

Thurrock Recovery College STUDENT NEWSLETTER



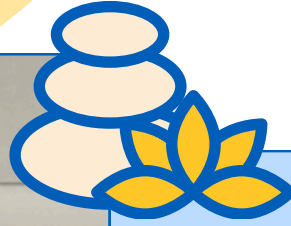
By Louise, a student at Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College

In this Issue...

- Yoga Pose of the month
- Staff spotlight
- Articles from our students
- Community Updates

Pose Of The Month

Crescent Low Lunge Pose Prayer Hands
-A Gentle Journey within, to calm your mind



About Crescent Low Lunge Pose

This posture combines a powerful stretch for the legs with an uplifting backbend, creating a sense of expansion and energy.

The palms joined in Namaskar Mudra (prayer hands) symbolize connection—both to ourselves and the world around us.

**By Diana
Yoga Tutor**

Benefits

- **Strength and Stretch:** Stretches the spine, shoulders, hips, and legs while strengthening the thighs, knees, and ankles.
- **Flexibility and Mobility:** Opens the hips and chest, enhancing the range of motion in the spine and shoulders.
- **Energising and Relaxing:** Relieves tension in the back and hips, reducing stress and promoting relaxation.
- **Therapeutic Effects:** Improves digestion, circulation, and respiratory function while stimulating the nervous and lymphatic systems.
- **Emotional Balance:** Opens the Heart Chakra, promoting self-love and compassion, while grounding emotions through the Sacral Chakra.



How To Practice

Crescent Low Lunge Pose



“
"The deeper you go within,
the more beauty you
uncover in your soul."
”

- 1** Begin in a low lunge position with your right leg extended back and left leg bent at a 90-degree angle, keeping the left ankle aligned with the knee.
- 2** Place your right knee on the mat.
- 3** Bring your palms together in prayer hands at your chest.
- 4** On an inhale, stretch your arms upward, lengthening through your fingertips.
- 5** Slightly lift your chest into a gentle backbend, expanding your chest and opening your heart.
- 6** Hold for 5–8 breaths, focusing on your alignment and steady breathing.
- 7** Bring your palms together in prayer hands at your chest.

Contraindications

- Avoid this pose if you have knee or hip injuries.
- Use modifications or props for balance.
- If you experience tightness in the hips or shoulders.

Let Crescent Low Lunge Pose with Prayer Hands inspire you this February to stay rooted yet reach for the sky.

Embrace this moment of **balance**, **strength**, and **renewal**.

Artwork

By Louise, Student

Hands of Strength



Our Connections Give Us Strength.

Like keeping a notebook of positive people.

Memories of moments that we have felt a positive connection to something.

It can be anything like music, places, cars, colours, nature, a book, movie or a game.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



By Mandy Barber:
Recovery College
Wellbeing
Practitioner

Dear Readers,

For me, this picture evokes everything that ensures my physical & mental wellbeing. Don't get me wrong, I have a wonderful family & some good friends. It's what I need to stay well that I'm talking about.

I've experienced a variety of mental & physical issues in my life including childhood trauma & loss of a parent; significant losses in adulthood leading to depression that warranted hospitalisation twice. From 2010 I developed a health issue resulting in being wheelchair bound for the best part of 10 years.

Not evident from this picture now. The one thing that has been an ongoing joy throughout my life from my earliest memories has been my love of animals.

My current animals are an 18-year-old adopted stray tabby tom cat (Tiggy), a rescue greyhound (Athena), & a gypsy cob (Princess). They are all demanding of my time & attention in different ways, but they are what get me out of bed each day.

I walk Athena daily in the early morning, which in the winter is in the dark, freezing cold or pouring rain, but I push myself to

do it because it's the best way for me to start my day & get both my body & brain into 'function mode' & ready for the day ahead.

Princess lives out all year round with a small herd of horses (which is the most natural way for horses to live, especially native breeds), so on my days off I go to the fields & do chores including poo picking, perimeter checking & fence repairs, filling the water tanks, supplementary feeding etc. Weather permitting, I'll also groom & go for a ride in the forest.

The forest is always beautiful regardless of the time of year & watching the seasons change & the natural beauty of each season is so inspiring. Sometimes the birds are so loud, especially walking the dog to hear the dawn chorus, & when out riding it can be awesome to spot different creatures in the forest, like muntjac deer, foxes & badgers.

