

Thurrock Recovery College STUDENT NEWSLETTER



Hear your thoughts

By Louise, a student at Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College

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3 Mindful Minutes

By Patrizia Pessenda-Garcia, Recovery College Coordinator

April is Stress Awareness month, a time to pause and reflect on how stress affect us all. Whether it's work pressures, family responsibilities, or the constant demands of daily life, stress is something we all experience at some point.

I would like to take a moment to think about how we can manage it better – for our own mental and physical well-being. **Stress can feel overwhelming.** It can weigh us down, making it hard to think clearly or feel like ourselves. It's ok to admit that things feel tough sometimes. There are so many ways to cope with stress, and **for me mindfulness has been a game changer.**

At first, I wasn't sure what to expect. The idea of sitting around and focusing on my breath seemed to simply to be effective. But when I started to practicing mindfulness regularly, I noticed that I was able to stop, breathe and just be in the moment.

One of my favourite mindfulness practices is *noticing sounds*, which I would like to share with you. It only takes three minutes, or longer if you want to.

- Sit comfortable with your hands on your lap
- Allow your breath to settle into a slow, steady rhythm
- Then, focusing on your abdomen, allow the muscles to expand out to draw air into your lungs and to contract back towards the spine to breathe out
- Now, notice the effect of the breath on your body – the expansion and contraction of your abdomen, your ribcage rising and falling, the slight movement of your shoulders
- Now, focus on your nostrils, noticing the coolness of the air as it enters them and the slight warm as you breathe out.
- Sit with the breath for a couple of minutes enjoying the rhythm in the in-breath and out-breath.
- Once you have established the rhythm of your breath, notice any sounds around you or within your body. It's normal for thoughts to pass through our consciousness, I image them as fish that liger for a while and swim away to the sea.
- Don't try to identify the sounds or where they come from. Just notice them, then return to your breath and gently end the practice.

Practicing mindfulness for just three minutes daily is helping me to manage stress, stay grounded and approach life with a sense of balance. And most importantly, it's reminded me that **it's ok to slow down and take a moment for myself** – because my well-being matters.

POSE OF THE MONTH

Wide Child's Pose (Prasarita Balasana) - Surrender and Reconnect

This April, embrace Wide Child's Pose (Prasarita Balasana)—a deeply restorative posture that invites you to surrender, release tension, and reconnect with stillness. Like nature in spring, we expand and soften, allowing renewal to unfold within.



By Diana
Yoga Tutor



About Wide Child's Pose

A variation of the classic Child's Pose (Balasana), this pose enhances relaxation by widening the knees while keeping the feet connected at the toes.

The gentle forward fold, combined with an extended reach of the arms, creates a calming, grounding effect that soothes both body and mind.

Benefits

- Deep Stretch and Strengthening: Opens the hips, thighs, and lower back while toning the hamstrings and elongating the spine.
- Flexibility and Mobility: Enhances hip flexibility and pelvic mobility, making it beneficial for those with tight lower bodies.
- Chest, Breath & Relaxation: Expands the diaphragm, improving lung capacity and regulating breath patterns.
- Postural Alignment: Encourages a neutral spine, broad shoulders, and improved lower body alignment.
- Stress Relief & Emotional Balance: Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing anxiety, tension, and emotional overwhelm.



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HOW TO PRACTICE

Crescent Low Lunge Pose



“

“Let go of what weighs you down. With every exhale, release stress, soften the heart, and welcome peace.”

”

- 1** Begin in Vajrasana (Seated on Heels): Sit with your spine tall, hands resting on your thighs, and take a few deep breaths.
- 2** Widen the Knees: Move your knees apart, keeping your feet together with toes touching.
- 3** Fold Forward with Awareness: Inhale, lengthen the spine, and as you exhale, fold forward, extending your arms out in front of you.
- 4** Relax the Upper Body: Allow your forehead to rest on the mat, keeping shoulders soft and hips sinking toward the floor.
- 5** Breathe and Surrender: Hold for 5–10 deep breaths, feeling the release in your hips, back, and shoulders.

Contraindications

- Avoid if you have knee, ankle, or shoulder injuries.
- Those recovering from abdominal surgery or in late pregnancy should modify or skip this pose.
- Wide Child’s Pose reminds us that true strength lies in surrender. As you lower yourself into stillness, let go of tension, soften your heart, and allow space for new beginnings this spring.

“In the quiet of surrender, we find the deepest strength.”

