



YOUR VOICE IN KIRKLEES

Spring 2023 Interactive Edition

WORKING BETTER TOGETHER



WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER





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@in_kirklees

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a nationally recognised initiative designed to help us all improve our health and wellbeing. When we feel good about ourselves, it becomes easier to make positive changes and to improve our physical and mental health.

This time we'll be looking at ways to **CONNECT**. Feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need. Healthy social relationships are important for our mental health and wellbeing as they can increase our feelings of happiness and self-worth. Creating strong bonds with family and friends also helps us to feel secure.

Connecting with others can be very rewarding, so why not try at some (or all) of the suggested activities below and note how you felt before and after doing each activity...

Activities to Help You Connect More:	How I Felt Before:	How I Feel Now:
Phone or video chat with a friend or relative you haven't seen in a while and have a catch up. If you wanted to, you could also make a plan to keep in touch regularly - every fortnight or once a month perhaps.		
Brighten up someone's day by sending a meaningful item you think they'll like through the post. This could be anything - a poem, a photo or a picture, or perhaps a greetings card. Anything that you think will make them smile.		
Set up a WhatsApp group for your family, friends or neighbours where you can share good news or positive experiences. This might also help other people to feel more connected too.		
Social connections don't just have to be with other people, spending time with pets and animals can also increase our feelings of happiness and help to boost our wellbeing.		
Don't forget to connect with yourself too! You could try some meditation or have a go at practicing mindfulness. If you have access to the internet, www.mindful.org has some great resources to help you get started.		

Personal Reflections On Connecting

Continuing our Five Ways to Well-being theme, we've reached "Connecting". Connecting to me is about interacting and engaging, being seen and/or heard and valued etc and hopefully not judged. Social/human connections can boost our self-esteem, reduce anxiety and stress and improve confidence. I also think that the more positive connections I make, the greater the empathy I have for others and the more likely I am to trust them and want to support them. This, in turn, has also led to a new sense of belonging. Making positive connections has been very important to me recently. It has been the perfect antidote when I have been left feeling anxious and depressed by those who had the "pull up the ladder, I'm alright Jack" approach to me. I've also spent a long time thinking about how people around the world are suffering E.g. in Ethiopia, Pakistan, Greece, Turkey and Syria etc. (the list is endless sadly) and asked "what have I got to moan about!?!?" There's nothing wrong with considering others but I'm not sure this helped my mood. Along with this I felt I should be proactively doing more to directly affect my wellbeing.

So I started making more of an effort to spend time with others and as a result have felt happier in myself, more confident, less useless and found myself not dwelling so much on those who I felt had wronged me, like my landlady who, while ignoring my dwellings serious damp issues, significantly raised my rent! and those that chose to criticize me to distract from their own shortcomings and errors etc. Thankfully these "I'm alright Jack" types are far outnumbered by the good and honest folk whom I've been able to connect with. I've been spending more time with my family, whom I neglected for far too long, including with a sister who, although very ill and frail, is one of the strongest and most selfless people I know and a brother and his young family who've opened up their home to a Ukrainian woman and her teenage son.

I frequently use Batley Library (an official "Warm Space") where staff are friendly and supportive, assisted by "The Friends of Batley Library" who provide tea, coffee, cakes, biscuits, soup and porridge etc. While at the library I met Henry who runs weekly song writing classes/sessions there. Six weeks later, I'm no Bob Dylan, Burt Bacharach or Tom Waits admittedly, but I like to think my skills are developing! I definitely never thought I'd be singing one of my own compositions in a public space!! Henry is friendly, encouraging, supportive and non-judgemental and shares my passion and belief regarding the links between music and wellbeing. **Please read Henry's contribution on "what music gives us" on page 24.**

I've also been attending Batleys' Serendipity creative writing sessions, another friendly group of folks who recognize the benefit of such an activity to our wellbeing. This takes place at The Crescent (an official "Warm" and "Safe" space) which is a beautiful venue run by kind people who are motivated and passionate about supporting the community.

A few of us have recently started getting together weekly in Batley for a sing-a-long. Not only do we all enjoy singing but we enjoy each others company and appreciate how beneficial it is for our mental health etc. If you enjoy singing and would like to join us you can contact me on justjonnyboy@outlook.com or Sarah on Home@the-crescent.co.uk

Personal Reflections On Connecting - Part 2

All these connections (and random acts of kindness) have gone a long way to restoring my brittle faith in humanity. Far be it for me (a self-confessed technophobe!!) to judge those who rely on digital interactions and social media etc. for their connections but there does seem to be a link between this and the rise in loneliness and those with poor mental health.

Scraping the barrel a bit I know but I “connected” with a few of the famous people who sadly passed away last year....

Shane Warne: widely regarded at the time to be the best cricketer in the world, Warne reminded me that I shouldn't be judging books by their cover. I was involved with disability sport at the time and on one occasion shared a cricket gym with two County teams, one of which Warne played for, and of all the professionals present he was the last person I would have wanted to spend time with... well known for his champagne life style and appearing very cocky. Yet he was the only one who stayed to chat (very naturally) when all his peers seemed very uncomfortable in the company of those with disabilities including those with cerebral palsy, visual impairment, learning differences and amputees etc.

Gary Brooker: lead singer and keyboard player of Procol Harum, he wrote *Whiter Shade of Pale*, still one of the most listened to and best selling songs of all time. When in Devon he used a pub I was living in at the time. Sadly I didn't have the confidence to ask him to play a tune on the old piano but I remember it as the day I “fell in love” with bold pin-stripes! He looked amazing!

Wilko Johnson: Guitarist with Dr Feelgood. I saw them live in a club in Taunton and was totally gripped by his guitar style, charisma and stage persona etc. WJ was told many years ago that he only had months to live but went on to bring out records, tour and make documentaries before his sad passing last year.

And... really scraping the connection barrel... **Pele:** Brazilian footballer who, to many, was the GOAT (greatest of all time). We both went to see a match at Wembley where the main attraction was (in my opinion the real GOAT!)... **Diego Maradona.**

Then this year **Jeff Beck** passed away. He was probably most famous for his hit *Hi-ho-silver lining*, a song that he, many years later described as a “pink toilet seat around my neck!” Thankfully he went on to create some much better music. When I was a teenager I swapped my transistor radio for a record player with a cousin who also kindly gave me the aforementioned disc, the first of a few hundred collected over many years!

