

## The healing power of nature

Research has proven that there are lots of benefits to being in nature. Everything from reducing stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms to improving sleep, memory, concentration and creativity, as well as giving our immune system a boost. Studies have even shown quicker recovery times for patients who can see a single tree from their hospital window compared to those that can't! So how can we enhance our sense of wellbeing by getting up close and personal with Mother Nature?



Take notice: open a door or window, what can you see, hear, smell? Trees, birds, flowers? Even in busy towns and cities, nature is never far away!

Watch for wildlife: our gardens and local parks can be a haven for wildlife. Anything from little creepy crawlies to frogs, bats, hedgehogs, foxes and even badgers! Why not research how you can encourage wildlife to your own little green space?

Go Outdoors: whether you go for a walk, meet with friends or family for a picnic or just take your morning cuppa outside, make an effort to spend some time outside in nature as often as you can.

Immerse yourself: take photos, buy a bunch of flowers or a pot plant for your home, grow some herbs on a sunny windowsill or do a nature related art or craft project.

We are sure that everyone can find some small way to take advantage of some health-giving, joy-inspiring, peace-bringing moments in nature over the days, weeks and months ahead. Enjoy!



# Write Time for Wellbeing

If you are a regular reader of this publication, you may remember that one of our learners, Nancy kindly shared with us a piece she wrote while on our Write Time for Wellbeing course earlier this year. Here is another one of her inspiring works.....



I am a box



I am a box and I'm round, small, colourful.

I've got a lid, I get opened every day.

I'm useful, I help people, I like to be there for everybody.

I can't carry too much, but I can still be helpful.

There's a gift in a box, it's time to open the box.

I'm pleased to see what I see:

it's hope,

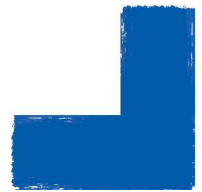
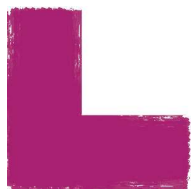
it's I can do,

to believe in what I do,

its happiness, it's trust,

it's knowing I can accept change

and I'm so pleased with my gift.



If you would like to discover how writing can help boost your mood, raise self-awareness and create feelings of calm and contentment then book on our Write Time for Wellbeing Taster session on Monday 12 June at 10.30am.

Please note that due to funding, this session is for Kirklees residents only.

# Love to Learn: anxiety

As a College with learning at our heart, we figured it was about time that we include something for the old grey matter in this little publication. As you may know Mental Health Awareness week was only a short time ago, so we thought we'd stick with their 2023 theme of ***anxiety*** for our newest feature.

Firstly, anxiety is a normal healthy reaction, which happens to us all at certain times, however it can become a problem when it interferes with our everyday lives. Unfortunately, anxiety can also reduce our confidence, as it can make things we previously found easy, hard to do. Often, we start to avoid situations and tasks we no longer feel confident in, resulting in us feeling even more anxious next time they arise.



There are four elements to anxiety:-

**Bodily sensations:** such as irregular breathing, churning stomach, sweating

**Behaviour:** the way we act when faced with the situation we fear

**Beliefs:** the thoughts we have about what might happen when we're in the anxiety inducing situation

**Emotions:** the way it makes us feel, for example nervous, panicky, or scared

Looking at these parts separately and learning new skills in the first three areas can be an important part of managing our anxiety.

Positive self-talk is one useful tool that can be used as part of this process.

Below are some examples of positive self-statements to help cope:

Preparation: It's not going to be as bad as I think / It won't last long and I can cope / I am getting better and need to rebuild my confidence / I might enjoy it if I go

Coping: I can tolerate my anxiety, I've managed it many times before / The feelings are unpleasant but not harmful or dangerous / The feelings always pass / I just need to concentrate on what is going on

Reflection: I handled that okay, it should be easier next time / I can be pleased with the progress I'm making / I managed that / I'm getting better every time / It felt challenging but I'm happy that I did it!

*Delivered by our partners at Talking Therapies, Anxiety Management workshops will be available at the College in the Autumn term*

# Let's Get Physical

With this month's theme being about getting out into nature, we thought we'd give you some ideas to how you can do that - and move more in the process!



Go for a walk - whether its a short walk around the block, a longer ramble with friends or a hike in the countryside. Find what's best for you and get striding out. Check out walking groups near you if you are in need of company, encouragement or route planning!