Artwork

By Louise, Student

Shape, Space & Light



Moments for light
Movements Shapes slow
Time to be still
See through the window
A day light glow



Spring into Mindfulness by Walking this Season



As spring approaches, I begin to dust off my trainers that remind me of a golden summer that now feels like a lifetime ago.

As I pull the pairs of trainers forward from the depths of the shoe cupboard, this new rotation of footwear brings me great joy. It's a simple yearly task that is a sign for me that my favourite time of year is about to begin and I can truly relish in an occupation that means so much to me...walking.

Sometimes overlooked, walking is an everyday activity that most of us do automatically. Walking is one of the easiest, safest and most inexpensive forms of exercise and can be readily incorporated into our daily routine.,

Being active is important for our mental health but many of us struggle to get enough exercise. It's important to acknowledge that there can be many different reasons for this, but I encourage anyone who wants to start doing more walking or exercise, to consider spring as the perfect opportunity to get started.

Why I encourage people to start discovering the joys of walking in spring is for a few reasons; the warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours, which increase hormones that can lift our mood and energy levels, but also because of the noticeable changes in the environment.

I love taking notice of the wildlife that emerges and the vibrant colours as outdoor spaces begin to flourish. Being mindful of these changes can help us connect and be present with nature.

The art of being present is what is referred to as 'mindfulness' and is achievable for all.

I find spring provides an ideal opportunity to practice mindfulness. As nature awakens, we can hear louder bird songs in the mornings, see flowers blooming and feel the warmth of the sun on our skin, the season invites us to take notice when we walk. The picture in this article captures myself during a walk in the Lake District last spring. In this moment I was being mindful, being

able to stop, take notice, and appreciate my surroundings. One way to take notice is to practice grounding techniques when we walk. 'Grounding' is a self-soothing technique that trains the mind to be fully involved in the present moment. You can ground yourself anywhere, including when you're outside.

To me, spring is a fantastic time to try grounding and it is very simple to do. To begin, walk at a slow, steady pace, focusing on each steps. Notice the rhythm of your movements and the feeling of your feet as they touch the ground. Once you get comfortable with this, you can incorporate trying to get in tune with your five senses. Pay attention. What can you hear, smell, touch, taste and see?

Walking also has numerous other benefits, which is why I love it so much.

Walking helps me process my day and allows a great opportunity for a digital reset. For me, over-consumption of social media and being online for too long can negatively affect my mood. Movement can help with this and is important. It's good for our physical health, cognitive function, emotional well-being and mental health and can be a great form of social interaction.

At Thurrock Recovery College we would like to invite you to one of our Mindful Walks, a course delivered across the Thurrock area, where we walk and explore mindfulness and its effect on our mental health and recovery in a group environment. These are run frequently, with dates provided on our current timetable.

Finally, I'd encourage anyone that wants to start walking to find a comfortable pair of shoes or trainers and start with a short walk first, increasing your walking distance gradually.

New habits and routines take time and require a level of dedication and it's important to recognise that we might have setbacks. However, once you're outside and begin noticing the joys of the changes this season brings to our surroundings, it might just help put a bit of spring into your step.

By Daniel F, Occupational Therapist



Forest Bathing

Since December once a month I have been attending something called 'forest bathing' with other people that like being out in nature and want to improve their wellbeing. Forest bathing is essentially slowing down, practicing mindfulness, taking in all five of our senses and an opportunity to do a barefoot exercise.

The first time I went, you could tell it was my first time as the other people were suited and booted as they say. I unfortunately rocked up in white trainers and not many layers on. My white shoes are now a stained musky colour, and I could not feel my hands or feet by the end of the walk.

Luckily, I did learn from this and bought myself some wellies, wrapped up more and could fully enjoy the experience. It really has had a positive impact on my mental health as it's an excuse to get some well-deserved exercise in as well as take notice of our beautiful surroundings that we can often miss or take for granted.

Here are some photos that I've taken on these walk's as I also enjoy photography as a hobby and love to look back on photo's as sometimes its nice to look back and remember.