The Your Voice in Kirklees newsletter committee meet every Wednesday. It's good to be able to catch up regularly with people who have the same passion and enthusiasm regarding those who live with mental health issues and the belief that we all have something to offer services and the wider community. If you would like to “connect” with us too please reach out via our social media channels or email Karl at Karl.Jackson-Lander@richmondfellowship.org.uk

By Jon Mills

Men's Talk

A theatre performance by men with
lived experience of mental health issues

**"Amazing, professional,
touching... wonderful!"**

"A really brilliant performance"

Were just some of the comments following the first performance of Men's Talk in front of a full house at Connect Housing in Dewsbury.

Men's Talk is a creative advocacy project for men, run by Community Links Engagement and Recovery Service (CLEAR) in Kirklees.

"We were looking for different ways to engage men who had experienced mental health issues", explained Stuart Hawkes, who leads on the project.

The result is a 40 minute performance exploring men's experiences of mental health and their journey to recovery.

"We want to encourage men to talk about their mental health and to show them that there is support out there and that things can get better".

"It gives me a reason to get out of bed"

mens.talk@commlinks.co.uk

COMMUNITYLINKS
CLEAR
engagement and recovery


Creative Minds

 **Kirklees**
COUNCIL

"Exhilarating – it was exciting"

Men's Talk was created with and is performed by men with lived experience of mental health issues. The play deals with adult themes including self-harm and suicide.

Asked if being involved in making a performance had been good for their own mental health, David commented, "It gives me a reason to get out of bed".

"It's become an important part of my week, we have a goal and something to look forward to", said Andrew.

And how did they feel after being on stage for the first time?

"Exhilarating – it was exciting, I wasn't as nervous as I thought I'd be – the whole day experience was enjoyable and uplifting – it's really given me confidence", said Chris Nicholson.

Men's Talk is touring a range of venues across Kirklees in the coming months.

For further details email mens.talk@commlinks.co.uk



The Your Voice in Kirklees newsletter group supported this event and was represented by Jon Mills for the premiere launch of the Men's talk event.

On 21st March 2023, I went to Connect Housing to see the Mens Talk premiere. My main motivation for booking a ticket was wanting to support some of the individuals involved, believing that the process would be a benefit to their well-being. However the experience was so much more than that! It was amazing. I found it informative, entertaining and challenging. The level of acting ability was incredible, so much so that at times I forgot I was watching people I knew personally. My overriding feeling when I left was that there's sometimes no substitute for lived experience.

Banana Muffin Recipe

Ingredients:

- 250g self-raising flour
- 75g butter or margarine
- 115g sugar
- 2 ripe bananas
- 125ml milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder

Optional Extras:

- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon or nutmeg
- A drizzle of honey on top once cooked



We like this recipe because it doesn't take a lot of mixing and is quite forgiving with your choice of ingredients. You can use any kind of sugar, milk, margarine and spices in the mix but you *must* use self-raising flour and baking powder. This recipe makes 10 muffins.



Method:

1. Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and any spices that you're using together in a bowl.
2. Mix the eggs, milk and butter together in another bowl.
3. Mash up the bananas with a fork and then add them to the bowl with eggs, milk and butter already in it.
4. Pour the banana mixture slowly into the flour bowl, stirring gently until it's completely mixed together.
5. Place equal amounts of the mixture into bun cases. (This recipe can also be used to make a loaf cake but will need the cooking time altering accordingly).
6. Bake in a pre-heated fan oven at 170 degrees or a normal oven at 190 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes.
7. Once cooked, remove the muffins from the oven and cool them for 5 minutes before removing from the tray.



SENSORY ISSUES IN AUTISM

I am writing this backwards. I'm starting with the conclusion:

If you deal with autistic people it would be a good idea to compile a sensory profile for each person you deal with who is autistic.

I am an autistic adult. I have several sensory issues:



LIGHT:

I get dazzled by bright light, wearing green sunglasses to deal with sunlight and bright indoor light. No, I am not trying to look like a rock star, I'm just trying to stop it from hurting. In low light. I also have difficulty distinguishing between dark shades. If you put something dark green on a maroon background it is hidden from me. I also find reading text over pictures very difficult. There is a sports shop in Leeds on The Headrow with a video screen taking up the whole of the window. I have to make sure I do not walk past this as it is too overwhelming for me.

Catering for autistic people with light sensitivity is awkward, we need the opposite of what partially sighted people need. If you want a one thing fits all approach to dealing with different disabilities I am sorry, they do not exist.

TOUCH:

I am sensitive to touch. Please do not touch me without asking, I find sudden touch painful. Like many autistic people, I am sensitive to pain. Please ask before touching an autistic person. That is good advice for non-autistics too - never touch without permission.



SENSORY ISSUES IN AUTISM

TASTE:

For me, it is about texture not taste, I dislike anything slimy in my mouth and the dryness of dry leaves such as coriander or parsley garnish is unpleasant to me too. Yes, that does make me a fussy eater.



NOISE:

I can meltdown from being in a room with several conversations going on at once. It is not about the volume of the background noise, I am unable to turn the background sounds off, and I am trying to process several conversations at once. The result is I cannot concentrate on the conversation I am in. However in a theatre for a film or a jazz or even metal concert, where all the sound comes from the stage.

Other sensory issues in autistic people which do not affect me include smell, body awareness, balance, movement and interoception (knowing what is going on inside your body).

Sensory issues in autistic and some other neurodiverse conditions are examples of our spiky skill sets. One person can find loud noises distressing and another may seek out loud music. Some may prefer bland food, while others, like me, seek out the spice in good Indian, Thai and Mexican food, and similar cuisine.

One size fits all autism support does not exist. This is why I stress the need for autism profiles, with permission of the individual users, for those who support us. We are a very mixed bag.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: By Steve Pape, Kirklees Autism group. <https://autismkirklees.org.uk>
Information checked from website of Autism West Midlands <https://autismwestmidlands.org.uk>



Age 16+

Kirklees Autism Group

Group Advocacy & Consultation

LEGO & Convo

Lindley Library

1st Friday of the Month

2.30-3.30

(Term Time only)

**Lidget St, Lindley,
Huddersfield HD3 3JP**

Batley Library

2nd Friday of the Month

1.00-2.00

(Term Time only)

**14 Market Pl, Batley
WF17 5DA**



Safe Zones/Places

Safe Zones are now operating in communities for people at risk, identified with a Safe Zones displayed in the premise window.

