

Thurrock Recovery College STUDENT NEWSLETTER



By Louise
Recovery College Student

In this month's issue:

- Yoga Pose of the Month
- Articles from our Peer Workers
- Poems
- Community Updates

Your Inner Spark:

Shining Bright with Resilience & Awareness



Hi everyone,

I would like to chat a bit about two really important things that can help us all on our recovery journey: **resilience and awareness**.

Do you know the feeling when you have been through something tough, but somehow you find the strength to keep going and even grow from it?

Well, that's resilience in action. It's like your own inner spark. That ability to bounce back and adapt when life throws you a curveball. It isn't about never facing challenges, but about finding your way through them and learning a little bit more about yourself each time.

And what helps light up that spark? For me, it's what I call awareness. It's about truly seeing yourself, flaws and all, with kindness. It's noticing your strengths, understanding what might trip you up and recognising the patterns in how you feel.

In my experience, when I'm truly aware, I can tune into my thoughts and feelings, and even what my body is telling me, without judgement. This awareness helps me to realise when I'm struggling and figure out what I need, choosing healthy ways to cope.

Some useful tips that have helped me nurture those 2 amazing qualities are:

- **Deepening self-awareness:** By sharing our experiences and learning together, we can really get to know ourselves and find our unique paths to feeling well.
- **Building resilience muscles:** Practicing mindfulness on a regular basis.
- **Celebrate your wins:** Every step forward, no matter how small, is a victory.

Acknowledging your progress helps that belief in yourself and your incredible ability to recover and thrive. Remember, recovery is not a finish line but a beautiful, ongoing journey of discovery and growth.

By nurturing your resilience and really getting to know yourself through awareness, you will empower yourself to shine even brighter, even when things get tough.

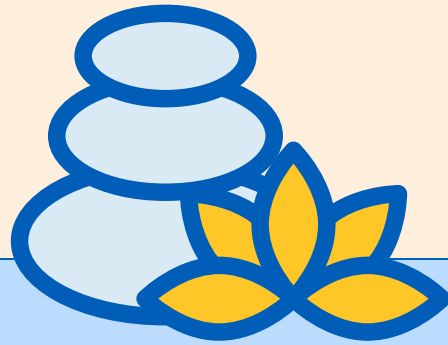
What's one small thing that helps you feel more resilient or more aware in your daily life? We would love to hear your thoughts.

Email us at thurrockcollege@mpft.nhs.uk

Pose of the month

Drinking Bird – Diving into inner strength

This July, step into the dynamic **Drinking Bird Pose** (Diver's Pose), a balance-focused posture that strengthens the lower body, tones the core, and encourages deep focus. Just like a diver preparing to leap, this pose builds courage, stability, and inner strength.



About Drinking Bird (Wide leg) Pose

A standing balance pose, Drinking Bird engages the legs, core, and spine while promoting focus and breath awareness.

It's a powerful posture that energizes the body, sharpens the mind, and enhances posture.

By Diana
Yoga Tutor



Benefits

- **Strengthens & Tones:** Activates hamstrings, calves, knees, and core muscles, improving stability and endurance.
- **Improves Posture:** Encourages spinal elongation and back strength, counteracting hunching and slouching.
- **Stimulates Digestion:** Massages the abdominal organs, aiding digestion and detoxification.
- **Enhances Focus & Balance:** Builds mental clarity and concentration, making it an excellent meditative posture.
- **Boosts Energy & Circulation:** Increases blood flow to the brain, refreshing the mind and uplifting the mood.



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How To Practice

Drinking Bird Pose



“

"Balance is not just about staying still—it's about embracing movement with confidence and grace."

”

- 1 Transition from Goddess Pose:** Straighten your knees and stand with feet parallel in a wide stance.
- 2 Engage the Core & Lean Forward:** Hinge at the hips, bringing arms in line with the torso, as if preparing to dive.
- 3 Additional Lift onto the Toes:** Balance lightly on the balls of your feet, engaging the core and legs for stability.
- 4 Breathe & Hold:** Keep the belly engaged, gaze forward or slightly downward, and hold for a few deep breaths.
- 5 Release & Reset:** Exhale, lower the heels, and melt into a forward fold over the thighs.

