

Thurrock Recovery College **STUDENT NEWSLETTER**



By Louise, Recovery College Student

In this Month's Issue:

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

What Brings Winter Sunshine Into My Life?

By **Patrizia Pessenda**, RC coordinator



As the days grow shorter and the weather gets colder, many of us find ourselves seeking little sparks of joy to brighten the winter months. At Recovery College Thurrock, we believe that wellbeing can be nurtured in the simplest of ways—even in the darkest season.

For me, winter sunshine can come in many forms: having a hot drink shared with a friend, the quiet joy of curling up with a good book, or the crisp beauty of an early morning or evening walk with my dog. I'm also looking forward to the festive lights twinkling in the streets.

However, winter sunshine isn't just about light—it's also about connection, kindness, and the small joys that lift our spirits.

Staying connected with others is also very important for our mental wellbeing. Whether it's joining a Recovery College course, attending the Recovery Café, reaching out to a friend, or attending a local community event, small moments of connection can make a big difference. Let's support each other this season and remind ourselves that we're not alone.

This December, we invite you to reflect on what brings you winter sunshine. Is it a hobby, a memory, a person, or a place? Share your thoughts with us—we'd love to include your reflections in our next newsletter.

Let's celebrate the small things that lift our spirits and remind us that even in winter, warmth and light can be found.

Yoga Pose of the Month

Easy Pose with Twist (Sukhasana Parivrtta)
Gentle Detox, Inner Balance, and Winter Preparation



As the colder months approach, Easy Pose with Twist offers a gentle, restorative practice for the body and mind.

This seated twist releases tension along the spine, supports detoxification, and promotes balance and clarity. Practiced mindfully, it prepares the nervous system and body for winter stillness, encouraging awareness, calm, and a sense of renewal.

“

"Turn gently in Sukhasana Parivrtta, releasing tension and opening space for clarity, calm, and renewal."

”

Yin Yoga Element

In Yin Yoga, holding this seated twist allows the connective tissues to release gradually, while stimulating prana flow through the spine and torso. The pose encourages breath awareness, emotional release, and deep relaxation. By slowing down and moving with intention, practitioners cultivate mindfulness, inner balance, and a sense of centred calm.

YOGA

YOGA



How To Practice It

1

Sit comfortably cross-legged in Sukhasana, grounding through the sit bones.

2

Place the right hand behind the back and the left hand on the opposite knee.

3

Inhale to lengthen the spine, exhale to twist gently, opening the chest and shoulders.

4

Keep the legs strong while the chest lifts and opens.

5

Hold the twist for 5–8 breaths, moving with awareness of breath and body.

6

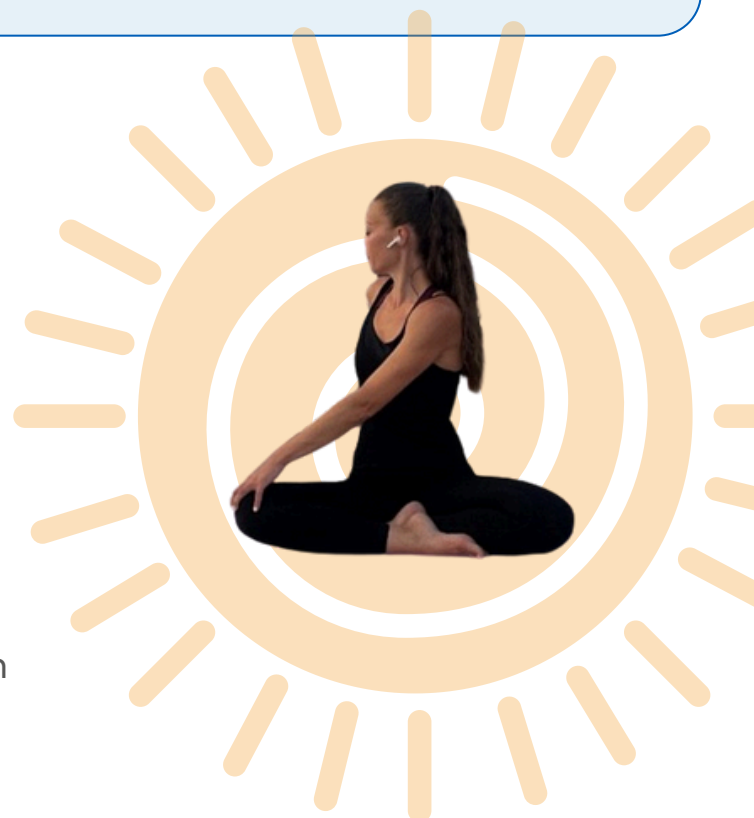
Repeat on the other side, maintaining mindful connection to each inhalation and exhalation.

