

FREE



RE-CO-CO

RECOVERY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE

WE
HAVE
MOVED



0191 261 0948



info@recoverycoco.com

www.recoverycoco.com

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN
UNDERTAKING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING
COURSES OR WORKSHOPS THEN YOU
WILL NEED TO FIRSTLY ENROL AS A
STUDENT AT RECOCO. TO DO THIS,
JUST GIVE US A RING AND WE WILL
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR YOU TO
COME IN. ENROLMENTS GENERALLY
TAKE ABOUT 45 MINS – 1 HOUR AND
GIVES US A CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW
EACH OTHER AND DISCUSS WHAT YOU
THINK WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

PLEASE DON'T ATTEND ANY
COURSES WITHOUT FIRST BECOMING
A STUDENT. ONCE YOU ARE A
STUDENT YOU CAN ACCESS PLENTY
OF OTHER COURSES, EVENTS AND
OPPORTUNITIES THAT AREN'T
ADVERTISED IN THE PROSPECTUS.



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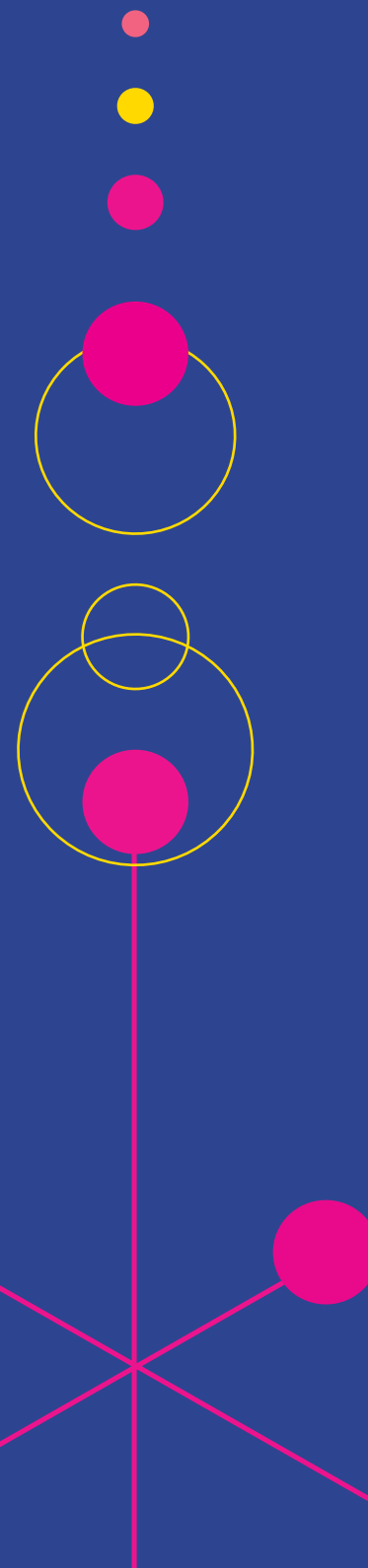


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COURSES

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ACT – INTRODUCTION TO ACT (ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY)

1

Ever feel like you are in a tug of war with difficult thoughts or feelings? Sometimes getting the better of them and sometimes feeling that they are getting the better of you? The struggle itself can be exhausting. What if you drop the rope and don't struggle? ACT focuses on acceptance and helps us connect with what is important in our life and how we might move towards those things. Act uses mindfulness as well as techniques and metaphors which can help us create a distance from our problems and become more flexible in our thinking.

Time: 1pm-3pm

Day: Monday

Dates: 24th Sept, 1st Oct, 8th Oct, 15th Oct, 22nd Oct

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Scott Wall

COMPASSIONATE MINDFULNESS CONTINUED PRACTICE GROUP

2

What is the purpose of this group?

If you have attended a Compassionate Mindfulness Group you may find it difficult to continue practicing when the group has ended or you may wish to access a group once again to benefit from the experience of a shared practice. This new monthly practice group is a response to the request by previous group attendees for a service providing such an opportunity. The group will be less structured than the initial training and will allow those attending to revise what they have learned on the initial course through further discussion and practice.

Who can attend?

You can attend if you have already completed a Compassionate Mindfulness Course (9 or 14 weeks) with Dr Joanne Milner, Clinical Psychologist at Tyneside Mind or WHIST.

You may wish to bring a pen and paper to make notes and glasses if you need these to read. If you have any other specific requirements, please let us know in advance so that we can find ways to help you access support to attend.

We are hoping to make this group self-running in 2018 supported by staff from the Recovery College. It will therefore belong to those attending who can work with the Recovery College staff to develop a group which meets your further compassionate mindfulness practice needs.

Time:

Please contact ReCoCo for confirmation

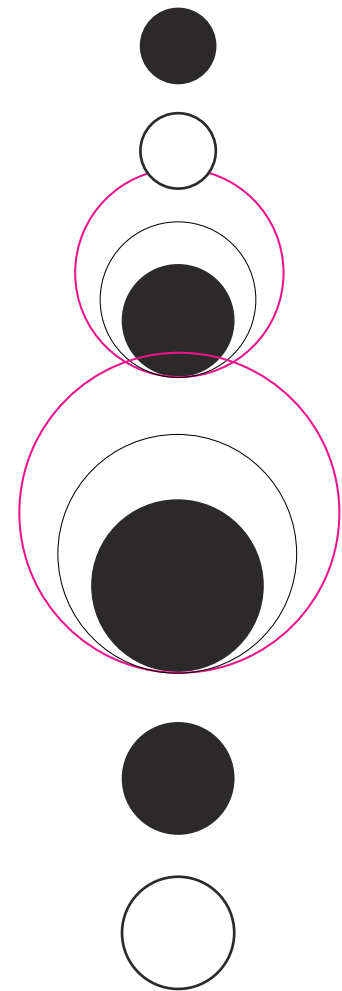
Dates:

Please contact ReCoCo for confirmation

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Wendy Ritchie



4

CREATIVE WELLNESS

It is hoped that this course will encourage students to develop creative skills which will enhance their emotional wellbeing. The focus will be on learning a series of creative skills. Creativity and the journey of recovery are individual to each person, however by combining the skills and experience of each individual within the group we hope to empower people along their journey of recovery, instilling a sense of hope.

Time: 10am-12pm

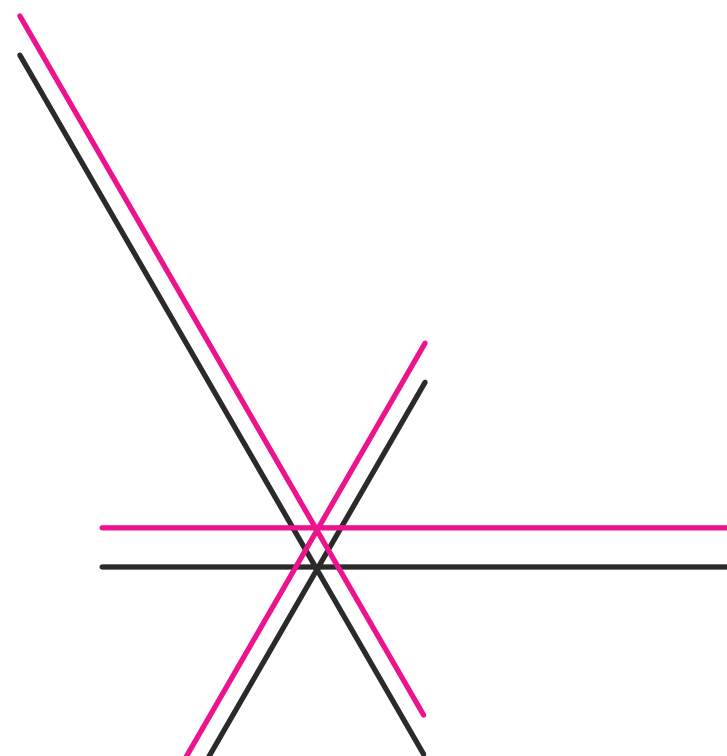
Day: Tuesday

Dates: Weekly from the 25th Sept

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Chris Sobey & Lorraine Morton



3

CREATIVE CORNER - FRIENDS ACTION NORTH EAST (FANE)

Creative Corner meet every 2 weeks at the Recovery College. We are a friendship group and decide together what art projects we want to do. We have done pottery, printmaking, animation, photography, portraits and creative crafts. We also visit local galleries and landmarks for inspiration. This is a particularly safe space for people with a learning disability to explore their creative side.

Time: 12pm-2pm

Day: Tuesday

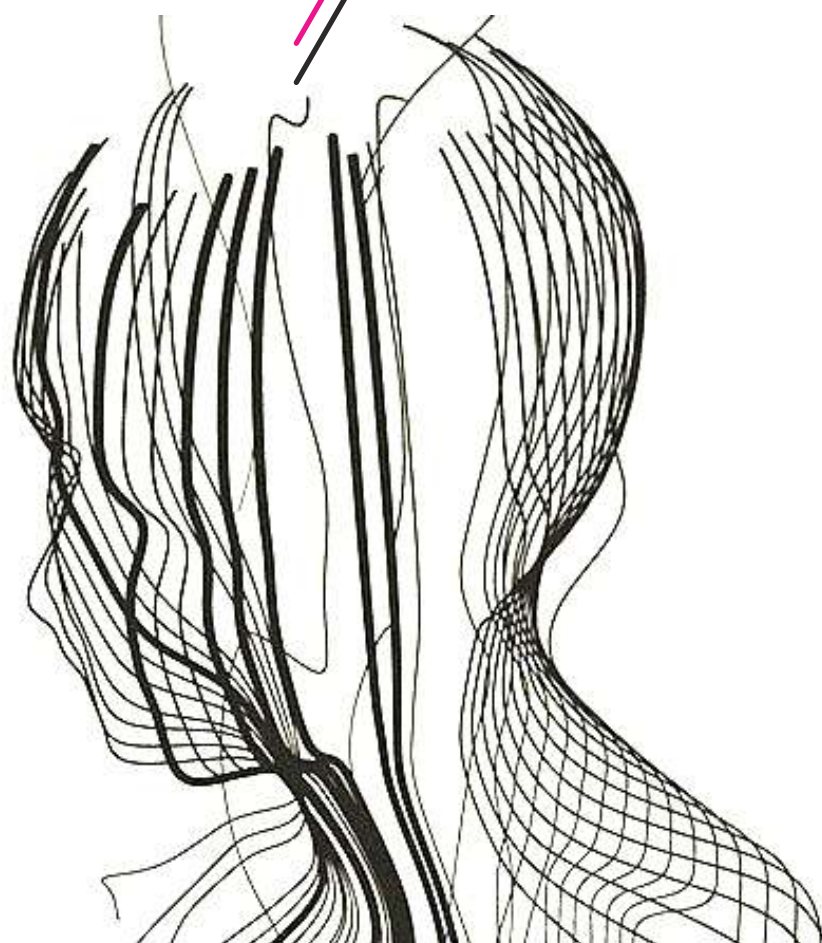
(please contact us for the start date)

Dates: then fortnightly

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Friends Action North East





CREATIVE WRITING

5

The group has so far been running under the auspices of Launchpad as an informal class that anyone can join. The tutor draws on a broad range of knowledge to illustrate all aspects of creative writing, from poetry to prose to drama. The sessions are relaxed and enjoyable. Creative writing can have a powerful therapeutic effect gently encouraging participants out of their shells. Participants are encouraged to, and will have the opportunity to present their work in public such as performing poetry to an audience should they feel ready.

Time: 11am-1pm

Day: Wednesday

Dates: Weekly (other than half term break)

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: David Kipping



DROP-IN

6

We have an informal, facilitated drop-in twice a week where people can come along and have a chat with other students. Get to know each other, connect and learn more about ReCoCo. This is a good opportunity for new students to meet each other as well as finding out from other students what opportunities might be right for you.

Space is limited at Anderson House so we ask that students only attend one or the other of the drop-in sessions.

Time: 1pm-3pm

Day: Tuesday and Wednesday

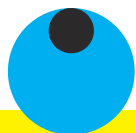
Dates: Tue 25th Sept, Wed 26th Sept, then weekly

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Drop-In Facilitators: Simone Wiseman, Alan Jackson, Mary Jeonath, Jo Dinoso





EXPLORING YOUR TRUTH WITH METAPHOR

7

A whole new approach to being human. Explore, enjoy, learn even more about who you really are and travel through your thoughts to a place of none. No beliefs required. Witness the perspective of your soul. 2 hour groups, once a week. Experience your undisputable truth. Maybe some wishes can come true. Remember how truly beautiful and miraculous you are?

On Facebook search for: HeArt by Suzanne

Time: 10am-12pm
Day: Friday
Dates: 28th Sept, then weekly (except half term)
Location: Anderson House
Contact: ReCoCo
Course Leader: Suzanne Ellis

FABULOUS FITNESS

8

A beginners class suitable for anyone who wants to strengthen their physical and emotional stability. Stretching, toning and Pilates ending with mindfulness relaxation. Come along and reap the benefits. Helps strengthen core stability, flexibility and tones those important places.

Time: 12.30pm -1.30pm
Day: Mondays
Dates: Starting Monday 24th Sept then weekly (except half term)
Location: Anderson House
Contact: ReCoCo
Course leader: Sue Barrow



9

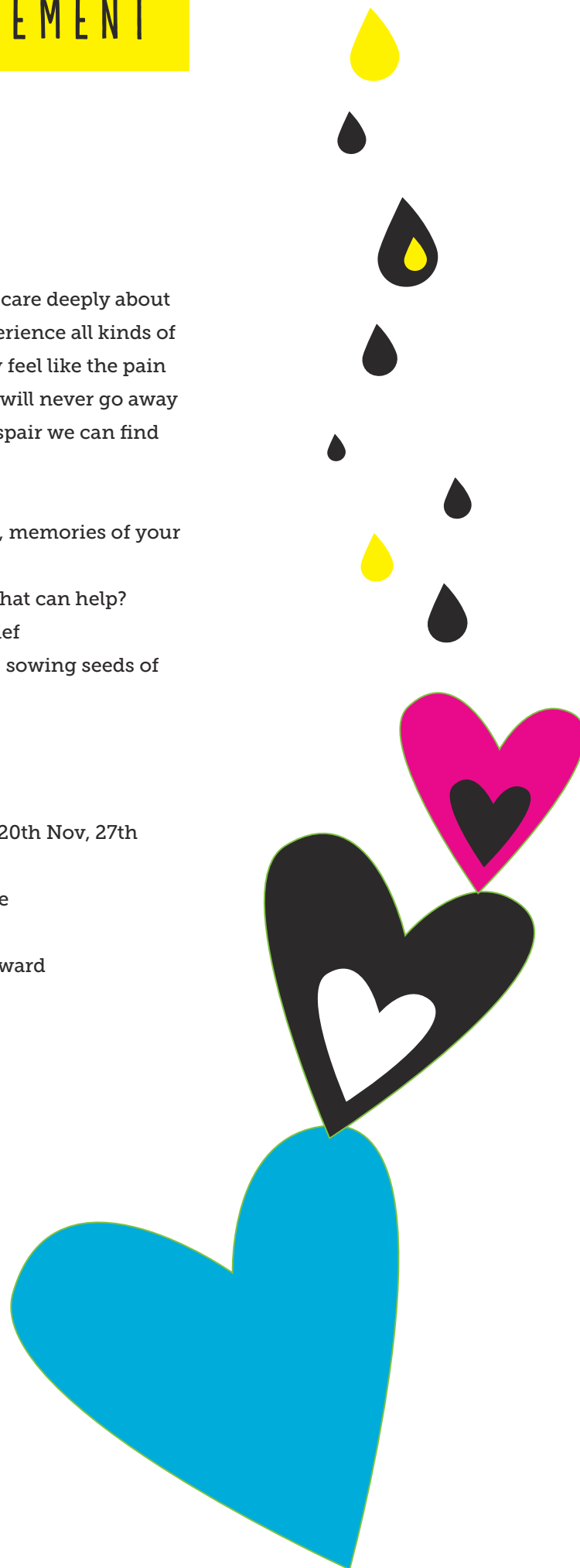
GARDENING

Gardening is good for the soul. It's very literally grounding, gets you outdoors in the fresh air, involves physical activity and gives a great sense of satisfaction and achievement in producing your own food whilst enjoying the beauty of nature.

This will be a weekly group working to develop and nurture an area designated as the Recovery College Garden, within the St Nicholas Hospital site. We aren't able to provide appropriate clothing so please bring clothes and shoes (preferably boots) that you are willing to get dirty. The gardening group is weather dependent. Should the weather be particularly bad, please call Michael at the Recovery College who will be able to confirm whether the group is on that day, or not.

Time: 9.30am - 12pm
Day: Tuesday
Dates: 4th Sept, then weekly
Location: St Nicholas Hospital
Contact: ReCoCo
Course leader: Michael Hall

Course Leader: Denise Toward



11

Course Leader: Lorraine Morton

12

INTRODUCTION TO DBT SKILLS

This is not Dialectical Behavioural Therapy. It is a 5-week skills-based group giving an overview of what DBT is, exploring and trying out the skills that people find helpful in managing their emotions.

Time: 1.30pm-3.30pm

Day: Wednesday

Dates:

1st series: 26th Sept, 3rd Oct, 10th Oct, 17th Oct

2nd series: 7th Nov, 14th Nov, 21st Nov, 28th Nov

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Cat Barrett & Bekah Davis



13

JOELENE ENGLISH

Joelene English is a Contemporary Dance Theatre choreographer and performance artist. Since graduating in 2006 she has gone on to choreograph and perform in an array of genres and venues, as well as teaching a wide range of students and professional artists. She is interested in using dance, film and theatre to explore human nature when destiny becomes trapped by reality. Her work combines taut choreography, beautiful scenography and emotional performance. She is fascinated by mental illness and its impact on everyday life.

To date Joelene English Dance Theatre's work has had a relationship with mental illness; this has been hugely influenced from personal experiences. Researching and delving into personal cobwebbed memories for work opens up a world of questions and few answers.

The sessions will be playful and fun using different art forms including creative writing, movement, drama, visual art and photography to explore the creation of an alter ego. To tell a personal story taking moments from well-known stories as starting points and weaving the real lives of its creators in amongst fragmented fiction. There is a story within us all and spoken word can often get in the way of communicating it with others. These workshops will offer each individual a different way to speak a voice through physicality, objects, photographs or if they dare dance. Each workshop will create an environment for challenge, discussion, creation and silence. What is created within the workshops will form the basis of a collaborative multi medium installation of individual personal journeys, including photographs, sound and objects. This course is for people who haven't undertaken Joelene's course before.

