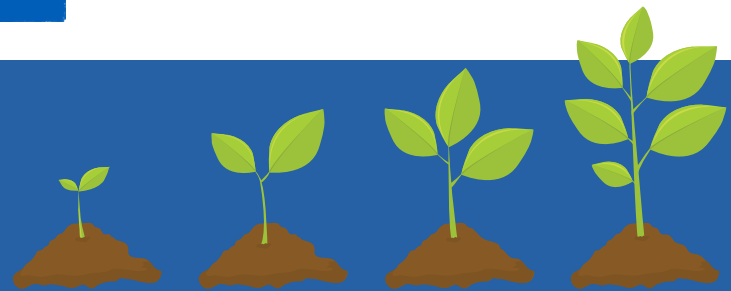


A Fresh Start for a New Academic Year



Welcome to a brand new academic year at the Recovery & Wellbeing College! As we step into the Autumn term, we're excited to share some fresh developments designed to make sure that our offer remains helpful, interesting and relevant to you amazing people who attend the College.

We've launched our new Editorial Group, made up of learners, volunteers and staff, who will help shape our course offer and ensure it continues to reflect what matters to you most. Your voice is, and always will be, at the heart of everything we do.

We're also trialling a new venue in Dewsbury town centre, which our flagship course 'A Plan for Living Well' will run from. We hope this will make it easier for more people to access our courses in a welcoming, central location.

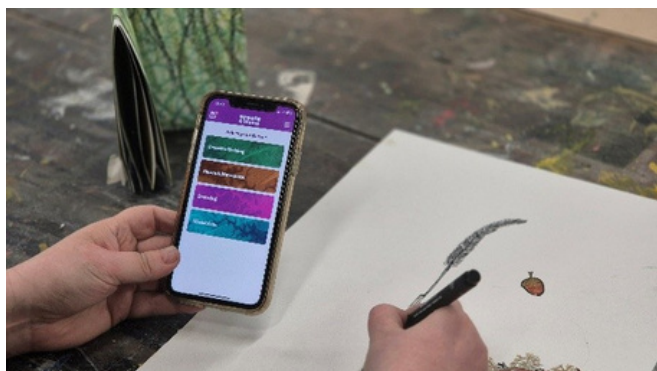
This term brings a mix of familiar favourites and lesser-known gems, alongside an exciting new course 'My Meds, My Life'; designed and delivered by our lovely Peer Worker, Laura and members of the Trust's Pharmacy Team. This course offers a safe space to explore mental health medication and how it fits into our own recovery journeys.

For those with a creative spark, we're excited to introduce the Create and Bloom app – a new way to express ourselves and support our wellbeing through creativity (more info overleaf).

So turn the page and let's start this new chapter together with hope and purpose....

Create & Bloom

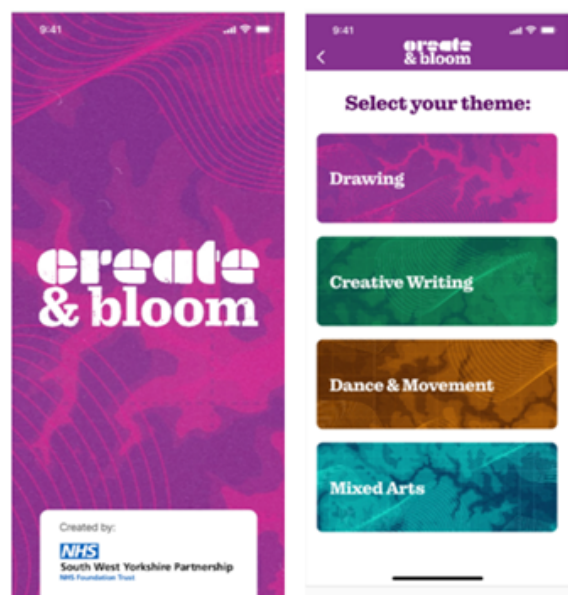
A ground-breaking new creative health app, Create & Bloom, has launched offering an innovative way to boost mental health and wellbeing through creative activities.



Create & Bloom provides a series of painting, drawing, movement and creative writing exercises, all delivered by expert organisations.

The activities are between 5 - 30 minutes and guided by supportive Creative Practitioners either by text, audio or video instructions. The content is designed to support wellbeing, encouraging us to spend some time each day immersing ourselves in creative activities to help relax and unwind from day-to-day life.

Research shows that active engagement with the arts (including visual, music, cooking, sports and gardening) can improve health and wellbeing. Engaging in meaningful, mindful creative activities can induce a state of flow which can lead to creativity, productivity and general wellbeing.



The app also features a sign-posting tool containing details of creative events, activities or groups that are happening in the local community.

Follow [@createandbloomapp](https://www.instagram.com/createandbloomapp) on Instagram to see clips of some of the fantastic activities on offer or download for free from [Apple](#) or [Google Play](#) now!

Create & Bloom was developed by South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust with additional funding from Arts Council England, Locala, Calderdale Cares Partnership and Calderdale Council.

Someone Like Me

One of our lovely learners, has kindly shared her experience of attending the Recovery College and how she feels it is a place for everyone!

My wonderful Support Worker introduced me to the Recovery & Wellbeing College, and even with her support, it took me over a year to pluck up the courage to enrol. I've lived with Anxiety and Depression for a long time and I'd just gone through a bad-break up; I was extremely nervous, shy and I didn't know what to say or how people would be with me.