Contraindications

Avoid deep twists if pregnant or if you have spinal disc issues. Move gently and mindfully to maintain comfort.

Symbolism

Twists symbolise wringing out the old, releasing stagnant energy, and creating space for clarity, renewal, and balance in both body and mind.



Dear Readers,

The time has come to say farewell, but maybe not goodbye, as goodbyes seem more final to me.

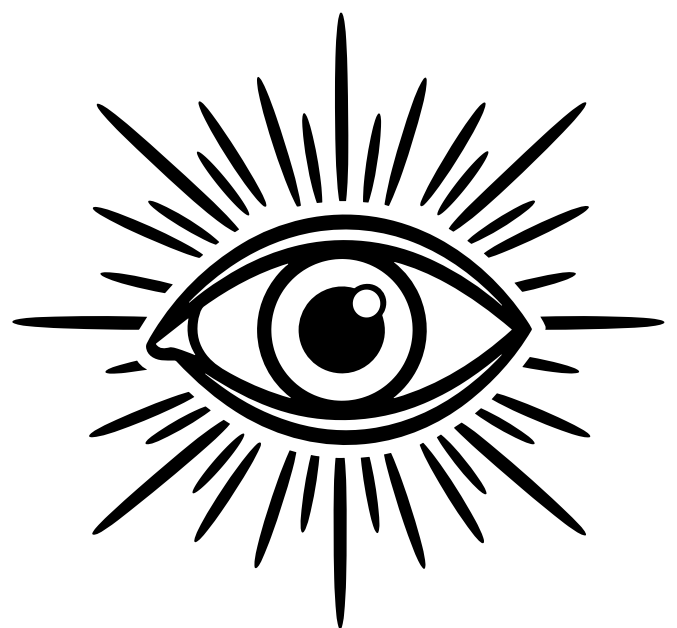
I have made the difficult decision to leave the UK, as my heart has always been longing to go back to work as an Occupational Therapist, as here, I never managed to become registered. With that having been said, I have been very lucky that managers understood my potential and gave me a chance to step up into new job roles.

That means that I return to my routes to North Germany and will move into my old core family home to share this together with my older brother.

Even as an introverted person, I was given the trust to lead by taking in what other people are saying, especially the ones being classed as "underdogs", as I got a great sense of justice and would naturally advocate for others who have not been given the same life chances from the outset.

Just this week, I received feedback in a meeting which took me by surprise, as it was not expected. I was told that I am very relational in how I go about my work life. I never saw this as clearly myself, but I think that it has to do with being a highly sensitive creature. The relationship must be the basis I always build from as a base or foundation to grow together.

I had the privilege to be entrusted with so many recovery stories and given others my trust by sharing parts of myself which



by Iris Dearne
Recovery College Lead

We wish
you
all
the
Best

BEST
OF LUCK

BYE

BYE

hopefully made the other person feel like that I can relate to them.

With a heavy heart, I will leave the UK behind and instead just visit to see my partner until she is ready to also relocate to our forever home.

I hope that I can reconnect with people from my home country after 24 years of absence as a resident.

Believe it or not, even the long German words 'jar my own mind' by now as I really got rusty speaking my mother tongue.

If I have crossed your path and perhaps touched a little of your soul, then think of me smiling at you and wishing you all the best on your journey of self-discovery.