Time: 10am-12pm

Day: Friday

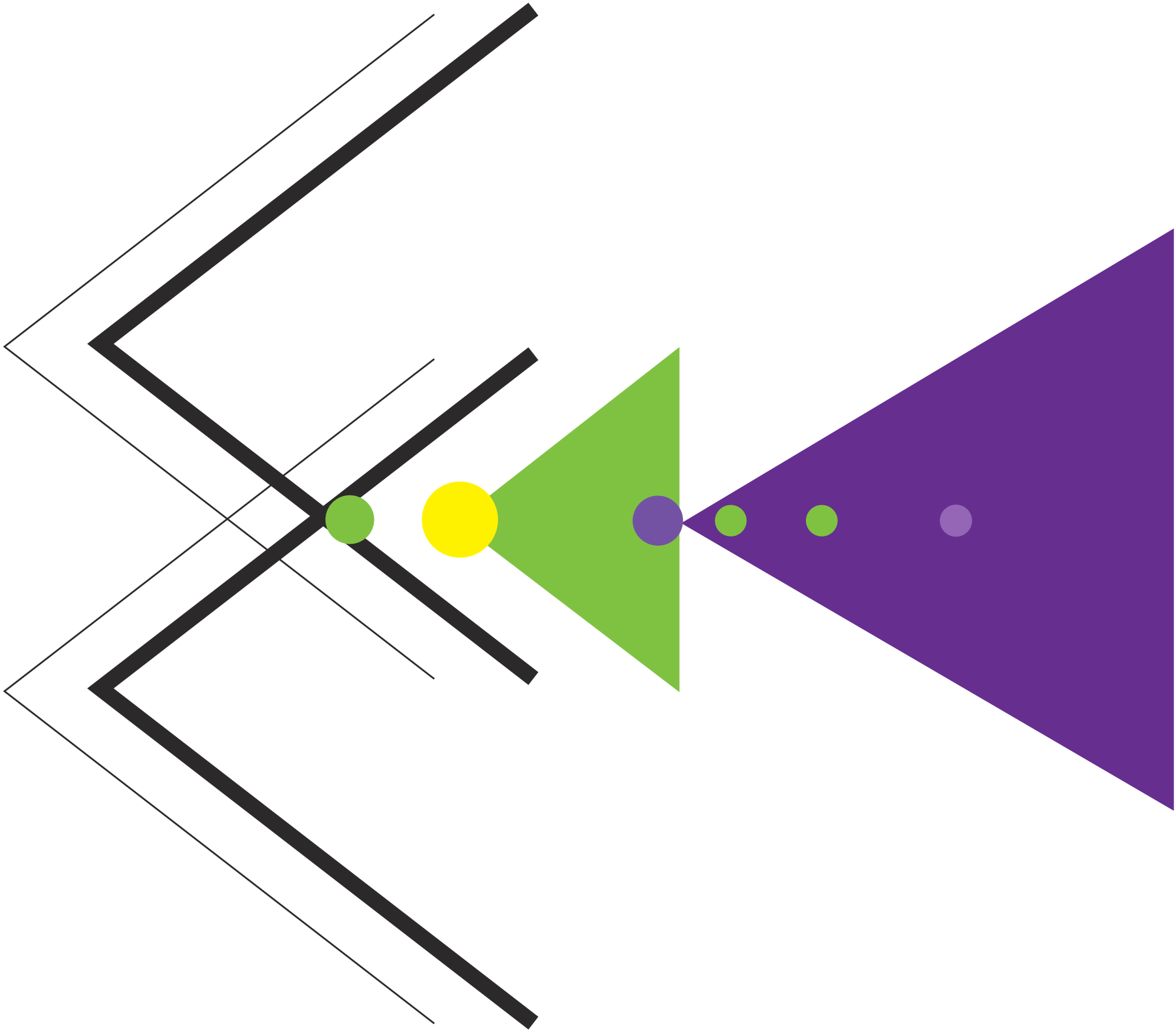
Dates: 28th Sept

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Joelene English, Vicki Beat





MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION AT THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

14

We really believe that mindfulness can help us gain control over our emotions and help us feel in control of our lives. It's also really enjoyable so if you think that it could help or that you deserve a little bit of YOU time then why not come along and give it a try. We now have a mindfulness drop-in every weekday at 12.00pm which lasts approximately 45 minutes. All sessions are suitable for absolute beginners.

Meditation with Warren

Warren is a practicing Buddhist and his meditation sessions incorporate traditional Buddhist practice such as 'Mette Bhavana' and 'mindfulness of breathing'.

Time: 12pm-1pm

Day: Monday

Drop-In Leader: Warren Milburn

Mindfulness Drop-In

Sue can help you look broadly at mindfulness. She incorporates very simple mindfulness exercises that you can do anywhere without it being obvious, so you can learn to take control of your breathing in all circumstances. Sue's mindfulness is particularly helpful for people who find it difficult to sit and meditate and looks at incorporating more physical exercises such as the 'body wash'.

Time: 12pm-1pm

Day: Tuesday

Drop-In Leader: TBC

Mindfulness Drop-In

Time: 12pm-1pm

Day: Wednesday

Drop-In Leader: Phil Waugh

Meditation with Warren

Time: 12pm-1pm

Day: Thursday

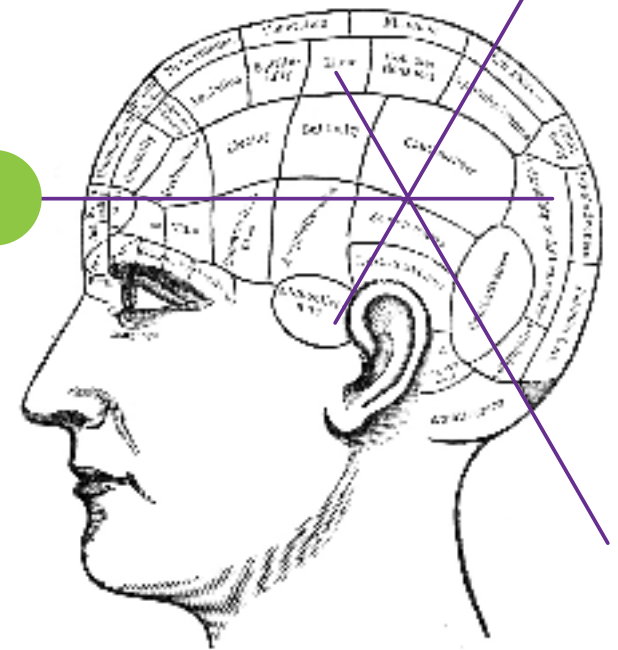
Drop-In Leader: Warren Milburn

Mindfulness

Time: 12pm-1pm

Day: Friday

Drop-In Leader: Faye Wilkinson



15

NEW BEGINNINGS

A 10 step course on beating anxiety and motivating you to a happier life

This 10 step course is designed to help you to overcome your anxieties and stresses which prevent you from living a happy, fulfilled life by using tried and tested techniques which are simple yet very successful.

During this 4-week course you will teach you:

- How to push through your anxiety
- How to take responsibility
- How to become a positive thinker
- How to deal with negativity
- How to expand your horizons
- How to get more out of the world by getting more into it!

You, like everyone, deserve the best of what life has to offer, so what are you waiting for? Today is the first day of the rest of your life; all you have to do is take that first step to a New Beginning.

Time: 10am-12pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 27th Sept, 4th Oct, 11th Oct, 18th Oct

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Grace Platten

(previously *Feel the Fear* Trainer)



16

REDUCING THE RAGE

Everyone gets angry or frustrated. It is a totally normal and healthy emotion. However, sometimes our anger can get away from us and begin to take over. If anger plays a larger role in your life than you want it to, this course may be for you. Whether you get angry at the smallest things, or your rage is an uncontrollable monster, this course may help in getting your anger back under control. Everyone is welcome and no prior knowledge is required. This is a skills class, not simply a place to moan about the world (though there may well be some of that!). Let's get 'a'had a'the radge.

Time: 10am-12pm

Day: Friday

Dates: 5th Oct, 12th Oct, 19th Oct, 26th Oct, 9th Nov, 16th Nov

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leaders:

Tom Nicholson & James White

17

RELAXATION THERAPY

Somatic therapy (of the body) is one of the oldest, most powerful methods available to us for learning how to move forward with our emotions and feel more at peace and relaxed within ourselves and those around us. Debbie uses a whole range of approaches to therapy such as mindfulness, physical relaxation and talking, which can be a very effective method. Using just her hands and her warmth, Debbie will gently guide you so that you can begin to feel a real sense of connection, not just within yourself, but with others around you too.

Conditions that respond well to this kind of therapy:

All conditions have the potential to benefit from the Therapy that Debbie offers because it works directly with your body and where the actual source of your distress, anxiety and panic reside, therefore, helping with both your physical and emotional wellbeing.

The session can take approximately 40 minutes of deep relaxation, but can be adapted to your needs.

If you would like to explore how this unique combination of relaxation and emotional wellbeing therapy could help you, then please book your appointment now by signing your name to one of the given slots below. I can also offer a free telephone consultation to see if the therapeutic services I offer could be of help to you - so please feel free to contact me if you feel you need to talk prior to the appointment by giving me a call. (Debbie's number is available at the ReCoCo office should you need more information)

All sessions are completely confidential and will always be tailored to you and your exact needs. Your details will never be shared with your GP, work or anyone else without your prior consent.

The sessions will not replace conventional medical diagnosis, treatment or psychotherapy. This approach can bring out very strong feelings, and possibly triggers. Although guided, you will need to take responsibility for your own wellbeing.

Time: 9.30am-2pm

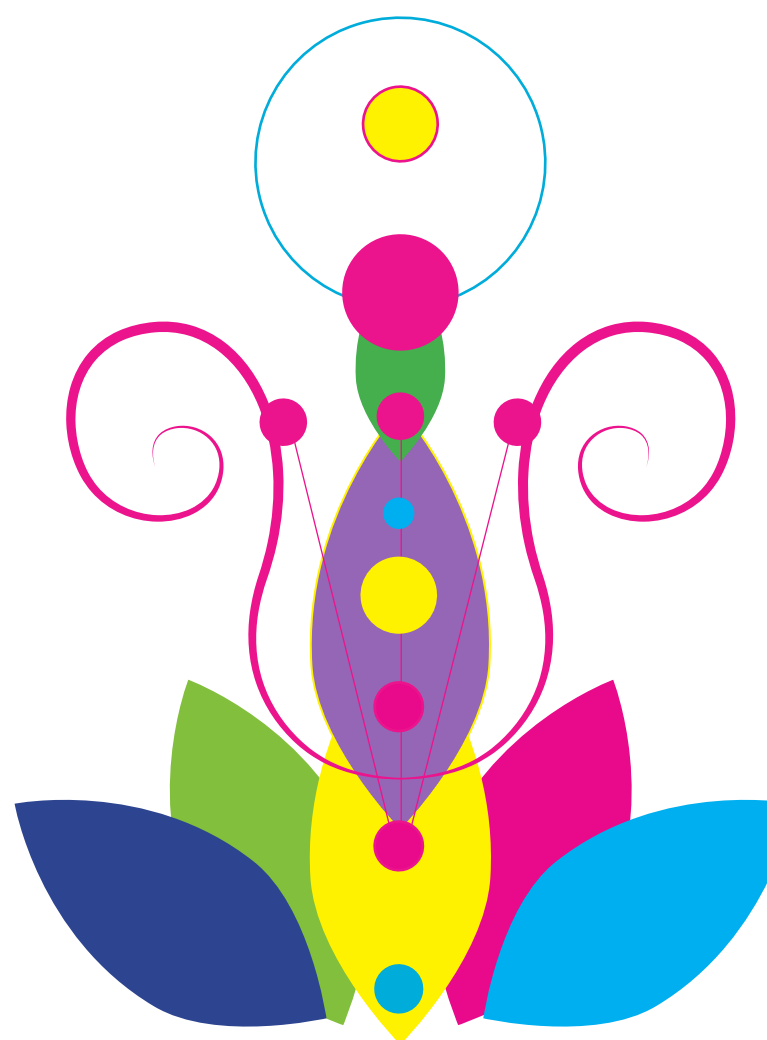
Day: Monday

Dates: 24th Sept, then weekly (except half term)

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Debbie Davidson



18

RISING STRONG

Following on from last terms The Daring Way, we continue to look at the teachings of Brene Brown and the impact that shame has on us. You don't need to have done The Daring Way to undertake this course but some knowledge of Brene Brown's teachings might be useful. There's plenty of information on the internet and a great TED talk on Shame that you will find on YouTube.

The Daring Way is a highly experiential methodology based on the research of Dr Brene Brown. The method was designed for work with individuals, couples, families, work teams and organisational leaders. It can be facilitated in clinical, educational and professional settings. During the process we explore topics such as vulnerability, courage, shame, and worthiness. We examine the thoughts, emotions and behaviours that are holding us back and we identify the new choices and practices that will move us towards more authentic and whole-hearted living. The primary focus is on developing shame resilience skills and developing daily practices that transform the way we live, love, parent and lead.

The Overall Outcomes for Rising Strong™:

- Continue to lead and participate in a global conversation about vulnerability, courage, shame, and worthiness.
- Increase global access to information on emotion and how emotion is connected to behaviour and thought.
- Awaken people's curiosity about emotions – awareness and the ability to articulate – and build our understanding of emotions.
- Use the rising strong process at both the micro and macro levels to increase wholeheartedness in living, loving, and leading.

Time: 3.30pm-5pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 27th Sept, 4th Oct, 11th Oct, 18th Oct, 25th Oct, 8th Nov, 15th Nov, 22nd Nov, 29th Nov, 6th Dec

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Claire Robinson

Further information can be found at www.thedaringway.com

19

SELF ESTEEM

This course is brought to you by The Kindness Project.

We believe that real self-esteem comes from a healthy respect for yourself and an understanding of what your role is in the world.

Each week we will look at a different aspect of how you feel about yourself and how to build on that. Some of the topics covered: interactions with others, low and positive self-esteem and positive affirmations. We look forward to welcoming you to a friendly, creative group session that explores the need for healthy self-esteem, finding ways to enhance in a peer environment and develop and discover new things about who you are and who you would like to become.

We look at many areas including:

- Your awareness of who you are
- How you think and feel about your strengths and weaknesses
- The expectations you place on yourself
- Your awareness of what you want from your life.
- Do you accept yourself for who you are or not?

- How you view yourself in comparison to others
- How you think and feel about what other people say about you

Time: 10pm-12am

Day: Friday

Dates: Starting on 28th Sept, then weekly (except half-term)

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Sara Lourenco



20

SELF-HARM AWARENESS SESSION

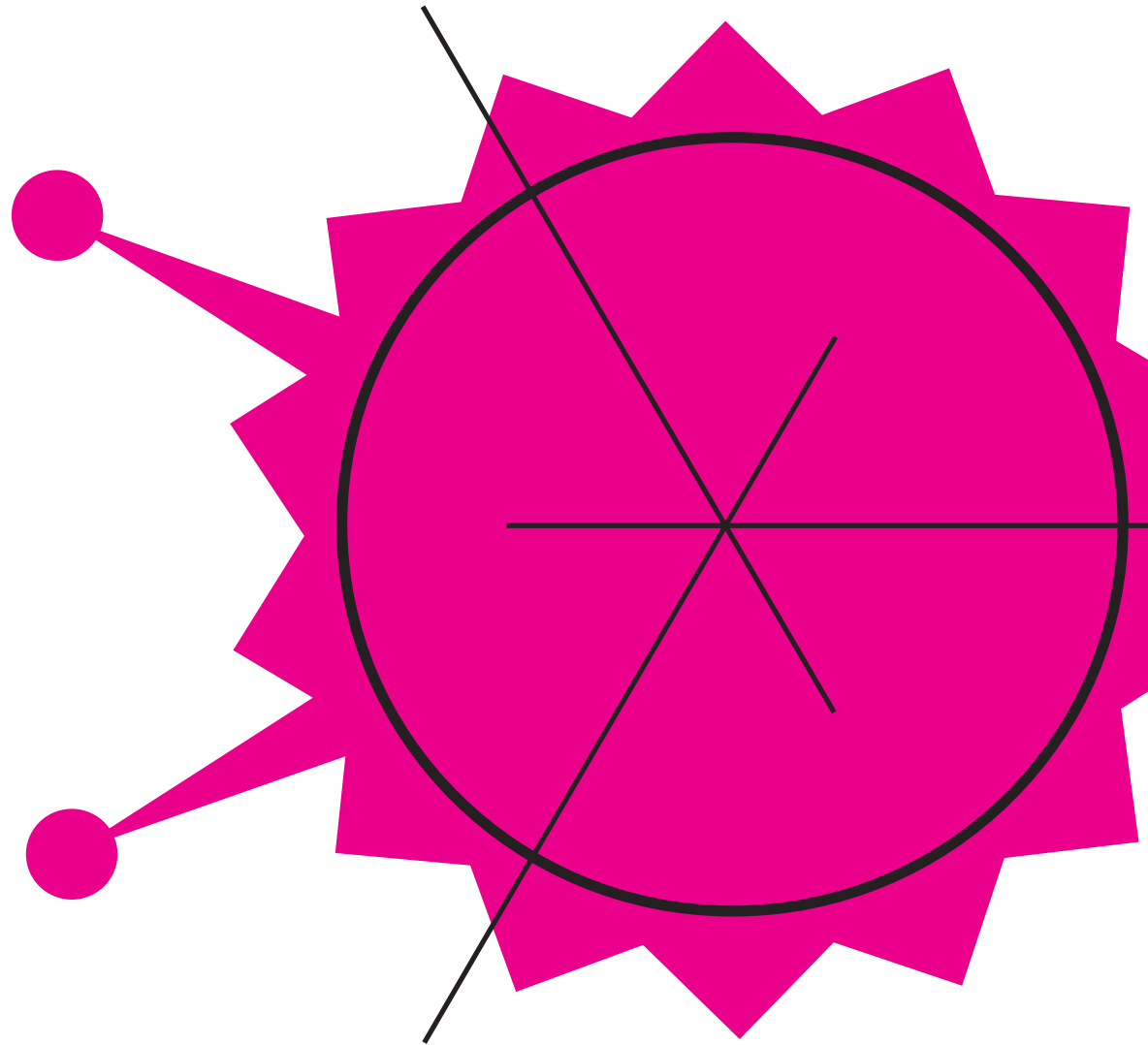
A 2.5hr session delivered by Steve O'Driscoll who self-harmed for over 20 years and managed to overcome his problems and now shares his experiences to help and support others and also facilitates a group in Newcastle to support people who self-harm.

The session covers:

- What is self-harm?
- Types of self-harm.
- Who self-harms?
- What makes people self-harm?
- How does it feel?
- Are people who do mentally ill?
- Signs to look out for.
- Coping techniques.
- Treatment.
- Self-help.
- What if you don't get help?
- How you support a person.
- Self-harm first aid kit.
- Steve will also share his journey of recovery.

The session is very relaxed and there is plenty of opportunity to ask those unanswered questions around a subject that is still taboo to many in society.

