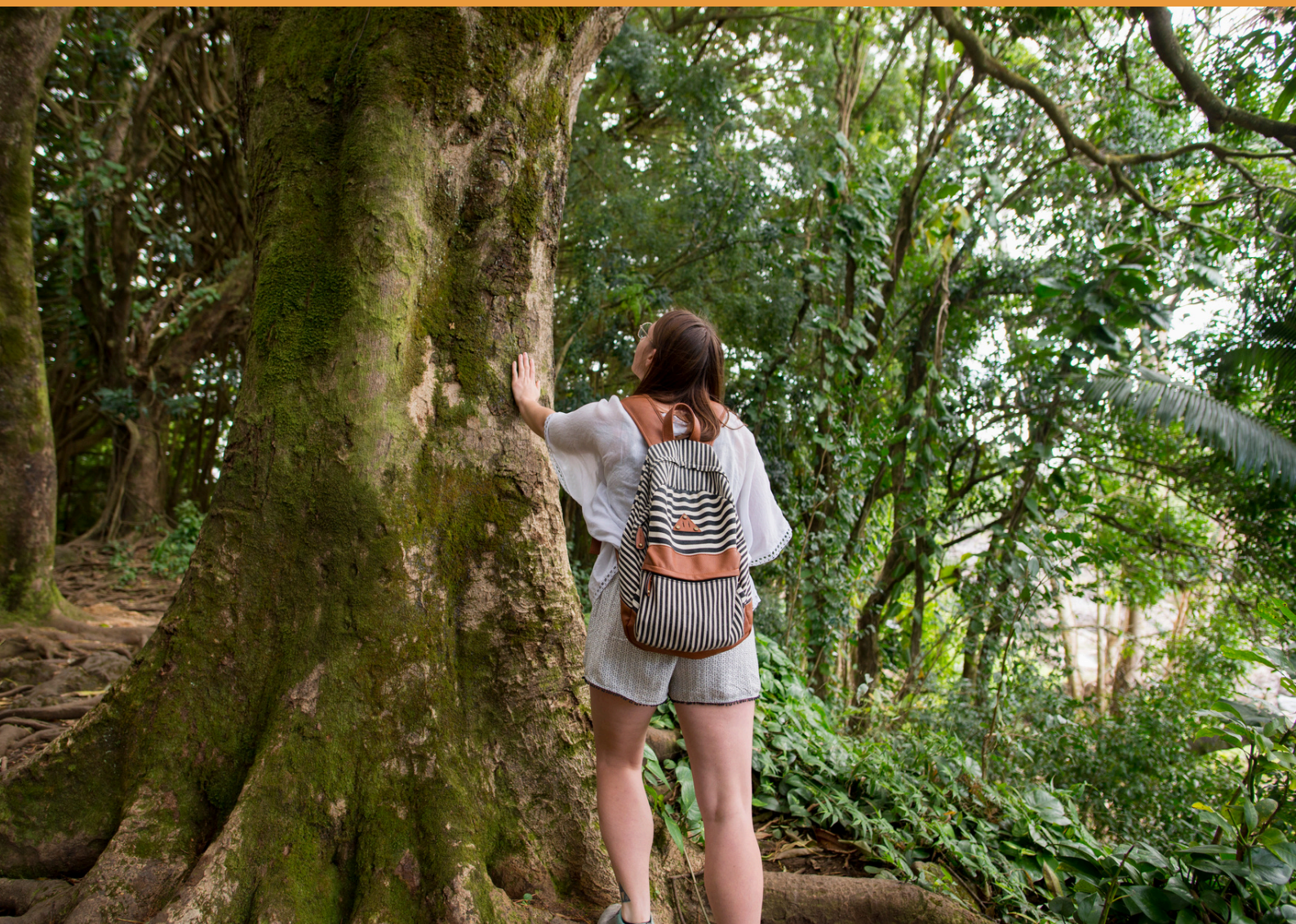


Thurrock Recovery College

STUDENT NEWSLETTER



In This Month's 'Reflect and Reset' Issue:

- Articles from our RC Students & RC staff
- Community updates

A Mindful Walk at Rainham Marshes



Back in July a group of learners and staff enjoyed a mindful walk at the beautiful Rainham Marshes Nature Reserve. Surrounded by open skies, wildflowers, and the sounds of nature, the experience offered a valuable opportunity to slow down, reconnect with the present moment, and take a break from the demands of everyday life.

