

FREE



RE-CO-CO

RECOVERY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE



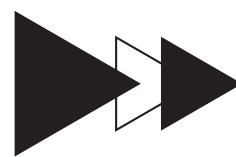
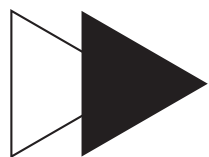
IN THE PROSPECTUS ARE DETAILS OF COURSES/WORKSHOPS,
AND OF GROUPS. YOU HAVE TO ENROL BEFORE DOING
COURSES OR ATTENDING GROUPS.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COURSE AND A GROUP IS THAT
A COURSE RUNS FOR A SET NUMBER OF WEEKS, AND THEN
COMES TO AN END. WE HOPE THAT STUDENTS WILL, AS FAR
AS IS POSSIBLE, ATTEND EACH SESSION OF A COURSE FOR
WHICH THEY'VE SIGNED UP.

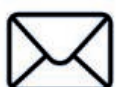
GROUPS ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE MORE OPEN-ENDED, AND
RUN WEEKLY/FORTNIGHTLY/MONTHLY AND YOU CAN COME TO
A GROUP FOR A WHILE, NOT COME FOR HOWEVER LONG AND
THEN SIMPLY RETURN. YOU COME TO GROUPS AS AND WHEN
YOU CAN.

THE PROSPECTUS ALSO CONTAINS ARTICLES, INFORMATION
AND ARTWORK. THE ARTICLES ARE FOR READING, THE
INFORMATION FOR DIGESTING, AND THE ARTWORK FOR
ADMIRING.

CONTACT DETAILS:



0191 261 0948



info@recoverycoco.com

www.recoverycoco.com

COURSES / WORKSHOPS

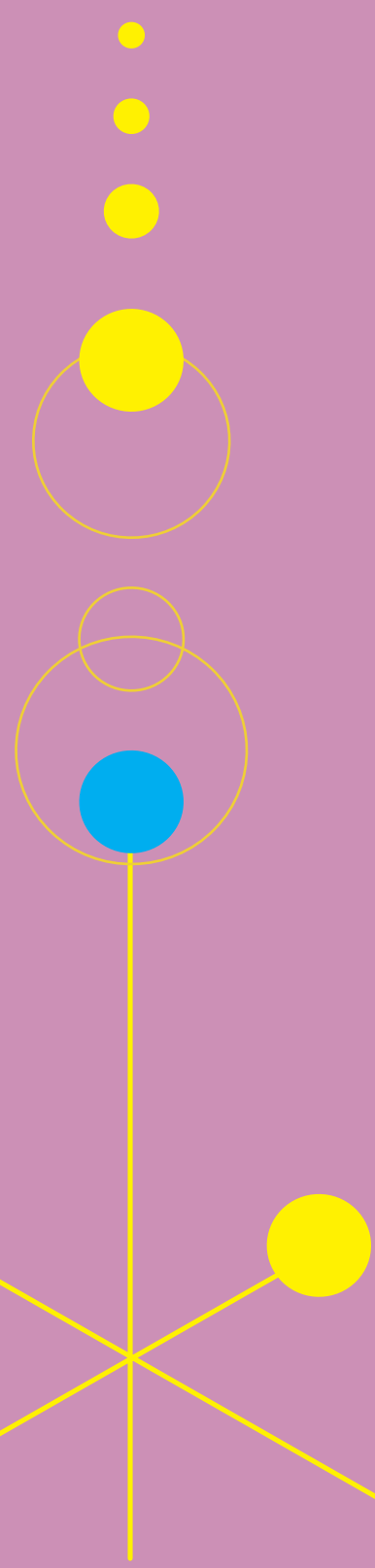
PAGE: 04	ANXIETY COURSE
04	CROCHET
05	HEARTS GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT
05	INTRODUCTION TO DBT SKILLS
06	PAIN MANAGEMENT
06	POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
07	REDUCING THE RAGE
07	RISING STRONG
08	SELF ESTEEM
08	SELF-HARM AWARENESS WORKSHOP
09	SONG WRITING ABOUT RECOVERY
09	TAKE HOLD OF YOUR EMOTIONS
10	UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES OF DEPRESSION
10	UNDERSTANDING MEDICATION
11	UNDERSTANDING PSYCHIATRY
11	WRAP AWARENESS