Businesses, sports centres and places of education across Kirklees have signed up to become safe places for those at risk.

A Safe Zone is somewhere you can go to get help if something happens that makes you feel scared and in fear of someone or something.

This campaign provides places you can go to for support to contact a friend, family member or the Police if you are feeling unsafe.

To find out more about Safe Zones or to locate a Safe Place, please visit:

<https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/news-appeals/safe-places-now-operating-communities-people-risk-kirklees> **or**

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/learning-disabilities/out-and-about/safe-places.aspx>



Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces are popping up all over Kirklees and are ready to welcome you!

Warm Spaces exist to provide you with a place for warmth and community. If you are looking for information on Warm Spaces, you can find it here: <https://warmspaces.org>

If you are struggling to heat your home this winter, looking for somewhere warm and welcoming to go. You can find a Warm Space local to you by visiting:

<https://www.warmwelcome.uk> or <https://warmspaces.org/#map>

Please check with the providers for times and dates of when they're operating as a warm space as some are only warm spaces at specific times!!!



Food Waste and Savings

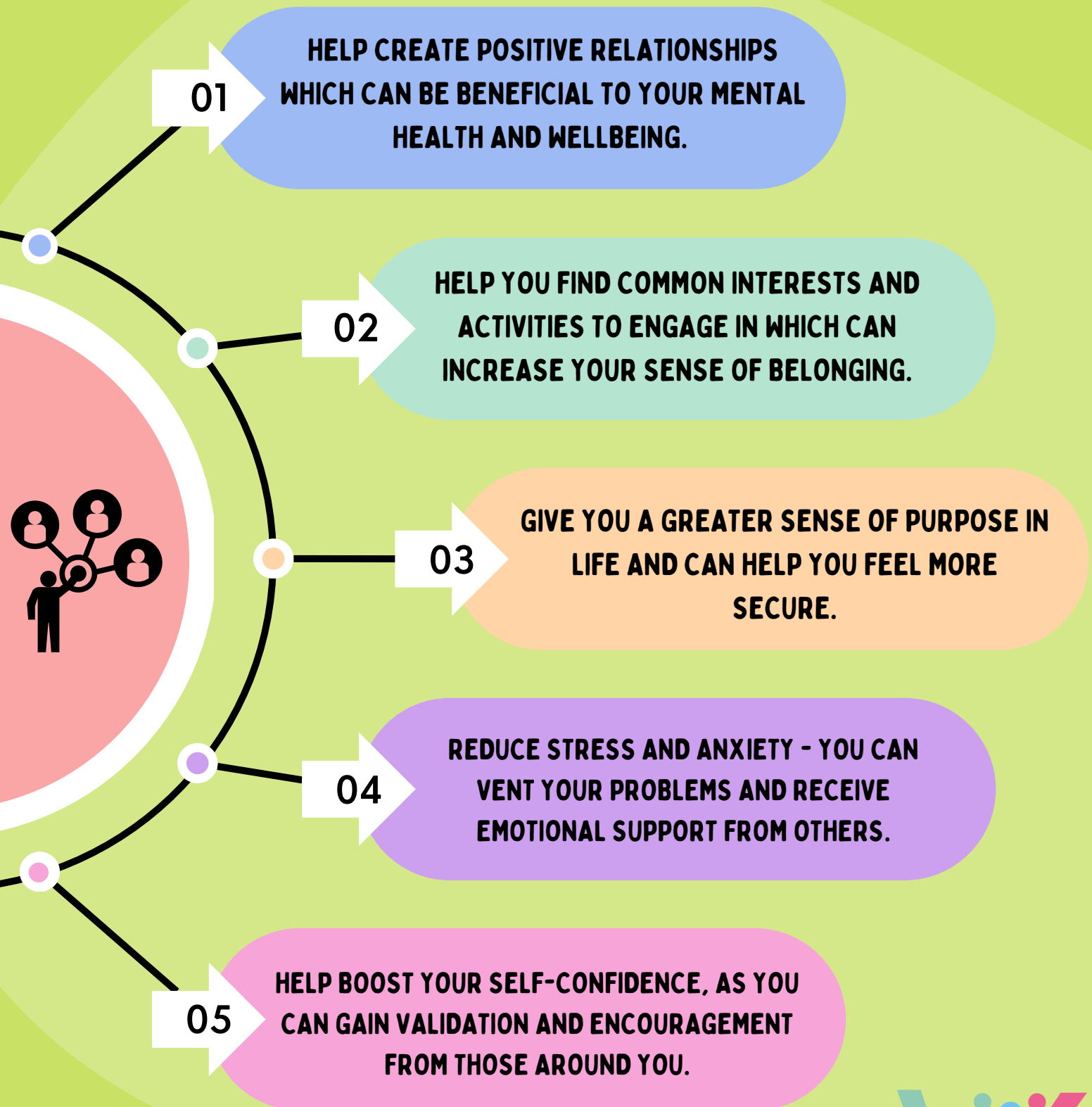
OLIO is a food redistribution service app that helps connect neighbours with each other and local businesses so that surplus food can be shared within the community and go unwasted, all for free. You can find more information about them at: <https://olioex.com/about/>

Too Good To Go is an app that provides a service that connects customers to restaurants, cafes and other food establishments and stores that have surplus unsold food that would otherwise be wasted. The food is typically at a reduced price. For more information, you can go to: <https://toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb/>



5 WAYS IN WHICH CONNECTING CAN IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS CAN....





Kirklees Employment Service Gives Back!

Tree Planting



On Thursday 2nd February 2023 the KES Team donned their wellies and met with the River Holme Connections Team in a field in Meltham to help with the Tree Planting efforts. Karl was unable to join us but he was with us in spirit and we named a tree after him!

The day started with a brisk walk across Meltham, it was very cold and windy so blew away our office cobwebs, but thankfully no rain! We met with Ffion and her team and got going over some health and safety... we didn't want anyone getting injured!

We were paired up with some fabulous River Holme Connections Volunteers and we went off to our patches to begin our task. We can all definitely agree that tree planting is hard work!

The process of planting trees is: dig the hole, put in fungi, put in the tree, cover and heel, put in the stake, use the equipment to make sure the stake goes below the tree line, then cover with the plastic cylinder and time.