I think the first course I attended, along with my Support Worker, was Fun with Felt. Everyone on the course was really lovely and after I'd spoken a little about myself, a lady came up and gave me a hug! It really is one of the friendliest places I've ever been!

There are a couple of stand-out courses for me, one being *Living Well with ADHD*. It really opened my eyes and has helped me to feel more comfortable and at ease with myself. It made me feel normal! When I spoke during the course, people listened, they could relate to what I had to say - and the Facilitators were brill, I can't thank them enough. I don't think anyone on the course wanted it to end.

Another course that has really helped me is *Mindful Mondays: Expressive Art* with the amazing Carolyn from Mindful Maker. This incorporated mindful doodling which I'd done years before, especially during Covid, but I never knew it had a name. These sessions reignited something in me. They help quiet my busy mind - and the support and encouragement I've received, makes me feel like someone has removed my outer shell. I've realised the work I produce is something to be proud of, not something to hide behind closed doors. In the future, I may even be exhibiting my work at a venue in Dewsbury.

I'd definitely recommend the College to others. It's a warm, welcoming place with no judgement. No-one demands anything from you. There is no pressure. There's a place for everyone here.



Let's Get Physical: Just Keep Moving



Over the years, this feature has encouraged us to try all sorts of activities, from strength training, to upping our step count, yoga and much more besides. However, the most important thing we can do for our health is simply this: move more often.

Modern life keeps us sitting far too long. Our bodies weren't designed for hours on the sofa or at a desk. The good news? We don't need to run marathons or hit the gym daily. Just break up our sitting time with small bursts of movement.

Recent scientific research shows that moving every 45 minutes—even for just a couple of minutes can help stabilise blood sugar levels. Stable blood sugar helps reduce the risk of diabetes, reduces inflammation, boosts energy levels, improves focus, and supports our overall wellbeing.

Worried that moving every 45 minutes sounds like a lot? Don't be! Let's just aim to move more regularly than we do now. Setting reminders on our phones to move can be helpful. Walk up and down the stairs, march on the spot while watching TV, do squats as we wait for the kettle to boil or set ourselves a mini challenge and see how many times we can go from seated to standing in a minute.

Whatever our level of fitness or mobility, every little bit counts. We're not aiming for perfection, just progress. So go on, give your body the movement it deserves!



Love to Learn: Be Kind to Yourself



Our lovely colleague, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Kirsty has kindly shared with us the importance of the role of self-compassion and how we can all be kinder to ourselves.

We're often quick to offer kindness to others, but when it comes to ourselves, we can be our harshest critic. Self-compassion is about turning that same care inward, especially during difficult moments. It's not self-pity or letting ourselves off the hook - it's a powerful skill that supports resilience, mental health, and emotional balance.

Notice your inner critic: start by paying attention to your self-talk. Is it harsh, shaming, or blaming? What voice does it have? Try to notice it as an unwanted visitor, rather than a solid belief.

Ask: "what would I say to a friend?" If you wouldn't say it to someone you love, consider whether it belongs in your inner dialogue. Practice speaking to yourself with warmth and encouragement, even if it feels unusual at first.

Pause and breathe: When emotions run high, take a moment to ground yourself. A few slow breaths can create space between you and your thoughts to respond rather than react.

Observe your thoughts like passing clouds: You don't have to believe every thought you think. Try noticing them without judgment - letting them come and go, rather than pulling you under or taking over.

Make room for imperfection: Remind yourself that it's human to struggle, to make mistakes, to not have it all together. Try for 'good enough' or 70% rather than 100%.

Remember that self-compassion isn't always easy, but it is always possible. Start small. Treat yourself like someone worth caring for - because you are!

Stay up to date, follow us on our socials



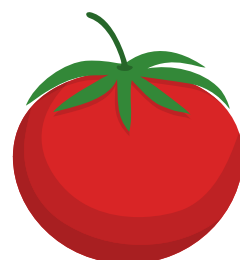
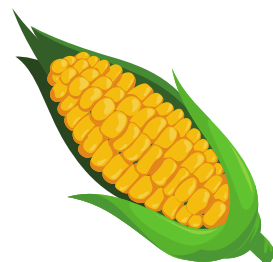
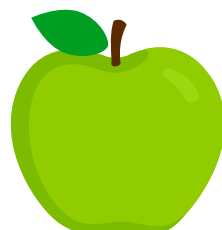
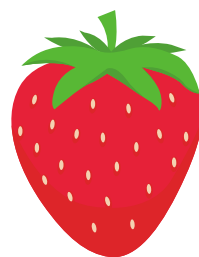
Trust Your Gut

Ever had a “gut feeling” about something? That’s not just a saying—your gut and brain are actually in constant conversation, as our gut sends signals to our brain influencing our thoughts and emotions. This powerful connection, which Scientists call the the gut-brain link (or axis) means that what we eat can play a big part in how we feel.

Our gut is full of tiny living things (called microbes) that help with digestion, mood, and even our immune system. To keep these little guys happy, it helps to eat a mix of different foods—especially fruit, veg, beans, and whole grains. These don’t have to be fresh or fancy—frozen and tinned options are just as good and last longer too. Aim to eat the rainbow, a delicious array of brightly coloured, tasty treats from nature’s bounty.

A study in Australia (called the SMILES trial) conducted with people living with depression, found that symptoms were dramatically reduced in just a few weeks. That’s powerful stuff!

So next time we’re shopping or cooking, let’s remember that nourishing our gut health is a big step towards supporting not just our physical wellbeing, but our mental health too.



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