DROP-IN

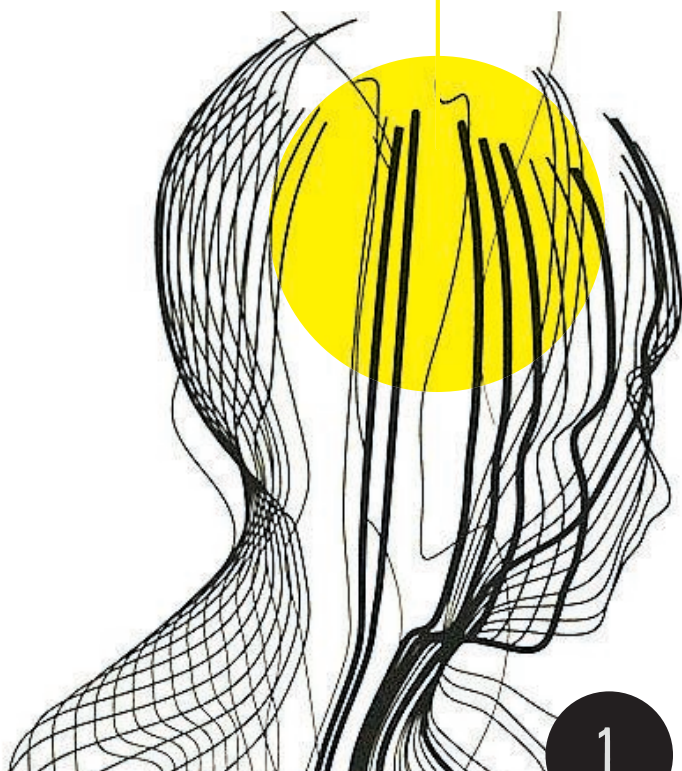
PAGE: 12	ALL THINGS GEEK
12	COLLAGE CLUB
13	CREATIVE WELLNESS
13	CREATIVE WRITING
13	DROP-IN
14	GAMING GEEKS
14	INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE
15	JUST JAMMING
15	MINDFULNESS
15	MUSIC THERAPY
16	WELFARE RIGHTS
16	YOGA FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH (TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA)

GROUPS

PAGE: 18	AUTISM SPECTRUM SUPPORT GROUP
----------	-------------------------------



COURSES / WORKSHOPS



1

ANXIETY COURSE

What is your anxiety? From where does it come? How does it affect you, and how can you work with the feelings? An exploratory course, looking at what anxiety means to each individual participant and exploring ways of living with, being with, the feelings. The course is responsive to the experiences of attendees, and will look at creative ways of coping. Participants will be guided and aided to discover their own solutions.

Time: 12pm-2pm

Day: Thursday

Date: 16th January, Weekly.

Course Leader: Mark Ross

2

CROCHET



Take pART and Crochet

Over the six weeks you will begin your crochet journey from learning how to hold a crochet hook and yarn through to making granny squares, Jennifer will support students to join squares and learn to crochet circles to make into spring birds.

Crochet is a very relaxing craft to learn, it has many benefits including keeping your mind focused and calm, keeping your hands busy and helps you to be creative using colour.

This will be a small group so you will be supported to read patterns and learn stitches in a relaxed and friendly environment.

Once you learn the possibilities are endless, so take pART and Crochet with us.

Time: 1pm - 3pm

Day: Wednesday

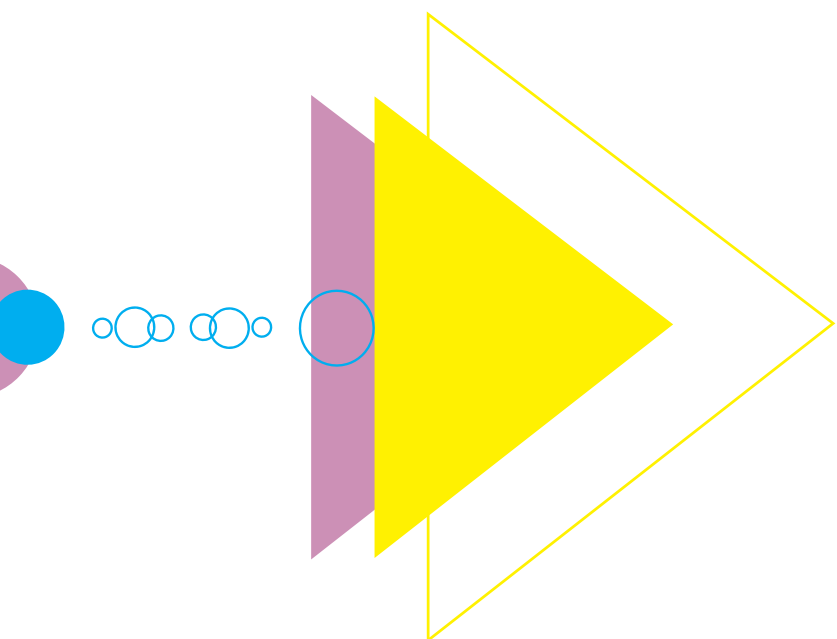
Dates: 15th, 22nd, 29th Jan, 5th, 12th, 19th Feb

Location: Anderson House

Contact: ReCoCo

Course leader: Jennifer Ironside,
take pART North East CIC





3

H.E.A.R.T.S GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Hope
Empathy
Acceptance
Respect
Trust
Support

Bereavement is something that most of us will experience at sometime in our lives.

The pain of bereavement is often accompanied by very strong feelings and painful feelings.

It may help to find out what you are going through is a normal process shared by others.

Week 1 Getting to know you

Week 2 How to cope with grief

Week 3 The stages of grief

Week 4 Recovery and continuing bonds

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Day: Monday

Date: 4 weeks from Monday 24th February

Course Leader: Denise Toward

4

INTRODUCTION TO DBT SKILLS

This is not Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. At ReCoCo we run weekly skills based groups giving an overview of what DBT is, exploring and trying out the skills that people find helpful in managing their emotions. Each week we will explore a different aspect of DBT skills; Week 1 will be Emotional Regulation, Week 2 will be Interpersonal Effectiveness, Week 3 will be Distress Tolerance. Then the 3 weeks will be repeated.

