

February 2024

## Work in Progress

The Recovery & Wellbeing College is, and always has been a work in progress. We are consistently looking at ways we can improve and have BIG ideas as to how we can help empower us all to improve our health, wellbeing and....lives! Despite our efforts, enthusiasm and commitment, the road has been bumpy!

However, despite set-backs we are optimistic that this year we can grow our offer to our learners in Calderdale, as well as Kirklees. With an expanding team, we are busy planning and are excited to be able to deliver courses in new venues in Halifax, after the closure of Hope Street.

With creative workshops and courses such as printing, animation and mandala making at Everbody Arts at Shaw Mills (previously known as The Artworks) and wellbeing courses, such as yoga and 'find your inner SHERO' being run from Unmasked Mental Health on Commercial Street, we hope that our learners in the borough will have lots more to choose from closer to home. We will also continue to offer plenty of online courses too!

While we would still like to do more across both districts we hope that this is a step in the right direction and look forward to meeting more of our learners in Calderdale in the near future.



Please keep your eye on our website over the next few weeks for upcoming courses in both localities:

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

# Spotlight On..... Unmasked Mental Health

Unmasked Mental Health is a charitable organisation committed to enhancing lives through a variety of mental wellness services designed to empower adults to choose the support that aligns with their preferences.

Their services include:

- One-to-one counselling (low cost or free for people receiving benefits)
- Group peer hubs – these currently run in Halifax town centre, Illingworth, Elland & Brighouse.
- Free Activity groups – for over `18's. They include Knitting, Cross-Stitch, Warhammer, Meditation, Tai Chi & Walking groups.
- Alternative Therapies – including Hypnotherapy, Reiki and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)
- Specialist hubs – their first specialist hub is to support people around the menopause.

All of these services are designed to proactively address and alleviate symptoms of poor mental health.

Unmasked firmly believe that high-quality mental health support should be accessible to everyone with the peer hubs and activity groups fostering a sense of community and belonging.

They tirelessly promote mental health awareness and the vital support available.

If you are interested in any of their services, visit their website at [www.unmaskedmentalhealth.co.uk](http://www.unmaskedmentalhealth.co.uk) or contact them on either 01422 356945 or email: [info@unmaskedmentalhealth.co.uk](mailto:info@unmaskedmentalhealth.co.uk)

# Someone Like Me

Big thanks to learner, Wendy who has kindly shared with us her recovery story, about receiving a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder and how she feels she has gone from zero to hero!

“A lot changed for me in 2022; my marriage broke down, I moved to a new area and was then sacked from my job due to my poor mental health. I had a breakdown. I felt suicidal and I cut myself off from everyone, barely going out of the house. I was drinking every day and trying to use alcohol as a coping mechanism. I’ve previously had both counselling and psychotherapy and have been on anti-depressants for most of my life. However, it wasn’t until I was given an appointment with a wonderful Mental Health Nurse at my GP practice and a subsequent referral to a Psychiatrist that I received a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder - and everything just slotted into place.

I did loads of research, which helped me make sense of some of the things I’d experienced in my life. I continued to get support from my Mental Health Nurse and was referred to the fantastic ‘Changes’ service where I received DBT & CBT from my Support Worker and I was also allocated a Peer Support Worker, I really felt like I was on the right track. In March 2023 they also helped me enrol with the Recovery & Wellbeing College.

I felt so scared attending the College for the first time, I didn’t know if I’d be able to cope. The first course I did was run by Karl from the Richmond Fellowship, after the session I was so emotional; I ended up in tears. I’ve done loads of courses at the College now, several with Karl and I must say he has been a big part of my recovery journey. I love it at the College, it has really improved my self-confidence and the support is wonderful. It’s a safe space to be who I am, without judgement, which is a big thing for me.

It has been a hell of a journey, and one that I am still on but I’m in a place where I am enjoying life now - for the first time in decades. I’ve made friends which I’ve always found difficult, I’ve stopped drinking and I’m about to start volunteering for the ‘Changes’ service. I have even delivered some craft courses with CLEAR. I really feel like I’ve gone from zero to hero!”

# Love to Learn: Find beauty in the ordinary

Peer Worker, James has two loves; printing and anything related to Japan. On his current Japanese Woodblock Printing course, he has been sharing his knowledge of 'Ukiyo' and how this can teach us to live in the present moment. Read on to find out more....