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the here and now with curiosity and without judgement. During the walk, students were encouraged to notice what they could see, hear, smell, and feel around them. Whether it was watching birds glide across the marshes, listening to the rustle of reeds in the breeze, or simply feeling the ground beneath their feet, these small moments helped bring attention away from worries and back to the present.

Spending time in nature has been shown to support wellbeing, reduce stress, and improve mood. Many students commented on how calm and refreshed they felt after the walk. The peaceful surroundings created the perfect environment to pause, breathe, and reflect on personal wellbeing.

The walk also linked closely to our Reset and Reflect approach, providing dedicated time to step back from daily pressures and check in with ourselves. Taking even a short mindful pause can help us gain perspective, build resilience, and return to our day feeling more grounded and focused.

Rainham Marshes reminded us that opportunities for mindfulness can be found all around us. By taking a moment to slow down and notice the world around us, we can support our wellbeing and create space to reset, reflect, and recharge.

As part of our summer programme, students enjoyed a mindful walk at RSPB Rainham Marshes. The walk encouraged everyone to slow down, notice the sights, sounds and textures of nature, and appreciate the wildlife and changing seasons. Along the way we identified native plants and listened for birds using a sound identification app.

Mindfulness in Nature

Taking time to notice the colours, textures, sounds and scents of nature helps us become more present in the moment. Mindful walks encourage us to slow down, engage our senses and appreciate the wildlife around us, supporting wellbeing and our connection with nature.

Plants We Identified

- **Elder:** Recognised by glossy black berries on reddish-purple stems. A favourite food of blackbirds, thrushes and starlings. Did you know? Cooked elderberries are used to make syrups and jams, but raw berries should not be eaten.
- **Common Dogwood:** A native shrub with curved leaf veins, red stems and blue-black berries. Did you know? Its vivid red stems brighten our hedgerows throughout the winter.
- **Blackthorn:** Produces blue-black sloes and provides valuable nesting habitat. Did you know? Blackthorn flowers appear before the leaves in spring, providing an important early nectar source for pollinators.
- **Dog Rose:** Developing rose hips will ripen later in the year. Did you know? Rose hips are one of Britain's richest natural sources of vitamin C and provide winter food for birds.



Birds We Heard and Saw

- **Common Tern:** A graceful bird that hovers before diving for fish. Did you know? Many Common Terns migrate thousands of miles to West Africa for the winter.
- **Pied Avocet:** A striking black-and-white wading bird with an upturned bill. Did you know? The Avocet is the emblem of the RSPB and one of Britain's greatest conservation success stories.
- **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** A familiar gull with a dark grey back and yellow legs. Did you know? They have been observed dropping shellfish onto hard surfaces to crack them open.
- **Northern Lapwing:** Recognisable by its crest and shimmering green-purple feathers. Did you know? Its distinctive call gave rise to its old country name, the 'Peewit'.

Nature Challenge

Before our next walk, see if you can:

- **Notice 5 different shades of green**
- **Listen for 3 different bird songs**
- **Find a tree, flower or insect you've never noticed before**
- **Spend 1 minute listening to nature**



PHOTOS
TAKEN
ALONG THE
RAINHAM
MARSHES
MINDFUL
WALK



Recovery College Joins Thurrock Big Lunches

Throughout July and August, the Recovery College was delighted to attend a number of Big Lunch events across Thurrock. These community gatherings provided a wonderful opportunity to connect with local residents, promote wellbeing, and share information about the Recovery College courses and the support we offer.