Time: 10am-12.30pm
Day: Thursday
Dates: 4th October
Location: Anderson House
Contact: ReCoCo
Course leader: Steve O'Driscoll

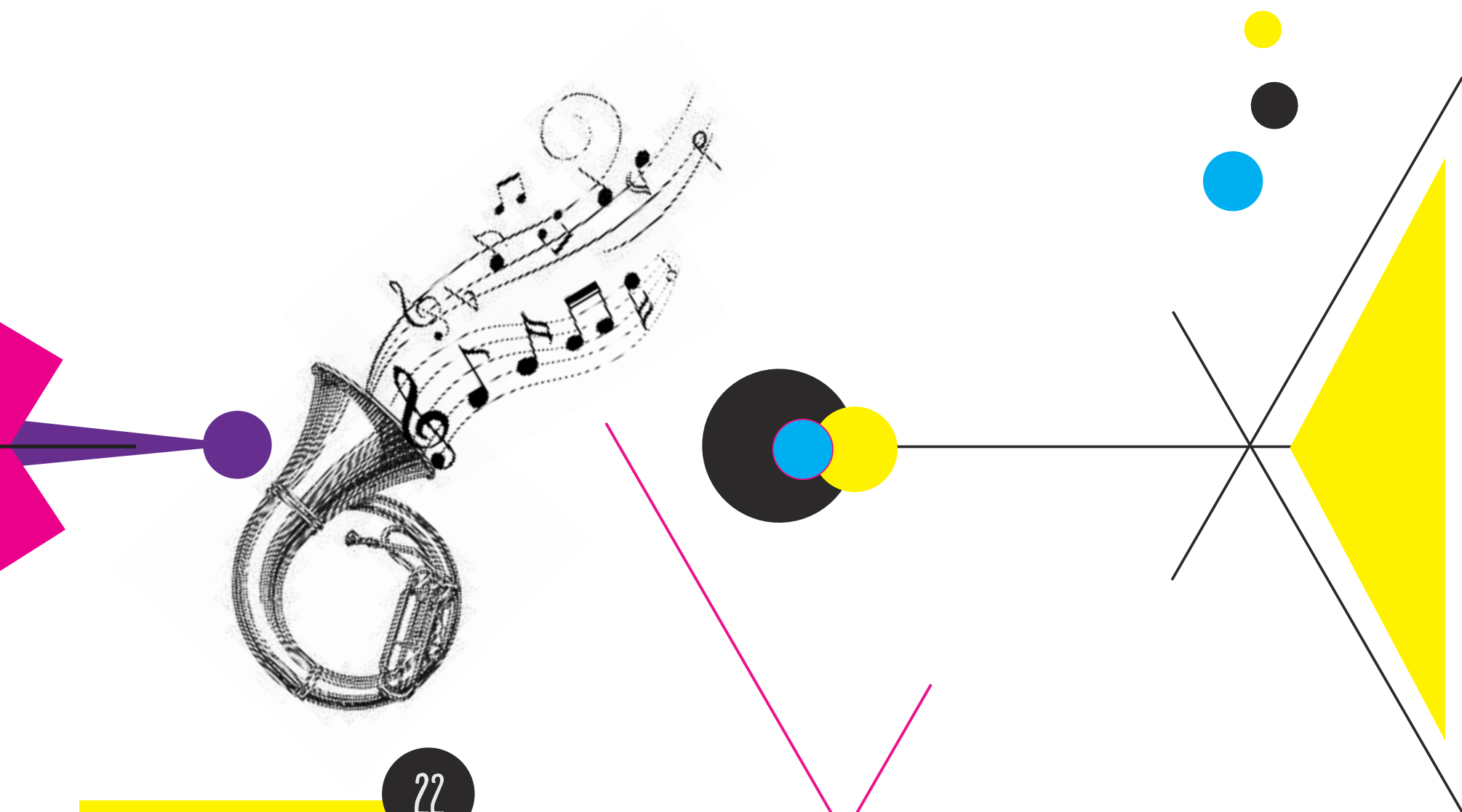


21

SMART RECOVERY

SMART recovery is a science-based programme to help people manage their recovery from any type of addictive behaviour. If you feel you need help and guidance with such issues please feel welcome to join us in a relaxed and informative weekly meeting where we will provide you with the tools, skills and knowledge of how to deal with these difficult ongoing issues.

Time: 2pm-3.30pm
Day: Tuesday
Dates: 25th Sept then weekly
(except half term)
Location: Anderson House
Contact: ReCoCo
Course Leader: Martin Tunney



22

SONGWRITING ABOUT RECOVERY

Do you like music? Do you have a story to tell? Join us and we will help you to write music about it. No experience needed. Your lyrics can be as vague as you like. Bring any instrument you can carry by yourself, including your voice(s). Consider taking headphones for electronic instruments if you are bringing them. Our facilitator has worked in hospitals since he was a lad in varying roles, has been a semi-professional musician and an experienced facilitator and tutor. He has his own material to write about, in terms of wellbeing and recovery. You will leave with some lines of song. Previous sessions have led to brief recordings and were well rated by attendees. You will retain copyright.

Time: 2pm-4pm

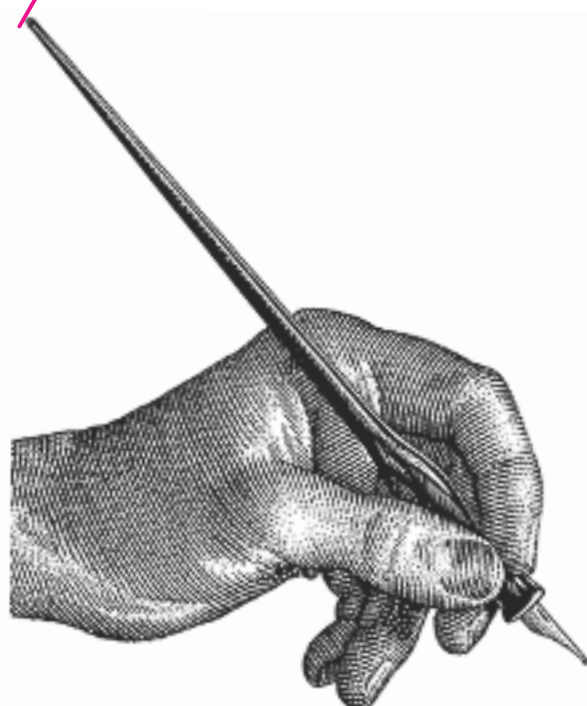
Day: Thursday

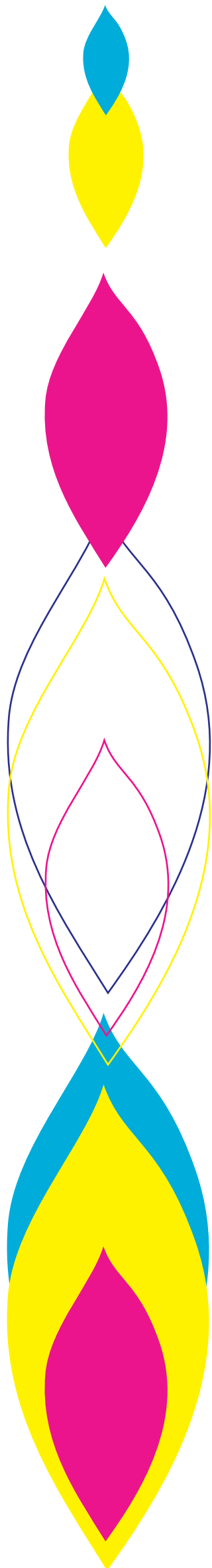
Dates: 27th Sep, 11th Oct

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Keith Reid





23

SPIRITUALITY

This five week course will provide an opportunity to explore in a supportive group how addressing our spiritual needs can help our mental well-being. How do we feed our spirits? How can we best deal with the past and look forward to the future? We'll seek to explore the concepts of joy, forgiveness, spirituality, faith, hope, and love. This is for everybody, whether they are religious or not ...

Time: 1pm-3pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 27th Sept, 4th Oct, 11th Oct,
18th Oct, 25th Oct

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Neil Cockling



24

SUPPORT FOR MALE SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Have you experienced or are you experiencing domestic abuse within the home?
Do you feel you have no one to turn to?

If you are a man living in Northumberland or Tyne & Wear you can join our support group.

Domestic violence can be difficult to talk about and many men choose to hide their experiences from others. We are offering a safe space with a qualified and experienced counsellor to help you talk things through.

At our monthly support group, in the centre of Newcastle, you can meet up with other men in a similar position, share your story, and look to move forward through resilience training. Please just come along on the dates/times shown below...

Time: 6pm-8pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 27th Sept, then weekly

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

25 TAKE HOLD OF YOUR EMOTIONS

This is a new approach which will get you to understand the way by which you produce your emotions. Knowing the 'HOW' is the basis to become able to keep on top of them.

The course is scheduled for 3 group sessions, each a week apart:

Week 1: For definitions, so we avoid misunderstandings.

Week 2: For the process of producing emotions.

Week 3: The basics of how to work, to become able to keep on top of your emotions.

You will not learn how to suppress your emotions. You will be enabled to experience them in a more satisfying way. In session one and three you are asked to fill in a short sequence of questions. At the end of session one you will receive a longer questionnaire 'The Personal Baseline'. As it is about your emotions, it is understood that you will have to look into yourself in a new way.

Walter Morauf is the presenter, with over 40 years of experience in dealing with emotional problems of others.

This is a new approach, which will get you to understand the way by which you produce your emotions. Knowing the "HOW" is the basis to become able to keep on top of them.

Time: 2pm-3pm

Date: 25th Sep, 2nd Oct, 9th Oct, 16th Oct

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leader: Walter Morauf

25

26 THE TANGO HEALING PROJECT

This is a new class for the area of the North East. Argentine Tango is an unlikely answer, with researchers identifying the dance as one of the most effective ways to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. The combination of exercise, social interaction and intense focus alleviates depression and a wide range of associated symptoms better than cross-training exercises or meditation.

One hour of soft stretchy exercises, trust's tasks, Tango sequences and musicality. Tango dancing is the opportunity to share wonderful danced moments with beautiful people. It is also a great place to meet new people who, after so many shared classes, become close friends! No other dance will bring you that feeling of connection.

In a world that never stops, Tango offers the opportunity to take a moment to let go and be fully present, connected to someone.

About the Instructor

Irene Costa has been dancing Argentine Tango since 2010 and she has been a student of many well-known tutors such as Christian Sosa – Maria Noel Siouto, Juan Martin Carrara – Stefania Colina, Ximena Hoeffner – Fernando Carrasco, Sebastian Achaval –

Roxana Suarez, Silvio la Via, Lucas Fernades, Natalia Hills-Alejandro Aquino, etc. She started Ballet, Artistic Gymnastics, Jazz and Greek Traditional Dance at an early age. She also took Latin and Oriental Dance lessons. She has taught at community and youth centres, university Tango societies, Tango festivals and several private studios. She organised and promoted Tango music and dance events nationwide. She presented a Tango-related radio show on the first Greek Tango Radio Vice Versa. She is currently living in the UK and she is an Instructor, Dancer, Choreographer and Director at the North East Tango. She is teaching at the Newcastle University Tango Society, Search and at private studios and community centres across the region of the North East. She is a member of the North East Dance Co-operative and the Dance Culture North East. She also organises cultural events. She holds a BA in History and qualifications in Music.

Time: 3pm-4pm

Day: Wednesday

Dates: 26th Sept, then fortnightly

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course leader: Irene Costa

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27

THIS IS ME

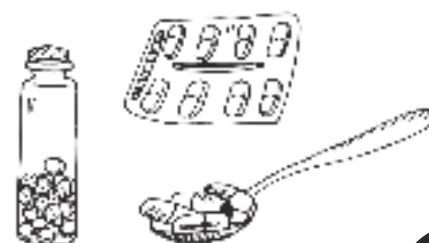
A ten-week course on becoming self-aware. This course will seek to help you recognise the skills and insights that you have gained from your experience of distress and trauma.

These are the skills that have kept you alive. Sue will help you to recognise the gifts and assets that you carry with you and use them to adopt a new way of life and a new way of being.

Using mood boards, WRAP, Behavioral Activation, DBT Skills, Positive affirmations, diary keeping, mindfulness and life formulations this course is intended to increase your confidence and self-esteem by drawing on your skills and enabling you to make sense of who you are, and why.

We ask that participants undertake the 2 day WRAP Awareness course before doing 'This is me'. Participants will be expected to complete homework tasks.

Time: 10am-12pm
Day: Monday
Dates: 24th Sept for ten weeks
(excluding half-term)
Location: Anderson House
Contact: Recovery College Collective
Course Leader: Sue Barrow



28

UNDERSTANDING MEDICATION

This two-hour workshop explores the practical and physiological impact of taking medication. It's an informal discussion group with a senior pharmacist that explores issues through shared experience. This workshop is suitable for anyone who wants to learn more about medication or for those who are thinking about changing, reducing or coming off medication.

We intend to run this workshop 3 times this term.

*Contact Recovery College Collective
for times and dates
Location: Anderson House

UNDERSTANDING PSYCHIATRY

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The session will initially describe the approach taken by psychiatrists in assessing, understanding and treating mental disorder. It will include briefly the development of psychiatry as a branch of medicine, looking at similarities and differences from the rest of medicine and will also describe the areas of information that are considered important in the history and investigation and consider the concepts of diagnosis and formulation as used by psychiatrists. It will set out the approach taken to consider the many different influences on a person's health and how these are taken account, by psychiatrists, in reaching a conclusion and planning care and treatment. We will then look forward to an interactive discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

Like all approaches there are limitations, some of which psychiatrists are aware of, and others less so. Others still, are better understood by those who use psychiatric services.

Facilitated by the former Medical Director of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, Dr Suresh Joseph.

The session will run twice this term.
Please contact us for the specific dates.

VERY BASIC I.T. SKILLS WORKSHOP

30

('LEARN MY WAY')

Are you technophobic? Have you missed out on learning how to use a computer? It's never too late.

Increasingly people need to be able to use emails, websites and write simple documents. People even need to do this to apply for benefits, jobs, deal with energy companies etc.

The Recovery College offers one to one support, in small groups of up to five people. This class is for complete beginners or people who are just beginning to learn. As well as tutor support we are registered with 'Learn my Way' which offers a wide and diverse range of online tutorials such as how to use a mouse, how to access the internet, basic literacy and numeracy, how to construct a word document etc.

Go on and take the plunge! We are a friendly bunch, all in the same boat and non-judgemental. Empower yourself and build your confidence.

Time: 10am-12pm.

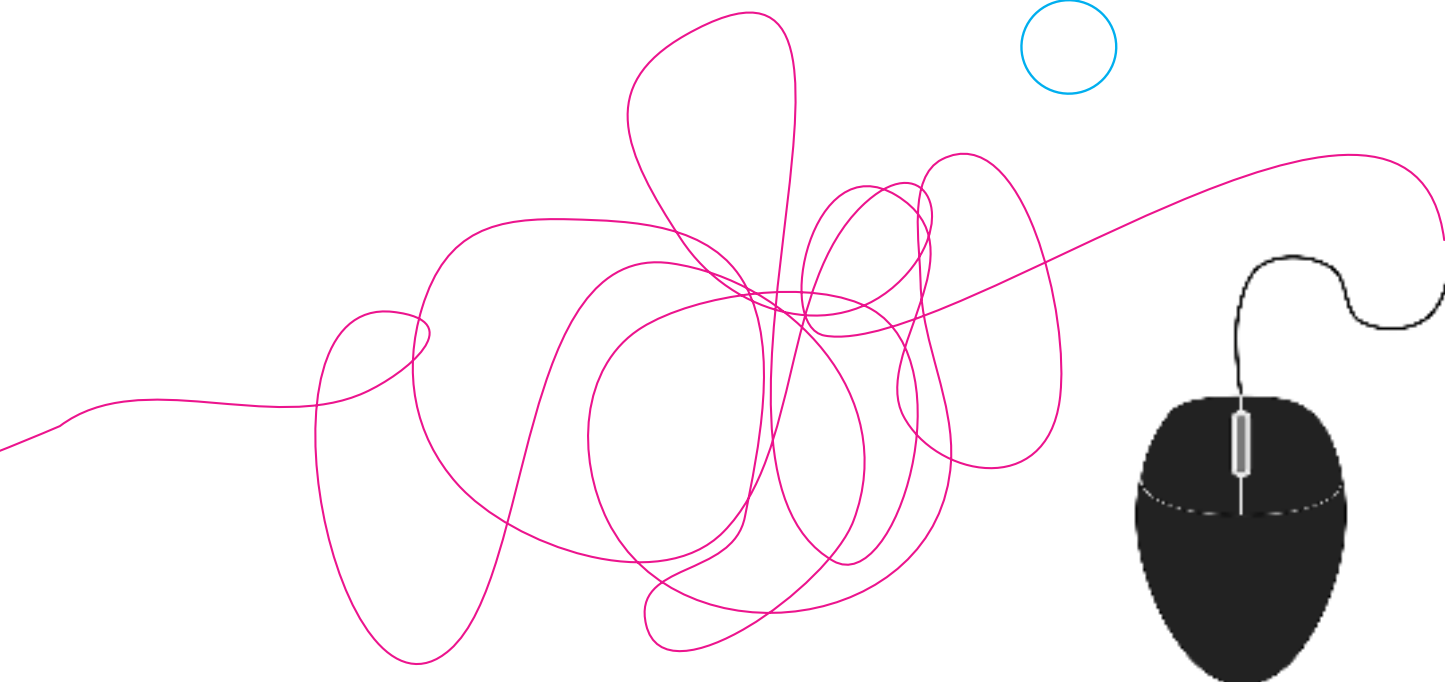
Day: Tuesday & Wednesday (weekly)

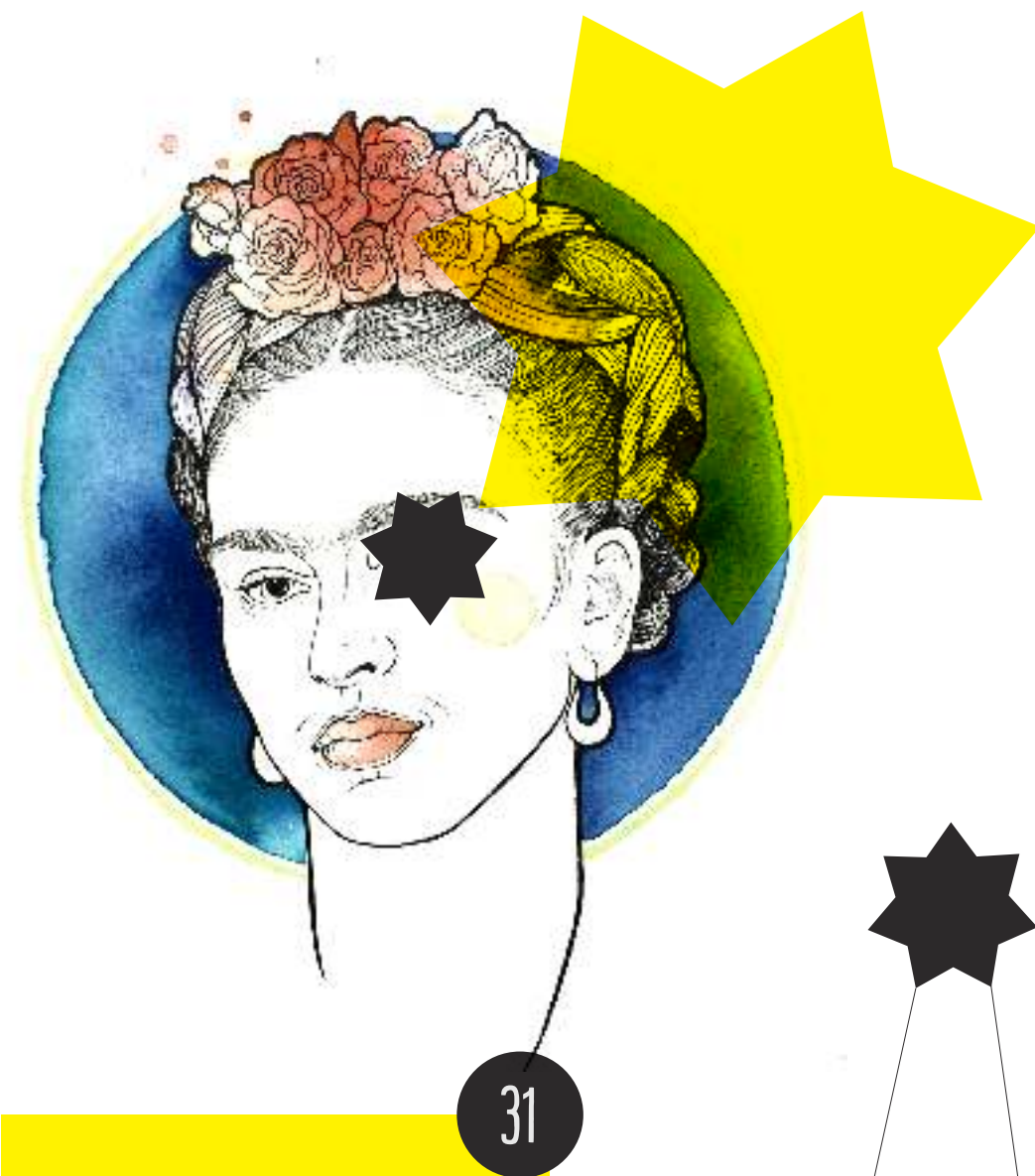
Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course Leaders:

Keith Havley & Rees Hodgson





WOMEN'S ART

These informal sessions will offer a safe space for women to explore their creative side. The direction will be led by what the group would like to explore. It will be a chance for lasses to connect with each other, share stories and have a laugh. You don't need to consider yourself particularly artistic or skilled, just up for bringing the creative you to the table.

