



INSPIRE

SPRING 2023

ISSUE 11

Welcome to ISSUE 11 of INSPIRE, a termly newsletter from the Wellbeing and Recovery College. Here we will keep you up to date with what is happening at the college, including details about our courses, stories from members of the college team, pictures of what our students have been up to recently, and other information that we think you'll find useful.

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Our Summer 2023
prospectus is out now!

Are you following us?

Find us on social media to stay up to date on the availability of our courses and much more!



Wellbeing and Recovery
College MPFT



@wellbeingrecoverycollegempft

Website:

<https://recovery.mpft.nhs.uk/>



@reccollegempft

An Update From The College

The Wellbeing and Recovery College continues to evolve and we are pleased that we can offer our students both virtual and in person courses this term. We have a wide range of courses available online that are accessible to all and if you are looking to get out in the summer sun we have a variety of classroom and outdoors courses to choose from!

All of our summer courses can be found here:

<https://flip.printstafford.com/wrcsummer23/>

New Courses for the Summer Term!

We are really excited to highlight the new courses we have planned in Summer 2023, each term we are keen to offer new courses alongside our existing ones, and we also like to bring our online courses to in person settings where we can; to add variety, appeal and accessibility to our students.

Expressive Writing: unlocking the inner world with the power of words: Tuesday 25th April, 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd May 1pm - 2.30pm, Online

Not to be confused with creative writing, this course is all about self-expression, responding to words, not crafting them. You will have an opportunity to reflect and write in a safe, friendly and confidential atmosphere that fosters personal awareness and wellbeing. No previous experience or particular skill at writing is required. This is not writing for show, it is writing for discovery of our inner worlds.

Moving for Wellbeing: Wed 10th May 12pm - Cannock Chase, Fri 23rd June 11am - Haughmond Hill

Join us on one of these relaxing yet invigorating sessions that aim to boost your wellbeing through gentle physical activity. You will have the opportunity to take part in an energising walk in peaceful surroundings. Both sessions will end with some time to connect with trainers and other students over a well earned cuppa.

Bird Watching for Wellbeing Victoria Park, Stafford: Wednesday 24th May 11am - 1pm

Bird-watching can be a truly mindful practice when we are actively looking for and listening to birds. Our wild birds are not only beautiful to see but a great way to improve mental and physical wellbeing. This course will introduce you to the beauty of bird-watching and build awareness of how this can be used to practice mindfulness and improve overall wellbeing.

Suicide Awareness: Friday 9th June 10am - 12pm, Online

An introductory session to develop awareness of suicide and suicidality and have a chance to reflect and discuss this sensitive subject. We will also explore what it is like to experience suicidal feelings and/or to care for a suicidal person, looking at some do's and don'ts when talking to someone about suicide.

The Value of Muscle Relaxation and Simple Resistance Exercise: Friday 21st July 1pm - 2pm, Online

This course emphasises the value of resistance exercise for relaxing our mind and body. It combines resistance exercise (tensing our muscles) with relaxation to reduce tension, relax the mind and create a sense of wellbeing. It explores the theory around resistance exercise and includes a practical relaxation session.

In Person Courses

We are pleased to offer you a variety of in person courses in the summer term:

Staffordshire

Bird Watching for Wellbeing

Wednesday 24th May 11am - 1pm, Victoria Park, Stafford

Yoga for Inner Peace

Wednesday 7th June 2pm - 3pm, The Well Nest, Stafford

Wellness Walk

Friday 14th July 11.30am - 1pm, Stafford Castle

Moving for Wellbeing

Wednesday 10th May 12pm - 1.45pm, Cannock Chase, Marquis Drive

Understanding Anxiety & Anxiety Management

Wednesday 17th and 24th May, 1 - 4pm, Lichfield Fire Station

Shropshire

Sleeping Well

Monday 22nd May 10.30am - 1.30pm, Ketley Community Centre, Telford

Wellbeing Toolkit

Monday 5th June 11am - 2pm, The Trinity Centre, Shrewsbury

Moving for Wellbeing

Friday 23rd June 11am - 12.45pm, Haughmond Hill, Shrewsbury



Evening Courses

Alongside our daytime online courses we are pleased to be able to offer a variety of evening courses for Summer 2023:

- Sleeping Well

Wednesday 3rd and 10th May 6pm - 7.30pm

- Getting Through the Working Week

Thursday 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th June 6pm - 8pm

- Wellbeing Toolkit

Wednesday 12th and 19th July 5.30pm - 7.30pm

- Building Your Self Esteem and Assertiveness

Wednesday 14th, 21st, 28th June and 5th July 5.30pm - 7.30pm

If you are interested in booking on to any of our courses, please contact us on 07891 099460 or email wellbeingrec@mpft.nhs.uk



Student Placement Experiences with the WRC

Hello, I am Charlotte, a 3rd year Occupational Therapy student who has completed a 3 month placement with the Wellbeing and Recovery College.

