



Dr Ann Craft
1943 - 1997

There was something refreshing about any encounter with Ann. She brought with her a broad-minded view of the world, a wide world without boundaries, full of enriching experiences if you look at it in the right way. In this area I think she has definitely influenced me.

Chris Burkimsher

It was such a privilege to work with Ann and to have spent time with her as a friend over so many years, she would have been heartened to see how her work has progressed. I miss her but am inspired by her in my work and I have so many good memories of our travels and working life together.

Hilary Brown

SEXUALITY

To be a human being is to be a sexual being. Although there may be a range of intensity, varying over time, we all have sexual needs, feelings and drives, from the most profoundly handicapped to the most able among us. Although we can shape (and mis-shape) sexual expression, sexuality is not an optional extra which we in our wisdom can choose to bestow or withhold according to whether or not some kind of intelligence test is passed.

(Craft, 1987)

I would like to pay tribute to Ann by saying that I feel that without her expertise, dedication and unswerving determination the development and teaching of health and sex education in Nottingham probably would never have happened. I feel that Ann has had a profound effect on me personally and professionally and she inspired me and other people who worked with her with her depth of knowledge, professionalism and ability to communicate and understand people on all levels under all circumstances. I miss her straight talking, warmth, humour and support to forge forward and believe in yourself.

Michael Collins

Ann Craft was a luminous woman, worker, researcher and pioneer. The value she gave to colleagues and friends she gave to people with learning disability and put their abuse and degradation on the social map at a time when no-one could bear to consider such things. I "inherited" Ann as a colleague and friend as she was a close colleague and friend of my father Professor S.S.Segal OBE, author of "No Child is Ineducable", and he and my mother both considered that Ann did for human rights, sexuality and sexual trauma what he did for education. Ann was always there to offer practical and theoretical and emotional support. Even when I phoned her a few weeks before she died she was able to wryly speak of her cancer and forthcoming death and express thanks for the friendships and work she had been involved in.

Valerie Sinason

I worked with Ann for many years, starting when I joined the fpa as a very green training and development officer in 1981. Ann was already an fpa tutor and adviser to their developing work on sexuality and learning disability. I have many fond and funny memories of the times we spent together. Hilary Brown may remember the occasion in Leeds where a group of us all agreed to share a house in old age and care for one another. Sadly that was not to be for Ann.

Later I worked closely with her on a project to provide visual images to support her new 'Living Your Life' materials and my 'Chance to Choose'. We were told firmly by Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Branch that we would be putting ourselves at risk of prosecution if we used, among other things, photographs of erect penises. In order to save the project, we used line drawings instead. This decision ensured the successful publication of 'Living Your Life', and Picture Yourself 1 and 2, all three of which continue to make a significant contribution to SRE for young people with learning difficulties.

Hilary Dixon

First impressions - never altered - remain vivid. "Here is someone you can do business with". Ann had a vision and was ahead of her time, but was a thoroughly practical person who understood there was a long road to travel in raising awareness of the issue about which she cared so deeply. And I much enjoyed the humour which lay just behind the reserve. Still much missed.

Olive Stevenson

Moving to the department of learning disabilities to work alongside Ann introduced me to some research techniques never before encountered. One day we'd be brain storming suggestions for Makaton-type symbols for various sexual terms. Another day I was subjected to aromatherapy by an action researcher developing guidelines for interventions for people with multiple disabilities. I learnt how to get members of steering groups actively and enthusiastically involved rather than merely providing criticism from the sidelines. Above all, we really enjoyed ourselves and I'd like to think our collaborators and participants did too.

I have also to admit that I did value meeting people who had read *Living Your Life* and, when finding out Ann was a colleague, related with huge enthusiasm how the book had changed their working life.

Penny Standen

Ann was my inspiration, my mentor and my friend. She encouraged and supported me to follow my aspirations and to specialise in the work that we both felt a great commitment to. Ann is remembered by so many because of her passion for her work and her generosity, kindness, humour and compassion to those who came in contact with her. She continues to be missed by all who knew her well.

Deborah Kitson

Ann Craft was the greatest networker I have encountered - she introduced me to Linda Ward at the IASSID conference in Helsinki and we all went to Savonlinna to the opera – she was a wonderful friend, a pioneer in the field of people with learning disabilities, and I miss her greatly.

Susan Hayes



Ann with Linda and Susan

I remember Ann as a remarkable person who pioneered and turned the first furrows about topics that were not then in the service/public consciousness.

As a person she was warm, approachable and determined, someone with iron principles who wanted to do something for the good. She also had a strong sense of humour - working with her on the first local abuse guidelines I remember her joking it had taken longer to produce them than to re-unite Germany! Her early death robbed us all - users, carers, services and professionals of her contribution.

Richard Welfare

At every meeting when masturbation is discussed without a twinge of embarrassment, when women with learning disabilities are supported in their decision to have or not to have children, when sanitary protection discrete from incontinence wear is offered to a woman with learning disabilities, Ann's influence on our attitudes and practice is evident. Ten years on, I would like to say again "Thank you, Ann, for your inspiration and dedication which continue to improve the quality of life for so many."

Caroline Downs

Her support for the Shepherd School was immense. When she arrived at the University she quickly established herself as a friend to the school, joining our fledgling Sex Education Monitoring Group. Her advice and support were invaluable. When the new project for Living Your Life was suggested in 1988 we were keen to join and what fun we had. And how much we learnt from Ann.

We still miss her for her friendship, her advice and above all her leadership and inspiration.

Shepherd School

I remember travelling down to London with her and Nancy Beecroft for the "Thinking the Unthinkable" Conference at The Kings Fund in 1989. I was very conscious of being in awe of Anne's insight into the issues and her passion to change lives for children and adults with learning disabilities.

As a personal friend she was so supportive and very funny. She was a very good mimic - particularly of the Old Consultants - the sort we hopefully see less of today. She loved the theatre and we enjoyed the ballet and opera at The Theatre Royal - how she laughed at some of the more bizarre leg work of the Willis in La Sylphide.

David Stewart

People rightly remember Ann for her pioneering work around education and awareness about sexuality and relationships for people with learning disabilities, and about abuse.

But how many people remember that she was one of the very first people in the UK to write about the rights of adults with learning disabilities to be **parents** – and to publicly support them in their unequal battle over the fundamental human right to have, and hold on, to their children, and to be supported to do so successfully?

Linda Ward