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

This Christmas I feel like having a real tree and will put on my parent's decoration which has survived all these years of not having been taken out of their boxes. I am going to cherish the lights and might even experience a bit more snow than in East London. My partner is going to join me, and I will cook orange duck with dumplings and red cabbage. But for us, the main celebration is going to happen on Christmas Eve as both our original cultures have got that in common.

Know that you all have made a big difference to my own life and that I was trying to show actions of being a reliable pillar & create some kind of scaffolding to resurrect whatever had been possibly shattered to bring back together even more beautifully like in the Japanese art of Kintsugi.

breathing winter sunshine



Art by Louise
Recovery College Student

Mindful Walk at Chafford Gorge



Start Practicing a Mindful Walk Today

Start by being present

Pay attention to physical sensations

Engage your senses

Notice your breathe & body

Let go of thoughts

Be kind to your body



“What you send into the universe comes back to you. Send positivity, gratitude, kindness. The universe will come back to you with more”.

The winter solstice marks the gradual return of light after the longest night, and if we link nature's cycles to our own growth cycles, we can deepen our understanding of ourselves. The idea of “winter sunshine” in relation to spirituality signifies hope, rebirth, and new beginnings.

The idea of light and dark in relation to our journey, mental health and navigating our emotions is key in my life. We often suppress what we see as ‘negative’ emotions and hide what we see as the darker parts of ourselves. Although darkness shouldn’t consume us, it can be a catalyst for our journey and perhaps a path towards enlightenment.



by **Lauren** Recovery College Student

Winter Sunshine

“Winter solstice is the great stillness before the Sun’s strength builds and the days start to grow longer”, and for me, this signifies the gradual reintroduction of brighter days. This brings me hope and does signify new beginnings. We can easily hide ourselves away from the world, but we need to nurture ourselves. It can be hard to accept endings, which naturally come before those new beginnings, but I believe everything happens for a reason.

Looking at rebirth, there are so many ways for this to happen, and everyone has their own individual experiences that influence the ways they navigate their journey. For me, it is in relation to personal growth, and rebirth is a way to shed those parts of us that may not serve us anymore and allow ourselves to be who we want to be or who we feel we truly are. Change is never easy, but we are constantly evolving without even realising it.

Someone said to me recently that I have changed, and yes, I have – but I don’t see that as a bad thing. Life is constantly changing, and naturally we adapt with it. Maybe we don’t even need to say we have changed, only that we are developing and adjusting as we need to. Change is for us personally and for me personally, the idea of hope is difficult to navigate when life challenges us with situations we simply cannot control. But what we can control is how we respond to them. We cannot change anyone else, but we don’t need to let others change us or go against our core beliefs in order to make others happy.

The people who are meant to be in our lives will bring us comfort and warmth and can act as an anchor of hope.

As winter sunshine is a sign of warmer days to come, the right friendships will assure us that any challenge we face, will pass. A true friendship can be an enduring connection that brings you peace and strength, and will allow you to face new beginnings whilst appreciating the simple joys that surround us. We sometimes need to break in order to rebuild. We all want to be seen for who we are, and we can heal through trying again and believing there is hope. There are beautiful people around us, and we are enough. Maybe winter sunshine comes in the shape of people too, and I know for me, I want people around me who feel like human sunshine!

Do not forget your worth. Allow yourself to feel what you need to and acknowledge that you are deserving of new beginnings, rebirth and hope. Maybe hope is there to remind you that a positive mindset can ground you and drive you towards positive outcomes.

“You cannot mess up anything that is meant for you, so don’t be so scared of what will happen. Trust your intuition and let your heart and soul guide you on this journey. I promise you, you cannot mess up anything that is meant for you”.

Try and trust the process and don’t be scared to start over. Who knows, you might like your new chapter even better! And remember it’s a chapter, not the whole story.