We were all very much ready for a coffee break! By the time we had finished we had managed to fill in a chunk of the field with new trees ready to grow. The River Holme Valley Connections Group would be coming back another day to complete the hedging.

It was a really rewarding day to give back to the environment – and we have such respect for tree planters. Getting out in the fresh air, being together, and doing some physical activity was also great for all our own wellbeing – and everyone in the team said they slept well that night!



Social Value Donations



Kirklees Employment Service was lucky enough to be given £250 to contribute to a social cause of their choosing.

The team met and decided we wanted to give a meaningful donation to several organisations with a focus on what people have been struggling with during the Cost of Living Crisis – particularly during the freezing temperatures we have experienced this winter.

We put together packages of fleece blankets, hats, gloves, socks, foil blankets, and our Peer Support Coordinators Partner kindly knitted lots of scarves for us. We donated these packages to The Crossroads Project Foodbank in Meltham, CAP (Christians Against Poverty), and the Kirklees Council Homeless Team. We feel very lucky to have been able to help out in the local community.

Here is some of the feedback we received...

Feedback from CAP

'Thank you so much for the fantastic blankets, gloves and hats you have donated for our CAP clients. It looks like someone has used their knitting skills to make some fab hats, and when the first recipient saw the bright pink beanie... she instantly fell in love with it! Both her and her partner were really grateful and said that the items will help keep them warm and maybe save on a bit of heating!'



Feedback from the Homeless Team

'I just wanted to thank you and Steve for meeting with me and for the kind thoughtful donations that you made. The items you donated to our Rough Sleeper Initiative Team will be invaluable; we have 6 officers who work on an outreach basis with rough sleepers as well as a Social Worker and substance misuse worker also.'



It can often take time to build up trust and engagement from new or entrenched rough sleepers, the items donated will help in supporting those rough sleepers who aren't ready and don't want an offer of accommodation. Warm clothing/blankets to offer is vital at times... having our own stock of these will mean they can be given out promptly.

The foil blankets will be really useful for our officers to carry whilst verifying reports of rough sleepers across Kirklees often involving long treks in woods etc. or when finding someone cold and not adequately clothed or safe source of warmth'.



A Hidden Gem in West Yorkshire

Tucked away just a few miles from the outskirts of Kirklees there is a truly Hidden gem of an eating establishment. Prashad has been in existence since 1992. It started as a family run and staffed business and remains true to that ethos today. It has, despite many accolades from leading chiefs and food critics remained almost completely unnoticed by most of the public.

I will confess to being what might be concerned somewhat bias, as I am a huge fan of this delightful restaurant having discovered it for the first time two years ago, even though it was only less than two miles from where I live! My Fiancé and myself decided to go out for a celebration meal and rather than returning to our tried-and-true local Indian restaurant, I decided to look further afield. This was when I came across Prashad and saw that it was listed by many online sites as one of the best places to eat in the UK! It was not only listed in the Michelin food guide, it had also received many other awards from food related organisations.

We arrived on a cold and wet Friday and from the moment that we arrived we were treated so well by the staff. We ordered food and were surprised how reasonably priced the A la Carte menu was. The food when it arrived was a revelation! I can honestly say it is one of the best meals I have had in my entire life! It was one of those meals that stays in your mind long after you have eaten it.

We have since been back many times and were pleased to see that it is now attracting more attention. Chefs Tom Kerridge and the Hairy Bikers have filmed there for the BBC recently and there is a very good chance of them attaining a Michelin star this year!

If you fancy a treat and have never tried a vegetarian Indian restaurant, give it a try. You won't regret it!

Karl Jackson-Lander





On the 21st of Feb The Dementia Hub in Kirklees ran an event for Dementia sufferers and to help promote awareness. Myself (Karl - Jackson-Lander, Peer Support Coordinator) and Ziona Last, my colleague (Employment adviser) offered our services as volunteers to help support this.

It was held at Huddersfield Town and included a live band, a school choir, afternoon tea and cake and dancing.

The event was a huge success, with many Dementia sufferers and their carers attending. The Mayor also made an appearance.

Along with the other volunteers Ziona and myself supported by decorating and laying out tables, cups cutlery and cakes! We ensured that drinks were kept topped up, chatted with people attending and joined in the dancing!

For us as volunteers it was an extremely rewarding experience and for all those present it was very enjoyable, and in general a very uplifting experience!



01484 503 908



RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP
MAKING RECOVERY REALITY



Kirklees Dementia Hub



KIRKLEES DEMENTIA HUB EVENT



LBT Attic Stories

By Rose Condo


Poetry, eh?

As a Canadian living in the North of England, my accent often provokes questions: Where am I from? What's it like there? Why did I move to the UK? The questions are meant well, and usually come from a place of kindness and curiosity. But the questions can also make me feel like an outsider, especially since the UK has been my home (off and on) for nearly 20 years!



A few years ago I became involved with spoken word performance poetry, and found it to be an artform where different sounding voices are welcomed and celebrated! I was living in Huddersfield at the time, and started going to open mic nights all across the North (thank you Transpennine Express!). I met other amazing poets, heard fabulous words, and realised this was an artform I wanted to fully immerse myself in.

Since then, I have written and performed solo spoken word shows and have won awards for my work. I've had the privilege of sharing my poetry across the UK and internationally. I've published my poetry and I regularly run writing workshops for people of all ages. As this amazing creative journey continues to unfold, I find so many examples of how poetry can help to raise voices, build confidence and cultivate community. I see this in people bravely reading poetry for the first time in front of an audience, in children discovering how to create rhythms and rhymes with words, and in seasoned performers sharing words before spellbound spectators.



I am incredibly lucky to programme and host Attic Stories - a monthly spoken word event at the Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield. Each month we have a lively open mic and we welcome a feature guest to perform a 20 minute set. Attic Stories tickets are Pay What You Decide, and all money collected goes to the feature guest. Folks have come from all corners of the UK, and we've had poets, storytellers, singers, comedians and actors perform... whether a person is sharing for the first or five hundredth time, all voices are welcome.

For more details about Attic Stories, please visit www.thelbt.org. You can find more info about Rose on her website: www.rosecondo.net



LB Attic Stories

A reflection by David Crabb

I began going to Attic Stories open mic at the Lawrence Batley Theatre with no intention of performing. The group is made up of local writers and listeners and has a magical calm atmosphere. I find my mental health is boosted through this distracting and positive energy I feel when I attend.