Time: 10am-12pm
 Day: Thursdays
 Dates: Anderson House
 Contact: ReCoCo
 Course Leader: TBC

WRAP AWARENESS

A workshop for people who experience mental health challenges and for those who care about them. It promotes a structured approach to developing a range of strategies to support self-management in recovery from distress. WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is a plan designed and managed by you and is designed to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviours
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist you in achieving your own life goals and dreams

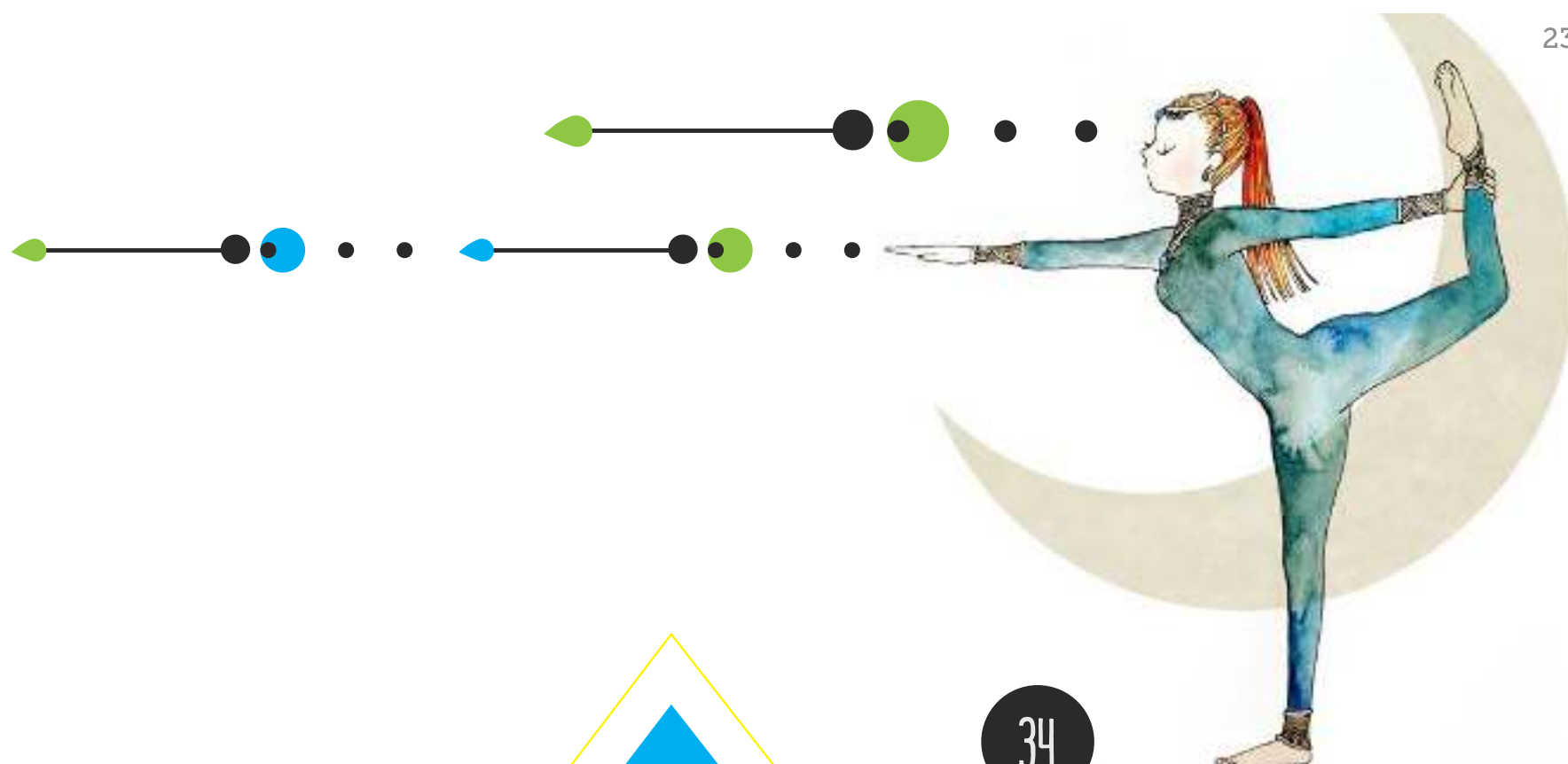
People find that doing WRAP with peers can give lots of ideas as to how you can increase your wellbeing and plenty of opportunity to bounce ideas off like-minded people.

We recommend WRAP for all of our students so we will be running WRAP workshops 6 times this term.

Location: Anderson House
 Contact: ReCoCo
 WRAP Leader: Sue Barrow

WRAP Dates for Summer Term 2018:

Session 1: Tuesday 25th Sept 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Friday 28th Sept 10am-2pm
 Session 1: Tuesday 2nd Oct 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Tuesday 9th Oct 10am-2pm
 Session 1: Tuesday 16th Oct 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Tuesday 23rd Oct 10am-2pm
 Session 1: Tuesday 6th Nov 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Tuesday 13th Nov 10am-2pm
 Session 1: Tuesday 20th Nov 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Tuesday 27th Nov 10am-2pm
 Session 1: Tuesday 4th Dec 10am-2pm
 Session 2: Friday 7th Dec 10am-2pm



34

TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA — YOGA FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

"The guiding principle of recovery is restoring a sense of power and control to the survivor" - Judith Herman

A gentle and mindful yoga class that builds a sense of connection to the self, giving you choice about what feels right for your body and time to notice, whilst having a positive effect on your emotional and mental health. Everybody is welcome, from absolute beginners with limited movement, to those with an interest in the mind body connection and mental health.

There is no touch or adjustments made by the teacher in this class and yoga mats are provided. It's good to wear comfy clothes that you feel relaxed in.

Time: 2pm - 3pm

Day: Monday

Dates: 24th Sept, 1st Oct, 8th Oct, 15th Oct, 22nd Oct

Contact: ReCoCo

Location: Anderson House

Course Leader: Lorna Evans

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WRAP DROP-IN

Have you been on the WRAP awareness course?
Would you like to continue to develop your own WRAP?

Do you need help finding your triggers, exploring new coping methods or with any other aspect of your WRAP.

Do you need help to build or refresh your current Plan?

Our WRAP leader is running a weekly WRAP drop in for students who have completed their two day WRAP Awareness and would like to discuss or revisit their plans.

Time: 3pm- 4pm (by appointment)

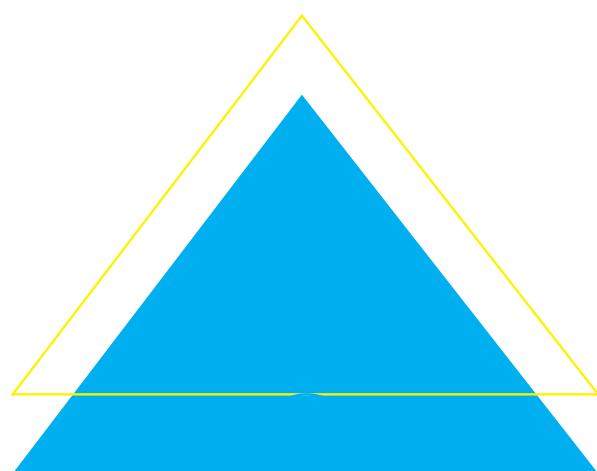
Day: Tuesdays

Dates: Starting 27th Sept

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

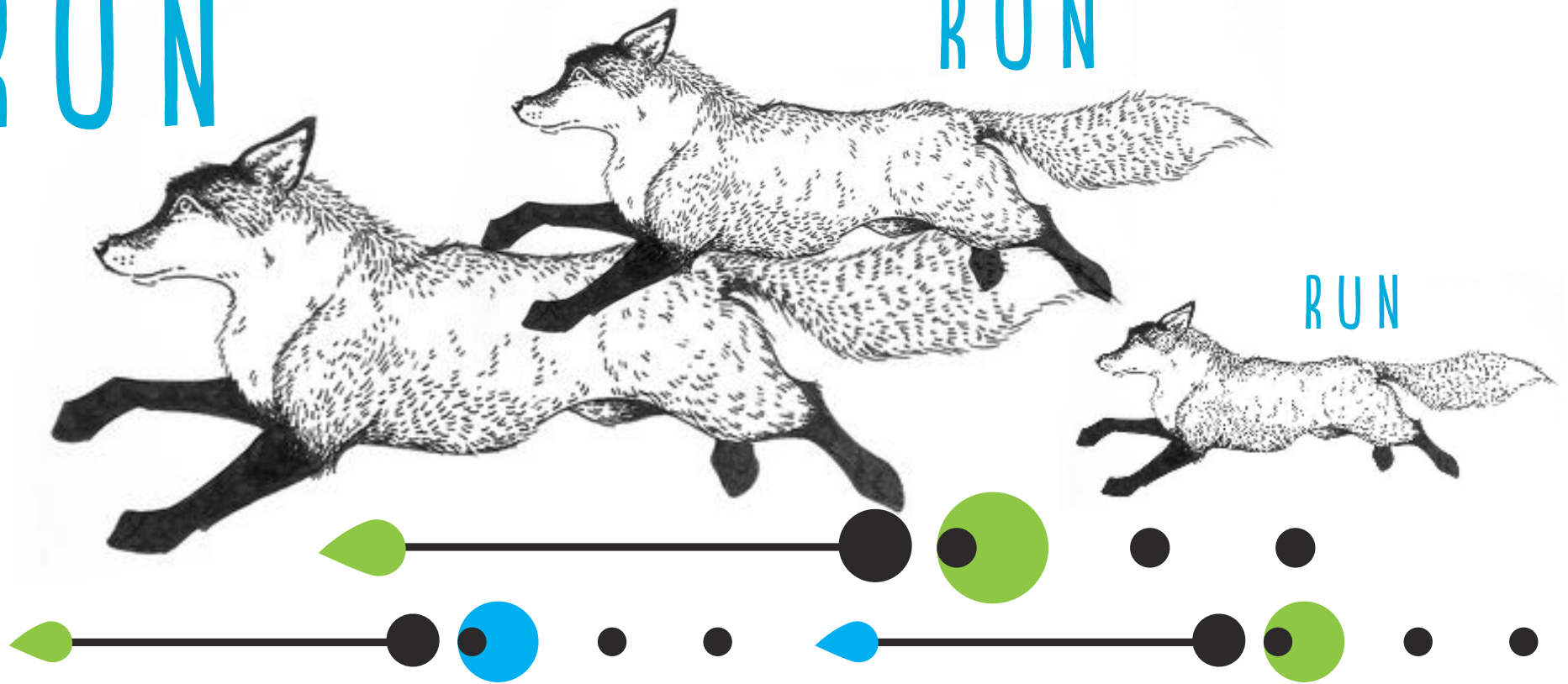
Course leader: Sue Barrow



R U N

R U N

R U N



Event: SimplyHealth

Great North Run 2018,

09 Sep 2018

Here at ReCoCo we are very grateful to the Shine Fund for all its support.

Friend of the college **James Duncan** is apparently going to actually win the Great North Run (even with a dodgy knee) which must be worth sponsoring him a bob or two. All proceeds going straight back into the Shine Fund.

See our website for details: www.recoverycoco.com

DBT
SKILLS
North East

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

Do you use destructive
behaviours and self-harm
to cope with daily life?

Do you ever consider
suicide as a way to escape?

Do you feel no-one
understands you?

Do you suffer from difficult
mental health issues?

Do your emotions overwhelm you,
causing extreme reactions?

Yes?

Then DBT is for you...

DBT helps you learn to manage your difficult emotions
by experiencing, recognising and accepting them.

As you learn to accept and regulate your emotions,
you also become more able to change your behaviour.

In DBT we work together to find a balance between accepting yourself
as you are and making positive changes in your life.

We teach practical skills that you can use to cope with day to day issues,
overwhelming difficulties and crisis and help you to build
a 'Life Worth Living'.

Our Team consists of Qualified Peer Support workers who have lived
experience of Mental Health problems, and who have completed the full
course themselves.

Please contact us for further information.

Tel or Text: 07936 375256 / 07963 375264 / llsnortheast@gmail.com





#07



RECOVERY
COLLEGE

THE TRADITION DEFIANCE

by Angela

I love my team. They are very tolerant. I'm not a natural manager you see, if such a thing exists. I'm not very good at relationships for a start.

I'm still catching up with what's normal when it comes to forming and maintaining relationships and understanding what are reasonable expectations to have of others.

I try all the time to be rational but I still think, mostly, in black and white. From days gone when too much grey and inconsistency prevailed in my early development. Whether I like it or not, it's still who I am.

My wife had the slightest falling out with a mutual, much loved, friend recently and I'm like;

'So is she dead to us now?'

Obviously everything was fine the next week but I'm made aware, again, that when it comes to relationships and trust, I'll always be playing catch up.

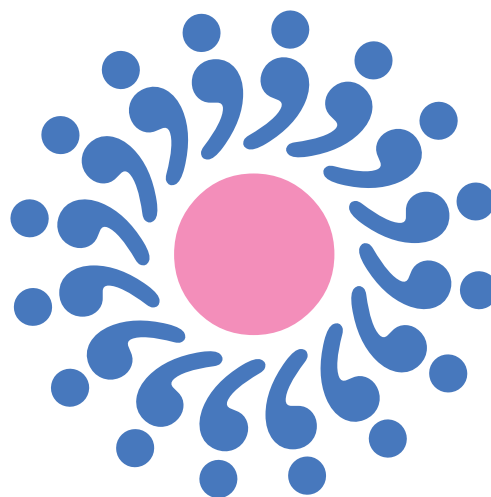
And I still hate making mistakes. Even though I know it's a part of life, the immediate temptation is to deny it. Terrified of making a complete show of myself along with the dread of accepting responsibility. Responsibility is hard.

Believing that you are still worthy of any regard or respect when you've dropped a bollock is even harder. And I'm hardwired to be oppositional. Down with the Bourgeoisie! Rise and Resist.

So I'm acutely aware of how fortunate I am that the team I work with understands and accepts what I lack in 'traditional' management skills and why.

We all know how to do our job to the same level. All learning every day, because there's no script to what we are doing at Recoco. No real tradition of patients running the asylum. Only an ingrained and unjustified fear from psychiatry, that such a situation should be avoided. That power should remain firmly in the hands of the powerful.

We pre-empt occasional trouble through funnies, hurtling towards the next obstacle relying on the evidence we have that anything seems to be manageable. Knowing that around the corner is the warm fuzzy heart opening moment when you notice how much a student or volunteer is growing.



They are like the staff on the deck of a giant mad love boat. Each pioneering their own role and always to the advantage of others.

There is security in knowing that every one of us has survived adversity and that it is that adversity that breeds resilience. We are more prepared than most for what life throws at us and have more identifiable examples than Joe public that, when it comes, it will be hard. But it will pass. An acceptance that without pain, there can't be the experience of true pleasure. That stars can't shine without the darkness. I'm blessed with the innate support and loyalty that comes from being part of a tribe who have shared a journey. A momentum powered by ambitious bravery and absolute aversion to bullshit. And I am thankful.

I am surrounded by hope and the best aspects of humanity every day. Drawing on the gifts I've been sent imagining that they are probably underserved but survival essence for difficult times. I'm sad for anyone who doesn't have what I have. Find it where you can. Be brave enough to belong.

Then there are others. Few and far between, there are those who could have it all, but choose solitary malice as their closest companion. These are the people who make it their objective to cause pain and disruption and I imagine that their lives can't be easy.

At some point they have discovered that making other people feel bad somehow makes them feel better and off they go, embarking on a lonely, contemptuous life.

Avoiding genuine connection for fear of exposing their fragile self-esteem. The bully's.

Who hasn't been bullied at some point? The bullies clearly have. How it impacts on us is often related to how others react.

Are we validated? Neurons and synapses and the likes being pruned of what we don't seem to require. If your caregivers are the perpetrators or bullies then the neural orchard of trust and feelings of safety will be been pruned to near death. Unused. Not required in a world where survival is the only objective.

I've been bullied very recently. By an adversary who won't allow themselves some peace by leaving me alone.



A sideways character assassinating swipe left me winded for a while. Upset. Frightened.

It happens every few years. The same person. For 17 years now. And I'm met with the realisation that if nobody is ever going to protect me from this, then I have no choice but to so use it to grow. Reassured in the knowledge that if they had any wits about them they would be dangerous. But they've none. So get up. Every single time. Get up. Push on. You are a Warrior.

There are opportunities to reflect and learn even as I catch my breath. How to nurture self for a start. Whilst draped in a cloak of negativity worn every day. Being under attack brings those core beliefs to the

forefront again.

"They are right, you are what they think you are. Nobody likes you. You're of no value. You had this coming. Your nemesis hates your guts and wants to see you destroyed."

It's not paranoia when it's real.

If a bully can't get you to loath yourself, then they will try to get others to loath you, or rather the character spun by the bully. My bully recruits.

