

Thurrock Recovery College

STUDENT NEWSLETTER



Artwork by Louise, RC Student

In This Month's 'Bright Minds, Brighter Days' Issue:

- Articles from our Students & RC Lead
- Yoga Pose Exercises
- Community updates

BRIGHT LITTLE DAYS



Calm Days. Little Wins.

Brighter days often start with something simple: **the way we choose to think**. When our minds feel hopeful and open, life naturally feels lighter too. I've experienced this in a very real, very human way.

The turning point came from something small and unexpected: a simple conversation. A friend said to me, **"You're allowed to think differently about this,"** and for some reason, those words really stuck. I started to notice how tough I'd been on myself—focusing on tiny slip-ups and brushing past what I'd done well. Little by little, I began to be gentler with myself, swapping those critical thoughts for ones that were more curious, understanding, and encouraging.

A little while ago, I started a small habit each morning. Before jumping into the day, I'd pause and ask myself, **what's one good thing I can bring into today?** Sometimes it was patience. Sometimes it was a smile,

other days, it was just showing up with a willing attitude. That tiny pause made a surprising difference.

With a brighter way of thinking, everyday moments started to feel more enjoyable. Conversations felt more genuine. Small wins felt worth celebrating. Even routine days had their own quiet glow. It wasn't about being cheerful all the time, but about choosing kindness and curiosity whenever possible.

Brighter minds lead to brighter days because they help us notice what's good, meaningful, and possible. When we give ourselves permission to think with warmth and understanding, life feels more welcoming. And often, it's that simple shift—one thought, one choice—that makes an ordinary day feel truly bright.

By Patrizia Pessenda
RC Lead

Yoga Pose of the Month

Upward Facing Dog Pose
Expand • Uplift • Illuminate

By Diane
Yoga Teacher



YOGA

Reflection – Gratitude in Nature

As May unfolds with longer days and lighter mornings, Upward Facing Dog invites you to rise with openness, energy, and clarity. This uplifting backbend encourages you to expand through the chest and step into the month with a renewed sense of purpose.

Urdhva Mukha Svanasana is a powerful heart-opening posture that strengthens the arms, wrists, and spine while deeply stretching the chest, shoulders, and abdomen. It creates space across the front body, allowing the breath to flow more freely and encouraging a natural lift in both mood and mindset. With consistent practice, this pose can help counteract the effects of long hours spent sitting, improve posture, and bring a sense of lightness and vitality to the body.

*“Rise through the heart,
lift through the light, and
let each breath guide
you into brighter days
and a clearer mind.”*



How To Practice The Pose

1

Begin lying face down on your mat, legs extended back with the tops of the feet pressing firmly into the floor

2

Place your hands beside your lower ribs, elbows close to the body

3

Inhale and press into your palms, straightening the arms as you draw your chest forward and upward

4

Lift your thighs slightly off the mat by engaging the legs, keeping the shoulders rolling back and down

5

Broaden across the collarbones and gently lift your gaze forward or slightly upward without compressing the neck

6

Stay for 3–5 breaths, allowing each inhale to expand the chest and each exhale to soften unnecessary tension

7

To release, exhale slowly and lower down with control

Contraindications

Avoid this pose if you have wrist, shoulder, or significant lower back injuries. Soften the elbows slightly or lower the thighs if you feel any compression in the lower back.

Symbolism

Upward Facing Dog symbolises rising into the light, opening the heart, and embracing new beginnings with confidence and clarity. It reminds us to move forward with courage, leaving behind heaviness and welcoming brightness.

YOGA

YOGA

YOGA

When Days Get Brighter

As the evenings get lighter, I've noticed I feel happier and more positive. The extra daylight gives me a sense of calm and reminds me to find joy in the small things.

I've been enjoying the lighter evenings, as they make it feel like I have more time to relax and unwind after the day. I've also been getting out for more walks, aiming for 5,000–10,000 steps a day.

I don't always reach my goal, but I'm hoping that as the weather gets warmer, I'll manage 10,000 steps more consistently. The fresh air and movement really help clear my mind.