The events were filled with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, bringing together people of all ages to enjoy food, conversation, activities, and community spirit. The Recovery College team had the opportunity to meet many local people, answer questions about our courses, and talk about how learning can support wellbeing, recovery, and personal growth.

Attending the Big Lunches also allowed us to strengthen links with community groups, organisations, and partners who share our commitment to improving health and wellbeing across Thurrock. We enjoyed meeting new faces, reconnecting with familiar ones, and hearing about the experiences, strengths, and aspirations of local residents.

The Big Lunch events reminded us of the importance of community connection and belonging. They showcased how simple acts of coming together can help reduce isolation, build relationships, and create opportunities for people to support one another.



Mandy & Paul at the Big Lunches, Blackshots, Grays



A particular highlight was seeing people engage in conversations about wellbeing in a relaxed and informal setting. Many visitors were interested to learn that Recovery College courses are open to everyone and focus on building knowledge, confidence, skills, and hope. Building knowledge, confidence, skills, and hope.

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We would like to thank everyone who stopped by to speak with us and the organisers who worked so hard to make the events such a success. We look forward to continuing our involvement in community activities and welcoming new learners to the Recovery College in the future.



Reflect & Restart

Pause... Breathe... Begin again.

The flamingos symbolise love, resilience, and new beginnings.

Their reflection in the water reminds us to look within, learn from the past and move forward with hope.

Like vibrant leaves and flowers, we can continue to grow and bloom through every season of life....

Reflect... Heal... Grow... Restart.

By Sarah, RC Student

UPCOMING COURSES

September 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays 
7 Newsletter Meeting 10am-11am Chafford Hundred 	8 Understanding Anxiety 10am-12:30pm Grays 	9 Yoga for Everyone  10am-12pm Aveley	9 Mindful Walk Chafford Hundred 11.30am-1pm 	10 Visualisation for Relaxation 5:30pm-6:30pm Online
14 Exploring Loss Moving Forward 1pm-3:30pm Grays 	14 Mindfulness Practice 3:30pm- 4:30pm Online 	15 Understanding Anxiety 10am-12:30pm Grays 	16 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley 	16 Progressing with Visualisation: Letting Go 2.00-3.00pm Online 
21 Exploring Loss Moving Forward 1pm-3:30pm Grays 	21 Progressing with Visualisation: The Ocean 10am-11am Online 	22 Understanding Anxiety 10am-12:30pm Grays 	23 Recovery Café 10am-12pm Brentwood 	24 My Rested Self Sleep 1pm-3pm Grays 
28 Mindful Walk Rainham Marshes 12pm-1:30pm 	29 Hope and Wellbeing 10am-12pm Grays 	29 Food and Mood 1-3pm South Ockendon 	23 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley 	25 Recovery Café 10:30am-1:30pm Grays 
		30 Recovery Café 10am-12pm Brentwood 	23 Intro to Navigating Emotions 1pm-3pm Grays 	
		30 Yoga for Everyone 10am-12pm Aveley 	30 Intro to Navigating Emotions 1pm-3pm Grays 	



Thurrock & Brentwood Mind

Peer Project

Delivering vital mental health support to the residents of Thurrock & Brentwood

Peer Mentoring & Befriending

1-1 sessions with a 'lived experience' volunteer to support you as you work towards an agreed goal



Peer Support Groups

Safe and social support groups where you can connect with new people and build relationships

Volunteer With Us

Become a part of the Peer Project and support these initiatives with your skills and experience



01375 391411



peers@tbmind.org.uk



Mind Thurrock and Brentwood

Support us

Help us to help others by donating to our JustGiving page.



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

f [MSE Recovery College](#)

o [@mserecoverycollege](#)

www 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: Thurrockrcollege@mpft.nhs.uk

Call: 01375 809 708



@ThurrckRCollege



Inclusion Thurrock Recovery College