

My Life As A Carer

“I’m a single Parent/Carer to my amazing son who is 22 and has Disabilities, and I am so proud of everything he has achieved.

Caring for my son has taught me far more than any formal learning I’ve ever undertaken and has also presented me with some of my biggest challenges! Before I recognised myself as a Carer the concept of ‘Self Care’ wasn’t in my vocabulary, it wasn’t until I was diagnosed with Cancer that I held my hands up and said ‘I can’t do this alone’. I did not know anyone else in my situation. Connecting with other Parents/Carers for peer support really changed things for me, helped me feel less isolated, build resilience, and navigate getting support.

The most recent research estimates there are 10 million unpaid Carers in the UK. To put that into perspective, there are 1.27 million staff working for the NHS. To me, this means that unpaid Carers are the backbone of the country !

Looking back, what would I say to myself at the start of my caring journey? I would say that comparison is the killer of joy, asking for help is not a weakness, and making time for yourself is crucial. At the Recovery College we offer a variety of accessible courses and we would love to hear from carers about any courses you would like to see us run in the future.” *By Erika, Recovery Coach*

For support in Kirklees: <https://carerscount.org.uk/> or for support in Calderdale: <https://makingspace.co.uk/carers-wellbeing-service-calderdale> or book on our ‘Self Care for Carers’ course on 17 June!

Spotlight On..... Curious Motion

Curious Motion is a non-profit arts organisation using dance, movement, and creativity to tackle loneliness and isolation in Calderdale. They create and deliver opportunities for all people to experience dance and the arts, with a focus on fostering togetherness and connection for individual and collective wellbeing. Curious Motion serves as a catalyst for more connection and belonging, facilitating meaningful encounters that support people to connect more deeply with themselves, each other, and the world around them. In particular, they support under-represented communities and those at risk of health inequalities.

Curious Motion run a range of classes and workshops alongside projects and events. They are delighted to be partnering with the Recovery College for a new inclusive dance performance project, centering on connection, achievement and togetherness. It forms part of their commission for CultureDale, Calderdale's year of culture, as well as their podcast, Calder Navigation, and their upcoming festival of creative wellbeing in Elland, 'Welland'!

Curious Motion opens its doors widely to people of all ages and backgrounds, including children, young people, those seeking sanctuary, older individuals, disabled people, people living with long-term conditions, and those navigating complex mental health experiences. Their goal is to support the cultural fabric of their community to create a fairer, healthier, and more compassionate world.



To find out more visit: www.curiousmotion.org.uk or join us for a taster session on either Monday 3 June at 1pm or Wednesday 5 June at 6pm in Elland. Our full course starts on Wednesday 3 July at 6pm for 7 weeks.

Someone Like Me

A long time learner, has told us how attending the College is helping her to give permission to take care of herself

“I have a long-standing diagnosis of Depression and Anxiety as well as an auto-immune condition and most of the time I received little or no support, which resulted in me being signed off from work a few years ago. After that, I didn't feel I had many options but when I heard about the Recovery & Wellbeing College I decided to give it a try.

Living with Depression and Anxiety, I find it easy to be hard on myself, always focusing on the things I believe I am failing at.

Although I am still not where I would like to be in terms of my mental health, I know attending the Recovery College has helped me a great deal. It's a place where I feel safe, supported and less isolated. The courses and the people I have met there have given me so much and brought hope back into my life. While my anxiety is a constant throughout my daily life and there are still times when I am in a mess and can't do anything, those times are definitely on the decrease and I'm having fewer periods where I reach my crisis point and need to reach out for help.

I don't know if other people have the same fight with themselves; not allowing themselves to make time for their wellbeing? Often, I feel crippled and overwhelmed with too many things to do, too many tasks to accomplish, too many chores to undertake and although I may wish to do something creative for my own wellbeing, I rarely do because I feel bad that I should be doing all these other things instead. By attending the College I am learning to give myself permission to take care of me. I love making things and can enjoy the process of creating something just for me. When I'm there I don't feel bad that I'm not doing the hoovering at home.