It was around my second visit that I thought about sharing my own work so I made a decision that on my next visit I would perform.

My piece was about a time when I lived in a van for two years and expressed how simple living with nature can bring joy and meaning to our lives. I was a bit nervous at first but, knowing the audience wanted me to do well, I soon relaxed and enjoyed performing. It was well received and this gave a boost to my confidence to go back and share more work.

I would definitely recommend going, maybe as a listener to begin with but then, as you settle into the positive vibe, try performing. It has certainly improved my mental health.

OVERCOMING HARDSHIP

BY

SENADA DERVISEVIC



How do you cope growing up from having a care free childhood to suddenly being rounded up by soldiers marching in to your village and taking over?

Senada was 9 when the army surrounded her once peaceful town, and life changed forever from a happy one to one filled with fear and terror.

Overcoming Hardship is the brand-new book from Senada Dervisevic. In it she tells her story about those first days of war, to her families' escape to Bosnia and then to the UK before eventually coming to Kirklees, losing loved ones along the way and settling in a country thousands of miles from home, with her entire life in one suitcase to a place where she didn't speak the language.

Senada's unflinching account of the hardships she has encountered and how she has overcome them is thought provoking and inspiring. She shares her knowledge, thus inspiring hope and motivating others.

Her mission is to help anyone going through difficulties, to let them know that they too can hopefully overcome life's challenges and achieve their goals and dreams.

This book is for anyone struggling with hardships in their life.

WOMEN OF THE WORLD



COMMUNITYLINKS
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To celebrate International Women's day and World Book Day together, CLEAR organised a Women of the World event on February 24th at the Dewsbury Town Hall.

Clients and staff alike came over for a peek from all over the Kirklees area, including Carers Count, the WomenCentre and Community Links Changes.

The event included food, promotion leaflets, sunny weather, and a slideshow, featuring women, who all contributed to our history as human beings: a perfect opportunity for an afternoon of laughter and connection!

One of our clients, Fatima, wrote a wonderful account of the life and work of Sayaka Murata, which we were able to print out for everyone to read at the event. Murata is a Japanese author, whose "work predominantly focuses on commentaries of Japanese society, challenging taboos relating to relationships, jobs, education, family expectations and gender roles", Fatima wrote.

But the highlight of the event must have been the Reiki, performed benevolently by Jax, from Dragon Rose Holistic. Reiki is a Japanese alternative to medicine which focuses on hands-on emotional and physical healing. Each person who wanted to try was summoned by soft bell chime for a 5-minute slot behind a wooden panel, where the Reiki magic happened.

Participants found this event "really nice" and "enjoyable", "loved the colouring sheets" and "the Reiki and massages", "the opportunity to meet new people and share their thoughts".

A lovely time, indeed.



Credits to:
dragonroseholistic@yahoo.com



International Woman's Day @ Diamond Wood Academy - Fri 3rd March 2023

Clear staff held a stall at the fantastic IWD Morning at Diamond Wood Academy School.

Parents were invited to attend the event to visit local Health and Wellbeing stalls, there was also hand and arm massages, glitter tattoos and face painting and many stalls by local services.

Clear gave away some Wellbeing Packs that included Hot Chocolate packets, fidget toys, popping candy and much more. These packs were designed to help people take time for themselves.





Despite the cold and wet weather, it didn't stop almost 50 clients, staff and volunteers to come together at the Womencentre in Dewsbury to celebrate International Women's Day on Wednesday 15th March.

Eram had spent the past few weeks getting creative with the ladies making purple badges, beautiful card flowers with quotes from women on the special women in their lives, and a poster depicting famous women they found inspirational.

The event consisted of an open mic session, coordinated by Emily and there was no end of performances from talented women that attend the Music Therapy and Women Apart groups. Woman after woman, took to the mic, in groups and solo to perform not only songs like Robbie Williams' Angels, but their own written work. In fact, Angels seemed to be the theme of the day and the room was filled with angelic voices.

It is certainly no mean feat to take to the mic and sing or speak about your most personally situations; the times when you didn't want to get out of bed, the days when you felt this one may be the last, to speak about what it means as a mother to not be able to live with your children or growing up with certain limitations and expectations placed on you for simply being a woman.

All these beautiful written pieces, in good times and bad, were both heart-rending and heart-warming, showing the sheer depth of talent and courage on display. Yes, there were tears, but also much laughter, and plenty of hot drinks, food, music and stories. The women connected with each other over shared themes and the many layers that make a WOMAN!

The session ended with Anna's wonderful dance and movement which re-energised and warmed everyone up before going back out into the cold March weather.

And as the tables were cleared, one couldn't help but think that we had plenty of talented, courageous and inspirational women in the room to not only fill a poster, but wallpaper the whole room with!!!



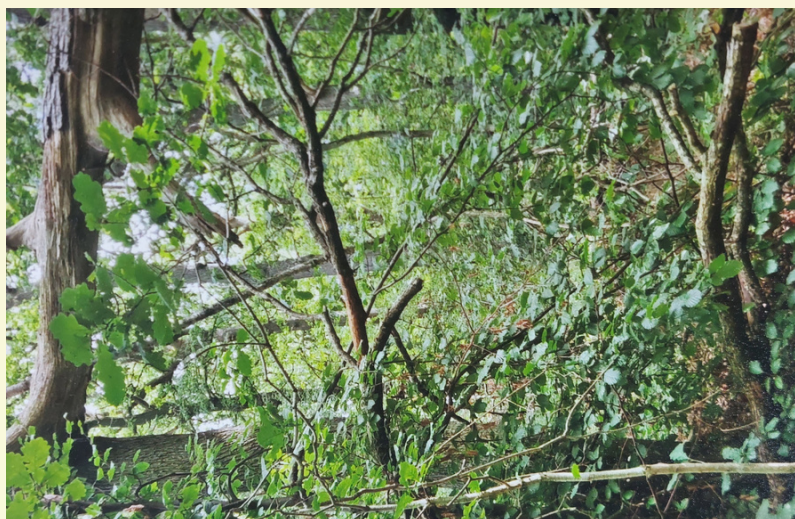
Barge Trips: Come Along!

