

New faces at the Recovery & Wellbeing College

We have been busy recruiting recently and are delighted to announce that we have recruited several Peer Project Workers to work with us on a sessional basis. We shall introduce you to them over the next few months, although some may already be familiar faces! We are also thrilled to inform you that our new Administrator for Calderdale, Andrew has joined the team. We are sure you will get to know him in the near future but we've given him this opportunity to introduce himself to you.....

Hi, I'm Andrew and my role here is administration for Calderdale and I'm here to help. I'm local but I have lived and worked in other parts of the UK. I've worked in libraries for many years, in further education, public libraries, and the NHS, so I've always enjoyed meeting and helping people of different backgrounds and experiences.

I'm a keen cyclist as I come from a cycling family. For me cycling is for everyone, whether you wear the lycra or not. I've cycled in many parts of the UK both on my own and as a member of a local cycling club affiliated to Cycling UK.



When I'm not cycling I enjoy cooking, and reading. I have a musical background as I learnt piano and church organ when I was younger, and enjoy lots of different sorts of music- classical, jazz, rock. Currently I'm in the midst of learning how to use music technology on my home PC, which isn't always easy, but I'm up for the challenge!

Spotlight On..... Umbrella Yoga CIC



Umbrella Yoga CIC are a collective of yoga teachers working as a not-for-profit organisation bringing communities together through yoga. They use evidence based practices to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of the people they connect with. Their mission is to provide yoga sessions to people with additional mental and physical needs in Kirklees.

There are 3 main parts to Yoga,

Breathe; different breathing techniques can help us to relax or energise. These breathing techniques can help with conditions such as asthma, panic attacks, COPD and blood pressure.

Move; the postures of Yoga aim to strengthen, stretch and relax the body. The movement can help us stay mobile, mindful and improve muscle tone.

Connect; their groups are not just a yoga class they are a community, an opportunity for people to share experiences and build a support network. They are also a chance for participants to connect to their own bodies and senses.

Their classes are open to all, so anyone can turn up and they'll adapt the class to the needs of the group. They also have classes for specific groups, such as adults with dementia, a learning disability or experience of trauma. They also work with gender specific groups to offer a safe space to practice Yoga.

To find out more visit www.umbrellayoga.co.uk



Someone like me

We are really grateful to Geraldine, a RWC learner and 'Friend of the College', who has kindly shared with us her story of living with Bipolar and some wonderful insights into what keeps her well.

“Life before my mental health problems was wonderful; I was happily married, with 4 beautiful children and a demanding but enjoyable job, but things changed. I was bullied at work, so stressed that I had a suspected heart attack, elderly parents living in Ireland who needed support and a husband with a Cancer diagnosis. Within a short period of time, I changed jobs, moved house, lost my husband and both my parents. I then had a breakdown.

Anxiety and Depression took hold. I was unable to leave the house for months, not caring for myself or eating properly. I lost touch with friends and my family support network consisted of my only brother. The emotions I experienced led to thoughts of suicide. However, over the course of 10 years, I received support from my GP, the Boothroyd Centre in Dewsbury and my daughter who now works in Mental Health Services, all of whom have been enormously helpful. Although I discovered my diagnosis of Bipolar by chance (I happened to see it on some paperwork) I felt happy, knowing what was wrong. Personally, I found it reassuring that I felt like I did due to a chemical imbalance in my brain rather than being attributed to life events.

The Recovery & Wellbeing College has also been a huge help. I'd expressed an interest in *A Plan for Living Well* but it was a 10wk course and I was hesitant about booking on, but having spoken to Matt at the RWC (who could sell snow to the Eskimo's!) I decided to give it a go and it changed my life! I learnt, from being with others who understand, that it's okay to ask for help or to do nothing for a few days and to try not to worry about what might happen, because it likely never will.

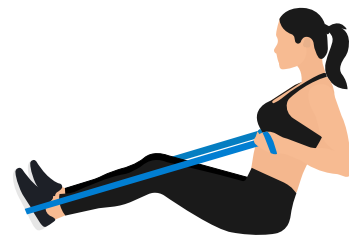
The biggest lesson I've learnt is that talking therapies work. While my own support network was initially small, I extended it by joining walking and sewing groups, book clubs and the Recovery College, all of which have helped me feel well. While my mental health means there are certain things I can't do, I take it one day at a time. I've become more accepting and make the best of it. Life is good.”

Let's Get Physical

It's been 'Falls Prevention Week' recently but for many of us, this might be something we never think about. However, whether you're 35 or 70 being active and building our strength can help us improve our overall health, as well as reducing the risk of falls in later life, which can often prove much more problematic than a few cuts and bruises.

