

Thurrock Recovery College **STUDENT NEWSLETTER**



Changing Course

By Louise, Recovery College Student

In this month's issue:

- Yoga taster sessions
- Articles from our Students & Health Trainers
- Community updates

Changes, Forward Planning and Looking Ahead

By Patrizia Pessenda, RC Coordinator

Making changes can be tricky. Sometimes it's exciting, other times it just feels like a lot. But I've been learning that even small changes can make a big difference—especially when they're part of moving forward at your own pace.

Forward planning used to feel overwhelming to me. I thought it meant having everything figured out. Now, I see it more as setting gentle intentions—things like signing up for a course, making time for a hobby, or even just writing down how I'm feeling. It doesn't have to be big to be meaningful.

Looking ahead doesn't mean everything will suddenly be easy. But it does mean I'm thinking about the future in a way that feels more open. I've started to ask myself, "What's something I'd like to try?" or "What might help me feel a bit better next week?"

Here are some tips for making sustainable changes:

- 1. Start small. Big goals can feel overwhelming.** Break them down into small, manageable steps. Even a tiny change is still progress.
- 2. Be kind to yourself.** Change takes time, and there will be ups and downs. Treat yourself with the same patience you'd offer a friend.
- 3. Make it meaningful.** Choose changes that matter to you, not what others think you should do. When it's personal, it's more likely to stick.
- 4. Plan for wobbles.** There'll be days when motivation disappears. That's normal. Having a "plan B" (like a calming activity or someone to talk to) helps you stay on track.
- 5. Build in support.** Share your goals with someone you trust, or connect with a group like Recovery College. Encouragement makes a big difference.
- 6. Keep it visible.** Write your goals down, stick a note on the fridge, or set gentle reminders. A visual prompt can keep you grounded and focused.
- 7. Celebrate progress.** Notice and acknowledge even the smallest wins. Change isn't about perfection—it's about persistence.

So, here's to small steps, quiet changes, and planning in a way that feels right for you. The future doesn't have to be perfect—it just has to be yours.

GRIEF...

is like a chest of drawers

I recently attended a course named '**Exploring Loss & Moving Forward**' course in anticipation of losing somebody I loved very much, which prepared me for what was to come.

During the course we did our best to understand and define grief but the answer did not come to me right away. Until my cat, my best friend, Gary passed away, and I came face to face with it.

Gary 27th Feb 2005 - 4th August 2025



Continued next page....

I realised that grief is like a chest of drawers. Each drawer holds memories, emotions, and unfinished moments stuffed into them without thought or system —just jammed in there, so they're bulging and full.

The chest stands prominently against a wall on the side of the room. You don't look at it, you don't want to, but you're acutely aware of its presence and you know it's just a matter of time before you'll be unable to tear your eyes away from it.

And sure enough, one day — out of nowhere — something, a scent, a sound, a sensation, a photo —SOME THING, opens one of the drawers.

And everything comes spilling out.
You're ambushed by the ache.
The raw, brutal realisation that you'll never see them again.
Never touch them.
Never hear their voice.
Never smell their scent.

And you crumble.

You sob, you rage, you retreat — until, somehow, you gather it all up, fold it as best you can, and gently shut the drawer. You go back to whatever it was you were doing, like nothing happened. But something did. You opened a drawer.

This happens again. And again.
Sometimes the same drawer.
Sometimes a new one you didn't know was there.
Sometimes a few open at once and you're lost in the mess of it all.

But slowly... painfully... you begin to fold.
You begin to sort.
You begin to understand.

One day, you realise the drawers don't burst open anymore.
You can choose to open them — and when you do, the contents no longer destroy you.
They move you. They remind you.
They bring warmth as well as ache.

**Grief never really leaves.
But over time the chest of drawers becomes less of a threat...
and more a treasure chest.**



Yoga Pose of the Month

Wide-Legged Half Forward Fold
(Ardha Prasarita Padottanasana)

Surrender, Grounding, and Autumn Reflection

Yoga
By Diane



YOGA

As the air turns crisp and the days shorten, **Wide-Legged Half Forward Fold** offers a beautiful invitation to pause, fold inward, and reconnect with your inner calm.

This posture is a grounding forward fold that stretches the hamstrings, lengthens the spine, and encourages introspection and humility. Practiced mindfully, it helps release tension, cultivate presence, and welcome the reflective energy of early autumn.

Yin Yoga Element

In the context of Yin Yoga, this pose allows for a gentle release of connective tissues—ligaments, joints, and fascia—through sustained, mindful stillness. Holding the posture encourages the parasympathetic nervous system to activate, promoting relaxation, emotional balance, and mental clarity. It is particularly effective for fostering patience and acceptance as the seasons shift.