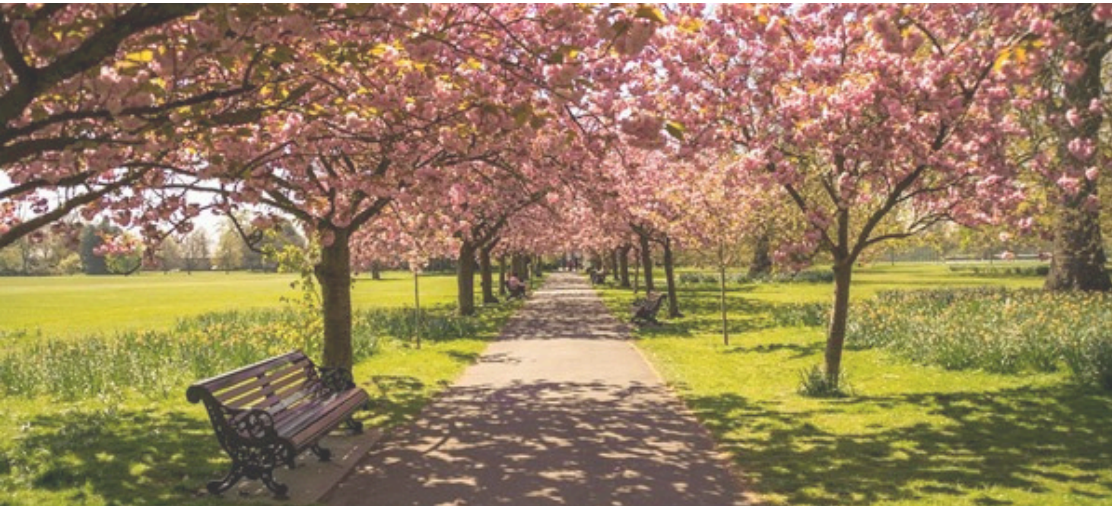
Here's a picture I took recently during my walk.

By Jenne
RC Senior
Administrator

**"THE FRESH AIR AND MOVEMENT
REALLY HELP CLEAR MY MIND."**



Spring Has Sprung



By Silwelani
RC Occupational
Therapist

Hi everyone, my name is Silwelani Nkomo.

I am a Health Trainer with Recovery College and an Occupational Therapist by profession. I am passionate about assisting others empowering them with skills and knowledge to assist with reaching their fullest potential by creating change and adding value to everyone within a safe environment. I would like to share this with you all:

It is a beginning of a new season which is mainly associated recharging and revitalising ourselves. For most people this season is associated with cleaning our gardens, planting new plants, flowers, cleaning our homes and changing our wardrobes.

However, we tend to forget about our mental health. New season is mostly about positively motivating ourselves to improve our mood, health and wellbeing due to the changes happening around us. As much as we do this throughout the year, Spring has a way of motivating us to explore our environment further as the days are getting brighter, longer and temperatures are milder. Including blooming flowers, nature

and animals is glowing. Various season changes can also have a negative impact to others, some individuals can still experience low mood during spring.

Cleaning is part of our daily and meaningful activities which can be impacted by various challenges in our lives. For others this can be a chore that can be difficult to engage in. Clean environment is associated with reducing stress levels and improves our mood, emotions positively according to various studies.

I would like to encourage breaking our cleaning tasks into small manageable sizes to avoid feeling drained, stressed which can lead to low mood and lack of motivation. Doing things at our own pace helps to achieve our end goal which cleaning or clearing what we need to. Also listening to our bodies and resting helps with reducing stress, low mood and enriching our health and wellbeing. Plus, balancing this with eating healthy regular meals, drinking water, sleeping pattern to help recharge and repair our minds, body, to improve our emotional support and reduce stress.

