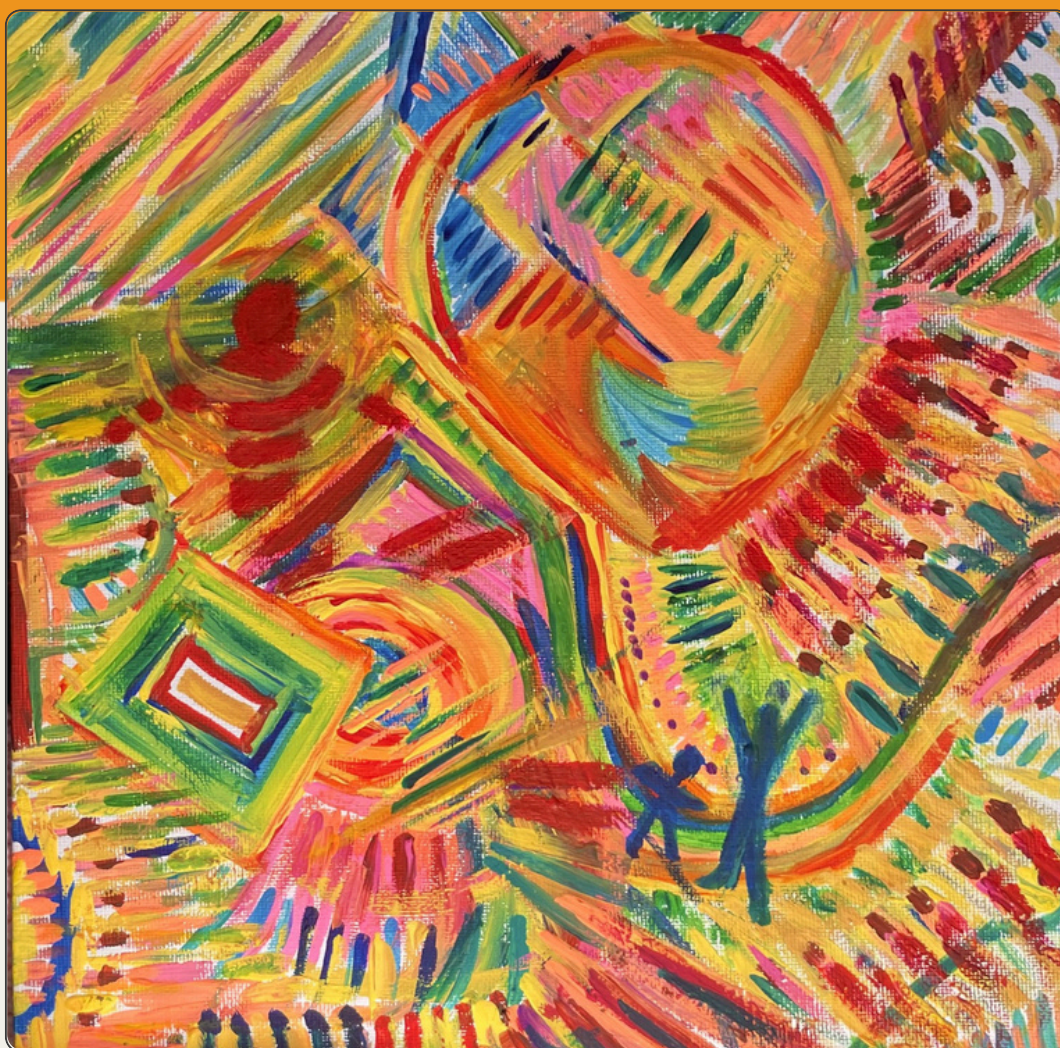


Thurrock Recovery College STUDENT NEWSLETTER



Vision of Hope In Colour, Giving More Energy and Strength in Mind

By Louise, Student at Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Yoga Pose of the month
- Articles from our Trainers
- Open Day
- Community Updates

What Makes Our Peer Support Groups Unique

By Imogen Francis, Peer Mentoring & Support Senior Worker (TB Mind)

At Thurrock and Brentwood Mind, we're proud to offer a growing range of Peer Support Groups designed to connect people through shared experience. Our Peer Support project is currently undergoing an exciting **refresh**—while some groups are already running, even more opportunities will be launching soon.

