



Our impact

Since our first project in 2014 we have developed several six-month projects supporting over a hundred members in Colchester and London. All our members have reported back saying that they have gained in confidence and have developed a positive outlook in life. We've had family members and friends comment upon the positive impact which the Black Dog Theatre Creation has had upon members lives and their relationships. The Black Dog Theatre Creation has received positive recognition from leading mental health individuals including Dr Tilbury and organisations such as Mind, Re-Think London SIBS and the Together organisation. We have produced six successful sell-out productions and have explored a range of different performance techniques including the use of puppetry, oral storytelling and music in performance. All with successful outcomes.

"The Black Dog Theatre Creation has become a life-line. It's a wonderful group where people can make friends, gain support and learn to live and connect again." (Kim)



*"Alfie has done wonders to help my wife with the Black Dog Theatre Creation. He's given my children back their mum and brought a smile back on her face. Of course, she still has her bad days, but she's stronger and knows how to deal with them. It's as if she's come alive again!"
(Husband of one of our members)*

Elo's story

Since coming to the UK, I have worked with vulnerable people; particularly those suffering from mental health problems. I have also suffered from depression and anxiety myself. This wasn't helped by not being a confident English speaker and I quickly became isolated within my local community. I would suffer from severe headaches and panic attacks. Then I saw a leaflet advertising the Black Dog Theatre Creation at the Oxford House Arts Theatre. I joined, and I haven't looked back. I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with the project and I loved working on the show. It was so much fun, and I met some new friends too. It helped build my confidence and gave me something to work towards. It also helped me with my English and I now socialize more with people that I know. I recently got a new job too. My first here in the UK working with people with disabilities. I still get involved with the Black Dog projects and recommend it to others.



10 Facts about our success:

1. Since our first project, 100% of our members have reported back saying that they have become more confident, independent and feel more positive about life.
2. We have produced six sell out productions.
3. Dr Tilbury, Senior Occupational Therapist and Actor has hailed the project as being a wonderful and positive group which impacts positively upon the community.
4. All our members have reconnected with the local community.
5. We have supported members in their return to work.
6. We have successfully explored several performance techniques such as puppetry, oral storytelling, music and freeze frames.
7. We have successfully created opportunities to encourage people to talk about mental health issues affecting their local communities.
8. Family members and friends of our members have fed back to us describing the positive impact which the projects have had on their family life at home and their relationships.
9. We have developed partnerships and worked with local mental health support groups.
10. Our audience size to our performances has consistently grown.

Carol's recount:

My life has not been very easy. I had a rough upbringing that was often abusive and unloved. Whilst still young I was sexually assaulted which left me both physically and mentally broken. Since then I have never had any confidence. I've lived as an almost recluse – hardly ever going out. A few years ago I was on a bus when it crashed and it left me with painful injuries which have caused me to become a prisoner in my own home. Until I started BDTC. Apart from going to church, BDTC has been my only link with the outside world. It has slowly taught me to socialise for the first time in years. I now have friends and through drama and performance, Alfie has helped me to become confident again. With his encouragement and positive nature, he has helped me to start travelling on the buses once more. I know that I am not getting any younger and my health has continued to slowly get worse. (I am now in a wheelchair) yet Alfie has adapted activities and got me up on stage and helped me to perform in front of an audience. BDTC has taught me to believe in myself and that there are no barriers.

Artistic partnerships

We have already developed and successfully worked with several performance venues including The Arts Theatre, London, Oxford House Arts Theatre, and The Colchester Arts Centre. All of which have been wonderful experiences and have supported our continued development. We have also worked with several freelance artists including musician Ed Nunn, film maker Ned Woodcraft and Actors Nick McDuff and Kitty Whitely.

Most recently, we developed a new partnership working with The award-winning Puppet Soup Theatre Company.



A Letter from Dr Tilbury

After working with The Black Dog Theatre Creation's London group, I would like to thank the members and all those involved for creating such a wonderful and affective project.

From someone who has suffered first hand from mental health issues and works in the field of supporting people; it is projects such as the Black Dog which are so important and sadly rare features within our community.

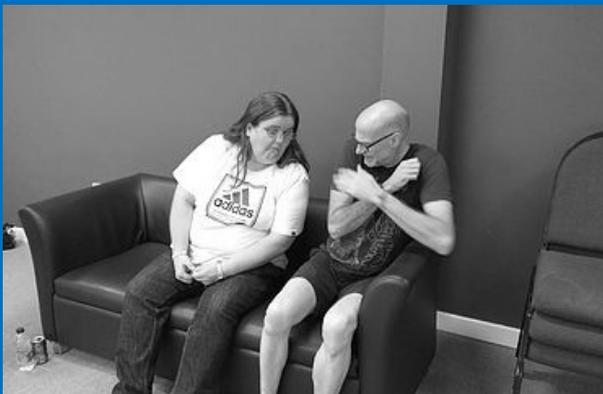
I have observed how the Black Dog Theatre Creation affects people's lives in such positive ways. The project uses drama and performance techniques to develop confidence, independence and to encourage people to think positively and to engage with their community again. After speaking to some of the members I have found that the group has already had a wonderful impact.

I would certainly recommend the project and will be happy to refer clients to the project.

Keep up the hard work!

Dr A. Tilbury

Senior Occupational Therapist



A Volunteers Story

My name is Mark. I have to say when I first decided to volunteer to help with the Black Dog project I wasn't sure what to expect. But as soon as I arrived at my first session I knew it was going to be a rather special experience and I haven't looked back since. Everyone – both staff and members were so inviting and encouraging. I've made some wonderful friends and learnt so many new skills. From organising, supporting others to performance skills. It was Alfie who captured my love of music and used it to help the group and nurtured my enthusiasm in becoming a technician and helping with the shows.



“A powerful and extremely sensitive piece of theatre which explored issues of isolation and mental

“Taking part in this performance was such a worthwhile experience. It has given me the confidence to come out of the house and to do something positive.” (Performer)



“What a delightful performance! It's amazing how much the members have come out of their shell. The Black Dog Theatre Creation is a truly remarkable project.” (Audience member)

“I never thought I'd see the project through. I was convinced that I'd go to one workshop and that would be it. Now I've just come off the main stage at the arts theatre after performing to over a hundred people. I feel so alive!” (Performer)

Visit:

www.blackdogtheatrecreation.com