The main thing that has stood out to me within the college is the invaluable process of co-production. Creating courses with both professionals and lived experience provides for a well-rounded, holistic view of the courses being provided.



The importance of Occupational Therapy focus within the college is to ensure students are not just surviving, but thriving. Living their lives and participating in occupations that are of importance to them. An Occupational Therapy focus ensures students are educated in areas they can take away and incorporate into their daily lives. Education is the key concept but also enabling students by providing strategies and skills to use in everyday life. Having had the opportunity to attend a few of the college courses myself I will be taking away some poignant strategies, the main one being speaking to myself the way I would speak to a friend. I now recognise when I begin to turn negative on myself, I am now able to reflect on my words and to be kinder to myself.

I enjoyed my placement so much that I joined the bank staffing to continue as a course mentor alongside my final year studies at university.



My name is Amanda, I am an Occupational Therapy student who recently completed a twelve-week practice placement with the Wellbeing and Recovery College.

During my time on placement, I have felt both supported and guided by the whole team as well as the students whose journeys I have had the pleasure of being a part of. My knowledge of mental health issues, co-production, and facilitation, along with technology skills, has improved vastly and I will take this with me in my future practice.

I would like to thank you all for the support you have given to me on my journey.

Celebrating Neuro-diversity

As a college we are passionate about implementing equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. We have dedicated this issue to celebrating Neuro-divergence and in particular neuro-diversity week which ran in March. We aim to provide articles, information, lived experience and support organisations to grow awareness within the college of all aspects of neuro-divergence that come under that umbrella.

Neuro-diversity week

13th-19th March was neurodiversity celebration week.

When it comes to inclusion, neurodiversity refers to a world where neurological differences are recognised and respected as all other human variations. The term was first coined in 1998 by Australian sociologist Judy Singer, who is autistic herself.

Depending on how our brains are wired, we think, move, process information and communicate in different ways. Many people in the neuro-divergent community use neurodiversity as an umbrella term used to describe alternative thinking styles such as Asperger's syndrome, Autism (ASD), Attention deficit hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (DCD), Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Sensory Integration Disorder, Tourette syndrome, and Specific learning difficulties. But regardless of labels, neurodiversity is about recognising those who think differently. We can all benefit from different thinkers!

Approximately 15-20% of population has a neurological difference. Instead of labelling people with deficits or disorders, when we use the term neurodiversity, we take a balanced view of an individual's unique strengths and challenges. Many challenges neuro-divergent people face are more to do with the environment and systems they are placed in.

Society can tend to operate on an approach to diagnosis and labels which can mean that quite often the focus is on the challenges rather than the many strengths and talents of neuro-divergent individuals.

Every neuro-divergent individual has a unique pattern of both strengths and challenges, so it is really important to harness the strengths and talents of neuro-divergent individuals. This helps to build confidence and self-esteem and ensures individuals are given the opportunity to flourish in their day-to-day lives.

Celebrate Neurodiversity



My Lived Experience Story by Mandy Lunn

I have had a diagnosis of long-term, recurring, clinical depression from about the age of 21 and I was always on medication for depression and anxiety, something to help me sleep. I spent a fortune on supplements and herbal treatments to help my low mood and fatigue. I spent hours in therapy over 40 years. Nothing ever helped. I never got better. I went from crisis to crisis - unable to understand why I found everything so difficult. I always felt like a failure. I was never good enough. I always tried so hard but it was never enough. I isolated myself more and more. Eventually, I got an appointment at Foundation House, St George's. After a short discussion it was said 'if you don't mind me saying Mandy, I think you have Asperger's.'

My diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition was received on 9th May 2022 at the age of 59 years (nearly 60).

It was suggested that I contact SAAS (Staffordshire Adult Autistic Society). I phoned them and spoke to someone who understood me and said some lovely things about autistic people. We had a long telephone conversation and it was a relief to find somebody who could empathise with my life struggles, somebody who could offer an explanation as to why I struggled to understand myself, my own emotions and feelings. Why I couldn't understand why others behaved as they did, why I didn't know how to respond to others when their behaviour confused me. The only time therapy worked for me was when I saw a therapist who had struggled with social anxiety himself. I would see him weekly and would discuss with him others behaviour that confused me and we would talk about how I could behave in response.