“

In the quiet fold of Ardha Prasarita Padottanasana, surrender allows wisdom to rise and roots you in the present.”

”



How To Practice It



1

Stand with your legs wide apart, feet parallel and toes slightly inward.

2

Place your hands on your hips and inhale, lengthening the spine from crown to tailbone.

3

Exhale and fold forward halfway, bringing fingertips or palms to the mat while keeping the spine long.

4

Feel the stretch along the hamstrings, inner thighs, and lower back.

5

Hold for 5–10 breaths, maintaining connection to your breath and the grounding through your legs.

6

Slowly rise back up on an inhale, keeping the spine long.

Contraindications

Avoid if you have severe hamstring or lower back injuries. Bend your knees slightly to maintain comfort.

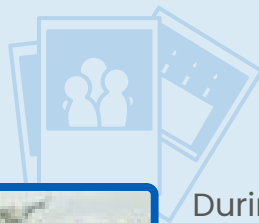
Symbolism

Folding forward symbolises surrender, letting go of what no longer serves you, & creating space for wisdom & inner reflection.



Snapshots of US

By Patrizia Pessenda, RC coordinator



During the summer holidays Recovery College attended the Big Lunch events in Thurrock. It was a heart-warming reminder of the power of community and connection.

These events have been a great opportunity to bring people together and share good conversations and activities, such as free taster yoga for everyone sessions, delivered by our lovely Yoga Tutor Diana.

The atmosphere was relaxed and inclusive, and it gave many of us a chance to step out, feel part of something bigger, and celebrate togetherness. Community events really show how valuable community spirit is on the road to recovery.

For many of us, recovery isn't just about treatment or services — it's also about rebuilding confidence, forming new connections, and feeling part of something bigger. Community events help break down isolation and encourage conversations that support wellbeing.

If you feel you would like to find out more about Recovery College, make new connections and have meaningful conversations with other people, come and join us on Fridays 10:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Recovery Café.

From October we will be based at the Waves Coffee Shop, next to South Essex College, Thurrock College, West Building, High Street, Grays, Essex, RM17 6TF



'Be the change you want to see in the world' – Mahatma Ghandi

By Lauren, Recovery College student

This beautiful quote encapsulates the theme of 'changes, forward planning and looking ahead' for me.

Often, we search for ways to change the world, but maybe it is about simply being the change that you want to see. I have the view that we get back what we put out in the universe and if we can be open to that, then maybe that is the best way to look ahead.

Positivity attracts positivity. Openness encourages connections. Change in the world starts with us and maybe if we can change our perspective other changes will start to follow.

Forward planning naturally leads to change and having goals, reflection time and aspirations all keep us moving. And looking ahead is a beautiful journey in itself but it can also be about taking the time to see where you have come from too.

We sometimes look at change as a negative notion, as it can be scary and anxiety invoking. But anything worth having won't be easy and anything easy isn't worth having. And sometimes looking ahead is scary too as we become comfortable with where we are. But we are closing ourselves off to what still lies out there.

So yes, it may be uncomfortable and even overwhelming, but the opportunities are yours for the taking if you can make that change and embrace the possibilities that life has to offer.



Mel, Active Essex & Lauren, RC Student

Take your time, trust yourself and believe that anything you set your mind to, is within your reach!

Changes, Forward Planning and Looking Ahead

by Mandy Barber, Wellbeing Practitioner

As the seasons change, so do our lives to some extent. Moving into Autumn, I am very aware of how I need to plan & make changes to ensure my physical & mental wellbeing & to look after myself. The mornings & evenings are darker & the temperature is dropping together with more rain on the horizon.

With this in mind I have started to go through my wardrobe & prepare for the colder seasons. I have put away my summer clothes & prepared my warmer clothes.



I have my coats & jackets ready at hand to ensure I have what I need for what's to come.

I have already planned for the darker mornings walking my dog, Athena. I have a head torch & she wears a high-viz flashing collar plus various warmth dog coats depending on the temperature. I have 2 sets of wellies I keep in the car in a large carrier bag for dog walking & when I'm with my pony Princess & the other horses she lives with, doing chores in the fields, feeding & care.

I have number of waterproof jackets & spare clothes in the car, as it can get extremely muddy.

Driving in the dark is also not my favourite thing to do, so I make sure I have everything in place in the car, to ensure I am prepared for any occurrence while driving. This includes an emergency pack with snacks, water, a blanket, a Thermos flask hot drink, a well-stocked first aid kit plus all the other items such as screen scraper & but it works for me.