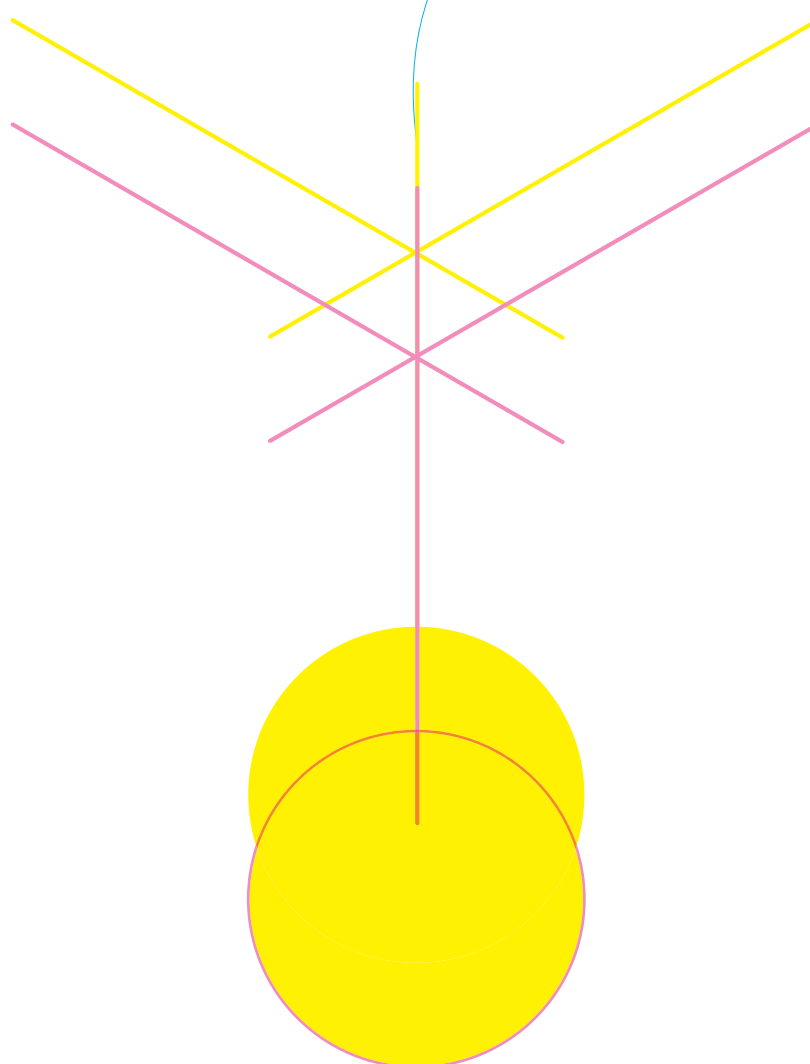
Mindfulness will be incorporated into each session.

Time: 10am-1pm

Day: Friday

Date: 17th Jan, Weekly.

Leader: Megan Shaftoe



5

PAIN MANAGEMENT

The Pain Management Workshop is a 6 week rolling programme as a guided self-help for understanding and managing persistent physical pain. As a first attendee it is important to attend all 6 sessions to learn all the available techniques but you can just attend session 1 for an overview which includes pain medication. After this feel free to attend any one session or more as a refresher for your learning. The sessions will run as follows:

- Session 1 - Introduction Workshop
- Session 2 - Mindfulness and Acceptance
- Session 3 - Imagery and Conditioning
- Session 4 - Eliciting the Pain Script
- Session 5 - Cognitive Restructuring
- Session 6 - Reshaping the Brain

Sessions 7&8 are optional drop ins

Time: 10pm – 12pm
 Day: Wednesday
 15th January, Weekly
 Course Leader: Glen Ferguson

Glen also offers information workshops that run from 1pm – 2pm on the same day as his pain management. They will run on the following Wednesdays:

- 15th Jan: What is EMDR?
- 22nd Jan: Medication Management
- 29th Jan: Understanding Simple Phobias
- 5th Feb: What is Mindfulness
- 12th Feb: Understanding Depression
- 26th Feb: Understanding Social Phobias
- 4th March: What is CBT?

6

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology is based on the belief that people want to lead a fulfilling life in order to cultivate what is best within themselves as well as enhance their experiences of love, work and play. During the session students will look into what makes life the most worth living and concentrate on increasing students' well-being by positive psychology knowledge and a variety of tasks. The aim of the group is to enable and empower individuals to make a positive change in their life in order to thrive.

What sort of things might you study in positive psychology class:

- character strengths (forgiveness, kindness, gratitude, creativity & curiosity)
- Meaning and purpose
- Happiness, positive emotions and well-being
- Emotional social intelligence
- Flow and mindfulness
- Wisdom
- Hope and optimism
- Positive relationships
- Authenticity
- Humour
- Resilience and much more!

Please join us on this meaningful journey to find out more about positive psychology. Course will be delivered by class discussions of relevant topics, small projects and in class activities such as a quiz.

Time: 1pm – 3pm
 Day: Monday
 Date: Weekly from 13th of January
 Course leader: Ewa Stefanow & Juliana Da Cunha



REDUCING THE RAGE

7

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, your rage is an uncontrollable monster, or find it difficult to express your anger in a healthy way, this course may help in getting your anger back under control.