Get gardening - weeding, digging and planting are all good ways to keep active. If you don't have your own garden then why not offer to help out a friend or neighbour or do some volunteering at a Community Garden or Country Park?



Cycling - is a great way to keep fit and get out in nature. There are plenty off-road cycle tracks if you want to stay away from traffic. Or check out [www.cycleforheath.co.uk](http://www.cycleforheath.co.uk) which offers free sessions for those wanting to enhance their wellbeing and cycling confidence.



Wild Water Swimming - basically this is just regular swimming but in a natural body of water, such as a lake or the sea. If you have never tried this before, for safety reasons we recommend going with someone experienced in this activity.



Yoga is an activity that can pretty much be done anywhere! So grab a mat and head out into the garden or park and get stretching. Oh, and remember to breathe! Namaste.

Alternatively, check out some of our Recovery College courses, such as Kayaking at Sowerby Bridge or Go Fish! in Huddersfield (both Beginners & Intermediate courses available)

# A Big Shout Out To...

## Our Volunteers and Friends of

We're extremely proud of the work that we do with our volunteers. Volunteers are part of the team and are equal partners in the running of the College, quite simply without their support we wouldn't have a College. Our incredible volunteers have lived experience of mental health, which means that they share their knowledge and experiences often of difficult times in their own lives with us so that we are able to develop courses to improve wellbeing for our learners. They use their insight to provide understanding and empathy to our learners and they really do make our Recovery College a warm, friendly and welcoming place to be.



"I enjoyed learning about the MH Museum and meeting staff and other volunteers was lovely" Marina Pears

In recent years life hasn't been easy, we've all been faced with difficult times through the Covid19 Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Our volunteers have continued to selflessly give up their time to support the C&K Recovery and Wellbeing College through these challenges. We want to say a massive thank you to all of our Volunteers and Friends of, for all of their ongoing support...

THANK YOU.



"A positive day out for all!!!"  
Daniel Brown



To celebrate Volunteers Week (1st-7th June) and to show our appreciation to our Volunteers we ran two events, a trip to the Mental Health Museum and a Pizza Party. We would like to thank the team at the Mental Health Museum and our NHS charity EyUp! for supporting us with these events which were great fun and thoroughly enjoyed by our Volunteers...if you don't believe us check out the photos and comments from our volunteers.

Our Volunteers/Friends of have said that volunteering at C&K Recovery College has; *"helped me to build my life up when my life fell apart,"* Joy Owen, *"Gives me focus and meaning in life to help others"* Ben Parker and *"Improves my mental health and opens up opportunities"* Michael Gott. "If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer please check out the 'I'd like to volunteer' section on our website.

We are also looking for people with a lived experience of mental health to come and facilitate courses in our college on a sessional basis. We will be advertising these posts in June. To find out more please book onto one of our find out what it is about online sessions on-via our website.





## Someone like me

**My Alopecia Journey** – for those that that don't know, Alopecia is quite simply hair loss. Many people will experience a degree of Alopecia in their lives, but the good news is that it is usually a temporary condition.

I first developed Alopecia Areata (bald spots) when I was 12, and suffered odd bouts all my life. I had long thick hair and could usually easily disguise any spotting. However 3 years ago I developed Alopecia Universalis (total hair loss) and in a matter of weeks lost every hair on my body, even my nails were disintegrating. As you can imagine it was quite traumatic; my self-esteem plummeted, I hated my new appearance. I felt like an absolute freak whose only future might be appearing as an alien on a TV show!

I was extremely fortunate in having a loving supportive partner and some brilliant friends and family, partially through their help I gradually realised that my lack of hair did not define who I am. I still had me. I got my first wig in January 2020 and now have over 15, which I have lots of fun with. You may have noticed already how frequently I change my hair style/colour - and pre lockdown I got my first tattoo – eyebrows and eyeliner!

I still have some down days, but they're now few and far between. I look at the positives; I don't have to spend ages drying and styling my hair, I save a fortune on shampoo and hairdressers and I've no need to wax my legs or pluck my eyebrows.

Additionally there's a great support group – [Alopecia.org.uk](http://Alopecia.org.uk). Knowing you're not the only one and being in touch with those in the same boat is a great help.

*By Sandra, RWC Administrator*

If you have been affected by any of the articles in this publication and need support, contact Mental Health Helpline on 0800 1830558 or The Samaritans on 116123

### Contact us

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