So either they are right and I've got everyone else fooled. Or they are right and nobodies fooled. That despite my attempts to shapeshift into a normal person doing normal things, everyone does in fact know that I'm actually a very horrible person and Elphaba and her flying monkeys (cards marked) are merely speaking on their behalf.

But you can't be everybody's cup of tea, can you?

Life is a battlefield. And you can't win without first having an adversary. They have a necessary function in reminding us how far we have come. And how ready we are to battle, should we have to.

Battle ready strength comes from resistance and mental illness is a sign that you've already survived battles. But at what cost?

Most of us worry that we have messed our kids up by the very nature of them witnessing our distress.

Some folk may have been viewed cynically as being entirely responsible for intergenerational emotional angst. That's harsh. And sometimes true. What we could say is that we've shown our kids that life can be hard and painful. Learn that or it will bite you on the arse snowflake.

If they were loved and nurtured during the distress then they are blessed. Showing them that distress does pass, and with resolve and action it will pass quicker. That's a gift.

I worry most for the kids who haven't been exposed to seeing pain and how to endure it. The middle classes are turning to gin with a prosecco mixer to numb the disappointment of an inauthentic connection with their precious off-spring. Do you know they sell prosecco flavoured ice cream now? Gin flavoured lolly ices. Cocaine flavoured Dib Dabs.

They were told a big fat lie. 'Protect your kids from the realities and hardships of life and they will remain intact'.

Their expectations were unrealistic. The empty space is wine glass shaped. The solution becomes the problem.

So at this moment in time I am excusing myself from things as I recover from said vicious, malicious attack from old adversary. And I'm asking myself how long should I allow myself to avoid situations and connection as I lick my wounds? How confident am I that self-soothing doesn't become a self-propelling decent into self-pity. Too much self. Will I go to that comedy night? Talk to loads of people? Look happy?' 'No, I can't be arsed, it's been hard. I'm recovering'.

That's the thing though about being 'in' recovery. You're always recovering – maybe we would get more done if we changed the word. It's not a recovered self I seek, but a different, continually growing and improving self.

We were given the diagnosis, the lifetime script, the stigma and the sick note by a paternalistic system who thought they knew it all. Cheers for that.

I'm rested now thanks. Time to push on and get things done, changed.

If we spend too long catching our breath we incur the danger of missing the opportunities that are out there, now, for those with lived experience to drive the bus.

Before Richard Branson and his Tory cronies suck up every last penny from the CCGs until there's nothing left for peer-led initiatives that are cheaper and more effective because they are founded on community, shared responsibility and a cathartic sense of purpose. Not profit and empty promises.

C'mon Warriors. Up now. We haven't got time for another little lie down. It's time to realise the amazing assets you carry and use them to help others.

Once the traumatised and the neglected get going you should see them fly. Hurdles that can floor the unprepared normal are met with the disdain that comes from surviving real challenges. Proper life and death stuff. Not this Mickey Mouse business world stuff.

The NHS recruitment crisis could be remedied with just one 'give a radge a job, day'. They are mint and there's never a dull moment.

What a refreshing change to NHS dogma that would be. You should see how the rest of them go on. The consummate professionals. I feel exasperated by the NHS. It is full to the brim with good people whose endeavour in life is to reduce suffering. Then there are those whose job it is to shout orders to these drained foot soldiers. The senior managers with the best vantage points but often unable to see clearly through the smog of traditional

hierarchy and outdated internalism. It still surprises me how entrenched hierarchy is in NHS organisations. It's not dissimilar to the armed forces. I can see the need for someone in charge to bark orders in a field hospital or possibly an operating theatre following a disaster, but the blind unquestioning nod towards 'just do as your told' that's generated by antiquated practise, bears little resemblance to the organic revolution that's happening in mental health services.

Like King Cnut ordering the tide to stay exactly where it is. But Cnutty mate, the tide has turned. If you don't make way then your socks will get wet. (That's not a spelling mistake, that's how his name is actually spelt – which merits more use if you ask me). Cnut had tickets.

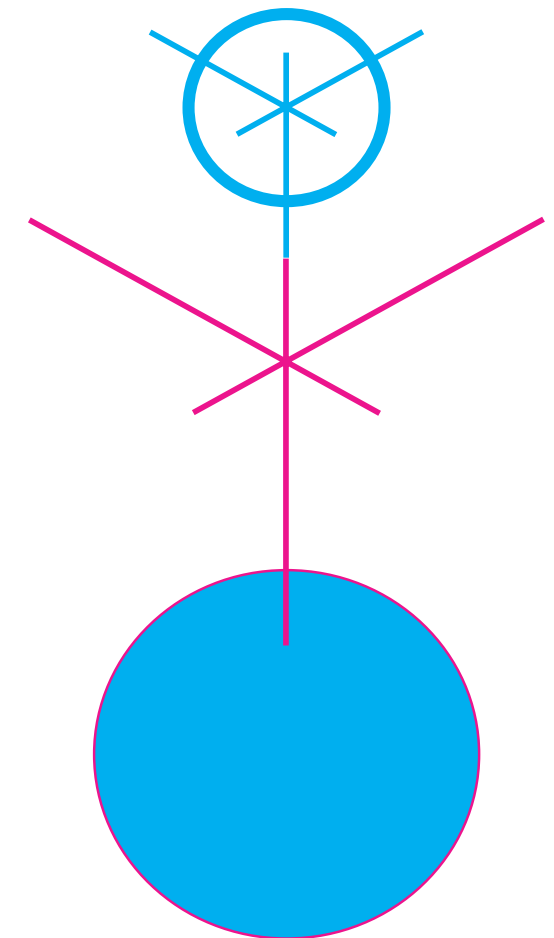
There are still very fixed ideas in the NHS about knowing your place. Sadly, the pay banding you have is directly related to your legitimacy and the value of your voice.

I've been 'reminded' (that word is used a lot – like forgetfulness is my problem, not defiance) of my place recently – who I work for MUST not be criticised in any way, any place, at any time.

Hang on a minute – I think I actually have 'critical friend' written into my job description. How do I do that then? – Double bluff by being entirely sycophantic with a sarcastic overtones and the odd wink? 3 strikes and you're in for a bollocking (you've literally got to kill someone twice to get sacked from the NHS so bollcockings are the 'go to' punishment). I'm not sure how many strikes I've had, this article is at least one strike, I imagine. Say nothing out of place, don't get ideas above your station, not even in relation to the service you created. 'You belong to us, and we will put you where we like'. It's unsettling and it suffocates innovation. Rococo's collaborative approach only works because sometimes its NHS contracted staff are crouching down behind their third sector friends, waiting

for the whiff of Matrons starch to pass so they can get on with helping people. 'Respect my authority!' is implicit. Make your mind up normality, I thought people were supposed to earn it. How on earth are us crackerjacks meant to keep up, and we are the fast learners remember. And good luck rounding up those Warriors who have survived through non-compliance. Shouting doesn't work – 'Who are you like? – ya not me dad!'. They'll not be told you see.

I went to a meeting the other week. I haven't been to something like that for years. Where a dozen highly paid senior



clinical managers talk about some bits and pieces they've done since the last meeting, that's changed bugger all or made any difference to anyone's life.

I worked out that the cost alone of the bums on seats to the NHS was about £1500. 2 hours, Band 7's and 8 and a GP. And I left thinking that could pay for a permitted earnings worker at Rococo for 5 months who could help 100 people by equipping them with the skills they need.

And yet, every day, we argue that the NHS needs to remain a fundamental partner in this service revolution because we love the NHS and everything it stands for, and has done for 70 years. It's never been as under threat as it is now and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to prevent it being dismantled by profiteers. Including dragging what bits we can, into the new age, shouting that 'if you get down off your high horse you'll see what really works'.

For mental health services to remain relevant to the spectrum of support that people need, it requires forerunners who genuinely seek collaboration on equal terms with expertise carrying partners from other sectors.

The NHS needs to realise that it doesn't carry all of the expertise. It never did.

It has become so self-perpetuating that its ideas have 6 fingers. It really does need to go out and mingle with some outsiders. Not other statutory services, they are just cousins and add nothing new to the gene pool.

Humility goes a long way. And realising that the third sector isn't just there as an overused safety net for failed attempts to pathologise people. Whilst there is a reluctance by senior managers to understand and accept the vibrant alternatives to psychiatry, people will continue to be robbed of community focussed approaches that actually work. I'm still deciphering what is reckless and what is brave and necessary. I was shocked when someone said that attempting to get a 25 acre farm so we can help hundreds of people was ambitious. Is it? Having a normal job for 15 years was over ambitious for me once. What we have achieved bears no resemblance to what the traditionalist imagined a group of service users could achieve, but we have. And why not? If your aspirations were severely restricted by

hardship and suffering then achieving anything like an ambition can feel like winning the lottery.

Why not have 25 acres of tree hugging, mindfulness, graft and sunshine?. Why not create a community where mutually respectful and kind people can help each other, why not believe that every one of them has a role and purpose in helping society. Why not imagine a world where the objectives aren't set by the 'be very frightened - buy stuff to make you happy' mob.

Know that its bollocks made up to make you spend money you don't have. There are lots of community centred movements out there. People from all corners saying no and promoting kindness and shared purpose. Soon, they will join together and the purveyors of greed and fear will have had their day for good.

Recoco grows from strength to strength despite the occasional attack and the dreary drag of some statutory cultural ignorance. And we have no traditional roles because there is no tradition of user led services in the NHS. It's only now that service users have helpfully, patiently, gathered the reins. Using our pathologised powers for good. Manipulating opportunities that those who aren't hyper vigilant will have missed. Getting outcomes and results, the likes of which haven't been seen before. Simply by bringing people together and appreciating the amazing, lifesaving gifts they bring with them.

The landscape is changing. There are more Warrior-led services than ever and Recoco will continue to do what it can to incubate amazing ideas from remarkable people.

(A special mention here for Susan Reid and Cath Goode who have been running the 10 week DBT skills course at Recoco for the past couple of years. Off they go to start up their own DBT charity and deliver what they do so well. £10 per session in Newcastle and North Tyneside. Worth every penny and it works and its better than sitting on a waiting list for 2 years. Not a living for them - but a start. And they're motivation is to help people. If you're interested in their sessions or thinking of a joint bid then their contact details are on the advert in this prospectus. Thank you lasses for all your hard work). What we lack in tradition, we gain in adventure. Not held back by dogma and outdated beliefs we will give anything a try at Recoco. Open to anything. Admittedly, some things – just the once.

Like the pentacles, daggers and calling up of demons. That was a step too far and not for us thanks. Although it has helped with the emotional transition of leaving Broadacre House. Many more tears would have been shed had I not been mindful of checking the walls for dripping blood and the windows for bluebottle swarms. Broadacre House has been a fantastic home to us for over three years and we will miss its wonderful feel and think fondly of all the love, connection and knowledge that has grown from there.

But we will embark on our mad love boat to pastures new at Anderson House (and hopefully some real pastures over in Bill Quay – fingers crossed) where Recoco will continue to push possibilities, create opportunities and build community. Good luck with your demonic squatters Messrs billionaires Rueben. I hope they don't prevent you from making the mega money you think you need. Now that you've evicted all of those pesky non-profit organisations.

And if they won't talk business and profit with you, then I have a cloven footed adversary who can probably translate in tongues. I can put you in touch if you like.

Angela

AKZONOBEL THANKS





WE'D LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR UTMOST THANKS TO THE VERY FINE PEOPLE AT AKZONOBEL. NOT ONLY DID THEY DONATE PAINT TO REDECORATE ANDERSON HOUSE, BUT A NUMBER OF THEIR STAFF DONNED OVERALLS AND GOT STUCK IN TO ACTUALLY DO THE PAINTING. NEVER MIND YOUR VAGUE CORPORATE STATEMENTS ABOUT SOCIAL PURPOSE, CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY, YADDA, YADDA, YADDA. THESE FOLKS ACTUALLY GOT THEIR HANDS DIRTY AND PUT IN A FULL SHIFT, GRAFTERS THAT THEY ARE. BLOOMING WONDERFUL. SO, MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEER, THE SPLENDID IAN MILLICHAMP FOR PULLING THIS ALL TOGETHER, AND WE'D LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF:

CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON, JAMES FERGUSON, DAVID STARK, SAM WHITEHEAD, MO CHOWDHURY, ALISON PARRY, RICHARD RAMSDEN, KRISTIAN BEK HELMIG, KEVIN REYNOLDS, CAROLINE FUNG, JOANNE GRANT, MICHAELA WARWICK, MARIE DALE, JONATHAN STEPHENSON, BETHANY WILKINSON, KATHRYN RILEY, ALEX JACKSON, JOHN WOOD AND HARRY JOYCE.

*ALSO A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO THE RECOCO VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED WITH THE PAINTING: DOUG, RUTH AND ALAN (+ANDY, MATT, HAZEL, KEVIN AND PAUL)

MENTAL HEALTH AS A FILING CABINET

I view my mental health as a filing cabinet. You know the type; about 5 feet tall, grey, metal, with 4 huge drawers that you can put suspended files into.

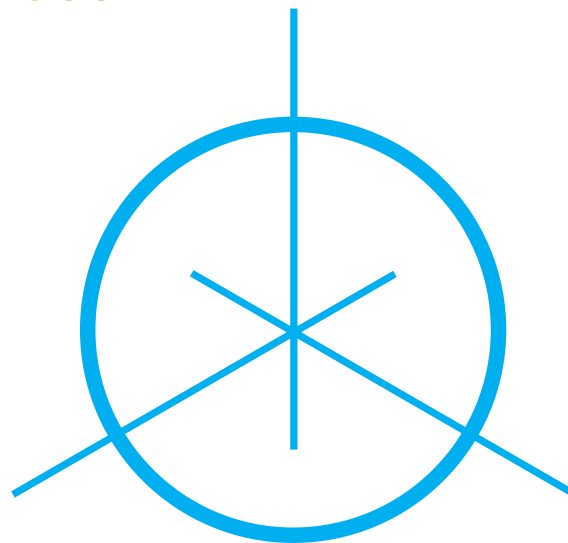
In my filing cabinet, there's the stuff that's neatly filed into the drawers. There's the stuff that's sitting piled up on top of the cabinet, in the process of being dealt with, there for easy access. But then there's the stuff that has fallen down the back of the cabinet and at 5 feet tall, it's there for as long as I want it to be. Well my stuff that has fallen down the back is the bad stuff. I don't want to file it. I don't want easy access to it. It's best left there undisturbed. But I know it's there and I remember what's there – every day. Every day, it's a struggle to fight the bad stuff. Every day I think I should be getting out my stuff from down the back and dealing with it properly. Every day is a fight to keep the bad stuff at bay.

I was diagnosed with clinical depression in 1997 at age 26. I went to my doctor because my coping mechanism,

bulimia, was out of control. It was affecting my work and sooner or later, I was going to be rumbled.

All of my eating, all of the visits to the toilet, the fact that my weight was stable....someone would guess. I was given anti-depressants (Prozac – good for Bulimia) and referred to the Eating Disorders team. The ED team were great and I did really well with them. I even realised my reason for being Bulimic – my coping mechanism.

The Bulimia started because of my being in an abusive relationship. For 5 years I suffered Domestic Abuse and became a shadow of the person I should've been.



I was so controlled; Even my underwear was assessed as suitable or not and had to be pure cotton. I ran away from him shortly after finding a new job. Something clicked in my head and silently, I found a rented room in a shared flat. My partner had to go to abroad. He insisted I go with him but I said I couldn't get time off work. That was my moment to run. It took him less than a week to find me when he returned. He begged me to come back and

marry him but I knew things wouldn't change and stood my ground. My job held me together. Despite being mentally fragile, I always managed to work and reached management level in a male-dominated world. Every now and then, I'd crash mentally and need to go sick for a while. At work, I used to have to argue that my depression made me slightly "less-able" not "incapable" of doing my job. I was one of only 2 women in the whole country doing my job and it held me together.

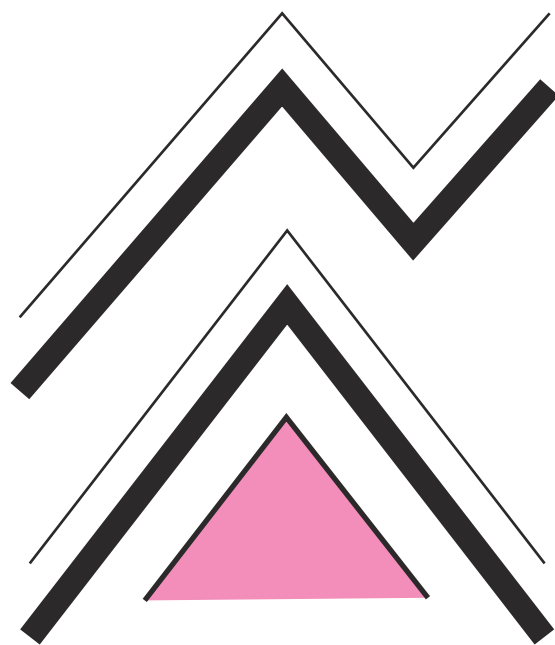
The reason my Bulimia had spiralled out of control was because of my Abortion.

One day, I was taken seriously ill at work and rushed to hospital. They found that I had a ruptured ovary because of a huge ovarian cyst which needed urgent surgery. I also found that I was pregnant. I was in no position to have a baby. I was in a rented room in a shared flat. I had no support system. It was going to be me and it. It sticks with me that an older lady on the ward said to me, "You don't have to have this baby".

I struggled with a decision but ultimately there was only one decision to arrive at. I aborted "Heather" on 4th October after weeks of torture. I was sure I was carrying a girl. As soon as I saw her heartbeat on the scanning monitor at 12 weeks, I felt she was a girl. She'd be 21 this October according to "that terrible date". I can't tell you the guilt and grief I feel now having made that decision. I play scenarios out in my head of how things might've been. I am tormented by my actions. How can I consider myself a nice person when I have this sitting in my memory, fallen down the back of the filing cabinet?

Then there's the relationship with my mother. This broke down, probably when I was about 13. That's the time when my dad put me in a private school. My mother resented it every-which-way. There was the money, and then there was the, "She thinks she's better than everyone else now".

I became "the Enemy". She hated me and things got worse when she fell pregnant with my youngest brother. She punished me every day. I maintained a healthy distance from my mother as soon as I was able. I can't forgive her for her treatment of me at a crucial time in my life. I truly believe that I was clinically depressed as a teenager, much, much earlier than the 26 year old me. My mother tries to get close to me as an adult but I cannot forgive her. The hurt and pain from my teenage years is so great that I feel I can't recover. I strive, as a parent of 2 boys, not to commit her sins. Everything I do is miles away from how my mother would do it.