Everyone is welcome to this course, however, please be mindful that this course can be emotionally challenging and triggering. We will discuss issues around trauma and shame which can be difficult if you are currently earlier on in your recovery journey. This class may be a process of self-discovery through skills and knowledge. Let's get 'a'had a'the radge.

Time: 10am – 12pm

Day: Thursday

1st Cohort:

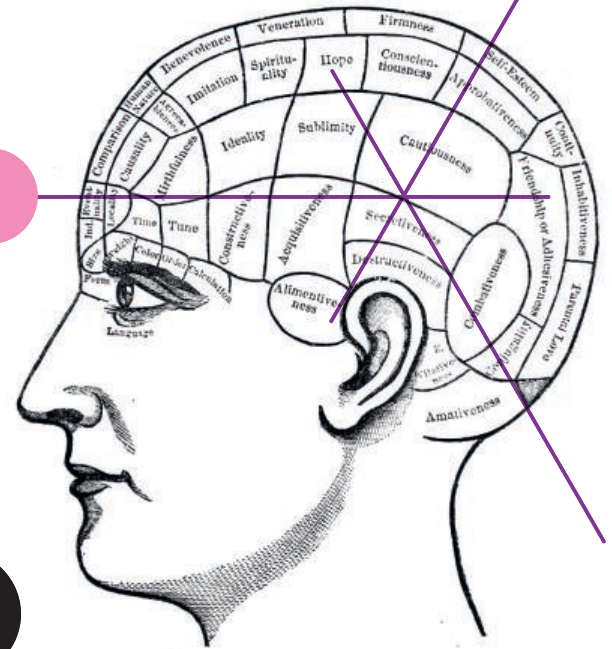
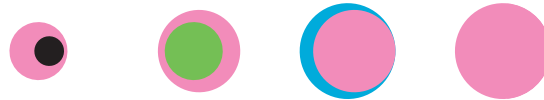
5 Weeks starting Thur 16th January

OR

2nd Cohort:

5 weeks starting Thur 27th February

Course Leader: Megan Shaftoe



7

RISING STRONG

8

Following on from last term's '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 teaching might be useful. There's plenty of information on the internet and a great TED talk on shame.

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 wholehearted 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 of Rising Strong™ are as follows:

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: 1pm – 3pm

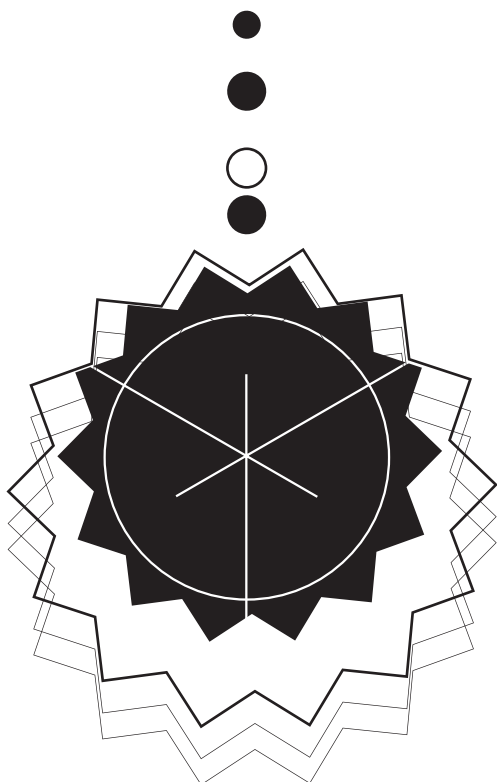
Day: Monday

Date: Weekly from Monday 13th January

Course Leader: Claire Robinson

Further information

www.thedaringway.com





SELF ESTEEM

We look forward to welcoming you to a friendly, creative group that explores the ins and outs of our self-esteem. Each week we look at new ways to support each other through life's ups and downs that can lead to new possibilities.

We look at:

- What is self-esteem, what can affect it and why?
- What you think and feel about yourself, looking at positives and negatives.
- The expectations we place on ourselves and the importance of setting realistic goals.
- Learning to accept ourselves for who we really are and looking at what we are good at.
- How we may view the world because of the way we view ourselves.
- Communication skills and motivation.
- Assertiveness and how to say no.
- The benefits of Kindness.
- Identifying our own core values.
- Coping with anxiety and/or depression.
- The importance of daily routine, healthy diet and lifestyle.

Course led by Sara Lourenco founder of Kindness Project Northeast. The project was set up in 2015 informally without realising the 'real' demand for such an organisation. It has now evolved into a community project that is constantly growing and changing dictated by the needs of our local people.

Time 10am – 12pm

Day: Friday

Date: Weekly from Fri 17th January (except half term)

Course Leader: Sara Lourenco,
Dorothy Dobson and Emma Savage

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: 1pm – 3pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 16th Jan & 19th March

Course Leader: Steve O`Driscoll



SONGWRITING ABOUT RECOVERY

11

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: Contact the Recovery College
Day: Contact the Recovery College
Dates: Contact the Recovery College
Course Leader: Keith Reid.

TAKE HOLD OF YOUR EMOTIONS

12

Scheduled for groups of up to 12 persons and 5 sessions:

Each session is to give you one of 5 connected tools, to work with to face and stay on top of your emotions. The will to change is the best guarantee for success.

Knowing the "HOW to use the tools" is the basis, to become able to keep on top of them.

You learn definitions, so we avoid misunderstandings, Your process of producing changes in emotions, the basics in relationships : to become able to keep on top of your emotions.