UPCOMING COURSES

May 2026

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
4 Bank Holiday		5 Anxiety and Me 10am-11am Online		6 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley	6 Visualisation for Relaxation- Floating on a Cloud 12pm-1pm Online	7 Ways to Wellbeing 11am-1pm South Ockendon	7 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Brentwood	8 Intro to Navigating Emotions 10am-12pm Grays	8 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays
11 Exploring Loss Moving Forward 11am-1pm Grays	11 Newsletter Meeting 10am-11am Chafford Hundred	12 Progressing with Visualisation: Letting Go 5:30pm-6:30pm Online	12 Anxiety and Me 10am-11pm Online	13 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley		14 Ways to Wellbeing 11am-1pm South Ockendon	14 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Brentwood	15 Intro to Navigating Emotions 10am-12pm Grays	15 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays
18 Exploring Loss Moving Forward 11am-1pm Grays		19 Visualisation for Love, Kindness & Compassion 2pm-3pm Online	19 Anxiety and Me 10am-11am Online	20 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley	20 Mindfulness Practice 5:30pm-6:30pm Online	21 Mindful Walk 1pm-2:30pm Grays Beach	21 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Brentwood	22 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays	
25th May – 29th May Half term						28 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Brentwood		29 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays	



Positive Well-Being Day at Grays Town Park

Date: 3rd July 2026 Time: 13pm-16pm



**Stalls/ Community information /Performances/ Music /
workshops/ Entertaining you all.**

OLDER PEOPLE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

ENTRY IS FREE

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

In partnership with



Thurrock Hub

 mind
Thurrock
and Brentwood

152 Bridge Road, RM17 6DB

Thurrock Residents Only

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10am-12pm Stepping Stones Gardening Group Open to referrals	10am-12pm Stepping Stones Gardening Group Open to referrals	10:30am-11:30am @Mind Online Group Open to referrals		10:30am-12:30pm Connected Minds Open to referrals
10:30am-12:30pm Creative Calm Open to referrals		12:30pm-2:30pm Colour & Connect Open to referrals		
1pm-3pm Companionship Group (Paid service) Open to referrals		1pm-2pm Nature in Mind Walking Group Open to referrals		

peers@tbmind.org.uk

01375 391411

1 in 4 of us

**will experience a mental health
issue in their lifetime.**

**If you are struggling with your
mental health, you are not alone.**





THE HEALTHY MIND HUB

**Boost your wellbeing. Build connections.
Discover what helps you thrive.**

Healthy Mind Hub offers free, friendly, community-based wellbeing workshops for adults across Mid and South Essex. Join a welcoming space to meet others, try meaningful activities, and explore what supports your mental health.*

Over six weeks, you'll enjoy sessions inspired by the Five Ways to Wellbeing including creative activities, gentle movement, learning something new, and taking notice of what matters to you.

The Healthy Mind Hub is best suited for people who:

-  **Are adults 18+ living in Mid and South Essex**
-  **Feel generally stable**
-  **Are ready and able to take part in in-person or online group sessions**
-  **Want to build confidence, learn coping skills, and connect with others**

It may not be the right service for you at this time if you:

-  **Are in crisis or need urgent support**
-  **Require 1:1 or intensive mental health care**
-  **Feel unable to participate safely in a group setting**

* this is not a clinical, therapeutic, or crisis service

**[www.trustlinks.org/projects/
healthy-mind-hub/](http://www.trustlinks.org/projects/healthy-mind-hub/)**

or scan the QR code to learn more and get involved.
or email healthymind@trustlinks.org

SCAN ME



TAKE A SMALL STEP TOWARD A HEALTHIER MIND - WE'RE HERE TO WALK ALONGSIDE YOU.



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

3 hour weekly sessions

Recovery Café

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:

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

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

Meeting: Grays Park (RM17 6RB) *

Date: Every Friday from 08/05/26

Times: 10:30am-1:30pm

* Please note, in the event it rains, Recovery Cafe will be held at Wave Cafe (South Essex College High Street, Grays RM17 6TF)



Contact Us

✉ MSE.Recoverycollege@mpft.nhs.uk

📘 MSE Recovery College

📷 @mserecoverycollege

🌐 www.mserecoverycollege.co.uk



Scan the QR code for more information

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!





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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