By Katie Ireland
Peer Learning Support Worker



UPCOMING COURSES

A P R I L 2 0 2 5

April 2025

Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday		
	1 Open Day 1:30 – 4:30pm Thurrock Health Centre, 1 st floor Inclusion 	1 Mindful Walk 10-11:30am Purfleet 	2 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley 	3 Relaxation workshop 12-2pm Grays 	4 Progressing with Visualisation (online)  1:30 – 3pm	4 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café 		
7 (Easter Holiday)	8 (Easter Holiday)		9 (Easter Holiday)	10 (Easter Holiday)		11 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café 		
14 (Easter Holiday)	15 (Easter Holiday)		16 (Easter Holiday)	17 (Easter Holiday)		18 Good Friday		
21 Easter Bank holiday	22 Creating Mindfulness 10am-12pm Grays 	22 Visualisation for Relaxation: Loving, Kindness & Compassion (online)  2-3pm	23 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley 	23 Food and Mood Aveley 1-3pm 	24 Mindful Walk Grays 10-11:30am 	24 My Rested Self: Relaxation 11-1pm Tilbury 	25 Ways to Wellbeing: Connect 10-12pm Grays 	25 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café 
28 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am Chafford Hundred 	29 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm Grays 		30 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley 	30 Food and Mood Aveley 1-3pm 	1 Visualisation for Relaxation (online)  3-4pm	1 My Rested Self: Relaxation 11-1pm Tilbury 	2 Ways to Wellbeing: Give 10-12pm Grays 	2 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café 

 ThurrockRCollege@mpft.nhs.uk

 01375 809708



Get That Job!

Get That Job is a 3-week program designed to equip you with the essential employability skills needed to land your ideal job. Whether you're just starting your career or looking for a fresh start, this course covers key topics such as CV writing, interview techniques, and job search strategies.

Week 1: CV Writing

Week 2: Job Searching

Master effective job search strategies

Week 3: Interview Skills & Preparation

Boost your confidence and ace your next interview with expert tips and mock interviews.

You don't have to commit to all 3 sessions—feel free to attend the ones that work best for you!



Enrol Now!

www.tacc.ac.uk

01375 372476

Wellbeing Support Surgery

Hosted By Aveley Community Hub Volunteers

Located at:

**Aveley Community Hub & Library,
Recreation Ground, High Street, Aveley, RM15 4BX.
from 10am - 12pm. The last Friday of the month**

**28th March
25th April
30th May**

The Wellbeing Support Surgery drop in has been set up for the local community to access services directly in their neighborhood. We will be supported by representatives from multiple organisations.

This will include:

Financial Inclusion

supporting council tenants with budgeting, benefit, & debt issues. Fuel Poverty and The Cost-of-Living Crisis

Thurrock and Brentwood Mind

providing information and support for mental health

Age Well East

advise and provide practical information; connect communities to tackle loneliness and encourage mental and physical wellness

Thurrock Carers

providing information, advice and support for unpaid carers who support relatives, friends, or neighbours

Inclusion Recovery College

deliver a free, educational learning environment for people who experience difficulties with, or have an interest in, mental health and wellbeing

Private Housing and Adaptation Services

provide support to private rented properties for disputes with landlords, disrepair, damp, mould, enforcing private tenants' rights

Thurrock Healthy Lifestyle Service

provide stop smoking support and access to NHS health checks, and support and signposting to healthy weight and physical activity.

Alzheimer's Society

offers a range of dementia support services. From a listening ear on the phone to a visit in person and opportunities to connect with others

Well Homes

Thurrock Well Homes is a scheme to improve the housing conditions and the health and well-being of residents living in private properties

**Join us on Facebook for updates at:
Thurrock Resident Engagement**



or

Aveley Community Hub

**Or drop in to Aveley Community Hub and speak to Coryn on Monday
between 10am to 1.30pm**

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



Together Create

A brand new creative arts programme coming to Tilbury and Grays this summer!



Learn

Create

Sing

Make a difference

New friendships

To find out more or register your interest contact Rachel. 07378968443

Join us for visual arts, singing and drama this Summer in Thurrock. No experience necessary, everybody welcome!

Find out more: rachel@togetherproductions.co.uk

Open Day

Tuesday 1st April, 1:30-4:30 at Thurrock Health Centre, 1st floor

We are pleased to announce that from April we will be offering our courses as well to Basildon & Brentwood communities - **The Mid & South Essex** Recovery College Collaborative starts.

The Collaborative is together with Provide and Trust Links who are the other existing Recovery College providers in the area.

At the Recovery College people can:

- connect with peers and share experiences
- participate in wellbeing action plan building
- 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 want to learn and educate yourself on how to live a healthier and perhaps happier life.



Meet & greet with members of our team

If you are interested in registering with us or have chat we will be available.

You can also fill in our online registration form and a member of our team will be in touch.

The venues for course are around Thurrock in different areas.



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

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