We currently offer two main types of peer support groups: Focused and Social.

Focused Peer Groups centre around specific topics or communities:

- Men's mental health
- Chronic health conditions
- Recovery from drug and alcohol use

These groups **provide a safe space for individuals** with similar lived experiences to come together, share their journeys, and offer mutual support and understanding.

Social Peer Groups on the other hand, are built around shared hobbies and interests.

- Art
- Music
- Walking
- Creative activities

These groups offer an opportunity for people with lived experience to meet like-minded individuals in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

What makes our peer support groups unique is that they are led by people who have experienced similar challenges themselves.

This peer-led approach creates a deep sense of empathy and understanding that's often hard to find elsewhere. Being surrounded by others who "get it" can help individuals feel less isolated, more hopeful, and better equipped to embrace their own journey.

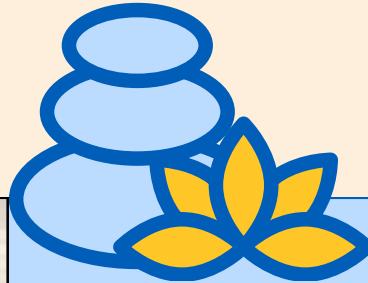
The benefits of peer support are well-documented. Research shows it can boost emotional well-being, increase confidence, and help people develop healthier coping mechanisms. Many also find it reduces feelings of anxiety and depression, simply by knowing they're not alone.

At Thurrock and Brentwood Mind, we believe in the power of connection and community—and our peer support groups are a powerful way to find both.

POSE OF THE MONTH

Reverse Warrior (Viparita Virabhadrasana) Resilience and Strength

This May, channel Reverse Warrior (Viparita Virabhadrasana) to cultivate resilience, strength, and boundless energy. Just as nature flourishes in full bloom, this empowering pose invites us to open our hearts, expand our breath, and awaken our warrior spirit.



By Diana
Yoga Tutor



About Reverse Warrior

A powerful standing backbend, Reverse Warrior ignites strength while creating a deep side-body stretch.

A staple in Dancing Warrior sequences, this pose combines grounded stability with fluid movement, promoting both mental clarity and physical endurance.

Benefits

- **Stretches & Strengthens:** Engages and lengthens the hamstrings, quadriceps, glutes, and calves while toning the knees, hips, and ankles
- **Flexibility & Mobility:** Expands shoulders, neck, and spine, improving range of motion and posture
- **Breath & Energy:** Encourages deep breathing by opening the chest, promoting better lung function and oxygen flow
- **Postural Alignment:** Tones leg muscles, improves spinal stability, and counteracts slouching
- **Stress Relief & Confidence:** Activates the nervous system, releasing tension and emotional blockages, bringing a sense of empowerment and focus.



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HOW TO PRACTICE

Reverse Warrior



“

“Strength is not just in standing firm, but in bending with grace and rising with power.”

”

- 1** Step into a Strong Stance: From Tadasana (Mountain Pose), step your right foot back, keeping a wide stance.
- 2** Bend the Front Knee: Inhale and sink into a deep lunge, ensuring your left knee is directly above the ankle.
- 3** Reach & Extend: Lift your left arm overhead, allowing your right hand to rest gently on the back leg.
- 4** Engage & Expand: Open through the side body, feeling a deep stretch along the ribs, spine, and chest.
- 5** Breathe & Hold: Stay for two full breaths, using each exhale to deepen the stretch.
- 6** Switch Sides: Return to Tadasana, then repeat on the other side.

Contraindications

- Avoid if experiencing shoulder, neck, or lower back injuries.
- Those with high blood pressure or vertigo should practice with caution.

Like a warrior, **resilience is built through movement**—balancing **power with fluidity**. This May, embrace Reverse Warrior as a reminder that **strength is not rigid but adaptable**, and energy flows best when we allow ourselves to move freely.

