

Thurrock Recovery College STUDENT NEWSLETTER



By **Louise**, Recovery College Student

In this Month's Issue:

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

By Patrizia Pessenda, RC Lead



As we step into January, the start of a new year often brings reflection and resolutions.

The winter months, with their shorter days and colder weather, can feel isolating for many. This makes **mindful communication** more important than ever—because how we connect with others can brighten even the darkest days.

Mindful communication means being fully present during interactions. It's about listening deeply, speaking thoughtfully, and responding with awareness rather than reacting impulsively. We can do this by being mindful and paying attention to the present moment without judgment and by making sure that we choose words that are kind, honest, and constructive.

Mindful Communication is especially important in the winter months for various reasons: January can be a time of low energy and mood dips, especially after the festive season. Mindful conversations help us feel **heard and supported**. The new year is a chance to

set intentions and new beginnings—not just for us, but for how we relate to others. Choosing kindness and presence can be a powerful resolution.

When it's cold outside, we often retreat indoors. Mindful communication helps maintain warmth in our relationships, even when the weather is chilly.

I would like to share some practical tips for winter mindfulness:

Check In with Others

A simple “How are you really doing?” can mean a lot during the winter months.

Slow Down and Listen

January is a time for reflection—give conversations the same care by listening fully.

Share Warmth Through Words

Compliments, gratitude & encouragement can lift spirits during darker days.

Create Cozy Conversations

Whether over a cup of tea or a phone call, make space for meaningful dialogue.

Think of mindful communication as a winter fire—it takes intention to light, but once burning, it brings warmth and comfort to everyone around it.

This January, let's resolve to speak with kindness, listen with care, and connect with presence. In doing so, we create a sense of community that can carry us through the cold months ahead.

Yoga Pose of the Month

Anjali Mudra in Sukhasana
Connection – Clarity – Presence



YOGA

YOGA

Reflection – Mindful Communication

January invites us to pause, listen deeply, and choose our words with awareness. Anjali Mudra in Sukhasana brings the mind into stillness, allowing communication to come from a centred, grounded place. In this posture of soft focus and open presence, we practise listening to ourselves first, so our communication with others becomes more intentional, compassionate and aligned.

“

*"The quieter you become, the more
you can hear." – Ram Dass*

”

Continued next page...



1

Sit comfortably cross-legged on the floor or on a cushion

2

Lengthen your spine and soften your shoulders

3

Bring palms together at the heart centre

4

Gently press thumbs into your sternum

5

Close the eyes and take slow, mindful breaths

6

Focus on the space between your thoughts

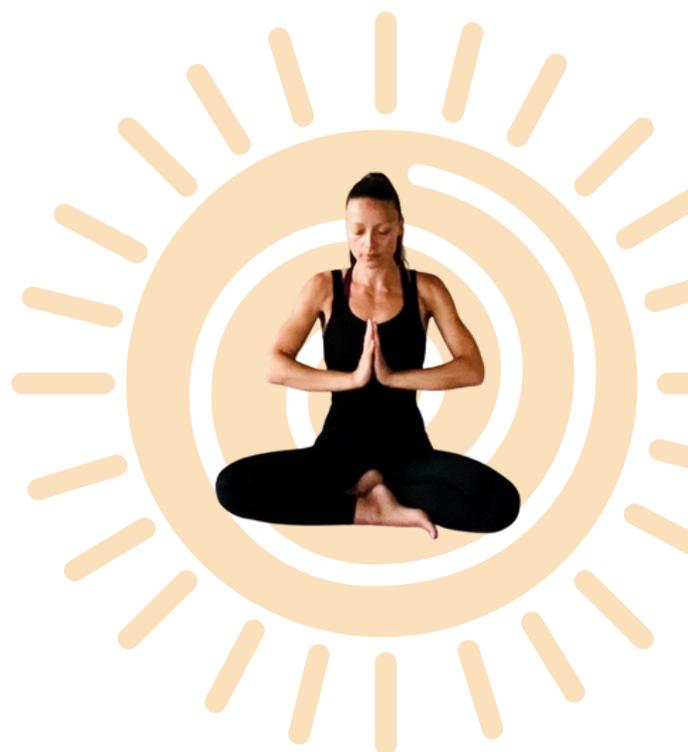
Contraindications

- Knee or hip discomfort (support with blocks or cushions)
- Lower back tension (sit against a wall for support)

Symbolism

Anjali Mudra symbolises unity, honour, and respect—an offering of peace both inward and outward.

Sukhasana represents ease and simplicity, reminding us to approach communication with softness and intention.





by Janet
Peer Trainer

Hello everyone, my name is Janet and I recently started working as a Peer Trainer at the Recovery College helping to run some of the various courses they offer.

Before joining the college team, I attended various courses as I progressed along my mental health journey. Some of you may recognise me from My Rested Sleep, Food and Mood, various Visualisations, 5 ways to Wellbeing, Practical Mindfulness and Yoga.

I've experienced a variety of mental health issues over the last 15 years, including depression and anxiety - so understandably, mental health awareness and especially the stigma attached to it is something I feel passionate about.

Understanding your thoughts and how they can stop you from living a happy and fulfilled life is something very close to my heart.

I live locally in Thurrock with my husband, dog Alf and my other fur and feather babies.