Just to make sure :
YOU WILL HAVE TO FACE YOURSELF :
You learn, *how to face* your emotions in your own time.

If wanted, after the course, in 1:1 sessions. The 1:1's will take place at a time convenient for You and me, at the ReCoCo.

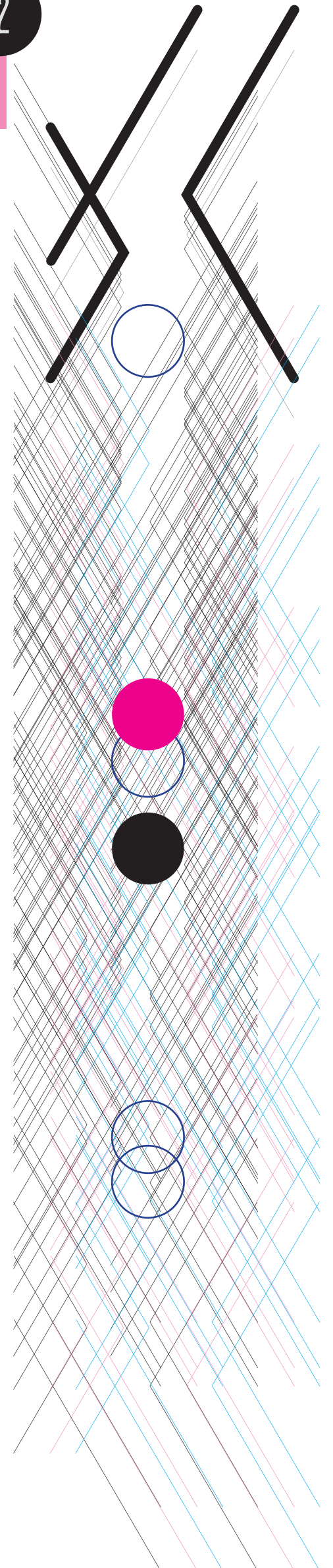
In some sessions you are asked to fill in a short sequence of questions.

Facing yourself can become stressful. It is advised to be in good shape for the whole course.

Human : In Centre is the provider. Walter Morauf is the presenter, with over 40 years of experience in dealing with emotional problems of others.

For any personal questions :
human.is.in.centre@gmail.com

Time: 10am – 12pm
Day: Monday
Date: 5 Weeks from 13th January
Course Leader: Walter Mouraf



13

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF DEPRESSION

This course explores the various dimensions to the experience of depression. Topics will include changes to emotions and moods, the bodily aspects of depression, changes to interpersonal relations and difficulties performing everyday tasks. Our focus will be on lived experience exploring the experiences of depression through engaging with first person testimony.

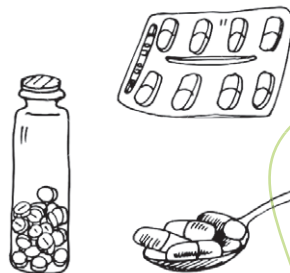
The course will provide a range of ways to understand experiences of depression and give you opportunities over a number of weeks to discuss and reflect on forms of recovery.

Time: 11am – 1pm

Day: Monday

Dates: From Mon 13th Jan for 4 weeks & Mon 24th Jan for 4 weeks

Course Leader: Ben Smith



14

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.

Time: 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: 23rd January and 2nd April

Course Leader: Stephen Wilson



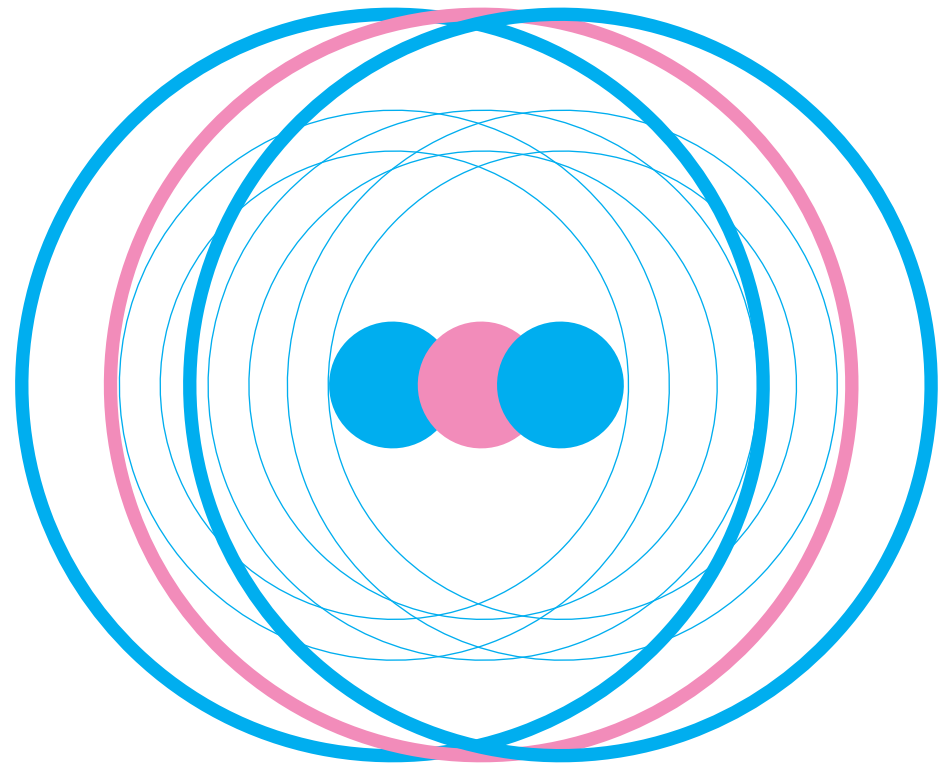
15 UNDERSTANDING PSYCHIATRY

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 into 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 2 times this term. Please contact us for the specific dates.