Here at CLEAR, we go on roughly 3 barge trips per year. This is great as we get to see the changing seasons whilst in the thick of nature. We provide these day trips for clients as an outlet to explore different things and have often had themed barge trips with activities such as creative writing and also music and singing.

A typical day would see us meet up at a central point and travel to the marina together, where we would have a warm drink (or cold drink depending on the weather!) meet the crew and embark on our journey. Usually travelling towards Huddersfield there is plenty to see, snippets of history to learn and even a chance to work the locks along the way.

The crew are very friendly, professional, knowledgeable and keep us are all day.... Even letting us have a steer of the barge.

All in all they are amazing relaxed days which we all need once in a while!





"WHAT MUSIC GIVES US"

- Henry Bateman (songwriter, community musician, guitarist)

I recently interviewed for a place on a music therapy training programme. Part of the audition process saw me put in a room with fifteen other candidates and numerous instruments of all varieties: a couple of grand pianos, guitars, lots of percussion instruments... you name it; it was probably there. We were like a group of children in a very big sweet shop, and the only instruction we were given by the assessors was to 'make music'. That was it. For the next hour or so - we played music, the sixteen of us and the three tutors. We moved around the room, experimenting with different sounds, forming grooves, and mirroring each other's ideas and creativity.

Reflecting on the process, there was a general consensus that we felt we had 'introduced' ourselves to each other - like there was already a closeness there between us; a developing understanding of each other's personalities and sensibilities. However - bar some nervous conversation on the way in, no words had been spoken between us.

So - what is it about music? If music is can be an alternative way of communicating - how can it be used, for the better? If music, in just that hour we spent together, created a sense of community between us interviewees (which I think it did) - how can this be used for the better? How can we make the most of these awesome opportunities music affords?

I am currently involved in a project working in a couple of different libraries around Kirklees. I go into these libraries once a week and work with people to make music and sometimes make up songs. One moment that has stuck with me occurred whilst working with one person who had significant cognitive disability. For most of the session, they were withdrawn, not actively participating in the music making. However - when it was suggested we listen to the Prince song 'Purple Rain', this individual's demeanour completely changed. When it got around to those iconic rhythmic crescendos at the end of the choruses, she beat them, perfectly, with her hands on her knees. It was as if she was conducting the recording; you could see the rhythm flowing out of her arms. Following this, she made attempts to participate in our improvising, banging drums and trying different things out.

Music breaks boundaries. It is not a language. It's more abstract than that. But I think of music as an organ; like a mouth, or a heart. It is a WAY of speaking. Sometimes that can allow people who literally can't speak to communicate some way. For others who can, it can make saying certain things a lot easier to express.

You can come along and make music with us at Dalton Rawthorpe Library (10am-12) or at Batley Library (2-5pm) on any Friday... we would love to see you.



Become a Peer Champion

Kirklees Employment Service, in partnership with Working Together Better Partners, are looking for Peer Champions across Kirklees.

Our Peer Champions are people who have lived experience of mental health, and have the additional experience of belonging to a particular community.

A Peer Champion uses their knowledge to help services deliver support that is really focused on what helps people in those communities access the services.

A Peer Champion has a voice to improve accessibility to services by working with staff and commissioners to teach us what things we can do to make people within communities feel more comfortable coming to us for support. A Peer Champion can also be a link to telling us what people in communities want us to be doing at our services and the support they would like to see.



What does a Peer Champion do?

- Be at services to be a lived experience point of contact
- Inspire others based on your journey
- Attend workshops to help peers feel comfortable
- Help at events
- Let staff know what will help communities access services
- Help services improve the provision they offer

Current Peer Champion areas

- Autism
- LGBTQ+
- Young People (18-25)
- Veterans
- Dementia
- BAME

We are always open to more groups!

To find out more, or become a Peer Champion, Contact:

Kirklees Employment Service
The Media Centre, 7 Northumberland Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1RL

Phone:

01484 434866

Email: info.kirkleeses@RichmondFellowship.org.uk

Website: www.rfkirkleesemployment.org.uk (or click the QR Code)



WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice" (NDTi Advocacy Charter, 2018).



ASK 4 Advocacy's advocacy services are person-centred and help people to:

- *Be involved in decision making processes including best interest meetings.*
- *Have a say in decisions about their care and treatment.*
- *Say what they want.*
- *Secure and safeguard their human rights.*
- *Represent their wishes and views.*
- *Access appropriate services and support.*
- *Challenge unfair and discriminatory practices, policies and procedures.*
- *Identify unmet need and gaps in service provision*
- *Explore their options and rights without bias to enable them to make informed choices.*

In carrying out the work above our advocates will explore their client's views and wishes with them, provide information to help them make informed choices, and support our client's development of self-advocacy skills. Our advocates will not give their personal opinion, make decisions for, or seek to influence a client's decision-making. Advocacy is not a crisis or emergency support service and advocates are not support workers, counsellors, befrienders or mediators. Advocates do not provide administrative or secretarial support, where a person is able to read/write for themselves we encourage them to do so. If we are not the right service we will signpost or refer clients to the right organisation.

There are a number of different types of advocacy provided by this service and we don't need professionals to make referrals for you.

You don't need to have a formal mental health diagnosis to get support from advocacy and the service is free of charge.

We have a dedicated duty advocate at the end of the phone 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and are happy to work out if advocacy is right for you.



01924 460211 or Email us – advocacy@touchstonesupport.org.uk

Hearing Voices Peer Support Group



Every Monday from 5:30-7:00pm



**CLEAR, 32-34 Lion Chambers, John
William Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1ES**



A space where people who hear, see or sense things that others don't can talk and support each other.

Do you have lived experience and work with CLEAR, Insight or one of the Working Together Better Partnership services?
Join us!

Ask your worker to make a referral or contact CLEAR.

GET IN TOUCH

Huddersfield: 01484 519 097
clear.huddersfield@commmlinks.co.uk



Online singing in the evening

FREE online singing
sessions on Thursday
evenings from
6:30pm – 7:30pm
with hoot



**no singing
experience
needed!**

“I always
feel so
much
better in
my mood
after
these
sessions.
Uplifting!”

– hoot participant

Interested?

Visit our website to sign up
www.hootcreativearts.co.uk

Call: 01484 516224 or
Email: info@hootcreativearts.co.uk

Brain in Hand

Do you need help getting through the day?

Perhaps

- you struggle from anxiety
- or maybe you are neurodivergent
- or you find remembering things a challenge.