Contraindications

- Avoid if experiencing lower back pain, knee, or hamstring injuries.
- Modify by keeping the knees slightly bent if discomfort arises.

Drinking Bird Pose teaches us to trust the process of balance and movement. Whether on or off the mat, embrace this practice as a reminder to lean into challenges with strength, grace, and unwavering focus.

"Stay steady, breathe deep, and trust your inner strength."

“The **POWER** of lived experience and peer support is undeniable”

In my role, I often feel like a real-life superhero. Think about it: meeting someone who has been to the moon is awe-inspiring. While we know space travel is possible and can read about it, we rarely envision ourselves in that position or hear those personal stories.

The same applies to mental health recovery. We all know it's achievable; there's significant evidence that people recover. But meeting someone who is actively on that journey? That's a superhero moment. Just a few years ago, I wouldn't have believed I'd be where I am today. In this role, I finally feel that I matter, and that realisation has profoundly boosted my confidence.

I am a voice for those who haven't reached this point yet and who doubt their own voices will be heard. This is the true power of lived experience and peer support. We advocate fiercely to ensure that no one gets forgotten or left behind. We emphasize how we wish we had been represented during our struggles. We respectfully challenge the status quo because, while many possess extensive knowledge, lived experience provides a critical perspective. I can confidently state,



"If I were a service user or student, this is how that would impact me." My experiences are mine, and that gives me a powerful, unassailable voice.

This approach has significantly enhanced trauma-informed practice within the Recovery College. I address uncomfortable conversations head-on and confront issues that could potentially harm students or staff. It's crucial to create a safe environment for everyone involved. We must protect not only students from re-traumatization, but also the staff who support them. Open dialogue, earnest communication, and authenticity are non-negotiable.

To be fully effective in my role, I bring my complete self—vulnerabilities and all—only when I feel it is safe to do so. Lived experience and peer support create that safety. We understand firsthand what it means to lack safety, and we are determined to ensure that no one has to face that again.

By Katie Ireland
Peer Learning Support Worker

Until Next Time...

Dear Students,

For those of you that don't know (because we have only ever met via Zoom or spoken on the telephone), I am going on maternity leave at the end of this term.

I didn't just want to disappear for a while and for people to wonder about me, as I can appreciate it is hard & confusing when this does happen unexpectedly. I wanted to acknowledge the rapport I have built with you all whether that be through doing your individual learning plan, having met you at Recovery College events, when I've delivered courses or even through reading my articles in these newsletters!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time thus far at the Recovery College and although I embark on this new exciting journey/part in my life, I will be back. This is not the last you've heard of me! I will continue to share more of my lived experience and help more people, as helping others and feeling like I'm giving something back in turn helps keep me to stay focused and remain positive.

Please don't think of this as me saying goodbye, this is me saying 'until next time'.

Watch this space!

I look forward to seeing familiar and new faces upon my return. Until then, I wish everyone all the best!

By Katie Ireland
Peer Learning Support Worker



Metaphor for Resilience

When we are young, we like to climb trees like we have a hidden strength that lasts all throughout childhood. Now imagine growing up into an adult but losing that strength. Somehow you don't want to climb mountains or trees, you just want to fall in the mystical air waiting for the drop to hit rock bottom. Losing yourself is hard, especially when you had the strength to start with. But as you reflect over time, you see the resilience come back. That inner voice tells you that you can and that is enough to get you through the challenges of life.

Star – Part 1

I am a star in the sky
I am bright like the sun
I am the sea shining.

Star – Part 2

I am a shimmer
I am bright like the silk sun
I am shining through.



Awareness

I am aware that I wear a mask behind that is my true identity
I am aware that I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.
I am aware that challenge can be difficult but one step at a time taught me to beat the difficult times in my life.
I am aware that I have anxiety but that does not define me.
I am aware that the person I am is me and that's enough to get me through this world.

Resilience

Resilience is where you push yourself to do something that you're having trouble with, and it proves successful setting goals to achieve without putting pressure on yourself. If you try something once, see how it goes see how you feel and whether you can do this again. If you can, you will find inner strength and direction. If you struggle, feel proud that you have tried this and could possibly give it a go again in the future without putting pressure on yourself. Being resilient is bouncing back, gaining confidence and strength.