"Rise, bend, breathe, and conquer—your inner warrior is waiting." 🔥

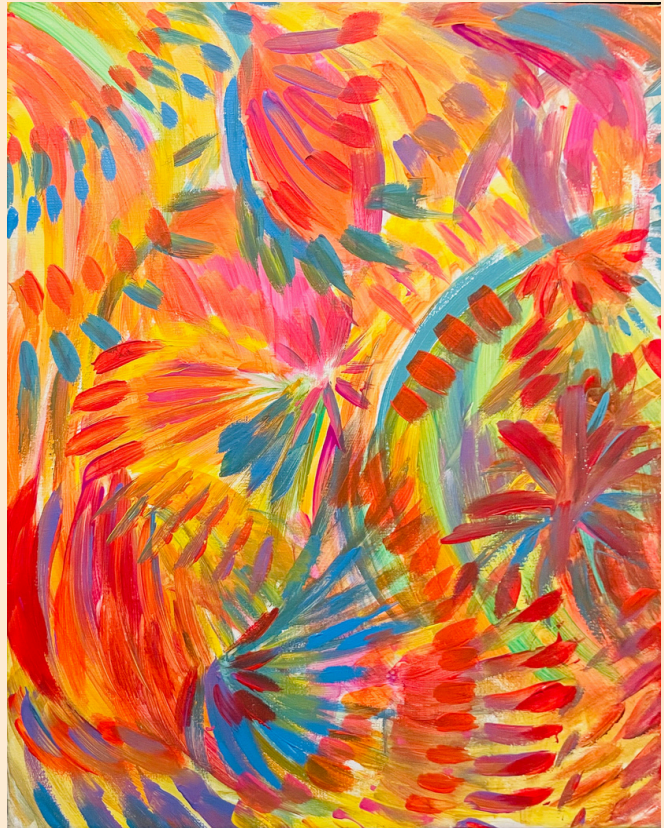
Artwork

By Louise, Student

1



2



3



4



1. **Forest of Depression**
2. **Lightness comes back - More free again**
3. **Breathe into - rising anxiety - mood more calm**
4. **Mandala - Like breathing and mindfulness**



As we enter **Spring** where the sun starts to beam, I feel I have a spring in my step (pun intended). I stand taller and I prepare for this welcoming season in the year. I love Spring. It's one of my favourite seasons of the year as it's the perfect temperature, not too hot, not too cold, just right. Also because we are reminded of the beauty in the world. Whilst we can look and seek out the negatives in the world, I prefer to love nature and beauty in a not so perfect world. The flowers start to bloom, the birds sing louder and the atmosphere just feels a little more inviting.

I feel more enticed to get out there, go for a walk and meet up with friends. I'm reminded every year that the grey skies, stormy weather and bitter cold will pass as they always do. The light will always find a way to shine on in!

As an adult I think one of the most welcoming things Spring brings is getting all your washing out on the line! There is just something different about hanging your clothes outside to dry, it feels fresher and more comforting to me.

That being said, I do try to enjoy all the different seasons as that way I always see the positives that each season has to bring. Summer brings joy, beach days, great memories & sunburn! A lot of sunshine and relaxation that's when there is fun in Summer, it's not so fun when you're trying to work in it! But I still appreciate the good times Summer has to give.

I love Autumn because of the beautiful colours it brings. I love taking photos as a hobby and it is the perfect month for taking photos. Autumn has got to be my second favourite season; the Summer is finally over and we can start to sleep properly again! My birthday and Halloween are just round the corner and the smell of Pumpkin Latte...perfect!

I love winter because I love feeling cozy and comfortable, with a hot drink in hand and snuggled under a blanket.

I hope you all get to enjoy what spring has to bring and hear the birds sing!

By Katie Ireland
Peer Learning Support Worker



The Cycle

I wake and find I'm there again, will this ever end?
These thoughts and feelings plague my mind, I really need a friend.

I battle through, don't open up, ashamed I'm being beat,
But silently I'm breaking down admitting to defeat.

What's the point in working hard, when it comes back around,
I try my best, use my skills and firmly stand my ground.

But it takes hold, it's all too much, and beats me till I fall,
I'm submerged, I'm there again, this mental health cycle.