From our mid 30's we start to lose muscle mass; an inevitable part of ageing. As years pass, this loss of muscle strength can make simple everyday tasks such as walking, cleaning, shopping and even dressing more difficult. It can also hinder our ability to cope with, and recover from an illness or injury. All of which can have a negative impact on our health, wellbeing and quality of life. The good news is that we do have some control over how much muscle we lose. The most effective way to combat this is to build strength - and improve balance. Here's some suggestions how:

- Start a Strength & Conditioning Programme (aka resistance or weight training) at your local sports centre/gym. Make sure you get advice from a qualified person and we promise you won't end up looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger!
- Lift a few weights at home. Beg or borrow some dumbbells if you don't have any. Even using a can of beans can be a great start for beginners.
- Practice some body weight exercises such as squats or press ups. Start slow and begin with pushing your weight against a kitchen worktop for example.
- Use a resistance/exercise band. These are relatively inexpensive to buy and there are plenty of helpful online videos to demonstrate how to use these.
- Join a Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi or Dance class. Great for social interaction too!
- Walk regularly - gradually building your fitness by walking further, faster or more difficult routes.



As well as improving our muscle strength, these activities also increase our bone density so even if we do fall, the chance of breaking bones is reduced - and it can even improve our blood sugar control. Just 20 minutes a couple of times a week can have a big impact so choose an activity that will fit into your life that you can learn to enjoy - even if the jury is still out, after your first attempt - or two!

Love to Learn: Mood & Food

We all know that eating healthy can have a positive impact on our long term health but it can be hard to motivate ourselves to change our behaviours when the results may not impact on us for decades. However, imagine living with a mental health condition that could be dramatically improved in a matter of weeks, simply by making different food choices.

So, can what we eat have an impact on our mood? The simple answer is yes! Over the last 10 years, there has been lots of research looking at whether our diets can impact on our mental health - with some rather surprising results. One particular study, the SMILES trial worked with a group of moderate to severely clinically depressed individuals. Over 3 months, participants were encouraged to increase the amount of whole foods they ate (food close to it's natural state containing no artificial substance) and eat less processed food. The outcome was that 30% of those who took part not only felt better but actually went into full remission, having no depressive symptoms. Those who improved the quality of their diets the most, having more significant results. Admittedly, this was a small study of only 67 people as they struggled to recruit participants. Most people, including some Health Care Professionals, thought it a pointless study but the results (and some of the participants who said the experience was life-changing) suggest otherwise.

Some evidence implies that our gut health plays a key role in how we feel both physically and mentally. Eating a wide range of healthy foods can apparently increase the good bacteria in our gut, lifting our mood, reducing inflammation and enhancing our immune system. So where do we start?

Eat more whole foods: fruit, veg, nuts, fish, legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas etc) and wholegrain cereals (ie oats). Frozen, tinned and dried all count so don't worry about always buying fresh. Start small by adding a few lentils into your fave spag bol recipe or chuck a few mushrooms into an omelette and build from there.

Eat less ultra processed food anything containing chemicals, colourings, sweeteners, preservatives. The higher the list of ingredients, the more processed it's likely to be.

While eating this way may cost you more time in the kitchen it doesn't mean it will cost you more money. For recipe ideas visit:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/vegetarian_recipes_under_1



Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



World Mental Health Day

Every year we celebrate World Mental Health Day on 10 October. The theme for 2023, set by the World Foundation of Mental Health, is *Mental health is a universal human right*.

World Mental Health Day is about raising awareness of mental health and driving positive change for everyone's mental health. It's also a chance to talk about mental health, how we need to look after it, and how important it is to get help if you are struggling. So we encourage you to get talking, whether that is about your own experience or checking in with friends and family to see how they are doing.



If you or someone you love is struggling at the moment, there are lots of organisations who can help. You can find details of some of these on the resources page of our website:

<https://www.calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk/resources/learner/>

In celebration of World Mental Health Day 2023 the Working Together Better Partnership are working with Handmade Productions to host a Community Lantern Event. You can get involved and make lanterns to display and use at the Parade on Tuesday 3 October at 3.30 -5pm at the Media Centre in Huddersfield. Or join the parade on Tuesday 10 October at 4.30 - 8pm outside Dewsbury Town Hall. Feel free to bring your own hand-held lantern or light!

Contact us

ckrecovery.wellbeing@swyt.nhs.uk

07717 867911

calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk

