on **020 7696 6007**,
go to **mencap.org.uk/givehope**
or use the **QR code below**.

Every pound makes a huge difference to the lives of people with a learning disability. **Thank you!**

Registered charity number 222377 (England and Wales); SC041079 (Scotland) 2023.117

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