By Wayne and Leanne, Recovery College Students



Shining Resilience & Awareness

As many of you may know I am an animal loving person. Having a gypsy cob pony & a greyhound dog has enabled me to develop greater awareness of both myself & surroundings, which has led to building self-resilience.

The connection with animals is something I am passionate about, as are my friends, and we like to share this with others in various ways. One thing we do in particular, is to take a number of our horses weekly to a local residential school for children with various emotional difficulties. Each week a different class of around 8-12 children join us & they are able to make connections with the horses. They can stroke them, be with them, talk to them, learn about them & begin to understand another creature.

We then lead them on a short ride around the field. This is quite magical as we see each child respond to being with the horses & begin to engage with them.

By Mandy Barber
Wellbeing Practitioner

They gain in confidence little by little. They begin to relax and enjoy just being in the moment, being aware of themselves and the horses. They start to build a relationship with a particular horse. They become aware of the horses breathing, movement or eating the grass (which is very often 😊). They feel how the horse moves when they are riding.

Some are a little reserved or nervous at the beginning and will wait & watch to see what the other children do. Normally as the children share their experiences, they are keen to give it a try. This is the development of resilience in action.

It is so beautiful to see how this awareness & resilience begins to grow in the children.
I feel privileged & grateful that I am able to be part of their journey.



By Chris Jackson
Health Trainer

Dear all, I'm sad to inform you that...

I'll be leaving the Thurrock Recovery College at the end of this term. Having managed to secure a senior post at Trust Links, one of the organisations with whom we are partnering up to form the **Mid & South Essex Recovery College** this year.

I haven't been with you long – I joined the college in September on my trust's rotation scheme, but liked it so much that when my term came to an end I decided that I'd quite like to stay a bit longer. Having come from a secondary mental health team I was used to a different way of working, but I was quickly won over by the Recovery College ethos.

I had a fair bit of experience working in mental health, and always noticed the sense of solidarity that could be found amongst people living through hard times. Some of the groups I worked in lasted for quite some time, with members coming and going throughout. I was amazed to see the value that veteran members added to groups – taking newbies under their wing, sharing tips on what worked for them and, most importantly, showing those people at an earlier point in their recovery journey that change is possible.

And this is why I've found my time here in the college to be so great. Sure, it's good to have more freedom and be creative in how I make use of my skills, but the real pleasure has been in working every day in partnership with people at different points in their recovery journey. I genuinely feel that organisations like this represent the future, and will start to play a much bigger role in creating wellbeing within the community, so I'm excited to see what we will build together.

It has been a real privilege working with you all – whether it has been delivering courses, getting to know you at individual learning plan meetings, or just having a chat at the Recovery Café, it has been really excellent to be part of a community with wellbeing at its heart.

The college that I'm moving to is still part of the same organisation so I hope that this won't be the last you see of me, but in the meantime I'd like to send you all my best wishes as you continue along your journey. I will be leaving the Thurrock Recovery College at the end of this term. **All the best, Chris.**



UPCOMING COURSES

J U L Y 2 0 2 5

July 2025								
Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
30 Open Day 1:30 - 4:30pm Inclusion Thurrock Health Centre 1 st floor	1 Food and Mood 10am-12pm Grays	1 Understanding Anxiety 6-8pm Grays	2 Yoga for Everyone 10-12pm Aveley	2 NEW Practical Mindfulness 1-3pm Grays	3 Ways to Wellbeing: Be Active 10-12pm South Ockendon	3 Communicating with Confidence 1-3pm South Ockendon	4 Identity and Personality (online) 11am - 1pm	4 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays Park Café
7 Newsletter co-production 10-11 am Chafford Hundred	8 Food and Mood 10am-12pm Grays	8 Understanding Anxiety 6-8pm Grays	9 NEW Practical Mindfulness 1-3pm Grays		10 Exploring Loss & Moving Forward 1-4pm Grays		11 Identity and Personality (online) 11am - 1pm	11 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays Park Café
14 Understanding Depression (online) 10am - 1pm	15 Food and Mood 10am-12pm Grays	15 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 10-11am	16 NEW Practical Mindfulness 1-3pm Grays		17 Exploring Loss & Moving Forward 1- 4pm Grays		18 Mindful Walk Chafford Hundred 12-1:30pm	18 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays Park Café
21 Understanding Depression (online) 10am - 1pm	22 Hope and Wellbeing 10am-2pm Grays	22 Progressing with Visualisation: The ocean (online) 10-11:30am	23 (Summer Holiday)		24 (Summer Holiday)		25 (Summer Holiday)	

✉ ThurrockRCollege@mpft.nhs.uk

☎ 01375 809708



THE COMMUNITY BIG LUNCH

& FREE Summer Events for the whole family!

