

Spread Your Wings

Happy New Year and welcome to the first edition of Keeping Connected of 2024! At the beginning of any new year, many of us may feel like the reset button has been pressed. We might be motivated to make positive changes in our lives. Perhaps we are focused on a particular goal. However you are feeling this month, we hope the Recovery & Wellbeing College will empower you to live life well.

If you are new to the College, maybe you are thinking of attending your very first course, or trying something completely different, which we know can feel daunting, but once you step through our door, that's the hardest part done. If you have been attending the College for a while, perhaps you feel more confident and relaxed about attending your next chosen course or workshop, which is great news!



However, we encourage you all to continue to challenge yourselves, to step outside your comfort zone, as this is when the real growth happens. The Recovery College will always be here when you need us but there are lots of other places you can go, things you can do, people you can meet outside the College walls where you can still be your true, authentic, wonderful selves and utilise all your skills and knowledge. So whatever you have planned for 2024, don't get stuck in a rut. Spread your wings and fly!

Spotlight On..... Yorkshire Green Doctors



Groundwork's Green Doctor service delivers free home energy visits & telephone consultations across Yorkshire. Their team of energy advice experts can help you make your home more energy-efficient, saving you money and helping keep you warm in Winter. They offer:

Energy & Water

Correct usage and setting up of heating controls.

Switching energy providers for a cheaper tariff.

Reducing energy usage / energy bills through behavioural change.

Preventing condensation, damp and mould growth.

Smart meter advice/applications.

Water saving and meter fitting for appropriate households.

Installing small-scale energy efficiency measures including draught proofing, reflective radiator panels, energy saving lightbulbs, water and power saving devices and pipe lagging.

Support to access grants for boiler & insulation schemes

Income & Health

Help with billing and metering issues.

Energy complaints and assisting them through to resolution.

Referrals to other local support agencies e.g. food banks, health care professionals, housing support teams, debt support services & more.

Home hazards/risks identified e.g. electrical, trip/falls etc.

Applications for social water tariffs.

Applying to Priority Service registers.

Resolving issues with water debt.

Carbon monoxide risks advice.

**The service is free
for all tenancy types**



Contact the Green Doctors Yorkshire for free support:

www.groundwork.org.uk/yorkshire/get-support/my-energy-and-heating/

Phone: 0300 303 3292 / 0113-238 0601

Email: greendoctoryorkshire@groundwork.org.uk

Someone Like Me

We are so pleased that new learner, Simon, gained so much from our recent Creative Wellbeing Walks. If you'd like to benefit from these too, there will be more walks on offer in the Spring across both Kirklees & Calderdale.

“The Calderdale and Kirklees Recovery College wellbeing walks offer more than just a stroll through scenic paths; they provide a lifeline for those grappling with mental health issues. As someone who was thrust into the isolating world of working from home and subsequently diagnosed with depression, these walks became a pivotal part of my healing journey.

Being confined to solitude for extended periods exacerbated my condition. The walks, however, became a beacon of hope, a doorway to escape the suffocating grasp of depression. Stepping outside into nature's embrace brought an immediate sense of calm. The rustling leaves, chirping birds, and the gentle breeze whispered solace, easing the weight on my shoulders.

What truly made these walks transformative was the camaraderie they fostered. Interacting with fellow participants, sharing stories, and simply engaging in conversations dissolved the walls of isolation. The sense of belonging cultivated during these walks was a balm for my soul.

Gradually, as I made these walks a weekly ritual, I noticed a profound shift within me. The heaviness lifted, and a newfound lightness settled in. The amalgamation of nature's therapeutic touch and the warmth of human connection acted as a catalyst for my recovery.

Now, having returned to work, I credit much of my progress to these walks. Not only did they help alleviate my depression but also equipped me with coping mechanisms to navigate life's challenges. They served as a reminder of the profound impact nature and community can have on mental wellbeing.

In essence, the Recovery College wellbeing walks are not merely about putting one foot in front of the other; they are a testament to the transformative power of nature and human connection in healing the mind and soul.”