I was put in touch with Marilyn Jones who works with the Shropshire Autism Hub. I joined Marilyn's brilliant educational Autism Webinars for MPFT Staff. Marilyn suggested that it would take me about a year to come to terms with the late diagnosis. I started to understand myself better. I was asked to work in the new Autism Support Team for adults in secondary care within MPFT and I work 2 days per week with them, offering peer support to other autistic adults and supporting clinicians in delivering autism workshops. I signpost people with autism and/or ADHD to SAAS and the Wellbeing & Recovery College. I am still a member of SAAS and can support other auties to attend their community groups at Lichfield and Stafford.

I am now a peer support worker with lived experience helping others to enrol in the Wellbeing and Recovery College. Through my job I have met a lot of other females who are late diagnosed with ASC and/or ADHD. What a difference the college ethos, the compassion and understanding from others has made to my self-esteem and self-confidence.

My heartfelt thanks to all who have shown me compassion and understanding. The knowledge I know have about my autism has helped me to understand myself. I know that I am not alone. I am surrounded by people who are compassionate and empathic and it makes such a difference to how I feel about myself. I no longer feel like a failure, I no longer feel crazy. I focus on the future and helping others.



Brand new sensory course coming soon...

‘Understanding and Balancing Sensory Reactions’

By Trainers Jane Clark and Mandy Lunn

We are really pleased to be offering a brand new course looking at understanding how we as human beings process sensory information and make sense of it. The course explores sensory processing difficulties, the different ways that sensory information affects different people and what can be put into place to make life easier. We are all unique human beings and have our own sensory preferences. This is an important topic which affects many people and has a big impact on everyday life. Sensory Processing Difficulties covered in the course;

Are real - Some people are much more — or much less — sensitive than others to what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch. Sensory processing issues can also affect balance and movement.

Can be overwhelming - Things like bright lights and loud noises can trigger sensory overload and distress beyond a person's control.

Are misunderstood - Trouble with sensory processing doesn't mean a person is "difficult" or "overreacting." When provided with the right strategies, people can thrive.

We will look at how each individual can put sensory strategies in place to move towards that 'just right state' where they feel calm, awake, attentive, grounded and can engage well in everyday activities. Students will get a worksheet where they can write down their own sensory preferences tailored to them. The course will run over 3 sessions of 2 hours each.

Keep an eye out in the student updates and on social media for the launch of this exciting new course!



Gamers Wellbeing

“Our mission as a charity is to help people over 18 overcome social isolation and anxiety, but what we've found is that our monthly sessions are a huge benefit to people who are on the autistic spectrum.



It's true that gaming is often a passion for neuro-diverse people and we think that's largely due to games being clearly structured with rules and regulations which helps them feel less overwhelmed. I think this is why using games as a tool for socialising is so effective, everyone knows where they stand and it also lets our service users have a shared focal point to aim the energy so they're not overthinking social interactions”. If you'd like to visit one of the sessions to see for yourself or have a chat with the team please contact – gamerswellbeing@gmail.com

NHS MPFT Support

Autism Training - To help you understand

Welcome to the 4th series of our award winning suite of focussed sessions with a lived experience trainer and organiser

Autism – Women and Girls	14 th April 2023
Autism – Mental Health, Pain and Trauma	12 th May 2023
Autism – Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)	16 th June 2023
Autism – Ritual, Obsession and Addiction	14 th July 2023

We are able to open the sessions to a limited number of autistic people or their family members. Booking is not necessary but it helps me if you contact marilynjones05@aol.com to confirm your booking stating “Autism Training” in the subject field. For any difficulties with the link, please contact mandy.lunn@mpft.nhs.uk.

Neuro-Diversity Support Organisations

If you or a loved one are neuro-divergent or you would just like further information, we have a wealth of resources and local support organisations to help.

Autism

Staffordshire Adults Autistic Society (SAAS)

Tel: 01782 616555 Email: info@saascharity.org Website : <https://www.saascharity.org/>

We are a Staffordshire based charity founded in May 2007. In 2019 the charity became an incorporated organisation to offer support to individuals both before and after diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum condition ‘ASC’. We work with individuals who are over the age of 16, as well as providing support and advice to families of people with ASC. We have weekly social meetings around Staffordshire that enable people to socialise in a comfortable and non-judgemental environment. The Guildhall, High Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1PW

Lived Experience quotes from 2 SAAS members:

“SAAS is a place where likeminded people can be, a place of acceptance, laughter, debate and most importantly a place in which you are heard. It is unique in its approach to people as you are treated as a person, rather than a person who needs an intervention.”