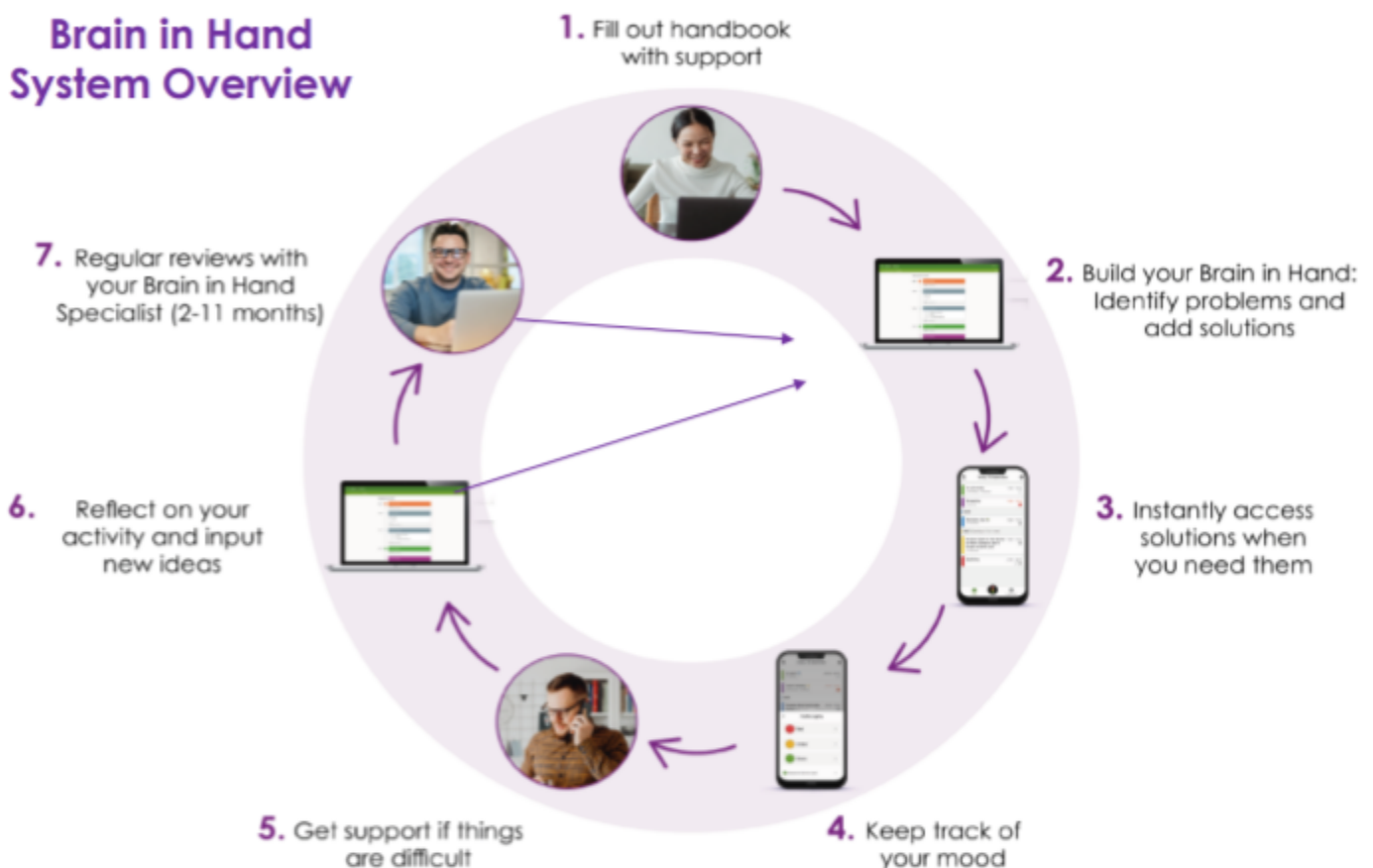
If you answered “yes” to any of those points, then you may benefit from using the assisted technology which Brain in Hand.

What is Brain in Hand?

Brain in Hand is a hybrid support system to help people get through the day. It uses a mix of technology with the added bonus of human support when needed. It was originally designed for autistic people at university but is used mainly to support people with anxiety related issues in Kirklees. No diagnosis is needed, and it is not condition specific.



Brain in Hand System Overview



Technology



There is an app which you would use day to day, and a website which is used less frequently to customise the system. There are many ways to use BiH, there is a diary, which looks similar to outlook ie you can colour code, schedule reminders and have repeat appointments, but it does a lot more. Behind each diary entry you can have activities associated with the event.

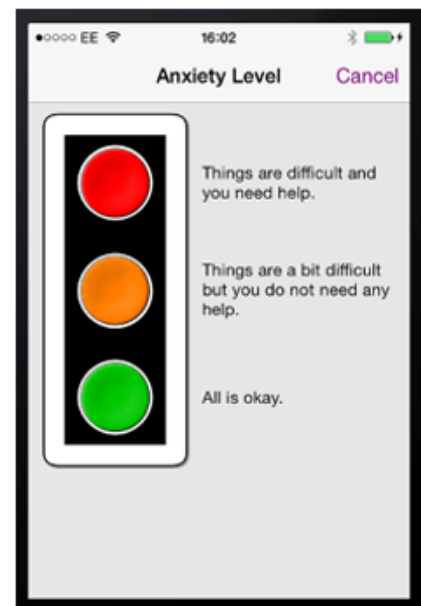
For example, you may have a daily 'morning routine'. And part of that routine there may be various activities you do, such as get dressed / personal hygiene / breakfast. Each of these activities may have potential problems associated with them, such as breakfast – run out of cereal. For each problem, you can put in solutions which you can then access at that moment you need them ie when you are in heightened anxiety.

In addition to the diary with known events, there is an 'unplanned events' section. This is where again you populate with possible problems and solutions, for events that could happen at any stage, for example feeling ill. Both the diary and unplanned, means you have 24-hour solution focused, personalised support.

