

Happy Birthday to Us!



The Recovery & Wellbeing College recently turned 10 years old and, like many of us do around significant anniversaries, we are looking back and reflecting on how the College has grown and developed, the many changes we've experienced but more importantly, the memories made.

For us, most of our memories are of people. We cannot tell you the huge number of learners who have walked through our doors, scared, lost, desperate. We have had the privilege to watch them take one small, brave step and then another and another until they are walking with their heads held high, renewed with hope and looking to the future. These people we remember well.

Memories can serve us well, revisiting a positive memory can provide a sense of happiness and contentment. Reflecting on past experiences can give us insight and allow us to learn from them and become more self aware. Sharing memories with others can help strengthen bonds and we'd like to do just that! Please reflect on your own memories of the Recovery College and share these with us over the next few days, weeks and months as we celebrate our tenth anniversary and move into the next decade, no doubt filled with more changes but with one constant; supporting you to learn how to live life well.

Becoming a Recovery College Ambassador

“Earlier this month I completed the new ‘Becoming a College Ambassador’ training with fellow Ambassadors Jana, Martha and Milton. I have been a Learner and a ‘Friend of’ the College for a few years and it is helping me regain my confidence. I am passionate about the College and the courses available from mindfulness and yoga, to arts & crafts, as well as practical courses on coping with anxiety and depression and other aspects of mental health and wellbeing.

The training gave us an understanding of the role and values of the College and how our own individual experiences and knowledge can help us to publicise it. Our role is to promote the College and encourage people to give it a try – they are sure of a warm and friendly welcome from staff and peer workers who understand how making that first step through the door can be daunting, but nothing a smile and a nice cuppa can’t remedy.

I attended the recent Welcome Event at Fieldhead Hospital, Wakefield, where I was able to chat with new recruits and staff from various parts of the Trust about the Recovery College. My fellow Ambassadors and I also attended the popular ‘Harvest Your Potential’ event on World Mental Health Day where chatting to people about the College and seeing them enjoy the taster sessions was very rewarding. Being an Ambassador is literally spreading hope and positivity, what a lovely way to spend some of my spare time.”

By Jo, RWC Ambassador

Someone Like Me

Learner and Ambassador of the College, Jana, bravely shares with us her story of loss and how the Recovery College is helping her to find herself and her place in the world.

“In September 2023 I lost my husband after 25 years together. He died in the car right next to me, due to a sudden cardiac arrest as I was taking him to the hospital, which left me feeling totally unprepared and devastated. My mental health has never been very good and after his death I sought therapy but was turned away; being told that I had “normal grief feelings” despite the traumatic circumstances of his passing.

One day in October, I could not stay in the house any longer and just drove around. Then I remembered that 8 years ago during a depressive episode, my GP had recommended the Recovery College. The WRAP course (aka A Plan for Living Well) helped me then, but life took over and I forgot all the things I’d learnt. So, I drove to Mirfield to see if the College was still there, and luckily it was.

As soon as I walked in, the staff welcomed me with open arms. I enrolled and booked on several courses; some creative and others to help me improve myself like Confidence to Work, Letting go of Loneliness and many more. I found the creative courses really helped to take the focus away from my loss, if only for a few, but enjoyable hours. I came to realise that there is life after losing someone and there are other people out there who are struggling with all kinds of mental health issues.

The Recovery College is a place of understanding, that is non-judgemental and makes everyone feel they are of worth and that life can get better. Maybe not as before, but better than the dark times. Following the loss of my husband, and my role as a wife I need to find myself and a new place in the world; I am grateful that the College is helping me to achieve that.

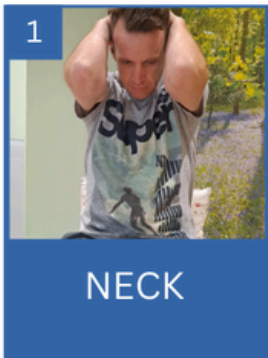
Now only one year later I have completed a training course to be an Ambassador for the College as well as becoming a volunteer, something I would not have dreamt possible just twelve months ago.”

Let's Get Physical: Daily Movement

Movement is our best medicine here are a few reminders of exercises you could practice at home, from our Peer Worker & Yoga Teacher Laura and her model (physio husband, Andrew!)

