

Thurrock Recovery College

THE NEWSLETTER

June 2024 | Edition 1

ART FEATURE

Awakening the Senses

More details of this wonderful piece of art can be found on page 3.

If you have a piece of art/work inspired by one of our courses we would love for you to share it with us and feature it in one of our upcoming newsletters.



WELCOME TO OUR FIRST EDITION

This has been co-produced with students and if you are interested in contributing we would love for you to volunteer with our small team.



WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION

From the Newsletter Team



DEAREST READER

We are excited to introduce you to our newsletter, which has been co-produced by our students who are dedicated to sharing their experiences and knowledge with others on their journey to recovery.

At our Recovery College, we believe in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages personal growth and development.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do, and we are proud to showcase their talent, creativity and personal growth in our newsletter.

Our mission is to fill each issue with real life engaging articles, uplifting stories, and helpful resources that aim to inspire and motivate. We hope that you will find our newsletter informative and an enjoyable to read.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our Recovery College community. Whether you are a student, a carer, or a supporter, we are here to help you on your journey to recovery.

We look forward to hearing your feedback, and ideas to help us grow, and if you are interested in contributing and joining our small team please do email the college for more information as you would be most welcome.

Warm regards,
The Newsletter Team.



Awakening the sense

Louise (RC Student)

Mindfulness in Action

Louise recently joined staff and others from the Recovery College to complete a Mindful Walk around the Park. She was so inspired from her experience of being present that she went home and created this wonderful and thought provoking piece of art and accompanying poem. Thank you for sharing this Louise.

Our next Mindful Walk is 3rd July.

*I wondered in the park,
for a change.*

*Leaves were sweeping all around,
the trees, the ground,
and around me.*

*Helping to awaken my senses and
my energy.*

*Breathing in the fresh air,
sweeping around.*

Becoming more alive.

*Awakening the senses, colours are
strong and bright.*

*A feeling more strong.
Inside my mind. More calm. Eyes
awake and Mind strong.*

*More together.
Feeling much better now.*

*Being more present in a moment,
a feeling of space and time for
my mind on a walk outside.*



The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.

Here are five benefits:

- 1. Reduces stress and anxiety:** Allowing you to focus on the present moment instead of worrying about the past or future.
- 2. Improves mental clarity and focus:** By training the brain to concentrate on the present moment, it can lead to increased productivity and better decision-making skills.
- 3. Enhances emotional intelligence:** Improving your ability to recognise and regulate your emotions, leading to stronger relationships.
- 4. Boosts the immune system:** By reducing stress and inflammation in the body. This can lead to improved overall health and well-being.
- 5. Promotes better sleep:** By reducing stress and promoting relaxation. This can lead to better overall health and mood.

Call me Dave

Written by Dave, RC Volunteer

I am, over and above anything else, a writer and as such am inclined to write about almost anything and seem to do it best when I know the subject matter. Depression is something I know intimately.

I have lived with depression my entire life, even before I knew it had a name or that there were, and still are, millions of other people who live with it too. I always dealt with it instinctively by masking my feelings and pretending to 'the world around me' that I was a confident, funny, happy-go-lucky soul whose demeanour and attitude was the antithesis of somebody suffering from depression. The very idea of admitting, even to myself, my true feelings of doubt, low self-esteem, fear of rejection, guilt, being a burden on others, a constant all-consuming sadness and daily thoughts of taking my own life did not enter my head. I grew up in a world where men don't expose their weaknesses, ever!

I could write screeds on the darkness that consumed my mind, but that's not what I'm here to do. I don't see the point in dwelling on what has been; it's in the past, where it cannot be cured. What I'm going to do instead is share my ongoing personal tale of recovery and the insights I've gained in the hope that I will, at the very least, provide encouragement for people, particularly men, who might think they are suffering alone. Many isolated men are like me: they want emotional and social support but often feel uncomfortable with expressing themselves.

Some days, I'll be fine then, out of nowhere, I will be overcome by a feeling of the deepest sadness imaginable and all the negative thoughts begin to cycle: I am worthless, I am a waste of space, I am a failure, I am a burden, this world would be a better place



without me, I can't do it, I wish I could just die and turn to dust and my existence forgotten. The Recovery College is helping me to understand the vagaries of my moods during my mental-health recovery journey and this newsletter is a platform for fellow students and me to express ourselves, share our lived experiences and, most importantly of all (to me), provide a link that is going to connect people one step, one day at a time.

Welcome to the first issue of the Newsletter. I hope my words will encourage somebody else to realise that we don't need to do it alone.



Living with low mood

RC Laura

Living with low mood can be a challenging experience. However, there are steps you can take to manage your mood and improve your overall wellbeing.

Here are 3 tips to help you live with low mood:

1. Practice self-care: Taking care of yourself is important when you are living with low mood. Try to get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet, and exercise regularly. Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as reading, listening to music, or spending time in nature.

2. Connect with others: Social support is crucial when dealing with low mood. Reach out to friends and family members for support and companionship. If you do not have anyone around, seek professional help, a support group, or join a course at the Recovery College. Our 5 Ways to Wellbeing course provides a great opportunity to connect with others on similar journeys.

3. Challenge negative thoughts: Low mood can be accompanied by negative thoughts that can make it difficult to cope. Try to identify these negative thoughts and challenge them with positive, realistic ones. For example, if you find yourself thinking "I'm worthless," replace that thought with "I have value and worth as a person."

Remember, living with low mood is a journey, and asking for help is a great tool for support.



Would you like to improve your flexibility, strength and overall wellbeing?

Come join us to connect through:
Introduction to Chair Yoga -
Wednesday 19th June.