UPCOMING COURSES

December 2025

Monday			Tuesday	Wednesday		Thursday		Friday
1 Anxiety and Me (online) 10am-12pm 	1 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 5:30-6:30pm 		2 My Rested Self Sleep 10am-12pm Grays 	3 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley 		4 Intro to Navigating Emotions Grays 10am-12pm 	4 Mindful Practice (online) 1-2pm 	5 Recovery Café 10:30am -1:30pm Waves Café (Inside South Essex College) 
8 Anxiety and Me (online) 10am-12pm 	8 Visualisation for loving, kindness and compassion (online) 5:30-7pm 		9 My Rested Self Sleep 10am-12pm Grays 	10 Yoga for Everyone Aveley 10am-12 pm 	10 5 Ways to Wellbeing Grays 1-3pm 	11 Intro to Navigating Emotions Grays 10am-12pm 	11 Mindful Practice (online) 1-2pm 	12 Recovery Café 10:30am -1:30pm Waves Café (Inside South Essex College) 
15 Anxiety and Me (online) 10am-12pm 	15 Newsletter Group 10-11am Chafford Hundred 	15 Progressing with Visualisation (online) 5:30-7pm 	16 My Rested Self Sleep 10am-12pm Grays 	17 Yoga for Everyone Aveley 10am-12 pm 	17 5 Ways to Wellbeing Grays 1-3pm 	18 Mindful Walk Grays 11am-12:30pm 		19 Recovery Café 10:30am -1:30pm Waves Café (Inside South Essex College) 
22 Christmas break			23 Christmas break	24 Christmas break		25 Christmas break		26 Christmas break
29 Christmas break			30 Christmas break	31 Christmas break				





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



Skills Bootcamps in Health and Social Care

Skills Bootcamps are free, intensive courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and an offer of an interview with an employer upon completion.

When people think of working in care they often think of personal care but there are so many roles in this sector from admin to catering to management.

Take advantage of the many career opportunities available in Thurrock across the care sector. Contact us today to find out more!



Meet the team on
Friday 9th January 2026
12:15pm – 2pm

Call: 01375 372476

Email: tacc@thurrock.gov.uk

Visit: www.tacc.ac.uk



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Essex County Council

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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 Coffee Shop

Date: Every Friday from 03/10/2025

Times: 10:30am-1:30pm

There is no need to book to attend the Recovery Cafe. Please note this is available to attend during term time only.

Inclusion Thurrock is provided by ^{NHS}inclusion - a specialist service of Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT), working with Thurrock and Brentwood Mind and Essex Partnership University NHS Trust.

 **Mind** Thurrock and Brentwood

Mental Elf

Festive Fun Run
7th December

The elves need you!

FREE

**National Trust
family day
access pass
for runners
and
volunteers**

TAKE PART!

Join us on

Sunday 7th December
at Weald Country Park in
Brentwood from 10.45 am

For more info and tickets



Free mental health, wellbeing and employment support for people in Thurrock.

Inclusion Thurrock offer a wide range of services including:

- Inclusion Thurrock Talking Therapies
- Recovery College
- Inclusion Thurrock Psychological Therapy Service
- Thurrock IPS Employment Service
- Early intervention in Psychosis (EiP)*
- At Risk Mental State (ARMS)*

**This is ran in partnership with EPUT*



We offer **free** mental health support to those who are looking to access talking therapies, employment support or simply a safe space to learn more on how to live a happier, healthier life.

To find out more:



01375 898 680



inclusionthurrock@mpft.nhs.uk



inclusionthurrock.org

Scan the QR
code to visit
our website
and find out
more!



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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Inspiring futures through
lifelong learning

Colour & Connect

A safe space to colour, chat, and
take a break from it all.

No art skills needed—just come
as you are!

Every Wednesday

12:30pm - 2:30pm



www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

 **Mind** Thurrock and Brentwood

Registered Charity No: 1106451

www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

Connected Minds



EVERY FRIDAY

10:30am - 12:30pm

Come and join us in a warm and
welcoming space where we chat, play
games, do colouring and uplift
each other!

Call 01375 391411 for more information

 **Mind** Thurrock and Brentwood

Registered Charity No: 1106452



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

X @ThurrckRCollege

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