It warms my heart to be in nature. With nature I can honestly say it is the thread that has gone with me throughout the ups & downs of my life. Since early childhood & now continues to keep me on an even track.



Lost In Paris

– with Marvel

Bonjour

We had the great experience of a Christmas in Paris with our family, despite being organised for the family to come to Grays for the celebration! Our arrangements changed by early December, so we booked up a dog friendly hotel in Paris and with the assistance of Eurotunnel we drove to Paris. Our hotel was on one side of huge gardens (Jardin de Luxembourg), our family on the other. Marvel was happy; each day was a minimum of a four mile walk!

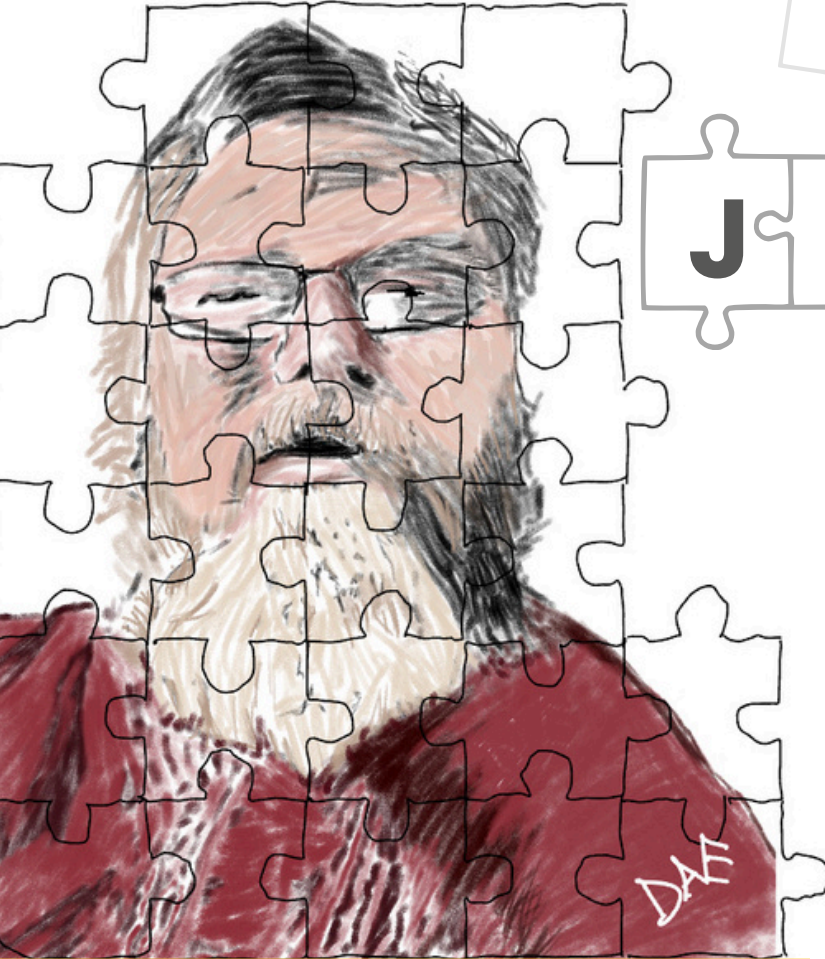
It was very cold, but bright and sunny; there was even fresh coffee to be bought from the myriad of little green Kiosks, all festively decorated. The beauty of the gardens was stunning, along with statues and the architecture of a massive Chateau in the middle. People and their dogs were so friendly! The winter sun and greenery was inspiring, the fresh air invigorating, making my hopes soar like an eagle. **This moment in time is what I describe as a “Wonderment”!**

Yet; on this particular walk we had a problem. As we came out of the park Marvel and I took a wrong turning; and had that sinking feeling as I realised we were lost in Paris.

I felt super responsible for Marvel (who continued to greet each person and their dog as long lost friends). So what do you do when lost in Paris? At first the feeling is quite intimidating especially with no phone signal; then an obvious thought is Google Maps. Then to talk to people in my poor French. I told myself to slow down; and think what is the most comfortable way of overcoming being lost? Of course, like all Parisians, if in doubt; stop and go into a Bistro for a drink and chat!!