I've had to battle for my eldest son's diagnosis on the Autistic Spectrum. I knew there was something different about him when he was 15 months old. I was so convinced; I took him to Harley St to see a private Paediatrician as my own GP just rubbished my concerns. He was 3 and the doctor understood me completely. She saw autistic elements. She put the wheels in motion but it wasn't until he was 10 years old that he was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome. All I can say about child number 2 is that I was left completely "broken" after the birth. My son was in special care for 9 days. The maternity unit medics knew that I was fragile but only 5 days in, when I begged for the Crisis Team, did they offer any help. I was ready to run from the hospital and fully intended suicide. I have not recovered from childbirth 2. The question is, "Do I still

have Post-Natal depression?" Maybe I have. I haven't worked since. I am still "broken". My suicidal episodes have increased. I feel that everyone would be better off without me. It used to be the case that thinking of my kids would stop me from self-harm. These days, I have thought even they would be better off without me. Every day is a struggle. There's this lost filing gear. Then there's everyday life. I fight my way through the days. I'm doing group therapy. I'm doing 1-2-1 therapy. My brain hurts. I don't want to be awake.

But then I was offered 10 Friday sessions at Bill Quay Farm in Pelaw from RECOCO. I'm amongst people who understand. After 4 weeks, I shared something that'd never been heard by non-medical people before. They have earned my complete trust. I've been late every week and it has not been a problem. They understand that things happen. There's a complete feeling of calm. Every session, the weather's been kind and we've worked the allotment. We do Mindful walks. We talk about things – stuff that wouldn't be discussed anywhere else. We have been fed as well! There's meat broth and veggie soup with bread every week which is out of this world. We've been on "Mindful Walks" down to the Tyne. I even discovered a "Common Blue" butterfly on one walk (see photo). So far, I've helped prepare the vegetable soil beds (with farmyard manure – quite a task to collect!) over 2 weeks, planted potatoes, planted aubergines, seeded lettuces, and seeded basil. I have loved every minute.

At home, totally inspired by Bill Quay Farm, I'm managing to keep 8 tomato plants alive, loads of potatoes alive, 3 aubergines, 200 onion sets and have just seeded 8 packets of herbs. Normally, I'd be sat in my chair, not moving for anyone. Even when I'm not doing, I'm thinking and planning for some of my time. Thinking of what I can do next. For the first time in my adult life, Bill Quay Farm, under RECOCO, is bringing me PEACE and serenity. I can't tell you how that feels. My brain is being given respite from all of this bad stuff down the back of the filing cabinet. Yes, for once, I feel peace. Please make RECOCO

the new custodians of the farm. I feel this is a huge resource for folk like me who have horrible stuff down the back of their filing cabinets and need respite and peace. I'm sharing my (normally private) story with you so you can see how important this place is for RECOCO to have in their control.

Thanks for listening,
LAS



THE ROAD TO RECOVERY – A PERSONAL JOURNEY

by Paul

ReCoCo is not a typical Recovery College; we are the Recovery College Collective. We are much more than a motley collection of students and volunteers – we are a community. We support each other as we struggle with our disparate mental health conditions in an inclusive, friendly, non-judgemental and accepting environment. ReCoCo is unique; I enrolled at another local Recovery College before ReCoCo and it didn't bear comparison with here.

I enrolled at ReCoCo approximately 15 months ago and I've never looked back. You couldn't get me out of here with five hairy men and a crowbar. I've made real friends here and I'm now part of the furniture. I can't emphasize too much what that means to me. A sense of belonging is real important to me. I look after the library area these days and proud to do so. It's all about giving something back.

Like all of us, I've been on an accelerated personal journey since turning up at college; a journey towards 'recovery' which means in practice that I'm so much more able to manage my mental health condition now. That's not to say that I won't be debilitated by my mental health condition at times; it's the nature of the beast in action.

I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder type II and my learned experience tells me that the diagnosis is correct. By definition, I have extreme mood swings and struggle with chronic mood phases. In simple terms, I live with months and months of depression punctuated by shorter periods of hypomania (with manic spikes). My variant of the mental health condition is unusual in that I never have so called 'recovery periods'; This means that I never have times where I exhibit the 'average mood swings of the average bod'.

In medical terms, my viewpoint on 'recovery periods' is absolute heresy in that I would choose not to have them if I actually had the choice. I'm bipolar and not at all

interested in average mood swings. It's not for me. I'll live with the downs because they are followed by ups. Hypomania is where it's at and I don't care what the mental health professionals have to say about that.

In my case, I also have to live with serious

“

I have found I am more relaxed here and everything has been informal. I don't feel alone here.”

anxiety. It's a toxic mix with bipolar disorder. Anxiety has blighted my life since my earliest days. I'm not whinging; it is what it is.

My fundamental assumptions about the combined effects of bipolar disorder with anxiety have been challenged and radically changed for the better since turning up here.

I used to believe that I had no self-confidence and self-esteem whatsoever. I now know that's not true and I retain a measure of self-confidence even when the depression bites hard. I'm much more assertive and proud of my achievements. That's the direct consequence of attending courses at college.

I have a racing mind. It goes at 1,000 miles an hour.

I often think about several tasks coming up and all of them at the same time. Meditation was, I believed, the last thing that I'd be able to do. Wrong. I completed an extended course on mindfulness and now regularly come to mindfulness drop-ins. Living in the moment helps and I'm better able to concentrate. I've also discovered that chakras work for me as part of mindfulness, a real surprise as I had them squarely in the pigeonhole labelled religious mumbo jumbo.

College is a sanctuary when times are rough. I can come in and hang out in the chill-out area. I can talk to others or not and, crucially, other students are sensitive to that without having to be told. Most everybody knows when I'm having a bad day. I don't have to sit in my flat alone and struggle with depression, isolated and in silence.

I used to let mood states fester without challenge and, moreover, 'fed' them. Chronic depression would inevitably lead to acute episodes and I would soar when high. At college, I have built up an armoury of wellness tools to help me cope. Mindfulness is one of the primary ones and there are loads of others. I go to the gym, play Badminton (badly!), go out with the village walking group, spend time by the sea, come into college and take advantage of the support provided by my local mental health services

– the list goes on. I'm longer a martyr to my mood swings.

Anxiety is a real issue for me. There are many tasks, often prosaic, that I'm frightened of tackling.

These activities/tasks are forbidden; I can't and won't do them. It's that bad that I have a support worker that promotes exposure therapy. That's real important, but, in itself, insufficient to challenge anxiety. Here again, college marched in to help through the provision of a 'Feel The Fear' course, an 'anxiety-buster'. I'm far from combatting many of my fears, but I am now prepared to tackle some of them head on. It's an ongoing process and that's the essential nature of 'recovery'.

I have aspirations now (that's also a result of being part of college) and, by far, the biggest one is to be able to speak out publicly about mental health issues.

Out of nowhere, I've now got a mentor at college that is supporting that aim. Through him, I've attended a number of courses empowering me to develop the gumption I need to achieve my goal. I'm not there yet, but I'll get there. Thanks to Steve for that.

I don't have one mentor, I have two. Sue has gone out of her way (amongst other things) to support me with putting together a WRAP, a task that I've been avoiding for the best part of 2 years. It became a forbidden activity before a WRAP course at college followed by one-to-one sessions. Recovery plans are important. I should add here that there was no 'formal' assignment of my mentors to me. It was a natural process that simply evolved. My mentors are friends. They are specifically cited in my WRAP as supporters when times are hard and I'm breaking down.

It was not so long ago that I was dismissive of all the coping strategies that I now rely upon to manage the swings and roundabouts arising from bipolar disorder in action. I considered them all to fall into the category of 'hippie-shit'. I've learned better now.

Come to ReCoCo and believe. I do.

We are now moving out of Broadacre House and on the cusp of moving into a new home. Change is always difficult, but I've learned that everything is an opportunity.

ReCoCo goes on; onwards and upwards.

Paul



SCARS

to me
scars are beautiful
they show us
where we've been
not where we're
going
they remind us of
battles
we once had to
face

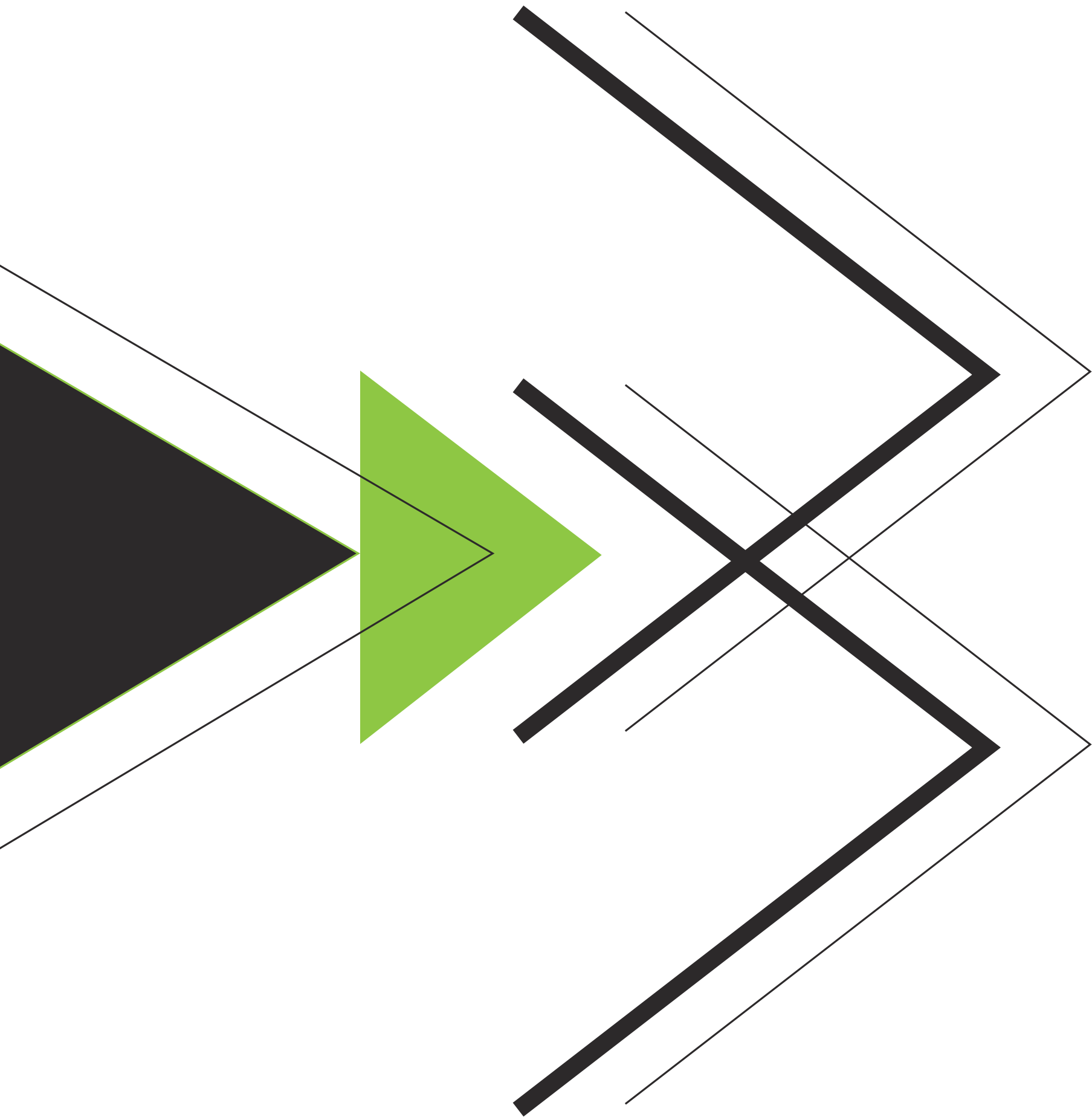
to me
scars make us
strong
they paint a picture
of the darkness
you once lived in

to me
scars show us the
past
they take you
places
of sadness and sin

but look around
everyone has scars
some old
some new
they're all special to
me

by Mel





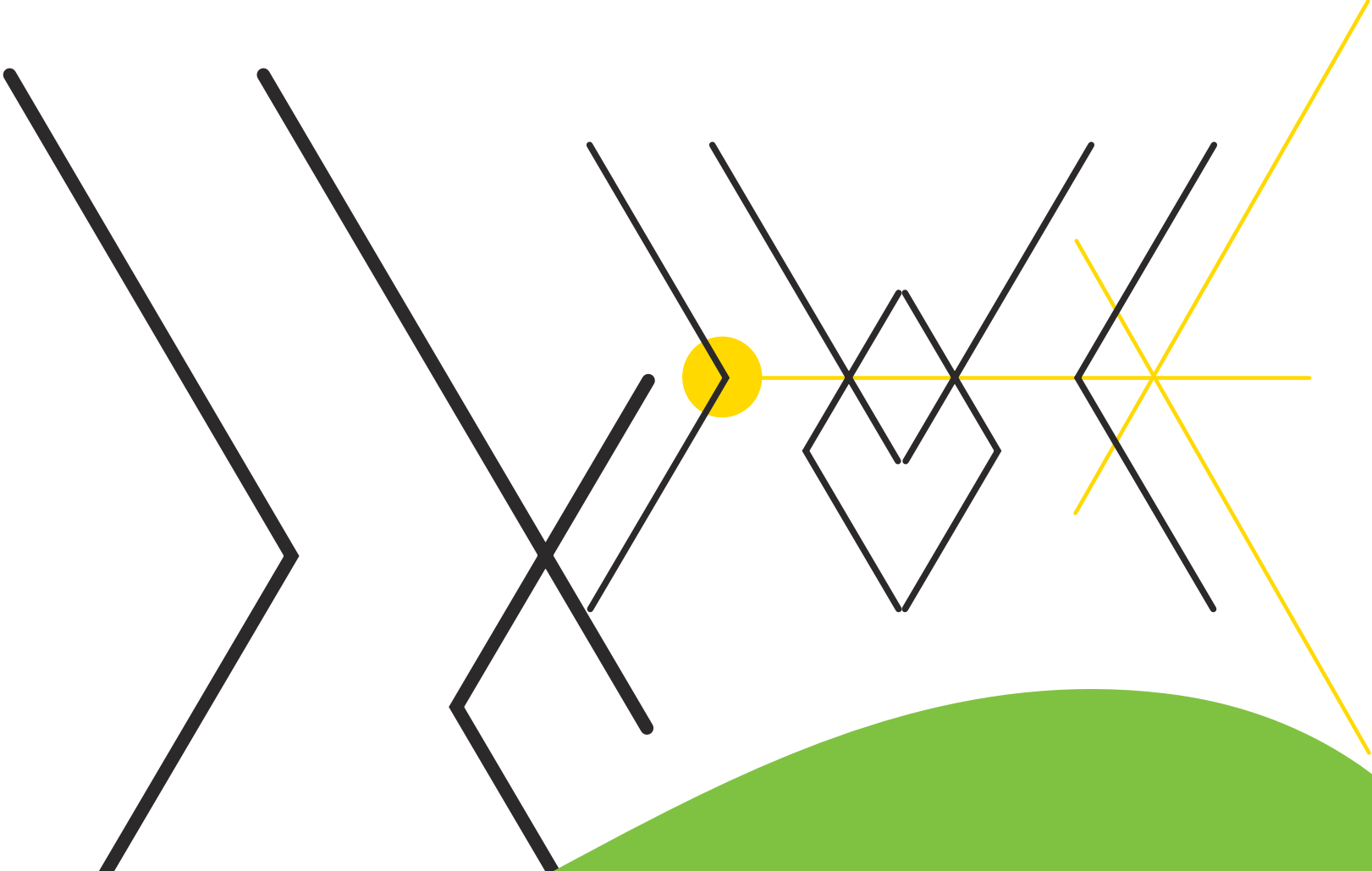
THOUGHTS FROM CHRISTINA

//

"I would like to extend a sincere Thank You to all the Staff and Volunteers at ReCoCo at this pivotal point of moving from Broadacre. Some six months ago, when I first walked through the doors of the Newcastle Recovery College, I felt somewhat anxious, bewildered and unwell but I soon received a caring welcome from the staff at the office. I then spoke to a very caring person by the name of Angela, who made me feel at ease and listened to me; I mean: really Listened to Me (!). While wanting the very best for the Recovery College, I soon realised that actually, Angela's most important aim is to help Service Users to find what is truly best for each and every person at the college. How very special. >>

>> I have come a long way since at ReCoCo, with ups and downs, following a number of interests, participated in courses, experienced mindful quiet time, received advice and support and spoke to others sharing aspects of lived mental health experience. It is uplifting to know there is a constant focus on Wellness and Recovery at the College and that everyone is truly valued. >>

Thank You.
From Christina



"The Staff at Tyneside Recovery College are very welcoming and helpful. Everyone that uses Tyneside Recovery College has either experienced mental health illness in the past or currently have a mental illness. All of the members are non-judgemental and are supportive of one another. It is like one big happy family! I have done courses such as Wrap, Peer Support Development Course, DBT introductory Skills and took part in a geek group by playing card and board games. I have also done a recovery star when I first joined the College which covered the main aspects of people lives by setting goals and to check over time to see how you have progressed. Staff have also helped me with interview preparation and supported me with a job application which enabled me to be a volunteer at Bill Quay Farm which I really enjoyed. The services provided have really benefited my mental health and I have coping strategies in place to stay well".

TESTIMONIAL FROM TYRONE MURPHY

HOW GOOD IS THIS RECOVERY COLLEGE?

by Michelle Glascott

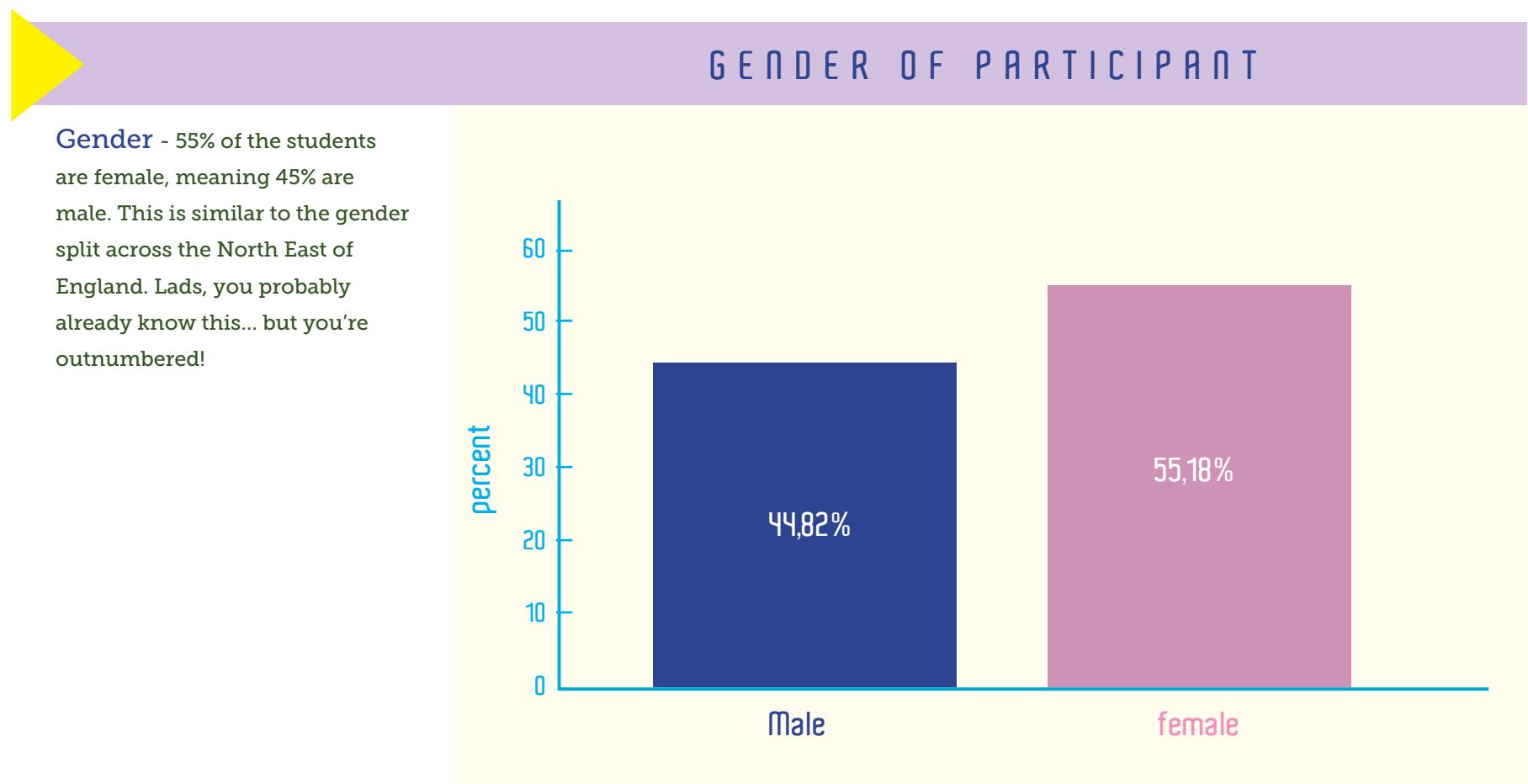
You only need to spend a few hours at the college to know the answer... absolutely brilliant!