It is important to me to stay healthy, so I adapt to my needs for the seasons. This is my way of ensuring I am taking care of my overall wellbeing. It takes a little bit of forward thinking & planning for as many eventualities as possible, but it works for me.

UPCOMING COURSES

October 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 Yoga for Everyone Aveley FULLY BOOKED	2 Practical Mindfulness Grays 10am-12pm	2 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 2-3pm
				3 Recovery Café 10:30am - 1:30pm Waves Café (inside South Essex College)
6 Mindful Walk 10-11:30am Purfleet	6 Understanding Depression 1-3pm Grays	7 Explore, Imagine, Be 10am-12pm Grays	7 Food and Mood (online) 6-8pm	8 Yoga for Everyone Aveley FULLY BOOKED
			8 Visualisation for Loving, Kindness and Compassion (online) 2-3:30pm	9 Practical Mindfulness 10am-12pm Grays
				10 Recovery Café 10:30am - 1:30pm Waves Café (inside South Essex College)
13 Newsletter Group Chafford Hundred 10-11am	13 Understanding Depression 1-3pm Grays	14 Explore, Imagine, Be 10am-12pm Grays	14 Food and Mood (online) 6-8pm	15 Yoga for Everyone Aveley FULLY BOOKED
			15 Progressing with Visualisation (online) 3-4:30pm	16 Practical Mindfulness 10am-12pm Grays
				17 Recovery Café 10:30am - 1:30pm Waves Café (inside South Essex College)
20 Understanding Depression 1-3pm Grays	21 Relaxation Workshop 11am-1pm South Ockendon	21 Food and Mood (online) 6-8pm	22 Mindfulness Practice (online) 11am-12pm	23 Mindful Walk Grays 11am-12:30pm
				24 Recovery Café 10:30am - 1:30pm Waves Café (inside South Essex College)
27 Half term OPEN DAY 1-4pm	28 Half term	29 Half term	30 Half term	31 Half term



Drop in - Free - Drop in - Free




 mind Thurrock and Brentwood

CREATE TOGETHER

TILE ART WORKSHOP

**JOIN US TO HELP CREATE A COLLECTIVE TILE MURAL THAT
CELEBRATES MENTAL HEALTH, RESILIENCE, AND COMMUNITY.**

 mind
Thurrock
and Brentwood



Generously
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**Everyone welcome
– no experience
needed, all
materials provided**

**Friday 10th October
10am-12pm
The Log Cabin (near
MIND Sensory Garden &
Offices)**



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



Together Create

Making art together. Making change together.

Activities for you and your family to get creative together. Sing, create shared artworks, boost wellbeing, meet new friends and make a difference

Sing



Make



**Free
snacks!**



**Inspire
change**

**Meet new
people**

After-school clubs for the whole community - adults and children

Art: Tilbury Family Hub, Wednesdays 3:30-5pm (24th Sept - 10th Dec)

Learn new textile techniques as we create a pop up community art space

Big Sing: Grays Baptist Church Hall, Saturday 25th October 11am

Explore songs from around the globe, create our own and perform at local events

Art: Welcome to the UK, Thursday 11.00-1pm (6th Nov- 11th Dec)

Learn new textile techniques as we create a pop up community art space

Free taster session then small suggested donation per term.

Free subsidised spaces available. No experience required. All are welcome.

Sign up at www.togetherproductions.co.uk/events
Find out more: hello@togetherproductions.co.uk
or message/call us on 07378 968443



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more
information



Join us at Waves Café in Grays on Friday 17th October
1030-1230pm to hear about the FREE 12 week stop
smoking service available to you

'let's quit smoking together'

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

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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

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Mid and South Essex Recovery College

Now offering **FREE** courses to residents in **Basildon, Brentwood, Billericay and Wickford**

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Recovery
College



Nature in mind


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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**

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.

The Recovery Café

Weekly 3 hour sessions

The Recovery Café is a safe and social 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.

Course information:

The Recovery Café is a welcoming and informal space to:

- 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

Reasons to join:

- To feel less isolated and more supported
- To enjoy a sense of belonging within a non-judgemental community
- Opportunity to register with Recovery College & book onto courses to support your wellbeing



Contact us:



01375 898 680



ThurrockRCollege@mpft.nhs.uk



recoverycollege.inclusionthurrock.org

Meeting: Waves Café

Date: Every Friday from 03/10/2025

Times: 10:30am–1:30pm

There is no need to book to attend the Recovery Café.



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

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