Love to Learn: Automatic Habits

Most of us have something in our lives that we want to change; a habit we want to break such as smoking, eating junk food or spending less time scrolling on our phones. We also may want to create new habits such as practising yoga, learning a language, starting a craft project or improving our cooking skills. Whatever it is, we're all good at thinking of reasons why we can't do these things, constantly putting our plans on hold into the unforeseeable future. So, how can we make the behaviour changes that are important to us, that will enable us to live happier, healthier lives? According to James Clear, author of the book 'Automatic Habits' he tells us that tiny changes can create remarkable results and to ask ourselves:-

how can I make it obvious? Stack habits together and decide that when situation *X* arises, we will perform response *Y*. For example; after making a cup of tea each morning, I will spend 1 minute meditating or after I finish lunch I will wash up my dishes or every time I see a set of stairs I will take them instead of using the escalator.

how can I make it attractive? Make our behaviour rewarding, for example; after I've done my workout I will buy a drink from my fave coffee shop or after I've done 10 minutes of learning Spanish I'll check my social media.

how can I make it easy? our habits become more automatic through repetition so act rather than plan, 2 minutes is enough to get started. For example; do 30 minutes of yoga becomes take out my yoga mat or fold the laundry becomes pair up one pair of socks.

how can I make it satisfying? We're much more likely to repeat a behaviour when the experience is satisfying. For example, seeing *X* marked on the calendar each day you have completed your new habit or filling a jar with a coin each time you've done that thing, or seeing a long list of different fruit & veg you've eaten that week can give us a real sense of achievement and satisfaction.

So whatever you are working towards in 2024 remember that we are all unique with different goals and motivators, so find something that works for you. Start small and think about the behaviour and when and where you can build this into your life. You've got the power!

Let's Get Physical

Do you hate the idea of exercise or don't consider yourself a 'sporty' person? Well, you're not alone. From an evolution point of view, 'exercise' is a new thing. Our hunter / gatherer ancestors didn't go for a run to stay fit & well, to them that would seem ridiculous! Yet due to necessity they were incredibly active; walking long distances to find food, climbing trees, digging, carrying water, chopping wood. In the modern western world, we no longer need to perform these tasks so in order to stay well, we have to create other ways to be active and to utilise our bodies in the way they were designed to move - so we created 'exercise'. However, finding the motivation to get moving can be difficult, even for the most avid fitness fan. It's not in our DNA to spend lots of energy on an unnecessary task - so we need to create a reason to be active! Here are some tips to help get you off that sofa and moving!



- Think about activity as practising self-care or having some 'me time'
- Arrange to exercise with a friend, giving you a regular time to catch up and socialise each week
- Sign up for a specific fitness challenge or sponsored event, there are lots to choose from for all abilities and you can raise money for a cause close to your heart at the same time
- Focus on the benefits for you personally; maybe you want to lower your blood pressure, have reduced joint pain, a reason to get out of the house and meet others
- Make the activity rewarding; do something fun like dancing or take part in a walking football or five a side tournament with mates or colleagues
- Treat yourself; perhaps this is a chance to listen to that podcast, your fave playlist, to have a nice soak in the bath after your efforts
- Accept you'll have set backs - because everybody does, it takes time to make lifestyle changes but the more we try, the more likely we are to succeed and our bodies (and minds) will thank us for it.

As someone once said 'we don't need to be perfect, we just need to get started'

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



Meet Karen, another of our amazing Peer Project Workers who, you guessed it, started as a learner at the Recovery College - albeit in Barnsley but we won't hold that against her! Karen has recently delivered our Digital Skills for Beginners Course and will be delivering lots more in 2024, including 'How to find freedom & happiness with the four agreements'. We're sure you'll get to meet her in person soon if you haven't done so already!

"I first discovered the Recovery College back in 2017 when I started attending as a learner. I remember feeling lost and full of life limiting beliefs.

It's fair to say that attending the Recovery College has changed my life, giving me opportunities to develop and progress. For the past year I have been working as a tutor in the community, which I love. But coming to the Recovery College as a Peer Project Support Worker has felt like coming home."



Our team in Kirklees is rapidly expanding and we'll be introducing you to more of our Peer Project Workers and Recovery Coaches over the next few months. This also means that we'll be able to offer yet more courses and workshops in more venues across the districts in the months..... and years ahead.

Contact us

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