The people who use the college, just by the very fact they keep coming, despite what they have been through is testament enough to say the college works well and restores wellbeing for so many people. Our students/warriors have met with the bigwigs and told them of their experiences, literally baring their soul to demonstrate how vital the college has been to their recovery. Our warriors further demonstrate the worth in the college when many graduate from being a student to becoming a facilitator. Some then move onto volunteering at the college and helping others... and some have even secured paid NHS jobs. Now bearing in mind that when they first came to the college they described being broken, with nowhere to turn and were absolutely certain things were never going to get better. Yes, we know the college works and changes lives.

Whilst personal stories are the most powerful way of showing the college's worth, funders want data. They want statistics. They want cold, hard facts. Well guess what... we have them! Can you remember all of those times you have been asked to fill in forms about how you are doing? Well because of your patience and support, all of these forms (measures) have provided the data to prove that what we do makes people better. FACT! 925 students have completed the measures such as the 'Empower Flower', the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale' (SWEMWBS) and the Dunbar scale. That is a MAHOOSIVE amount of data and we have even more since this evaluation took place.

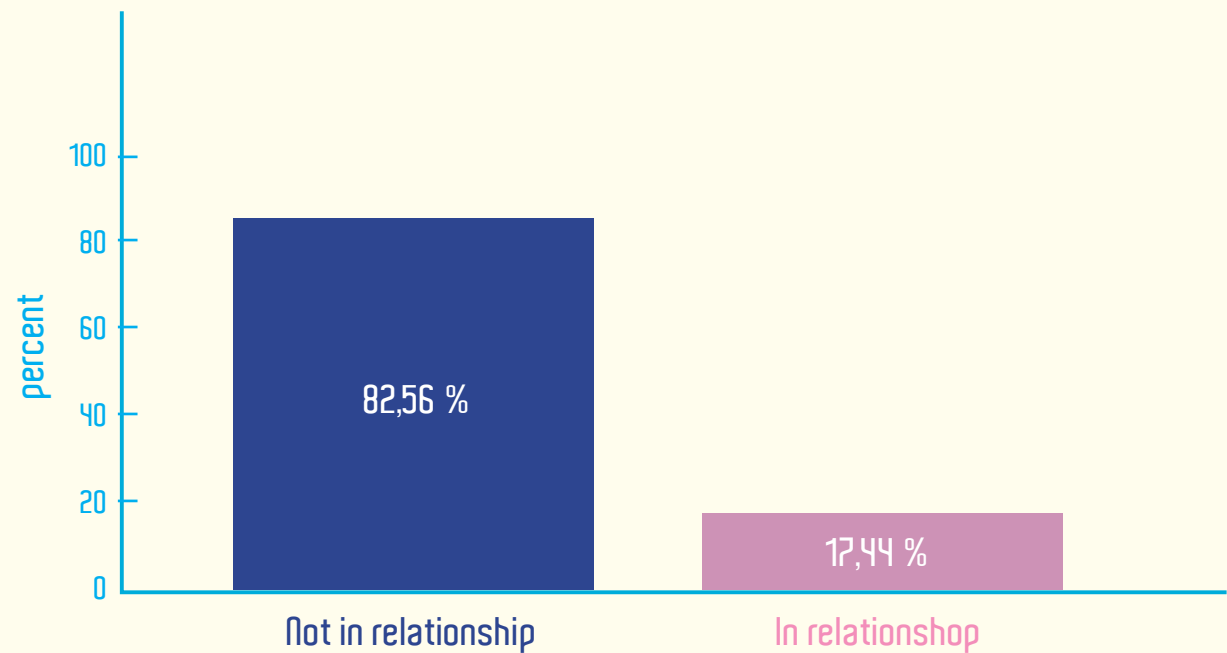
So, what did we find?

First of all, let's start with an overview of who we are.



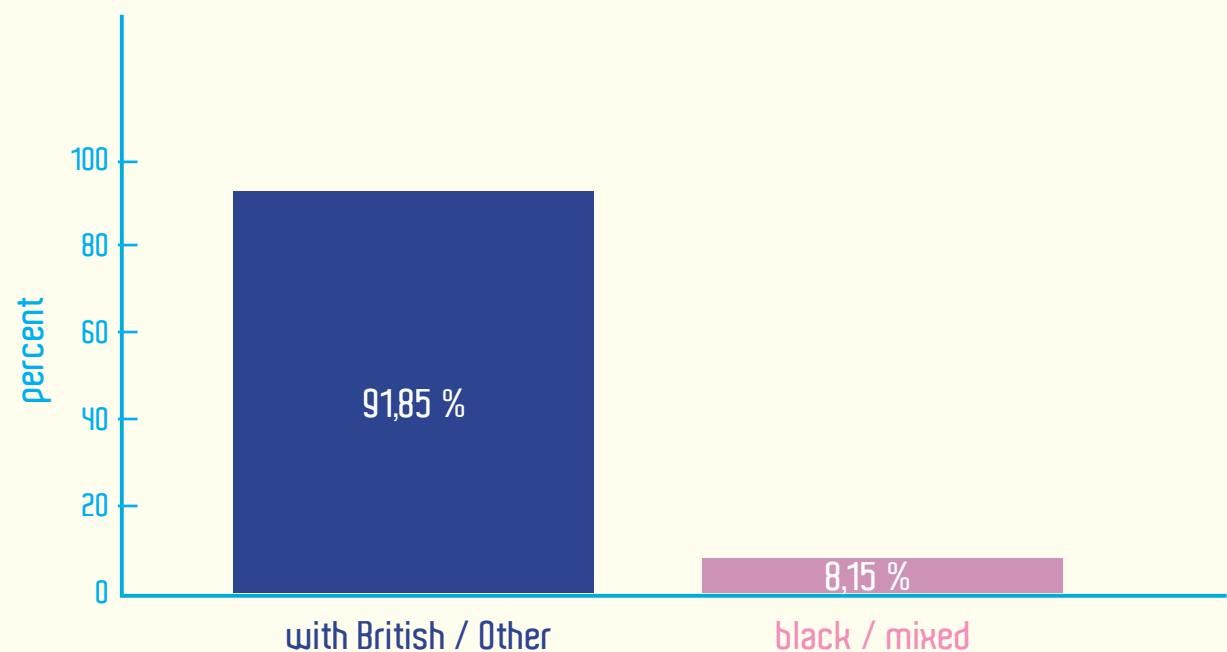
RELATIONSHIP STATUS RECORDED

Relationship Status - 83% of our students are not currently in a relationship, whereas across the North East, only 34% of people are not in a romantic relationship. This is a huge difference. What we do know though is that relationships are often badly affected by mental health issues. Many people in distress can struggle to maintain long-term partnerships due to the impact of their traumatic experiences on their ability to trust and love, but also the day-to-day strain of repeated periods of poor mental health.



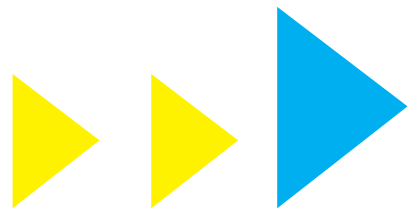
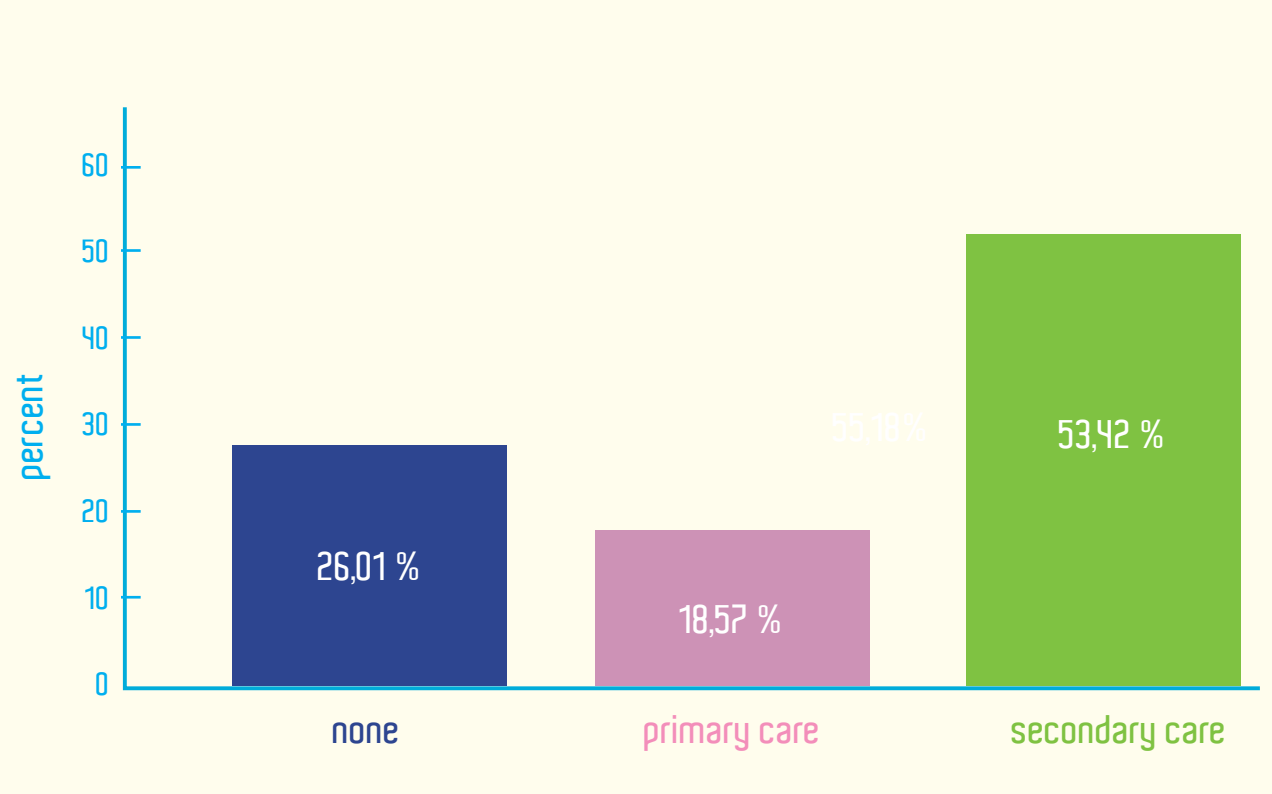
ETHNICITY

Ethnicity - In terms of ethnicity, the students at the college are mostly white (92%) and this is also different from the average across Newcastle (87%). This tells us that we need to think about how we can be more accessible and acceptable to our pals from different ethnic groups - and we're open to ideas on how we might do this, folks?



Services Outside of ReCoCo

- In terms of what services students use outside of the college 53% use secondary care services such as a Community Mental Health Teams or other NTW services. 19% use Primary Care services such as an IAPT counsellor. This means that 28% of our students use no other service apart from the college.



Deprivation - How 'well off' a community is is measured by the Government using something called an 'index of multiple deprivation'. This is basically an overall score which considers things such as average income, levels of employment, educational levels, housing etc and determines whether you live in an area which is deprived or rich, or somewhere in between. Most of the students in our college come from the most deprived areas in the region. This is a common finding for people with mental health needs. Researchers have known for decades that poverty and a lack of opportunity and resources has a massive impact on mental wellbeing (actually, normal folk have known this since time began... but never mind). Even those of us lucky enough to be born in areas which are not deprived, can often end up in areas that are the most deprived as it is so much harder to gain housing and support when experiencing mental distress. We also found that those of

us who live in the most deprived areas of the region have the poorest mental health and wellbeing of all of the students at the college (Hang in there for the good news coming about this soon though...).

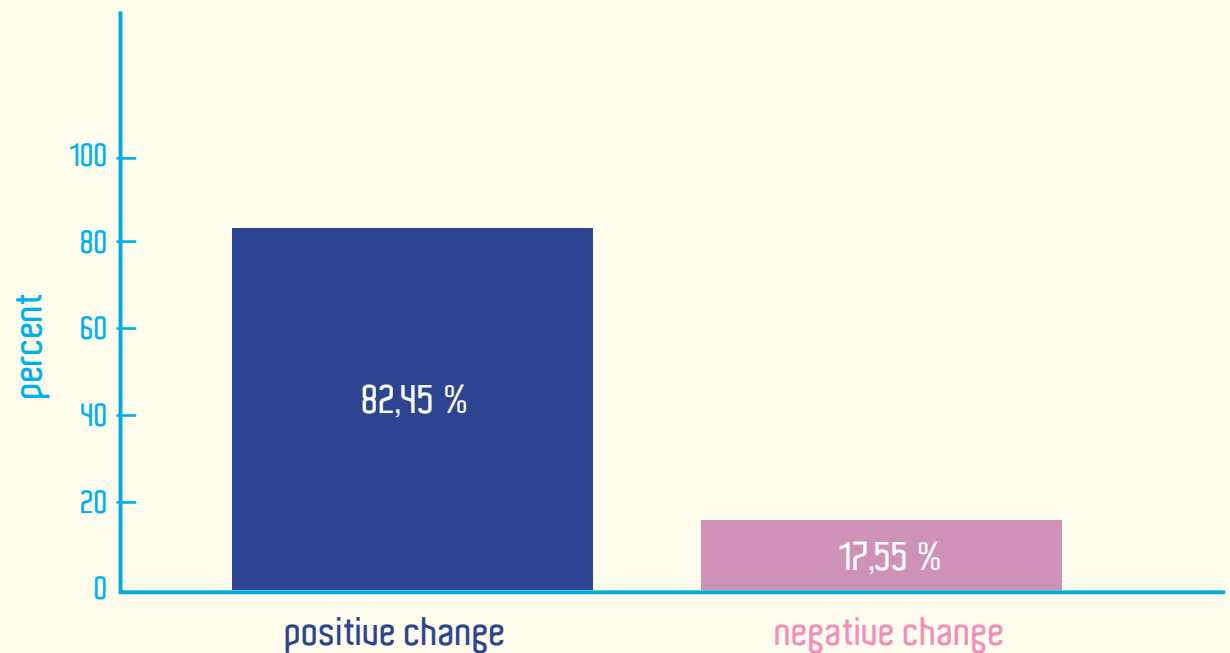
Now for The Great News... When we measured your SWEMWBS (mental health and wellbeing) scores when you first came to the college and then again after you had attended at least one course (some people have had this done many times), we found that 82% of students had significant improvements in wellbeing. This is an astonishing amount of you who have felt better after coming to the College.

And can you remember before when I said that those who come from the most deprived areas have the poorest mental health and wellbeing? Well... it is those very people who have been helped the most by the college. Interestingly, the majority of the almost

18% who reported a reduction in mental wellbeing actually started at the college with very high scores of wellbeing already... they really only had one direction to go in.

Just to emphasise even further about how well we are doing... when we look at the data we have collected, we are talking about improvement that is 'statistically significant'. This is a research term which means that it is less than 0.05% chance that the result is an accident... that it is not due to the intervention. In our case it is even better than 0.05% chance... in our case there is less than 0.001% chance that the reason for improvement is not because of the college... unless there has been a sudden and dramatic improvement in life circumstances for 82% of students (758 of you) - unlikely!

SWMWEBS DIRECTION OF CHANGE



THIS IS AMAZING!

We are so excited about this, as are the researchers... and the potential funders. The final line in the official report reads:

So, in summary, the Recovery College is a highly effective (statistically significant) intervention in increasing a sense of wellbeing and it is a very inclusive service which is equally effective for all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, relationship status and external support services.

Thank you to all of you who continue to fill in your forms... it really matters... Don't stop!

Michelle Glascott



GROUP WORK FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Group 1+
Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland will be running a group work programme in 2017. There will be one group in Gateshead and two groups in Newcastle. All groups are for women, aged 16 and over, who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives.

The groups offer you the opportunity to come together in a women-only safe space to:

- Explore how society's attitude towards sexual violence has affected you
- Learn and practice positive coping strategies
- Identify and develop positive future goals and steps towards these
- Increase your peer support network

Group 2
Group Work for Women who live, work or study in Gateshead or Newcastle starting April 2017

Group Work for Women who live, work or study in Newcastle or Gateshead starting August 2017

To express an interest in either of these groups, please contact us on 0191 2330382 or email pedwards@rcn.org.uk

WINDING-PLAY CONTAIN TRACES OF PEER SUPPORT

BEATS



An open, music-creation, jamming, writing, experimenting, having lots of fun session.

MONDAYS 3PM-6PM

0191 2330382 / launchpadncl@aol.com for details



Join our Group



Our groups are for women 18 or over who have experienced any form of sexual violence or abuse at any time in their life.

"I've not always been very good at self-care, and I am finding the way the group supports me in paying attention to that very helpful."

"The group has allowed me to share things I have previously kept secret."

Contact us to find out more

0191 222 0272
enquiries@rcn.org.uk
www.rcn.org.uk



Charity no: 1161149
Company no: 2215875



Mental Health Mates Newcastle upon Tyne

Mental Health Mates was set up in 2016 by Bryony Gordon (author of Mad Girl) following her own struggles with OCD. What started out as a mad idea, is now an international network of Peer Support walking groups.

Our message is simple and we offer a place to walk and talk without fear of judgement. Helping you find your WE, because YOU are not alone.

My name is Natalie and I run the Newcastle meet-ups. I have lived experience of depression, anxiety and a panic disorder. I am a Time To Change and Blue Light champion and I'm passionate about reducing the stigma and discrimination around mental health.

