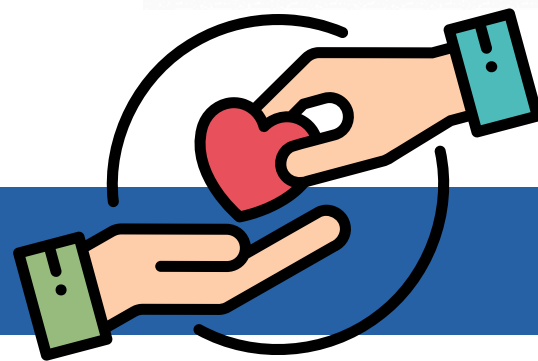


Calderdale & Kirklees

Recovery and Wellbeing College



Ten Ways to Give

As part of our tenth anniversary celebrations, we're focusing on the theme of "ten." In May, we're highlighting the benefits of giving to improve our health, build connections, and find purpose. Acts of generosity trigger our happy hormones, which help reduce stress and promote a positive mood. Engaging in activities which help others also strengthens social bonds, which are crucial for our mental wellbeing. Giving not only benefits those who receive but it also enhances the giver's physical and emotional health, creating a positive cycle.

Try our 'Giving Bingo' below to connect with others!

How many can you complete this month?

<p>Smile at every person you pass</p> 	<p>Give a compliment to someone you meet today</p>	<p>Write a thank you note to someone who has helped you</p>
<p>Take a moment to hug someone special in your life</p>	<p>Go on a walk and pick up litter on route</p> 	<p>Text or call a friend you haven't heard from in a while</p>
<p>Schedule a cuppa with someone who needs it</p> 	<p>Listen to someone without the need to offer advice</p> 	<p>Pass on a skill</p> 
<p>Respond kindly to everyone you meet today including yourself</p> 	<p>Consider volunteering in your community</p>	<p>Give yourself an hour to work on your wellbeing</p>

Check out our social media for more ways to give throughout the month ahead.

Spotlight On.... Safe Space Studio

Safe Space Studio was opened by Yorkshire Youth and Music in November 2023 to give young people (aged 16 - 24) somewhere to make their own music and collaborate with others. Sessions are supported by Music Leaders who are used to working with many music styles.

Facilities include Panasonic DJ Decks, Music Production Suite with Logic, Band Lab and FL Studio, Keyboards, Guitars and Drum kit. [Click here for a tour of the studio.](#)

Participants come with different levels of music knowledge and they can support you in songwriting, recording, DJ skills and music production. Safe Space Studio request that lyrics are kept suitable for Radio play.

Music makes lives
better!

To find out more please email contact@yym.org.uk with a bit about your music experience, name, date of birth and postcode. They will then arrange a suitable day and time for a free taster session. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member to the session, just let them know.



Someone Like Me

Big thanks to learner, Jan, who has kindly shared with us her experience of attending the College and how she is now looking forward to a brighter future.

“Hello, my name is Jan. I have lived with several chronic physical and mental health conditions for many years and, due to worsening mobility and increased anxiety I had become quite isolated. I found it difficult to motivate myself, and didn’t think anything could help.

When I attended my first course at the College, I felt a shadow of my former self. I wasn’t sure if it would help in any way, but I knew I couldn’t carry on as I was. I cried during that first session but the facilitator, Sarah, and all the other learners were so kind, that I felt better able to cope and continue with the course. As it progressed, I started to feel less alone, like I wasn’t the only person feeling this way, at the same time as learning new skills.

Following that, I attended the ‘Living Well with Anxiety’ course, and while this was challenging, I had many light bulb moments. I made the huge life-changing decision to leave my job, which was impacting on my health. It was something I had always been scared to do and while this was a massive leap into the unknown, it’s been a huge relief, and I’ve slowly found it easier to cope with life.

I’ve since attended a variety of courses, facilitated by some amazing people, all with ‘lived experience’ who have truly helped me on my recovery journey. I’ve started to get my sense of humour back, and while my confidence isn’t where I’d like it to be, it is improving. With the help of the facilitators and other learners that I’ve met, I’ve started to get a little bit of ‘me’ back - something I wasn’t sure would ever happen. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

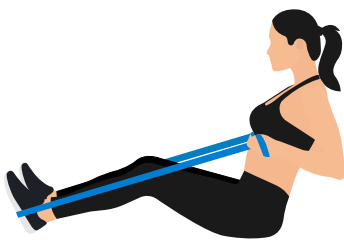
Living with chronic illness continues to be a challenge, but one that is made so much easier and bearable by attending the Recovery College. I’m really looking forward to attending future courses and hope to get more involved with the College in whatever way I can. Dare I say, my future certainly looks brighter now!”

Let's Get Physical: Through the Decades

Different stages of our lives may need different approaches to exercise. If you're a new parent, for example, finding time to exercise can be challenging, but incorporating gentle activities like walking with the baby or doing short home workouts can be beneficial. For those caring for others, it might be hard to prioritise self-care, but even small amounts of movement can help maintain strength and energy.

Midlife fitness is particularly important, especially for ensuring we are able to enjoy a better quality of life in our later years. Engaging in a variety of exercises, such as strength training, flexibility exercises, and aerobic activities, can help maintain muscle mass, improve balance, and boost overall health. This variety ensures that different muscle groups are used, reducing the risk of injury and keeping the body strong.

For people with limited mobility, there are many options to stay active. Chair-based exercises, yoga, water aerobics, and simple stretching can be very effective. These activities are gentle on the joints and can be done at your own pace.



Remember, it's never too late to start. Small changes can make a big difference. By varying our activities and exercise routines with each passing decade, we can improve our physical health, reduce the risk of chronic diseases, and enjoy a better quality of life. Mixing up our activities can also make exercise more interesting and trying something new is good for the ol' grey matter too! So, let's keep moving and stay active, no matter our age or ability.

If you've been inspired to get active by our **10 Ways to Move** or by any of the articles in this publication, we'd love to hear from you!

Please email us or give us a call and tell us about it!

Embracing Vulnerability: the path to authenticity

Recovery College Co-ordinator, Rachel, attended a talk on self-esteem recently and was reminded of how important it is to show our vulnerabilities and to be our wonderful, authentic selves.....

In our journey through life, we often have times where we feel the need to hide our true selves. We put on a brave face, pretending everything is perfect, even when it isn't. However, embracing our vulnerabilities can be a powerful step towards authenticity and deeper connections with others.

When I had my first child, I found myself living 200 miles away from home, without the support of friends and family. Loneliness crept in, and I felt isolated. I joined a Mum and Baby group, hoping to find companionship. While I did make friends, our conversations rarely touched on the real struggles we were facing. We didn't admit to being exhausted or having disagreements with our partners. Instead, we maintained the pretence of perfection, which only added to the sense of isolation.

Looking back, I realise that if I had been honest about my feelings and shown my vulnerability, I might have formed stronger, more meaningful relationships. By sharing our true selves, we allow others to see that they are not alone in their struggles, creating a space for genuine connection and support. Showing vulnerability is not a sign of weakness. It demonstrates that we care deeply, are passionate, or are hurt. It's okay to ask for help, to cry, and to show emotion, it's what makes us human. That said, be mindful of who we share our vulnerabilities with. Oversharing with those we don't know well or in a space we don't feel safe can sometimes lead to discomfort or misunderstanding. Finding a balance is key.

In essence, being our authentic selves means embracing our vulnerabilities and allowing others to do the same. It's through this honesty that we can build stronger, more supportive communities and we hope you find the College a place where you can be your true, fabulous selves.

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



*If you suffer from chronic pain read on, as Keilly Parker, facilitator of the upcoming **Freedom From Fibromyalgia** course explains how she recovered from her own symptoms and learned to support others as a transformational coach.*

I see myself not as a victim, but as a fibromyalgia survivor and warrior. Diagnosed in 2016, I faced a tough journey with limited medical support. I chose to take control of my health through holistic methods, including nutrition and naturopathy, avoiding medications that didn't suit my recovery.

From being bed-bound, I've significantly reduced my symptoms over the years, and improved my quality of life allowing me to continue my career as well as supporting others to heal.

With 12 years of experience as a social worker in adult mental health services, I've dedicated my life to helping others achieve their best, no matter the challenges they face. Recovery is unique for everyone, and I honour each person's path, guiding them to heal from within. My approach is non-judgemental, person-centred, and strengths-based, encouraging people to take responsibility for their own health – I'm just here to guide people to heal themselves from the inside out. Come and join me to start your own healing journey this summer!

*Join Keilly for '**Freedom From Fibromyalgia**' starting on 26th June at Mirfield Community Centre. This course provides hope, understanding, and lifestyle adjustments for a better quality of life. Open to everyone, including those diagnosed, caregivers, and professionals.*

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