

PCA Events – What's that about then?

By Dave McCartney

PCA Events has previously only been mentioned in this publication in connection with BAPCA Local Groups. I have been asked to write about the PCA Events website to explain what it can do for you and to further discuss what tools are available to users on the PCA Events website.

If you are tutor organising extra-curricular lectures, you can fill your places on PCA Events. If your company is running person-centred training, you can advertise that on PCA Events at no cost. If your group is hosting a person-centred event, it can get wider publicity on PCA Events.

PCA Events is a Yahoo! Group. Yahoo! Groups is a free service that allows you to bring together family, friends, and associates through a web site and email group. Yahoo! Groups offer a convenient way to connect with others who share the same interests and ideas.

The founder of PCA Events is Simon Carver who began the group in December 2002. He set it up in response to request from Local Group members at the first Annual BAPCA Local Group gathering on a way to share information on workshops, etc. PCA Events is a notice board for the promotion of the Person-Centred Approach and for publicising courses, workshops and events which will be of interest to those who are Person-Centred Practitioners or who have an interest in the Person-Centre Approach. The group exists to spread the word about person centred events beyond the boundaries of local organisations. This is done by posting messages to the group which will be notified to all group members.

The benefit of this is that you may be organising an event in Birmingham which someone from Buckinghamshire may not normally get to hear about but is perfectly willing to make the journey to attend, if only they knew. This is how they will find out.

A recent addition which is still in its infancy is the addition of an events database. Registered members may list their event on the database. (The moderators will edit a listing in order that events appear in a chronological order.) The database currently holds details of some events and meetings known to me in my capacity as the web author for Hillingdon BAPCA.

The group moderators are Simon Carver and Dave McCartney. Although the title of moderator seems forbidding, the only action we will take is tidying up the members list and necessary amendment of events in the database to ensure that events are listed chronologically. It has never been necessary thus far, but we may also remove any posts which might expose the group to the risk of legal action.

The group does not easily lend itself to being a discussion group, an internet forum such as exists at this address (<http://personcentered.proboards40.com/>) is more suited to discussion. However, if subjects do get discussed as happened recently about PC courses, then that is fine.

Now I have to provide instructions in step-to-step fashion so that you can make use of the PCA Events website. I have given the instructions broken down as much as I can to assist those who are not confident when using the internet.

How to get onto PCA Events

- 1) Go to the PCA Events website using the following web address:
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/pca-events/>
- 2) If you are already a member, use the “Sign In” option at the top of the page. Alternatively, if you are new to the site, click the “Sign Up” options at the top of the page.
- 3) Now for new members. You will now be at a screen asking for some personal details. Firstly, you choose a Yahoo! ID (a nickname that people will see) and a password that should be easily remembered consisting of at least six characters. The rest of this screen asks some security questions to help if you forget your ID or password at a later date, a verification question where you enter what you see on the screen into a box, and then shows you the terms of service.
- 4) An email will be sent to the email address you listed. When you have the email from Yahoo!, click the link contained within it which will take you to a page with your ID already filled out. Enter the password that you chose and follow instructions to verify your email address.
- 5) You are asked to enter your password in the box on this next screen. And now you have a Yahoo! ID!
- 6) Now go again to the PCA Events website using the following web address:
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/pca-events/>
- 7) Click on the button marked “Join This Group” then enter your registered email address. On the next screen you are again asked for your password. Enter it and click “Continue”.
- 8) Enter your Yahoo! ID and password in the boxes. The next screen asks for some choices to be made. One which is important is for message delivery. I would recommend clicking for the daily digest. This way you do not receive a message every time someone posts to the group. What you will get is one email each day with all the messages that were posted to the group in that one email.
- 9) Complete one more verification process at the bottom of the screen then join. Now you are a member of PCA Events.

How to post a message on PCA Events

- 1) Once logged on to the PCA Events website, look on the left hand side of the screen. From the top, you see the words “Home”, “Messages”, and “Post”. Click on the word “Post”.
- 2) On the next screen, enter a meaningful title for your message in the subject box then in the box below that, enter your message. There is no spell check so if you feel that you need your spelling to be checked, it may be useful to first type your message in a word processing programme and checking it before cutting & pasting it into this box.
- 3) Click the button at the bottom marked as “Send Message”. This posts the message to the group. You will not see it immediately to a time lag in the Yahoo! Groups system. Go back to the homepage and refresh it after a minute or two to see the new message.

How to add an event to the PCA Events database

- 1) Once logged on to the PCA Events website, look on the left hand side of the screen. Amongst the words listed there is "Database". Click on that word.
- 2) On the next screen, click on the title "Courses, Workshops and Meetings".
- 3) On the next screen, click "Add Record".
- 4) Now enter your information into the boxes that you see. These are titled as follows: Date(s), Event Type, Subject or Topic, Location and Where to find further details. Take your lead from what is already listed.

There are other features on the PCA Events website which currently are not fully utilised. These are:

Files – In this part of the site, users can leave spreadsheets or word documents. At the time of writing, I have the set of forms needed for BAPCA membership here as well as the BAPCA Local Groups listings as they appear in PCQ and some details of courses and events. I try to keep an eye on this section and remove items once they are past their sell-by date.

Photos – This is a space where members can post their photos. There are currently photos of three members. Photos of you are most welcome as well as photos from any meetings or gatherings which you may attend but please ensure that those whose photos you post are willing to be shown.

Links – In this space, members can add lists of web links which may be of interest to other members. Currently I have added a list of websites that exists for person-centred local groups. Other lists can be created as members themselves as they wish.

Database – In this part of the site, members can create databases for others to use and see. I imagine that the most useful addition to this section has already been made, a database of "Courses, Workshops and Meetings". This database can be added to by members as discussed above. Members can also add new databases of their own using the "Create Table" link from within the Database section.

Polls – Members can run polls of the membership from this part of the site. My knowledge of other Yahoo! Groups indicates that this is rarely used in any group.

Members – This is where the record of members resides. Members can browse this list but may only amend details of their own membership.

Calendar – This section does exactly what it says on the tin! It is a calendar to which members can make entries which are then visible to all other members. This is currently under-used and is perhaps not as useful as the "Courses, Workshops and Meetings" database mentioned above which lists events in date order and with a location that is immediately visible.

To those who are comfortable exploring the web, I suggest trying out the different sections of the site and playing with the capabilities. To those who are not that comfortable with the web but who know

what they want to do and lack the knowledge, feel free to make contact with me by email at dave@hillingdonbapca.co.uk and I will try to assist you in finding the solution you seek.

Finally, PCA Events has been a slowly evolving group which is beginning to grow and has the ability to widen the audience for your course, your workshop, your event. PCA Events seeks to be the first online port of call for those seeking Person-Centred Events in this country. How valuable that first Local Group meeting was. By working to keep connected on PCA Events we can prevent the PCA from dropping off the edge into fragmented and isolated little compartments. Go online now!

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