We meet once a month (usually the last Saturday of the month) for a gentle walk and talk usually around Exhibition Park, Newcastle and then have a nice cuppa afterwards. You can talk as much or as little as you wish about mental health but know that you are not alone and we understand that it is perfectly normal to feel weird. If you'd like more information or would like to join us on a meet-up get in touch.

Facebook: [mentalhealthmatesncl](https://www.facebook.com/mentalhealthmatesncl)
Twitter: [mentalhealthmatesncl](https://twitter.com/mentalhealthmatesncl)
Instagram: [mentalhealthmatesncl](https://www.instagram.com/mentalhealthmatesncl)
Email: info@mentalhealthmates.co.uk

www.mentalhealthmates.co.uk



DROP BY

Tues & Wed
1-3pm

INFORMAL
PEER
SUPPORT

Come by and chat with folk from the Beaconey College Collective



A free, relaxed and informal group, we meet every Wednesday (10am-1pm) to discuss and write about a wide range of topics. We all (including the tutor) have experience of mental illness and the group caters specifically for this. The atmosphere is friendly, guidelines are agreed, confidentiality is respected, and whilst everyone takes part, there is never any pressure to share your writing unless you want to. There's plenty of variety – something different every week – and since the group is ongoing you can attend on a regular basis or just drop in when you feel like it.



GEEK GROUP



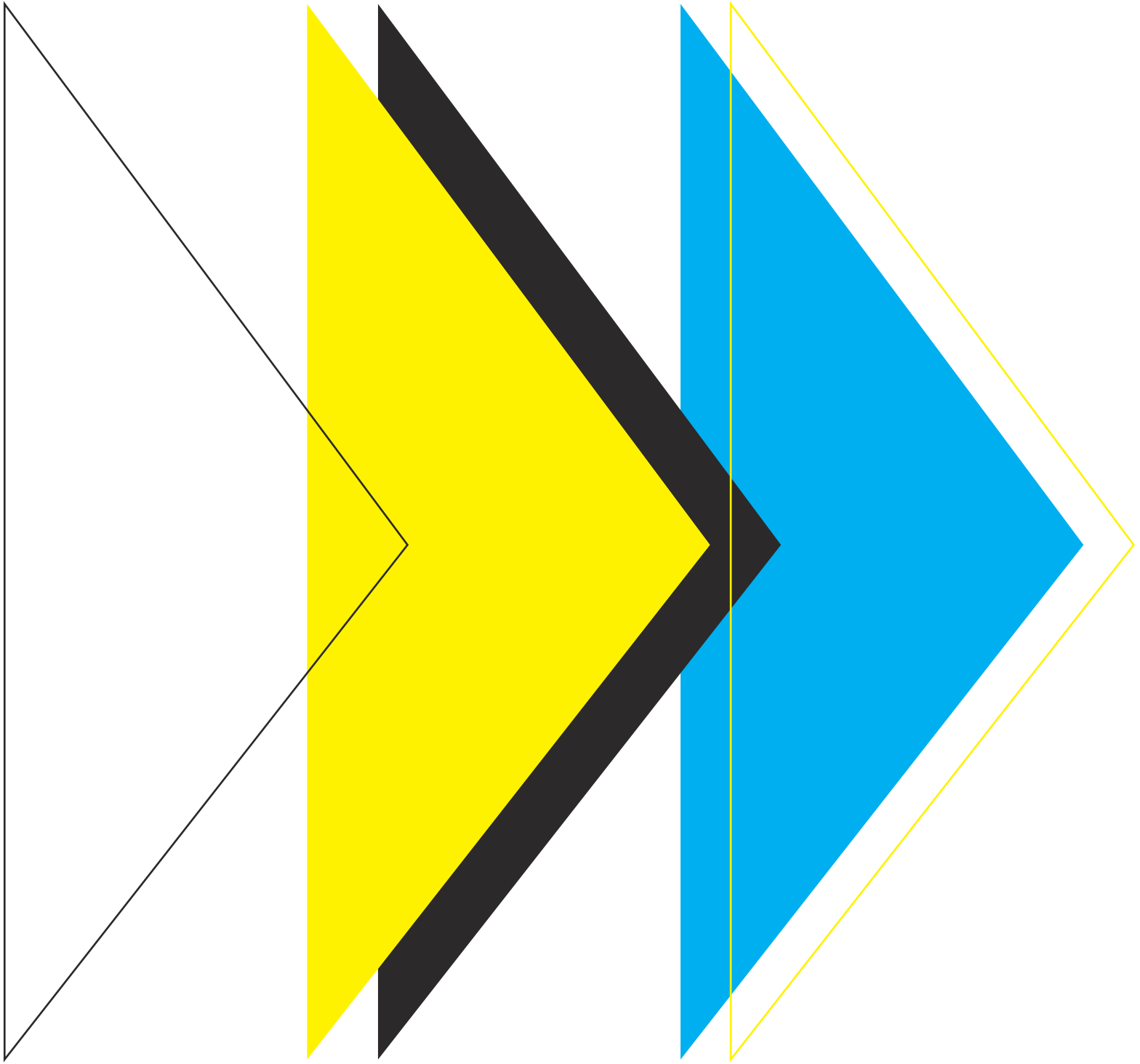
Computer games, comic books, tech, movies & TV, boardgames, sci-fi & fantasy, anime, & all that's geek cool.

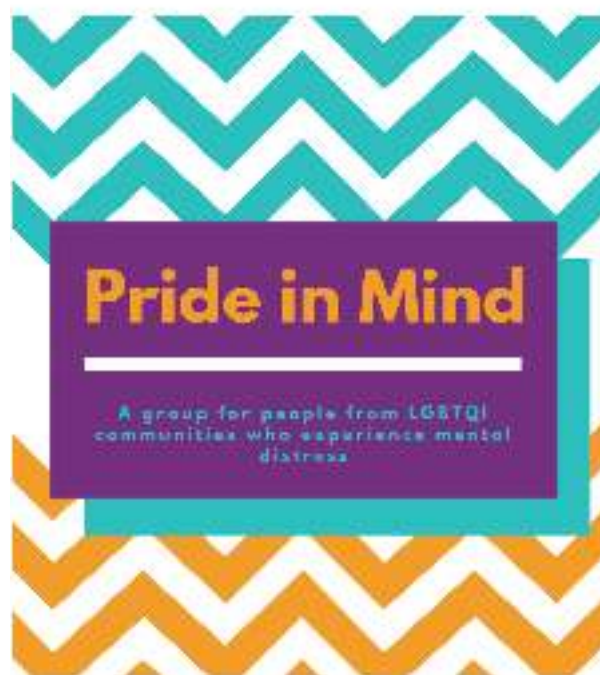
With real people.

April to April every Thursday

launchpadncl@aol.com 0191 2330382








Pride in Mind

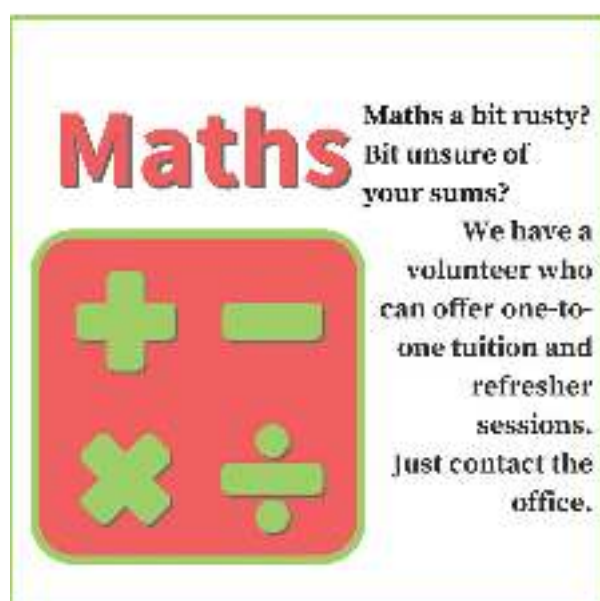
A group for people from LGBTQI communities who experience mental distress



WOMEN'S GROUP BLISSFUL

EVERY SATURDAY LUNCHTIME

Tel: 0191 2330302
launchpadncl@aol.com

Maths

Maths a bit rusty?
Bit unsure of
your sums?

We have a
volunteer who
can offer one-to-
one tuition and
refresher
sessions.
Just contact the
office.



1 IN 4 WOMEN WILL EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME

Heads for the game and
working together, we
can make a difference.

For more information
contact the office.

Not a head for the game?
Contact the office.

For more information
contact the office.

For more information
contact the office.



Pride in Mind

Pride in Mind is a group for people who experience mental health problems, including those who are LGBTQI, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Gendering, and Intersex.

We recognise that LGBTQI people who experience mental health problems suffer from double discrimination: racism/homophobia and transphobia, and the experience of being a mental health problem. We aim to address this imbalance by empowering the members of the group.

Pride in Mind provides emotional support for its members via monthly meetings at MORNAC in Newcastle. We also organise regular social events and activities and support in the community.

To join Pride in Mind or for more information
contact the group contact Nick Lumb
nick.lumb@ncl.ac.uk
0191 2330302
c/o launchpad, Newcastle House, Market
Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6NU



InSIGHTS

Self Injury Group

A group for those who have lived experience of self-harm or self-injury. This includes a range of issues, ranging from cutting, to skin-picking, to hair-pulling and other behaviours.

Run by and for service users and those who have self-harmed, it offers a supportive environment in which to share experiences, coping techniques, and the opportunity to talk to others.

It is not a clinical service, but a peer support and self-help group aimed at those for whom existing services don't quite meet all their needs, and it works to complement, not to replace professional medical help.

For further details please contact Launchpad
launchpadncl@aol.com 0191 2330382
or Steve O'Driscoll 07947766327

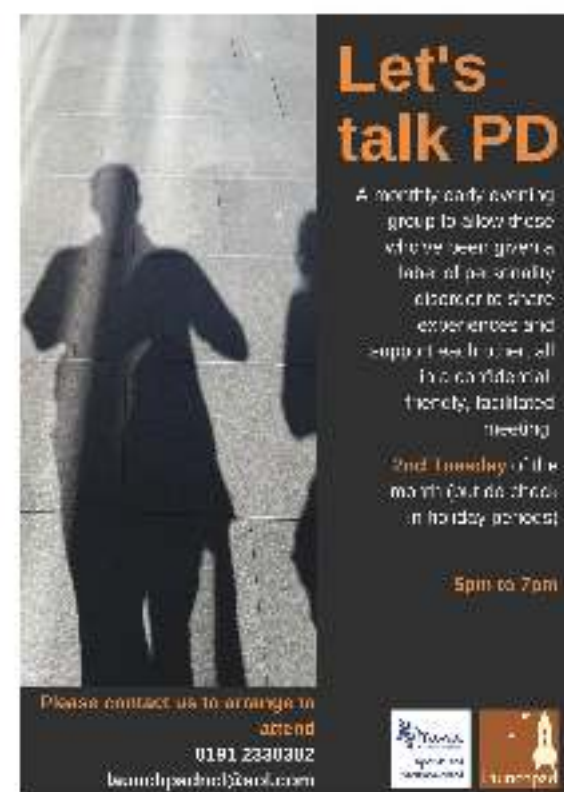


WALKING & TALKING

Launchpad Wanderers walking group

Can't talk with lived experience of mental health problems meeting every other Sunday for a walk in the park and a meal in the pub. Nothing too strenuous, in good company with a route planned to enhance self-esteem and health benefits as well as by public transport.

For further details contact the office
0191 2330302
c/o launchpad, Newcastle House, Market
Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6NU



Let's talk PD

A monthly early evening group to allow those who've been given a letter of personality disorder to share experiences and support each other. All in a confidential, friendly, facilitated meeting.

2nd Tuesday of the month (unless there is a holiday period)

5pm to 7pm

Please contact us to arrange to attend
0191 2330302
launchpadncl@aol.com

EMPLOYABILITY THAT PACKS A PUNCH

Based at our Newcastle gym, you will learn what it takes to become a fitness professional

Bursary available
Free gym pass

Contact us for more information

Only funded for 15-24 year olds

Our relaxed, no pressure training environment gives you the key skills needed to progress in the fitness sector. Based in Newcastle, our course will teach you:

- How to be a good fitness professional -
- How to lead a successful fitness session -
- Different types of exercise -
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle -
- Fitness nutrition -
- Sports injury -
- How to build a fitness business -

To reply or for further information, contact us today.



Knitting

Mondays 10am - noon

Mondays 10am - noon

It's not a hobby
It's a post-apocalyptic survival skill

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Unusual Experiences

Educational Support Group

Meet Every Other Thursday

1pm-4pm
Ring 07591130207 to confirm a place.

Tuesday afternoons or Thursday afternoons
1-1 or small group

Guitar

lessons and sessions



RESEARCH

By us
About us
For us

Peer Research Group gathering evidence to support and inform ReCoCo: get involved, all welcome.

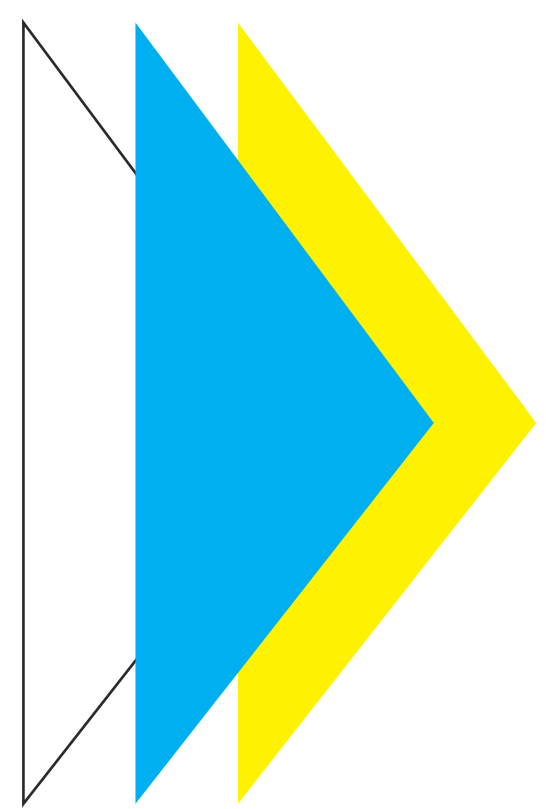
Please email info@recoverycoco.com or pop into the Office to be added to the Interest list.

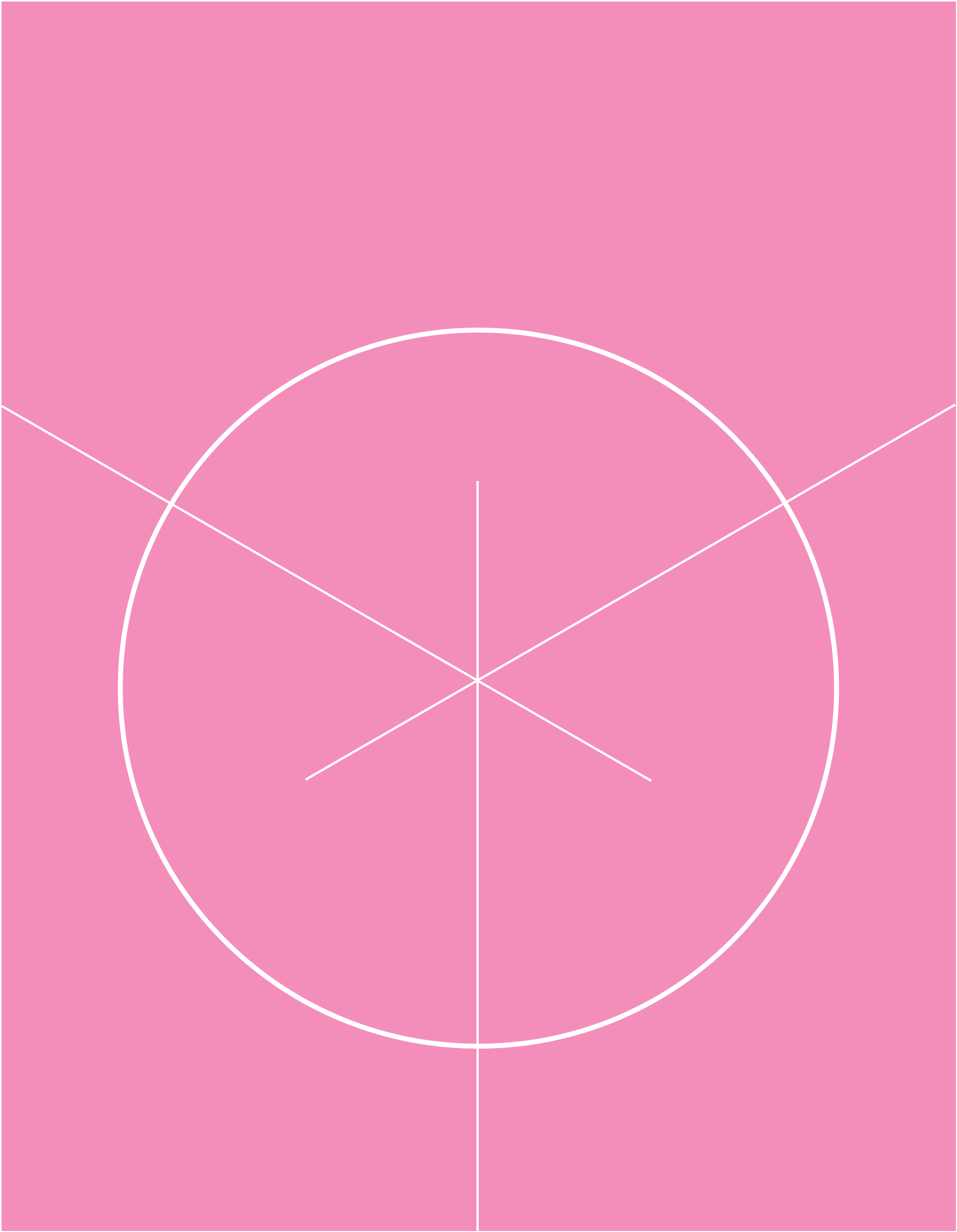
SAFE SPACE

Would you like support for your mental health & wellbeing?

Safe Space can help by providing an informal and supportive group where you can meet others, share, listen, gain advice, make your feelings heard, take in brief instructions. You can attend regularly, or just drop in for a chat when you need the most.

For further information please contact us via:
Telephone: 0191 477 4646
Email: safespace@nhs.uk
Website: safespace.nhs.uk





RECOVERY COLLEGE IS A JOINT ENTERPRISE
WITH THE BACKING AND INPUT FROM THE FOLLOWING:



HOW TO FIND US

RE·CO·CO Anderson House, Market Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6XA



BY BUS:

The bus stops on MARKET ST, BLACKETT ST and JOHN DOBSON ST are less than a 5 minute walk.
Bus services include 1, 10, 12, 22, 38, 39, 49, 58, 62, 63, 100.

BY METRO:

MONUMENT; 5 minute walk, MANORS; 10 minute walk

BY BIKE:

There is public bike parking at the City Library

BY CAR:

We can try and secure a space for you if you have access requirements, but we do need advance notice. There are public car parks nearby.



0191 261 0948



info@recoverycoco.com | www.recoverycoco.com

Designed by



rootsandwings.design