Alert system

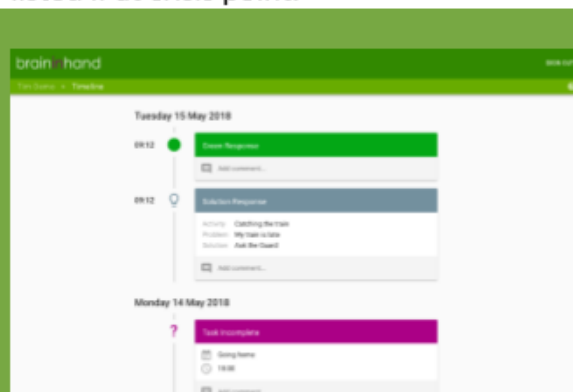
There is a traffic light system alert/response system. You can use this to log how you are feeling at any given point. If you press either Red alert once, or Amber alert three times within working hours an alert comes through. You will then be contacted via a method of your preferred choice (ie phone/email/text) to check-in with you.

It is not a crisis line, although you may use BiH to list crisis services as you can put both hyperlinks to websites and emails, and links to phone numbers, so you have different services easily listed if at crisis point.



Timeline

On BiH there is a timeline. This will display tasks that have been ticked as being done, plus traffic light presses which may be accompanied by comments. The timeline can be useful for both personal reflections, plus by services to try and identify areas that are causing most anxiety, and things that are working well.



If you are interested on what Brain in Hand can do for you, please contact the Kirklees Brain in Hand Team to discuss further

BraininHandKirklees@commlinks.co.uk



Peer Support What's On

April 2023– June 2023

Online Workshops and Groups



For more information or to book a place please contact:

Karl Jackson-Lander on 07909 993203 or email:

Karl.Jackson-Lander@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Huddersfield Office: The Media Centre, 7 Northumberland St, HD1 1RL

Dewsbury Office: Connect Housing: 21 Bond Street, Dewsbury, WF13 1AX

Richmond Fellowship Peer Support Service

These activities are open to everyone aged 18 or over who lives in Kirklees and experiences mental health issues, problems or concerns. You do not need to be seeing an employment advisor to join. Simply call the number on the back or email and ask for Karl Jackson-Lander the Peer Support Coordinator who will assist you to fill out a short referral form so you can attend.



Online - Zoom Workshops - 1 to 3pm

STRESS MANAGEMENT

This 2 week workshop starts on the **4th May** between 1-3pm and will examine all aspects of how Stress can affect us and how it has a negative impact on your mental wellbeing, looking at methods and new ways of thinking that can drastically reduce stress levels in our daily lives.

CONFIDENCE TO WORK

This extremely popular 6 week workshop starts on **the 18th of April 1-3pm** and explores all aspects of getting into employment after being out of work for any length of time due to poor mental or physical health.

FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD BUDGETING

This new 2 week workshop starting on the **29th May** 1-3pm will offer practical advice and tips on how to make large savings on your food shop and how to make sure that your household bills don't cost a fortune .

WAYS TO WELLBEING

This 2 week Workshop starts on the **12th June** 1-3pm and will cover all aspects of improving and maintaining mental health through practical means that people can use on a daily basis.

ASSERTIVENESS AND COMMUNICATION

These 2 workshops that start on the 20th April 1-3pm will explore all aspects of improving Assertiveness skills, maintaining them and developing better communication skills.

MOOD AND FOOD

This new two week workshop that starts on the **18th May** 1-3pm will show how food can affect our mental wellbeing in a positive and negative way and general tips on what to eat to improve your mental health.

Live workshops

VOLUNTEER TASTER SESSIONS

This new 2 week workshop that starts on the **15th June** 1-3pm at the Media Centre in Huddersfield will explore all the basic necessary skills and information that you will need if you are considering the exciting and rewarding world of volunteering.

SELF ESTEEM AND RESILIENCE

This 2 week Workshop starts on the **1st June** 1-3pm at the Media Centre in Huddersfield and will cover all aspects of improving and maintaining mental health through practical means that people can use on a daily basis.



Richmond Fellowship Groups

WORDS IN MIND

This reading group meets **every Tuesday 11am - 12am**. Each week the group decide on a theme and then explore it through stories, poetry, images or video clips in a very informal and relaxed atmosphere.

YOUR VOICE IN KIRKLEES - NEWSLETTER

This newsletter group meets **every Wednesday at 12.30pm - 2pm** simultaneously on Zoom and live. This partnership newsletter group is seeking contributors for their quarterly Mental Health Newsletters. This could be Art, Poetry, Stories, Articles, Puzzles, Photos and Crafts plus lots more, we just want to hear from you!

You can still send in any submissions if you can't attend this group by emailing: Karl.Jackson-Lander@richmondfellowship.org.uk.



For more information, to see our online calendar, or to complete our online application form follow the QR Code or visit: [Home - Kirklees Employment Service \(rfkirkleesemployment.org.uk\)](http://Home-Kirklees-Employment-Service.rfkirkleesemployment.org.uk)



Accessibility and Readability

In an attempt to cater to as many people's visual needs as possible, we have also produced a text-only version of this edition of the YVIK newsletter. We know we may not be able to accommodate the wide range of visual issues that people may experience, but we've tried to keep it as simple and plain as possible in the hope of it being easier to read, as well as being easier to adjust via your device's reader setting (E.g. zoom function).

We value your readership, so if possible, please send us feedback via our social media channels, email or through someone connected to the partnership to let us know what you think about this versions and if any improvements can be made.

Thank You,
The YVIK team

Email: karl.jackson-lander@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Twitter: [@in_kirklees](https://twitter.com/in_kirklees)

Instagram: [yourvoiceinkirklees](https://www.instagram.com/yourvoiceinkirklees)

Facebook: facebook.com/yourvoiceinkirklees

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Your Voice in Kirklees are seeking contributors for our quarterly mental health newsletter.

It could be:

- Art
- Poetry
- Stories
- Articles
- Puzzles
- Photos
- Crafts

Plus lots more, we just want to hear from you!

Our aim is to create a platform where anyone in the Kirklees community can share their experiences with mental health as well as highlighting partner services and other organisations that strive to make Kirklees a happy and healthy place to be!

Want to get involved even more?

We have a voluntary newsletter committee that meets once a week over Zoom to discuss and design each of our fantastic quarterly newsletters. A friendly group, composed of individuals who are on their own personal journey with mental health. All are welcome! **Every Wednesday 12.30pm on Zoom or in person.**

For more information or to send in a submission, contact our newsletter co-ordinator at:



KARL.JACKSON-LANDER@RICHMONDFELLOWSHIP.ORG.UK



+44 790 999 3203

