

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

April 2019

The progress question: each piece of 'straw' helping break adult abuse

Abuse and harm of adults is such a huge social issue, it can be hard to see any progress being made. So said a colleague a couple of weeks ago: Don't get me wrong they said *'I am very much committed to doing everything I can to tackling it [adult abuse], taking action, supporting those who are abused, but are we making progress?'*

Often, the problem seems so big we can feel paralysed in by the scale of it.

However I recently read a comment by Frank Mullane, Director of [Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse](#) (AAFDA) on Twitter ahead of their 2019 conference ([click here to read more about the AAFDA conference](#)). It caught my eye and gave me a new perspective on the progress question. He commented that by adding actions together we can *'bring that domestic abuse camel down!!'*

The saying 'the last straw that breaks the camel's back', describes a seemingly minor or small action that causes an unpredictably large and sudden reaction, because of the cumulative effect of small actions. Just like a small snowball grows bigger and bigger, building momentum as it rolls down the hill.

Luke & Ryan Hart (see below), who write and campaign against coercive control and domestic abuse and who, were speaking at the AAFDA conference replied by describing themselves as one 6'3" straw and one 6'8" straw.

I like this way of thinking, about how our individual actions against abuse and harm of adults can add up. To start a social movement against abuse and harm of adults. One example of how this is possible are easy to find, was: on Friday 15 March 2019, when thousands of UK school students went on strike against climate change, inspired by [Greta Thunberg](#) who in August 2018 walked out of school and organized a strike to raise awareness of global warming. She protested outside the Swedish parliament and grabbed the world's attention. Greta said she was inspired by the student activists at Marjory [Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida](#), who after the school shooting organised the [March for Our Lives](#) for gun control in the United States.

Another one is [Andrew Graystone from Levenshulme](#), who stood outside the Madina mosque in Manchester on after hearing about the horrific shootings at two mosques in New Zealand that left 49 people dead. He held a cardboard sign with a handwritten message: *'You are my friends. I will keep watch while you pray.'* A small act with a powerful impact and one which can trigger change.

The drawing together of many small acts against adult abuse and harm can make bigger changes across our community. We have one such opportunity in Norfolk will be taking place soon.

Luke & Ryan Hart

As a number of readers of the blog will know, I am very pleased to have been able to bring Luke & Ryan Hart to our county to give a series of seminars in April and May. Their seminar is called ***A Lived Experience: Seminar on Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control*** and all the tickets for the seminars were booked within 72 hours!! These seminars will be a really valuable opportunity for our 'collective professional development' on this very important topic.

These seminars will bring together over 700 people and offer a fantastic opportunity to further build our movement against this particular type of abuse. And this is part of the wider work to Speak Up against all forms types of adult abuse. We will be asking all those attending the seminars to take 3 simple actions to help us build a campaign against domestic abuse

In the run up to the first seminar on Monday 15 April, I would ask all colleagues to use their organisation's or personal social media to highlight this vital issue. Please tag in @CoCoAwareness and @NorfolkSAB to any tweets you send.

We can all add to that bit of straw that will help break adult abuse.

Walter Lloyd-Smith
NSAB Board Manager

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You can follow Frank on Twitter at @FMullaneAAFDA

You can follow Luke and Ryan Hart on Twitter at @CoCoAwareness