

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

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- an understanding of the pharmacology of opioids;
- a knowledge of the underlying conditions and their effect on health;
- an understanding of dependence;
- knowledge of alternative ways of relieving pain and distress; and
- ability to help patients change their attitudes and behaviour.

Many GPs do not feel confident, trained, or experienced in managing drug dependence. Though GPs could be trained in these key skills, other health professionals may already have or could develop the necessary knowledge and skills, and work with GPs to manage these patients.

There is currently a national initiative to extend the number and range of health professionals working in primary care. As part of this initiative our practice recently appointed a part-time mental health practitioner with a background including mental health, counselling, and working in substance misuse services.

One of her key roles is to identify, assess, and treat patients addicted to prescribed opioid drugs, working with a practice GP. We seek to help and support patients to reduce and stop their use of opioid drugs, and find alternative ways to cope with chronic pain and distress. So far we have not found this as difficult as we expected, and those patients who have reduced their opioid drug use have not had a worsening of their pain and distress in the process.

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I Want to Live

Free Space Project, Kentish Town Health Centre, London, 22 June to 12 October 2018, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 6.30pm



Photograph by Daniel Regan.

SUICIDE RESPITE

The Free Space Project, an arts and wellbeing charity, is currently hosting a thought-provoking exhibition and series of workshops on suicide and mental health at the Kentish Town Health Centre in North London. Photographer and Free Space Project Artistic Director Daniel Regan's project *I Want to Live* is a series of interviews and photographs taken from Maytree, an organisation based in a residential house in North London that provides a safe, non-judgemental space where people experiencing suicidal thoughts can stay.

Displayed in the award-winning exhibition space, and GP waiting room, on the first floor, are short interview transcripts and photographic portraits. Although individual and uniquely moving stories, collectively the emerging narrative establishes the driving force behind the volunteers, to listen and to be heard. Alongside these are photographs taken at the house that depict everyday domesticity, a cup of coffee or unmade bed, the traces left behind by those who have stayed before. These images generate an overwhelming sense of reverie, of time passing, and yet also of a state of transition, not unlike your everyday surgery waiting room.

Reflecting Maytree's non-clinical approach to suicide in a clinical setting highlights the synergistic role of art in health care, and importantly in tackling the barriers that remain when talking about mental health.

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<http://freespaceproject.org/portfolio/iwanttolive/>

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