16 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 behaviors
- 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.

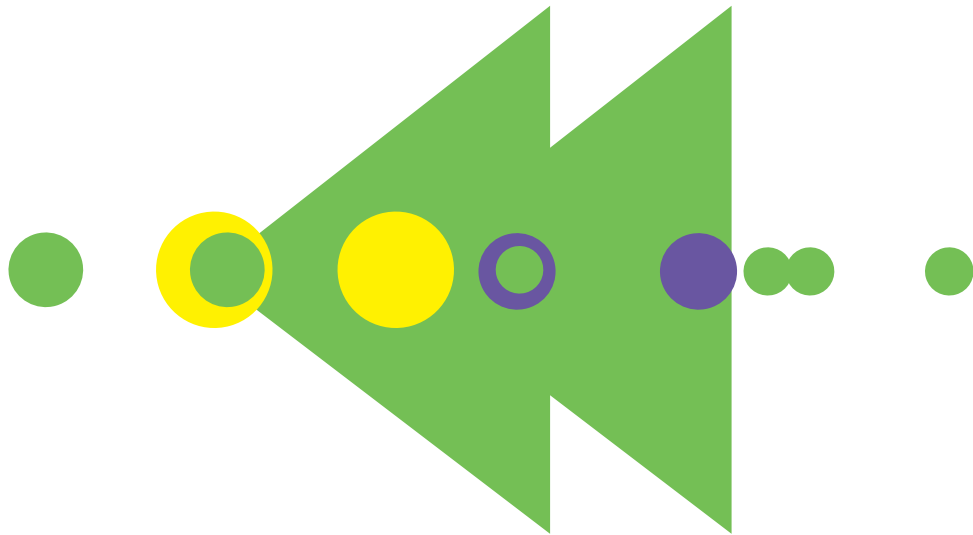
We recommend WRAP for all of our students so we will be running WRAP workshops 4 times this term;

Time: 10am – 2pm

Day: Tuesday (each course will take 2 sessions)

Dates: From 14th January

WRAP Leader: Sue Barrow



1

ALL THINGS GEEK

Interested in computer games, tech, sci-fi, board games, comic book ect ect. All things geek!! Come and join in and be a part of our gaming group

Time 11am – 1pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly from 16th January

Course Leader: Wendy Ritchie

2

COLLAGE CLUB

Why not come along to collage club, a drop-in workshop for anyone wanting a positive fun experience to start the new year.

All creative abilities welcome.

Lots of coloured paper, magazines, scissors and tape to get creative without having to draw a thing. You will get to rip, cut, glue and stick in a relaxed, supportive safe environment.

Workshops are facilitated by HCPC registered Art therapist, Fiona Fitzpatrick from Arts Psychotherapies UK CIC

Drop-in workshop

Time: 12.30pm – 2pm

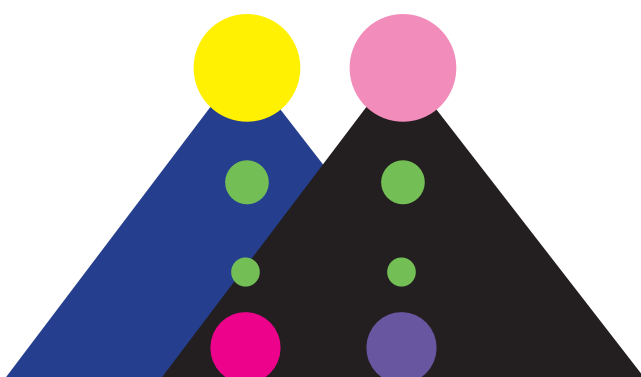
Day: Monday

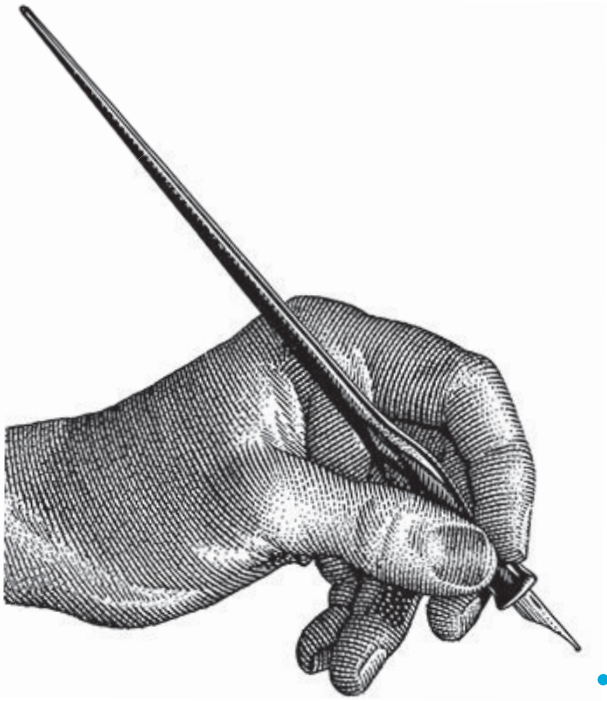
Dates:

5 weeks - 13th, 20th, 27th Jan,

3rd Feb, 10th Feb

5 Weeks - 24th Feb, 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd March





3

CREATIVE WELLNESS

It is hoped that these drop-in sessions 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.