Our chair yoga workshop will be a calming and accessible style of yoga that is suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Providing an opportunity to try yoga for the 1st time or ease yourself back in gently.

This is a 2 hour workshop that includes 60 min practice focused on moving the body into easy postures and stretches to encourage relaxation and ease out muscle tension. There will be breathing techniques alongside meditation to support your body and mind to relax.

You will reflect on how you feel at the end of the session, as well as taking some of these practises into your daily life.

Contact us if you are interested in joining us.

Email: Thurrockcollege@mpft.nhs.uk
Call: 01375 809 708

What a Marvel, Marvel is...

Contributed by Duncan, RC Student and Volunteer

Much of my life has been lived on the principle of: Goodbye or Wait, or Not Yet

As a young child I moved home many times; so, became used to the idea of: Goodbye to people, places and things.

At 10 years I moved to live in Cyprus with my parents and for 2 years lived an incredible lifestyle of half day school, beach life, swimming, sailing, diving and new friends. At 12 years I was informed that I would go to boarding school whilst my parents continued their life in the Armed Services travelling around the world. I said goodbye to my friends and a wonderful life. Then came a new life of learning to Wait. Waiting to receive a letter from my parents, waiting for a holiday to be with my parents wherever they were in the world.

At boarding school, it was Not Yet. I was used to being independent and taking responsibility for myself, so to be told I could not travel to see my grandmother, go for a swim, or go to the shops until I was older made me feel really angry.

Then came work, hard but very rewarding. My role as a social worker brought me into contact with all manner of people and witnessed how some regardless of age, would form amazing relationships with their pets. I recall a very elderly lady lived her life with her cat and were never apart. A boy was desperate to bring his dog into care with him after his parents both tragically died.

As I became an adult the hope of having my own dog was always present, then Marvel crashed into my life, a short -legged fluff ball of high-octane energy who shows me each day what living NOW means. When he runs; he is like a Top gun pilot at full speed. When he eats, he just enjoys the moment. when he meets another dog or human he just wants to play! I have now discovered Play as an adult. It's great; its liberating; it's fun; it's energising. I live with depression but life is improving thanks to Marvel and beautiful people in my life.

I found the Recovery College, a collection of people wanting to say **"hello and welcome"**, to me and you!



Pet Power: Combating loneliness

Do you own a pet?

I currently have three, soon to be four (don't tell the children) and coming home to their unconditional love brings with it a level of contentment and happiness.

Animals have been known to provide many benefits to our mental health. Not only do they offer companionship, which can help reduce feelings of loneliness and depression but they also provide a sense of purpose and responsibility, especially for those who struggle with mental health challenges. Caring for an animal can help individuals feel needed and useful, which can improve their sense of self-worth.

Research has shown that simply petting an animal (particularly a dog or cat) can lower blood pressure and reduce anxiety, as they offer a calming presence.

We are also able to reduce our stress through playful interaction with our animals, such as petting and playing with them, as it has been shown to release endorphins and promote relaxation. Try taking some time to sit and mindfully stroke and connect with your pet, your body and mind will thank you!

As well as animals encouraging physical activity ~(essential for maintaining good mental health). they can also help us to create social connections and even help support new friendships, boosting our mood and overall wellbeing.



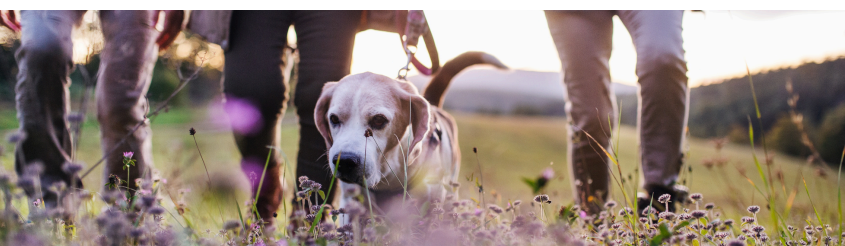
Meet Recovery College Co-ordinator, Patricia's dog: Jazz

Despite being 13 years old, she still has her crazy puppy moments when friends come round the house.

She gets so excited that she runs up and down around and cries. Her favourite food are kiwis. She won't let you eat one in peace, begging to get some, until we show her that the bowl is empty, then she goes.

Her favourite game is finding treats that we hide around the house. She makes us laugh all the time

I love taking her for walks to the park, although sometimes she rather sleeps than going out.



*"Choose to be optimistic,
 it feels better."*

Dalai Lama

Upcoming courses: June

Date	Course
Wednesday 5th	Mindful Walk
Wednesday 12th	Visualisation for relaxation (Online)
Wednesday 19th	Introduction to Chair Yoga
Thursday 20th & 27th	Introduction to Anxiety (Online)
Tuesday 25th	Relaxation Workshop

Community connections

COMMUNITY PANTRY

Grays Library

Mondays and Thursdays:
9:00am to 7:00pm

Tuesdays/Wednesdays/Fridays
9:00am to 5:00pm

Saturdays: 9:00am to 1:00pm

Please help yourself to a maximum of 3 items.

We are extremely grateful for any donations you can offer.



Thameside Complex Orsett Road Grays RM17 5DX

thurrock.gov.uk

 mind Thurrock and Brentwood

Youthful Wellbeing Group



A fortnightly group activity programme for 18-25 yr olds. Designed to improve your wellbeing and give you a safe space to meet others.



To register your interest follow QR code or
Call: 01375 531710
Email: Youthfulwellbeing@tbmind.org.uk

When : Every other Tuesday 6-8pm
Where : Inspire Hub Grays