It was a good decision. Marvel was treated like a little king (plate of meat and water appeared) as I had a beer and a local chicken dish; served by a waiter who was fascinated that we were walking in Paris for Christmas and we came from England! My French and his English was good enough to share our predicament, and to my surprise the people all around us wanted to help. Amazing! Before long I was on the right Avenue, and as reassured by the waiter the phone signal was fine (then I could phone my family), and we were reunited within twenty minutes.

Vive le France!!



J I G S A W

Just like a jigsaw puzzle, life is a process of putting all the uniquely different pieces together, one at a time, to create a final image. Even with the picture on the box though, it can be impossible to differentiate one piece from another, which leads us to sometimes place a piece in an incorrect position. This causes frustration! We later spend ages looking for something that was never missing in the first place.

These 'mistakes' represent the occasions in our lives where things have gone wrong because we made a poor choice. It could be an unhealthy relationship, or a poor business decision but when we eventually realise what we have done wrong we can correct ourselves. Just like it is when we find the piece that we thought was missing, ending a toxic relationship, or correcting the business decision also brings relief.

Some of us go through life with clearly defined goals and others adopt a more random approach but whether one begins by methodically separating and categorising each piece according to its colour, pattern, or shape, or one relies on a completely different method to accomplish the goal does not matter in the slightest because, with enough perseverance, the picture will emerge anyway.

If you look at the picture from a distance the 'scars' formed by the interlocking pieces are insignificant.

If you think about it for a while you will realise that life is like a jigsaw puzzle except it doesn't come in a box and there is no picture to refer to. Its pieces are all jumbled though, and we have to rely on time and instinct to assemble it.

Some of the border pieces, especially the four corners, could represent aspects of our lives that are incontrovertible: mother, father, place of birth and ethnicity.

The ordinary side pieces are representative of other factors, like wealth and status, education, culture, influential associations, friends, and health for example. They all affect us directly and their influences, which can both be either positive or negative, link us to our cornerstones to construct the frame that defines us and keeps us confined within its boundaries.

The middle pieces represent the chaos of life's reality.

From Expertise To Expertise:

 **Unlocking the power of lived experience through mental health support**

By Charlotte Matthews



"I can't do it!"

"I will just fail"

"I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed"

Are just some examples of the negative self-talk we say to ourselves.

Challenging these negative thoughts and reframing in the context of lived experience can recognise the value of your experience.

It can give you a **sense of empowerment** that you can tackle things and if it doesn't go to plan you can learn from it for next time.

My experience of mental health makes me an expert of empathy and understanding".

"I have been through dark times and come out the other side, this makes me a powerful and resilient person".

**"RECOVERY IS NOT ONE AND DONE!
It is a lifelong journey that takes place one day, one step at a time."**

The majority of people that make decisions around mental health and wellbeing services are people removed from the reality of experiencing mental health out in the community.

However with a **new grassroots approach** things are improving for the better. A movement of giving equal power to **people who have 'been there'** to help shape the varying services that support them is becoming more popular. This is where the concept of lived experience comes in to play.

**So... WHAT is lived experience?...
WHY is it valuable?**

Lived experience refers to the personal challenges and **first hand knowledge** that people who've navigated mental health either directly themselves or indirectly through close family members or friends.

It's not just about a qualification and what people believe to be the issues; it's about real-life **insights from those who understand** what it's like to experience mental health and the ups and downs of managing these challenges in life.

Imagine going through something difficult—like dealing with a challenging diagnosis or managing mental health—and feeling like no one in the room really understands what you're going through and you.....

...continued from previous page

constantly have to explain your point of view and relay to your personal story over and over again.

Now, imagine **someone who's been there, WHO GETS IT**, sitting next to you.

This is **the power of lived experience** in mental health services. It creates a sense of understanding, validation, and even hope that can't be replicated by clinical knowledge alone. It can also massively help **reduce the barriers** people face trying to access services, as they feel there is an ally on the inside.

It's time to challenge your perspective, value yourself & your experience!

Putting people in these positions to **overcome stigma** and building a narrative of hope and resilience around thriving with mental health.