I love to travel and have been lucky enough to have visited many exotic places, but still North Devon is my happy go to place.

My leisure time is spent meeting with my friends and family, walking my dog, keeping fit, reading and most recently at a local art class.

Celebrate Inner Strengths



Art by Louise
Recovery College Student

Art by Louise
Recovery College Student

Breathing Winter Sunshine



Best parts of present & future self



When I see the theme of each months newsletter I think how relevant it is in my life at that time but this one really is so important to me now.

Communication as a whole is key to any friendship, relationship or even work environment. Each relationship is different and in some communication will be established and with others it will just work naturally. Both are okay but it is so important to be mindful of the needs of the other person and also be mindful of your own.

Sometimes we need to set boundaries in order to feel comfortable in a connection, especially when our mental health factors in. For me reassurance is a type of love language and the people who know me best, know that is what I need. However, I would never want to anyone to prioritise my needs over their own.

I love writing these pieces and do it from the heart but I always have quotes already saved because these are themes that are in everyday life and I am so big into communication, reflection and working on myself. That is for me but also we all grow through different connections.

“Optimists live longer, have longer lasting relationships and make stronger first impressions. What do they all have in common? Language.

Your brain seeks advice based on the words you use. Say “I’m stuck and it searches for walls. Say I’m transitioning and it searches for doors.



Use future and possibility tenses “I will” or “it is possible” puts your brain into anticipatory state which is linked to reaching your goals

Set distancing “a part of me feels anxious” rather than I am anxious lowers cortisol and reduces rumination

Optimism is the belief life is about to reward you louder than it tested you. If you can write novels about pain but choose to live poems of hope, please never change.

The Key Principles To Mindful Communication

Be Present

For me personally I won't open a message or take a call if I know I don't have the time or capacity to be there for someone. That isn't fair on them or me. Conversations deserve to have your full focus and being present is so important in life anyway, but especially with connection. If I am out with a friend, my phone is there for things I have to take. But outside that, I want to be present in that person's company.

Listen Actively

Nothing is worse than not feeling seen or heard. Giving your time and attention to someone is the best way you can support them even if it is something you can't help with.

Pause Before Speaking

Take a moment before responding, what is this person telling you and what are they feeling. Sometimes it isn't their words, it's what they haven't said out loud.

Be Non-Judgmental

Although it is human to have reactions to what we are being told, the situation isn't about us. Don't allow your personal views to interfere with your listening and understanding. Create a safe space to talk about anything, they will be more likely to open up again if they feel safe and comfortable.

Show Empathy

You don't need to understand a situation to empathise, they only want to be listened to and treated with kindness. We all have that within us and usually someone wants to feel they can talk about anything without their being any kind of judgment.

Use Open Ended Questions

Allow them the time and space to expand on what they are telling you. Normally that's why they have brought something up and it creates a natural flow of conversation if you ask questions that don't need a simple yes or no answer.

Be Mindful of Non-Verbal Cues

This will also tell you more than their words sometimes and indicate what they can't get into words.

Be Conscious of Your Own Patterns

We all respond differently so reflect on your own patterns of unhelpful communication. Don't interrupt, or become defensive, that will only stop that person from communicating again.



UPCOMING COURSES

January 2026

| Monday | | Tuesday | Wednesday | | Thursday | Friday | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 5 | | 6 | 7 | | 8 Recovery Café Brentwood Theatre 10:30am-1:30pm  | 9 Recovery Café Grays 10:30am-1:30pm  | | |
| 12 Understanding Anxiety 11am-1 pm Grays  | 12 Newsletter Group  Chafford Hundred 10am-11am | 13 Food and Mood South Ockendon 11am-1pm  | 14 Yoga for Everyone Aveley  10am-12pm | 14 Visualisation for Relaxation (online) 1:30pm-2:30pm  | 15 Practical Mindfulness Grays 11am-1pm  | 15 Recovery Café Brentwood Theatre 10:30am-1:30pm  | 16 Recovery Café Grays 10:30am-1:30pm  | 16 Communicating with Confidence Grays 11am-1pm  |
| 19 Understanding Anxiety Grays 11am-1 pm  | | 20 Food and Mood South Ockendon 11am-1pm  | 21 Yoga for Everyone Aveley  10am-12pm | 21 Visualisation for Loving, Kindness and Compassion (online)  1:30pm-2:30pm | 22 Practical Mindfulness Grays 11am-1pm  | 22 Recovery Café Brentwood Theatre 10:30am-1:30pm  | 23 Recovery Café Grays 10:30am-1:30pm  | 23 Communicating with Confidence Grays 11am-1pm  |
| 26 Understanding Anxiety Grays 11am-1 pm  | 26 Mindful Walk  Grays 1pm-2pm | 27 | 28 Yoga for Everyone Aveley  10am-12pm | 28 Progressing with Visualisation (online)  1pm-2:30pm | 29 Practical Mindfulness Grays 11am-1pm  | 29 Recovery Café Brentwood Theatre 10:30am-1:30pm  | 30 Recovery Café Grays 10:30am-1:30pm  | 30 Communicating with Confidence Grays 11am-1pm  |





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

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

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.

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

No art skills needed—just come
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Every Wednesday

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www.thurrockandbrentwoodmind.org.uk

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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: Thurrockcollege@mpft.nhs.uk

Call: 01375 809 708

X @ThurrckRCollege

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