DAILY MOVEMENT REMINDERS

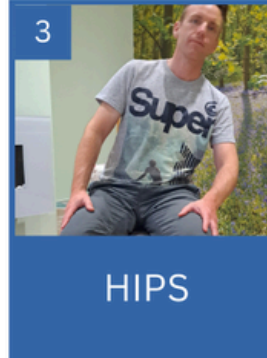
JOINT MOVEMENT



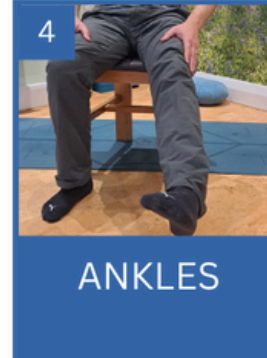
- Move the neck in circles
- Drop the ear to the shoulder
- Hands behind the head, drop the chin to the chest



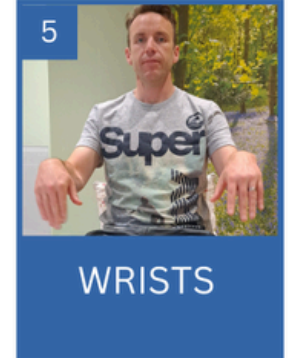
- Circle shoulders forwards
- Circle shoulders backwards
- Crunch shoulders to ears drop down



- Circle the hips clockwise
- Circle the hips anti-clockwise
- shift you weight from one buttock to the other



- Circle the ankles
- point and flex the foot
- write your name with your toes!



- Circle the wrists
- extend the wrists into a stop sign
- flex the wrists into zombie arms

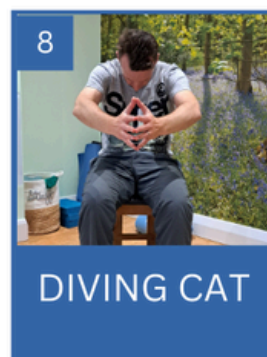
LOOKING AFTER THE BACK



- keep the feet firmly planted
- pull in your tummy muscles
- Drop the arm towards the floor



- keep the feet firmly planted
- Open the chest lift the head
- Squeeze the shoulder blades together



- keep the feet firmly planted
- sweep the arms forward
- Push the belly button to the spine and round the back



- Fold as much as feels comfortable
- let the head be heavy
- rise back up very slowly



- Fold as much as feels comfortable
- arm bent or straight
- raise the arm, looking underneath

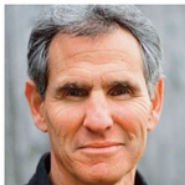
Love to Learn: Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a term that has been attached to lots of activities, but what does it actually mean and how could it benefit us in our daily lives? Read on to learn from Peer Worker Laura's personal perspective....

I first discovered mindfulness through a friend who teaches a beginners course. It really helped me when I was having a difficult time with worry, ruminating and catastrophising. Like many wellbeing activities when I started to feel better, I started to drop my mindfulness practice. BIG MISTAKE..... as I became unwell again with depression taking it's grip, time and time again.

However, I kept coming back to Mindfulness, eventually training to deliver an Introduction into the Mindful Based Stress Reduction Program and working through the Mindful Way Workbook with my therapist. Its now part of my daily wellbeing and I would be lost without it! **So what is mindfulness?**

Jon Kabat-Zinn



"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."

For me, it's about being in the present moment with the activity I am engaged in and letting go of the thinking mind that ruminates in the past or projects into the future.

My definition is very similar to one of the founders of Mindfulness in the western world, Jon Kabat Zinn's.

This means that, if I'm out in my garden planting bulbs, I'm giving it my full attention, I'm not thinking about the argument I just had or mentally writing a shopping list or judging my experience. I'm just there with the dirt, the wind in my hair, the smell of the grass, the sound of the birds. Its not easy, my mind flits all the time, but I just stop, take a breath and come back to what I'm doing, learning to live in the now!

Want to learn more?
Join Laura on her 5 week
Moving into Mindfulness
Course
@ Howland's, Dewsbury



Starting
Monday 4th
November
12.30-3pm

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



World Menopause Awareness Day

World Menopause Awareness Day is held on 18 October every year. The day was founded by the International Menopause Society (IMS) to raise awareness of menopause and to support options to improve health and wellbeing for women in midlife and beyond.

On our recent Menopause Awareness workshop 'The M Word' kindly facilitated by Jane, SWYT Health & Wellbeing Practitioner, we explored the challenges of menopause, what can help to reduce the negative impact of symptoms and what support is available. We also shared some of our own experiences in the session.



Amongst the information shared was a great website, full of really helpful resources including how to get help and support from your GP during the menopause as well as complementary and lifestyle options: www.henpickedhenpicked.net/menopause-hub/

Here at Calderdale & Kirklees Recovery College we offer a wide range of courses that may be beneficial to anyone experiencing difficulties associated with menopause, or for anyone supporting someone who does, please look on our website for further information or book on our next Menopause Awareness course in the New Year.

Contact us

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