By Hannah, Recovery College Student



From Experience To Expertise:



Unlocking the power of lived experience
in mental health support

By Charlotte Matthews, Mental Health Co-Production & Engagement Officer (TB MInd)



"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 next 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

M A Y 2 0 2 5

May 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			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
5 May Bank Holiday	6 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm Grays	6 My Rested Self: Sleep 11-1pm Grays	7 Yoga for Everyone Aveley 10-12pm	7 Food and Mood Aveley 1-3pm
			8 Understanding Anxiety 10-12pm Grays	8 My Rested Self: Relaxation 11-1pm Tilbury
				9 Ways to Wellbeing: Take Notice 10-12pm Grays
				9 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café
12 Newsletter co-production 10-11am Chafford Hundred	12 Hope and Wellbeing 12-2pm Grays	13 Creating Mindfulness 10-12pm Grays	13 My Rested Self: Sleep 11-1pm Grays	14 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley
			14 Mindfulness practice (online) 2-3pm	15 Understanding Anxiety 10-12pm Grays
				15 Introduction to Anxiety (online) 2-4pm
				16 Ways to Wellbeing: Learn 10-12pm Grays
				16 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café
19 Visualisation for Relaxation: Loving, Kindness & Compassion (online) 10-11am	19 Hope and Wellbeing 12-2pm Grays	20 My Rested Self: Sleep 11-1pm Grays	21 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	21 Mindfulness practice (online) 3-4pm
			22 Understanding Anxiety 10-12pm Grays	22 Introduction to Anxiety (online) 2-4pm
				23 Ways to Wellbeing: Be active 10-12pm Grays
				23 Recovery Café 10:30-1:30pm Grays Park Café
26 (Half Term)	27 (Half Term)	28 (Half Term)	29 (Half Term)	30 (Half Term)

ThurrockRCollege@mpft.nhs.uk

01375 809708



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 12-18 MAY

Word Search

P	W	E	L	L	B	E	I	N	G	M	M
H	E	A	L	I	N	G	I	V	S	C	I
T	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	I	R	O	N
G	R	A	C	X	D	B	M	K	E	M	D
N	E	C	O	E	P	I	Y	G	S	P	F
E	T	J	Z	F	T	F	A	R	I	A	U
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J	A	E	C	H	Z	Z	Q	H	N	O	S
C	L	B	R	E	A	T	H	E	C	N	S
C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E	C	W

PEACE

STRENGTH

GROWTH

COMPASSION

SUPPORT

MINDFULNESS

HOPE

HEALING

COURAGE

LAUGHTER

WELLBEING

BREATHE

BALANCE

RESILIENCE

OPTIMISM

CONFIDENCE

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

Life Beyond Limits

Do you have a long term or chronic
health condition?

Join our peer support group to
connect with others in the same boat



Starting in February at Grays
Library every Tuesday
To attend please call 01375 391411
and ask for peer support

www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk
 **Mind** Thurrock and Brentwood
Registered Charity No: 1106452

Nature in mind

Do you enjoy being out in nature?

Join us on a peer support
nature walk

Every Wednesday at 1pm - 2pm

We alternate our meetings between
Rainham Marshes one week and Davy
Down the following week

TO ATTEND PLEASE CALL 01375 391411 AND
ASK FOR PEER SUPPORT



www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

 **Thurrock and Brentwood**

Registered Charity No: 1106452

Confidence Collective

Do you struggle with confidence,
self esteem and/or body image?

Come and be a part of our peer
support group based in Grays



TO ATTEND CALL 01375 391411 AND
ASK FOR PEER SUPPORT

 **mind** Thurrock and Brentwood

www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1106452

Recovery Café

Fridays 10:30AM – 1:30PM at the Grays Park Café

We are pleased to announce that on the 2nd May we will have a guest speaker coming to the **Recovery Café**. Gina, from Thurrock Coalition, will be sharing information about the **Wellbeing Involvement Network (WIN)**

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



Meet & Greet With Members of our Team

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

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.

Recovery College Open day, 5th June

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

We are pleased to announce that from April we began to offer our courses to Basildon & Brentwood communities through **The Mid & South Essex** Recovery College partnership.

This collaboration is together with **Provide** and **Trust Links** who offer other existing Recovery College's 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. Take the leap of faith and join us today!



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: Thurrockrcollege@mpft.nhs.uk

Call: 01375 809 708



@ThurrckRCollege



Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College