“SAAS is a lifeline. It has shown me that there are reasons to get out of bed. That I don’t have to settle for just existing. I have a right to live my life my way. SAAS taught me that.”

NAS (National Autistic Society) Stafford Branch

Website: <http://www.nasstaffordanddistrict.webeden.co.uk/> Email: stafford@nas.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nas.staffordbranch/> Tel: 07762 105706

Arts4ND's in Stafford

The Hub Community Resource Centre, 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford. ST16 2LZ

#arts4nds <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/arts4nds>

Adult Recreational Techniques Sustainably For Neuro Divergent people.

Neuro-Diversity Support Organisations

Shropshire Autism Hub – A4U Shrewsbury

Develop, learn and progress in a safe and fun environment that supports expression in an autism friendly way for people over 18 years. You will be helped to identify, design and plan a clear pathway of support based on your own specific needs and aspirations. Also offer advice on benefits, health, housing, relationships, money, employment and much more...

Website: [Shropshire Autism Hub – A4U](#) Phone: 01743 539201

Email: advice@a4u.org.uk Shropshireautismhub@a4u.org.uk



ADHD

ADHD Foundation - The Neurodiversity Charity

The ADHD Foundation is the UK's leading neurodiversity charity, offering a strength-based, lifespan service for the 1 in 5 of us who live with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, DCD, Dyscalculia, OCD, Tourette's Syndrome and more. Integrity of purpose is fundamental to all we do as a user-led organisation. Our mission is to advocate and actively improve lives.

<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/> Tel: 0151 541 9020 info@adhdfoundation.org.uk

ADDISS

The National **A**ttention **D**eficit **D**isorder Information and **S**upport **S**ervice.

We provide friendly information and resources about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder to anyone who needs assistance. Tel: 020 8952 2800 Email: info@addiss.co.uk <http://www.addiss.co.uk/>

ADDitude

Online ADHD/ADD community providing advice including around diagnosis, free downloads and advice. <https://www.additudemag.com/category/manage-adhd-life/>

AADD-UK

Website for adults with ADHD/ADD, provides news advice, events, books, help and support. <https://aadduk.org/>

Getting Involved with the College

We are looking to increase the amount of advertising and promotion that we do so that more and more people can learn about what we offer and benefit from our fantastic range of health and wellbeing courses.

If you have any ideas of different ways to promote the college or are interested in helping us by distributing leaflets, please do get in touch with us!

At various times of the year we also have training and volunteering opportunities. If you would like to get involved with the college keep an eye on social media or contact us via email or phone to have a chat with us.

We'd love to hear from you!



What Have Our Students Been Up To?

This is where we share your photos, pictures of craft work, poems or stories. Thank you to our student Karen for sharing your beautiful craft creations!



A sunny photo of one of our previous Well-ness walks in Dale End Park by our Shropshire Co-ordinator Vicky



A Big Thank You

As always we have many people to thank who help to make it the success it is! We'd firstly like to say a big thank you to all of our students for your continued support and participation in our courses during the spring term. We hope that you are all continuing to enjoy our blended learning approach, learning both in a virtual way and in person. We very much hope that you'll be joining us again in the summer term, where we have even more courses to offer you either on zoom, in the classroom or outdoors. We would also thank all of our trainers. Without you, we would not have been able to deliver the wide range of courses that we have had on offer this term. We also wish to thank the dedicated core team at the College who do a fantastic job behind the scenes, working passionately to grow and expand the college and keep everything running smoothly!

Students—We need you!

In everything we do at the college, we really value your feedback and ideas. INSPIRE is a newsletter that we create each term for you: our students and trainers. We would really like to hear from you regarding the type of content you would like to see in our newsletter, including any topics you'd like us to write about and any information that would be helpful.

We are looking to expand our 'What have our students been up to?' section, so we welcome your artwork, poems, photographs of crafts or walks, articles, recipe's and stories. If you'd like to submit something to our newsletter, have an idea for an article, or if you have any thoughts you'd like to share with us, please email it in to the college and we will let you know if your submission has been successful. Please also let us know if you'd like to include your name or if you prefer to submit anonymously. We'd like to say a big thank you to all of our students who have submitted their creations and artwork this summer!

About Us

We are the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Wellbeing and Recovery College. Here at the college, we aim to provide wellbeing and recovery focused educational courses that are accessible to everyone within our local communities across Staffordshire and Shropshire. We work together with our growing community of students to create a safe learning environment to promote hope, control and opportunity for all. Our courses bring together an equal blend of professional, carer and lived experience trainers who encourage shared learning, where we can all learn from one another through the sharing of each individual journey towards wellbeing and recovery.

Contact Us

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