Ukiyo is a Japanese art form that originated in the 17th century. These prints were created using woodblock printing techniques and depict various subjects such as landscapes, nature and people. The word "ukiyo" translates to "floating world," referring to the fleeting nature of life and the pursuit of pleasure.

The philosophy of ukiyo teaches us that everything is constantly changing and nothing lasts forever, encouraging us to live in the present moment and to appreciate the beauty of life as it unfolds. By creating everyday scenes and objects, using vivid colours and intricate details this art form can encourage us to find beauty in ordinary things and appreciate the simple pleasures in life.

Take a moment now and look around you. What can you see? Perhaps you have a book nearby with a beautiful cover, maybe you can see snowdrops peaking through the soil in the garden, or a print or photograph on your wall that you walk past daily but rarely look at. Maybe you are washing dishes, and the light catches the bubbles and you see a small prism of colour. Let us be inspired by Ukiyo and learn to find joy in small things.

James is running more printing courses and workshops throughout the Spring and Summer in both Mirfield and Halifax. Details will be on our website soon!

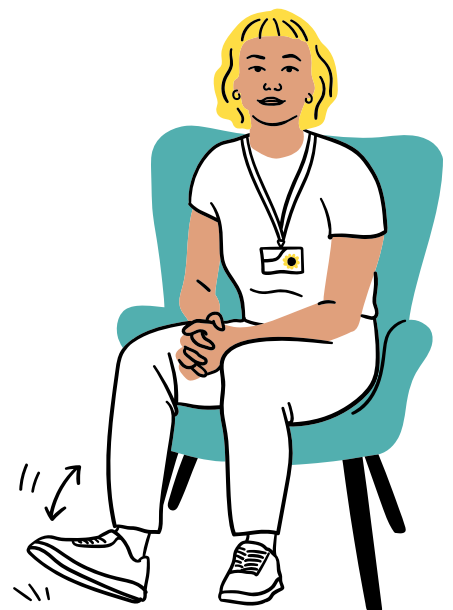
# Let's Get Physical: Become a fidget!

You know that feeling when you've had that sandwich at lunchtime followed by a packet of crisps or chocolate bar then mid afternoon, you feel tired, sluggish and could do with a nap? Well the likelihood is that our blood sugar is falling below the 'normal' range. Whether you are diabetic, pre-diabetic or not, we all experience spikes and dips in our blood sugar which is a good thing; it is meant to rise and fall. However, the more excessive these spikes and dips or the more frequently we experience them can have a negative effect on our health and make us feel, well, a bit rubbish!

While tempting to reach for the biscuit tin to give us the sugary boost we crave, doing so would just repeat the cycle. The great news is that there is plenty of things we can do to avoid these slumps and to feel energised, less hungry and more alert. While changing what or when we eat will help, moving our bodies can also have a really positive impact on maintaining healthy blood sugar control and research has shown that even fidgeting can make a real difference.

While any form of exercise is a good way to keep our sugar levels in check - and improve our health overall, studies have shown that a 15 minute brisk walk after a meal is especially effective. But what if you can't leave the house, or the paths are icy, or you just don't have time? Then fidgeting it the way to go!

Fidgeting involves small movements, such as tapping your feet or wiggling in your seat and is a simple and easy way to incorporate more movement into your day. Try sitting on the edge of your sofa with your feet firmly on the floor and raise your heels off the ground repeatedly for a few minutes after each meal and discover the benefits for yourself.



Even though fidgeting is a good idea, it should not replace other forms of exercise but it can be a good starting point to move more or to be used in conjunction with other activities.

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



Meet Gary, another of our sessional Peer Project Workers, who has been involved with the College longer than most of our staff! We are delighted that he has made the transition from volunteer to an official member of the team.

Hi, I'm Gaz. I have worked with the Recovery College since about 2016 on a voluntary basis. I love working for the College and get excited seeing how our learners grow and develop. My favourite course is Wellness Planning (*A Plan for Living Well*). I also help run courses like *Chess for Beginners* and *Eat Well for Less*. I'm a massive sci-fi nerd and love Doctor Who and Star Trek. If I'm not at home you'll usually find me at my allotment. Looking forward to seeing you soon.



*Our remarkable 'Plan for Living Well' course starts in April at the RWC in Mirfield. Previous learners have told us that this course has been invaluable and life changing. Discover more about this amazing course and whether it's right for you by booking on our Info session on Thursday 11 April.*

## Contact us

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