12pm - 4pm



MON
28 Jul

South Ockendon

Dilkes Park, Fairham Ave,
South Ockendon, RM15 5NN

THUR
31 Jul

East Tilbury

Gobions Park, Princess
Margaret Rd, East Tilbury,
RM18 8TN

WED
6 Aug

Tilbury (Picnic in the Park)

The Anchor Fields, Tilbury,
RM18 8EY

THUR
7 Aug

Chadwell St Mary

Pyramid Resource Centre,
Heath Rd, Grays, RM16 3AP

WED
13 Aug

Purfleet-on-Thames

On the Green (by the Beacon),
Centurion Way, Purfleet-On-
Thames, RM19 1QA

MON
18 Aug

Blackshots (Grays)

Impulse Leisure, King George's
Field, Blackshots Lane,
RM16 2LP

FRI
22 Aug

Aveley

Recreational Ground, High St,
Aveley, RM15 4BX

THUR
28 Aug

Corringham

Corringham Town Park,
Springhouse Rd, Corringham,
SS17 7LF



Grab a picnic and come along for a family fun afternoon!
Packed with creative activities, live entertainment, sports and more!

Scan the QR code for more information about what to expect!



Did you know...

Regular movement boosts your mood, lowers the risk of chronic diseases and increases your energy – making it an essential part of your routine for overall wellbeing!



Where to find local activities



Free & Low Cost Activity Booklet

Scan the QR code to check out low cost activities in Thurrock to get active – everything is under £5 a session or completely FREE!



Find Your Active Thurrock Facebook Group

Scan the QR code to follow us on Facebook and keep up to date with local activities, seasonal events, special offers and many more ways for you to get active in your community!

How to share your activities



Do you offer a physical activity in Thurrock? Then get in touch!

We will promote your activities for free!
Together, let's help Thurrock to be more active!



Contact: Melissa.Huggins@thurrockcvs.org

Hope and Wellbeing

1 session, 4 hours

Course Overview:

Are you feeling a little stuck... not sure what you want or where you'd like to be going? Sometimes we need to stop and take a moment to re-connect with ourselves, our strengths and values. In this course you will learn about what hope and wellbeing means, building upon your own hope and wellbeing to help you to overcome obstacles that stop you from achieving your meaningful goals.

Course information:

In this 4 hour workshop, we will use the Tree of Life to help build upon your own hope and wellbeing, and realise your own strengths and values. We will also discuss the power of positive affirmations and gratitude and how they can improve your hope. We will explore how the importance of routine and resilience can contribute to improving your hope and wellbeing.



Contact us:



01375 898 680



ThurrockRCollege@mpft.nhs.uk



recoverycollege.inclusionthurrock.org

Meeting: Grays

Date: Tuesday 22nd July 2025

Times: 10 am - 2 pm

Before attending, please make sure that you are officially registered with Thurrock Recovery College and have booked onto all relevant courses

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

Week 3: Master effective job search strategies
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

Inspiring futures through
lifelong learning

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



At Grays Library every Tuesday
To attend please call 01375 391411
and ask for peer support

 mind Thurrock and Brentwood

www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

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

Notice Board

Recovery Café at Grays Park Café Fridays 10:30am-1:30pm



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

At the Recovery Café 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 stop by.

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 the courses are around Thurrock in different areas.

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
Registered Charity No: 1106452

 **Thurrock and Brentwood**

Poem

You don't need to force yourself to do it.
Understand what you need to do.
Understand why you need to do it.
Understand the final outcome.
Understand the whole thing.
Be Successful.
Work towards one thing at a time.
Get used to it.
Let it become a part of you.
You are who you choose to be.
Choose to be yourself.

by Bug,
Recovery College Student



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