At Inclusions and Thurrock and Brentwood Mind **we value lived experience** and aim to put it at the heart of everything we do! There are a couple of lived experience roles available that actively give a platform for their perspective and valued opinions to shape and redefine mental health services.

Peer Facilitators at the Inclusions Recovery college – Co-facilitate course and co-produce courses and their materials.

Experts by Experience

Thurrock and Brentwood Mind are running a monthly lived experience panel meeting for up to 10 members to influence on new policy and participate in co-producing mental health and wellbeing services.

Please follow the QR code to register your interest.

Lived Experience Panel



UPCOMING COURSES

FEBRUARY 2025

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
3 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am Chafford Hundred	3 Yoga for Everyone 10 am-12 pm Grays	4 Your Picture of Wellbeing 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays	4 NEW Hope and Wellbeing (online) 2-4 pm	5 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 2-3 pm	6 NEW Understanding Anxiety (online) 9:30 -11:30 am	6 Understanding Depression 12-2 pm Grays	7 Ways to Wellbeing: Learn 12-2 pm South Ockendon	7 Recovery Café 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays Park Café	
10 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am Chafford Hundred	10 Yoga for Everyone 10 am-12 pm Grays	11 Your Picture of Wellbeing 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays	11 NEW Hope and Wellbeing (online) 2-4 pm	12 Mindful Walk 2-3:30 pm Grays	13 NEW Explore, Imagine, Be (online) 9 am- 1 pm	13 Mindfulness Practice 1-2 pm Grays	14 Ways to Wellbeing: Be Active 12-2 pm South Ockendon	14 Recovery Café 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays Park Café	
17 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am	17 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12 pm Grays	18 Your Picture of Wellbeing 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays	19 Individual Learning Plan reviews	19 Individual Learning Plan reviews	20 Individual Learning Plan reviews	20 Individual Learning Plan reviews	21 Recovery Café 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays Park Café	21 Recovery Café 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays Park Café	
24 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am Chafford Hundred	25 Your Picture of Wellbeing 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays	25 My Rested Self: Sleep (Online) 6-8 pm	26 Yoga for Everyone 10 am-12 pm Aveley	26 Ways to Wellbeing: Connect 1-3 pm Grays	27 Mindful Walk 11 am-12:30 pm Chafford Hundred	27 *NEW* Hope and Wellbeing (online) 1-5 pm	25 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 10-11 am	25 Recovery Café 10:30 am-1:30 pm Grays Park Café	

MARCH 2025

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
3 Newsletter co-production 10-11am Chafford Hundred	3 Communication for confidence 12-2pm Grays	4 Money matters 10-12pm Grays	4 My Rested Self: Sleep (Online) 6-8pm	5 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	5 Ways to Wellbeing Take Notice 1-3pm South Ockendon	6 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm South Ockendon	6 Anxiety and Me (online) 1-2pm	7 Mindfulness practice 2-3pm Grays	7 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30 Grays Park Cafe
10 Newsletter co-production 10-11am Chafford Hundred	10 Communication for confidence 12-2pm Grays	11 Money matters 10-12pm Grays	11 My Rested Self: Sleep (Online) 6-8pm	12 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	12 Ways to Wellbeing Give 1-3pm South Ockendon	13 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm South Ockendon	13 Anxiety and Me (online) 1-2pm	14 Food and Mood 11-1pm Grays	Recovery Café 10:30-1:30 Grays Park Cafe
17 Newsletter co-production 10-11am Chafford Hundred	17 Communication for confidence 12-2pm Grays	18 Identity and Personality (online) 11-1pm Grays	18 Mindfulness Walk 2-3:30pm Grays	19 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	19 Ways to Wellbeing Learn 1-3pm South Ockendon	20 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm South Ockendon	20 Anxiety and Me (online) 1-2pm	21 Food and Mood 11-1pm Grays	Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Cafe
24 Newsletter co-production 10-11am Chafford Hundred	24 Communication for confidence 12-2pm Grays	25 Identity and Personality (online) 11-1pm Grays	25 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 3-4pm	26 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	26 Ways to Wellbeing Be active 1-3 South Ockendon	27 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm South Ockendon	27 Mindfulness practice 11-12pm Grays	28 Food and Mood 11-1pm GRays	Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays

KINDNESS BINGO

You can cut the individual boxes out below and pop them in an envelope, then every morning pull one piece out and try and follow the instructions.