I'm so grateful for the College, it doesn't matter if you are feeling rubbish, you can still go and take part and feel included. No-one judges you if you don't feel like talking that day. It feels good to be in an environment where even though you may not know what people have been or are going through, you just know there is some shared understanding. No-one makes you feel awkward or weird. The Facilitators and staff are so nice, cheering us on, listening, explaining things in a way that make the subject matter fascinating. The College is a place where you can just be however you are – and there's not a lot of places in the world like that.'



Let's Get Physical - Happy Hormones

Have you heard that exercise is good for your mood? But do you know why and what is meant by the word, exercise? Perhaps not knowing is putting you off? Or do you hear 'exercise' and immediately think of running or going to the gym? If so read on dear friend, hopefully we can help remove the fear and mystery around it and together find something to get our "happy hormones" working.

So what do we mean by exercise? Well it is different for everyone, our starting points, goal posts and methods of getting there will all vary. For some it may be dancing to their favourite song, or going for a walk in the park, it could be a yoga class, a zumba class, it could be swimming or the gym. The important thing is that the activity should suit you, your situation and your taste. There are a lot of free apps for those who are starting activity from scratch (eg NHS couch to 5k, or online yoga). You don't need expensive equipment to dance in your own front room or to enjoy a walk in nature. Using mindfulness techniques can also help to boost the experience.

So any form of physical activity is good for our mental health. Our bodies and minds are connected, when we are active our bodies release endorphins, known as the "happy hormones". These are the same hormones which are released in response to pain and stress and give us the lift we need in difficult times. Being physically active also improves our sleep, our confidence and self esteem. It can help us switch off from worries and concerns. So let's not be scared of exercise, make your chosen activity part of your regular routine and you will get a regular dose of those happy hormones.

Don't forget the Recovery & Wellbeing College offers a variety of courses to help you be more active from dancing, to kayaking and Morning Movement & Meditation sessions

Those who give too much

‘I was always the person everybody came to when they needed a solution to a problem, when they needed a reliable volunteer or if they needed help to organise something. “You need someone to help organise a surprise party for next month? Sure, no problem.”

I was a giver, to the point where I felt exhausted, full of resentment and didn’t have time to do anything for myself or for the people that really needed me to be around. It is often said “if you want something doing, ask a busy person.” I now find myself asking why I once wore the role of busy person like a badge of honour? Now, I feel more content knowing why giving did not always feel good. Perhaps you are feeling this too, or maybe you find yourself pouring from an empty cup?



After burning myself out too many times, I started to think about what it means to give and what is considered “too much.”

I feel so excited being able to facilitate a workshop where there is opportunity to discuss the reasons why we give so much of ourselves. We’ll explore the science behind why it feels so rewarding and learn how to be more aware of the cost to ourselves and our health. I hope these conversations will help us become more aware of how much we give, learn how to set limits and be more effective at giving to enhance our own sense of wellbeing.’

By Karen, RWC Peer Worker

To learn more, join Karen on her upcoming course ‘For those who give too much’ at Mirfield Community Centre on
Monday 10 June at 10am

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



Hi, I'm Laura and I've just started as a permanent member of staff with the Recovery & Wellbeing College and I could not be prouder of myself and the team or be more privileged to be here to get to work with you. I began my journey with the College in 2020 when I was in a dark place with my mental health. I started with online courses, learning coping mechanisms, understanding more about mental health and most importantly that I was not alone.



I slowly began to attend the college in person, initially with support from my family and I cannot thank everyone enough for their help and support. The other learners, friends of, volunteers and staff are all so kind, supportive and encouraging. They have helped me beyond measure on my journey to wellbeing and I now hope to do be able to do the same for others whilst working here.

I look forward to getting to know you all.

You can read more about Laura's inspiring story on our website:

<https://www.calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk/blog/restoring-joy/>

Her upcoming courses include: **Writing for Self Expression** starting 7 June, **Creating Comic Strips** starting 13 June plus **Fun with Felt** and **Joyful Journaling** which will both be available in the Autumn term.

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