Made a personalised music playlist for a friend	Baked Treats for a Neighbour	Shoveled snow from my neighbours drive	Kept a gratitude journal	Paid the car parking for someone else
Bought a meal for someone that did not have their wallet	Treated myself to a massage	Left a surprise gift for a friend	Did someone else's chores	Offered my phone to a stranger to make a needed call
Put stray grocery carts where they belong	Surprised a friend with a note of appreciation	FREE SPACE	Took myself on a date	Sent flowers to someone who needed cheering up
Gave money to a person in need	Offered a tissue to a person that needed it	Gave a lottery ticket to a stranger	Cleaned up a hiking trail	Cleaned up a mess that wasn't mine
Welcomed a newcomer to join my group	Cooked a meal for someone just returning from the hospital	Wrote a positive note to myself for inspiration	Used reusable water bottles	Unexpectedly replaced something that was broken



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION

mind Thurrock and Brentwood

Are you an Expert by Experience?

What stories do you have to share? What could you bring to the conversation around mental health? Be part of the process to develop our new lived experience panel.



Join us today!

Scan the QR code or
Tel: 01368 391411
Email: livedexperience@tbmind.org.uk



healthwatch
Thurrock

Join the Healthwatch Thurrock Advisory Group



Healthwatch Thurrock seeks to recruit volunteers to its Advisory Group, to support the Healthwatch team best deliver their services to people in Thurrock.

The Advisory Group is formed of people from a range of backgrounds, with relevant skills and experience.

We are looking for individuals with specific knowledge around the topics below to join our diverse Advisory Group:

- ✓ Long term conditions
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Drugs & alcohol
- ✓ Learning disabilities
- ✓ Children/Young people
- ✓ LGBTQIA+

Please get in touch to tell us why you'd be perfect for the role

Call: 01375 389883
Email: admin@healthwatchthurrock.org

Thurrock Cares Roadshows

Find out what support is available to help you with the rising cost of living



Corringham Library
Wednesday 5 February
10am to 1pm

thurrock.gov.uk/thurrockcares




thurrock.gov.uk

Squad assemble! MISSION: COMMUNITY SCARF

LET'S GET KNITTING!

We are inviting the community to come together and help us knit a Community Scarf. All welcome, at any skill level.

Double Knit, 6mm needles, 30 stitches, 6' wide
Any pattern/colour and any length welcome.

Feel free to add your favourite community groups or organisation into your design to shine a light on the wonderful services in Grays and Thurrock. But don't be nervous, the scarf doesn't have to be perfect!

DEADLINE: Friday 7th February
Drop-off your knitted contribution to Arts Outburst on the 2nd floor of the Thameside Complex, Orsett Road, Grays by the 7th Feb 2025.

GRAND REVEAL

The Community Scarf will be unveiled at **Troupe Presents** on Feb 21st, our Creative Development Programme's very own cabaret evening showcasing participants AND our handmade symbol of care, community & collaboration!
Find out more at www.artsoutburst.co.uk

CONTACT
Emma at Arts Outburst
01375 326247 | emma@artsoutburst.co.uk

Recovery Cafe – Fridays 10:30–1:30 at the Grays Park Cafe

We are pleased to announce that from January we will be offering a new service – **The Recovery Cafe** at the Grays Park Cafe

The Recovery Café is a safe, inclusive and welcoming space where existing and new students can meet to talk about mental health related topics and find out more about Recovery College and other Inclusion services.

At the Recovery Cafe people can:

- connect with peers and share experiences
- participate in wellbeing talks
- explore recovery-focused courses and activities
- meet others who understand the challenges of mental health recovery
- register with Recovery College and book courses to support your wellbeing

Every body is welcome, especially if you experience feelings of isolation.

There is no need to book, just come in



Reminder

If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter we would love to hear from you. Please contact us to arrange attending our next informal meeting.

Meetings are held regularly in and around Thurrock.

The venues offer accessible facilities and free parking on site.



Scan Me

Scan the QR code below or visit
www.recoverycollege.inclusionthurrock.org
to read more!



Contact Us!

Email: Thurrockcollege@mpft.nhs.uk

Call: 01375 809 708

X @ThurrckRCollege

f Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College