This group hopes to help students develop a variety of artistic skills through both group projects and individual work. We provide a relaxed environment in which to try out new things, share ideas and just enjoy the process of creating something beautiful

Time: 10am-12pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly from 14th January

Course Leaders: Jasmine Asquith and
Fiona Tasker

4

CREATIVE WRITING

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

Date: Weekly from 15th January (other than half term break)

Course leader: David Kipping

5

DROP-IN

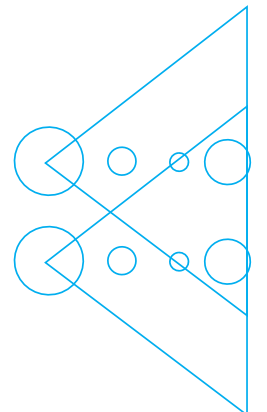
We have an informal, facilitated drop-in twice a week where people can come along and have a chat with other students. Get to know each other, connect and learn more about ReCoCo. This is a good opportunity for new students to meet each other as well as finding out from other students what opportunities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

Weekly starting Tue 14th & Wed 15th January

Course Leader: Alan Jackson and Mary Jeonath



6

GAMING GEEKS BOARD GAMES

A chance to get Quizzical with trivia board games, go retro with board games from the 80s and 90s. Have a go at more modern ones as well.

Give your brain a workout and have a giggle with like minds.

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly from 14th January

Course Leader: Fiona Tasker

7

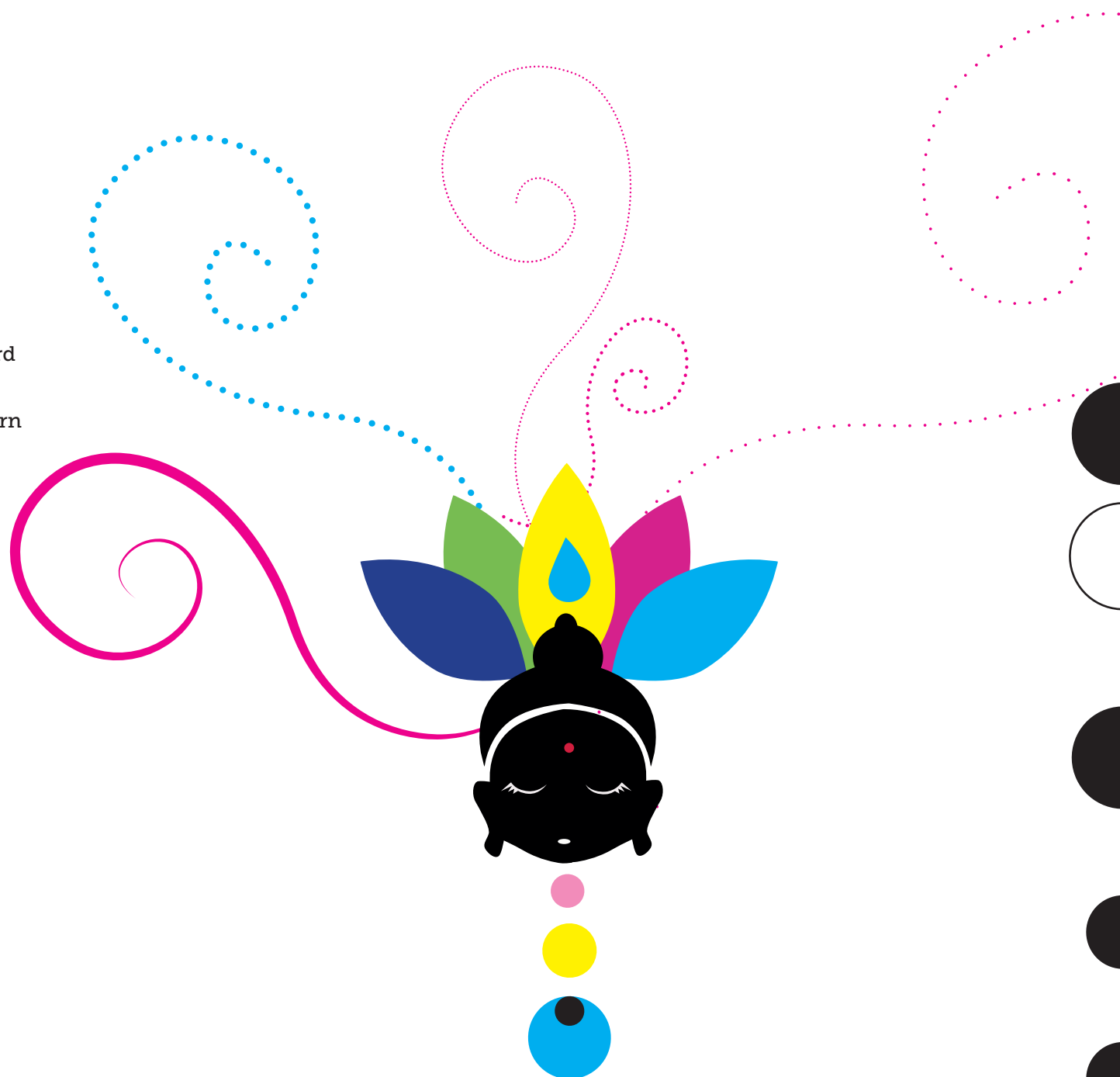
INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE

Indian head massage has lots of therapeutic benefits as well as being really helpful to relaxation. You don't need to book in advance for a treatment, just come along and **Give it a try.**

Time: 11am -1pm

Days: Mondays and Tuesdays

Therapist: Robert Buckley



8

JUST JAMMING

Informal music session with guitar, vocal and percussion lessons. Feel free to bring along your own instruments. All genres of music welcome.

Music is a fabulous wellness tool and performing with others can be a great opportunity to develop this tool.

Limited one to one sessions available upon request.

..... **it might get loud!!**

Time 1pm -3pm (12pm – 1pm 1-1s)

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly from 16th January
(except half term)

Course Leader: Rose Juliet

9

MINDFULNESS

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.

Time: 12pm – 12.45pm

Day: Every day

Dates: Starting w/c 13th January

Leader: Marie Brooks

Facilitators: Claire Atkins, Sue Barrow,
Dean Gibson, Fherisia Dougall, Phil Waugh,
John Hogan, Andy Bengall

10

MUSIC THERAPY

Sometimes the words are not enough to express what's inside us – music offers a unique way to explore feelings and creativity and experience a sense of connection with ourselves and others. Every one of us is musical- with the beating of our heartbeat, melody of our speech, rhythm of our walking. While individual session can help to experience your individual musicality, group sessions can be helpful as a means of exploring relationships and be a source of mutual support, reducing isolation and leading to greater self-understanding.

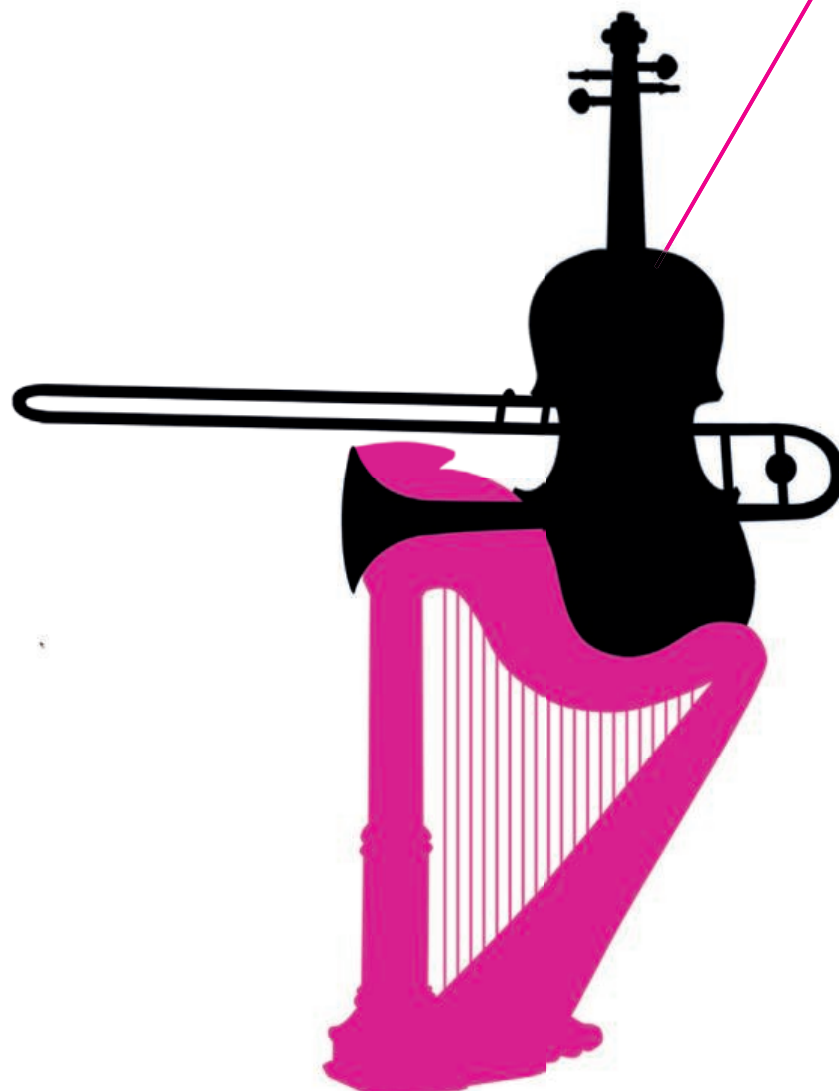
Session will be led by a Nordoff Robbins music therapist.

Time: 10am – 4pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly from 14th January

Course Therapist: Afra



11

WELFARE RIGHTS

This weekly drop-in will give you the opportunity to ask questions about benefits (including universal credit, PIP, ESA, limited capability for work, housing benefit), employment and permitted work, housing, travel passes etc. We will aim to clarify issues and support you with your queries.

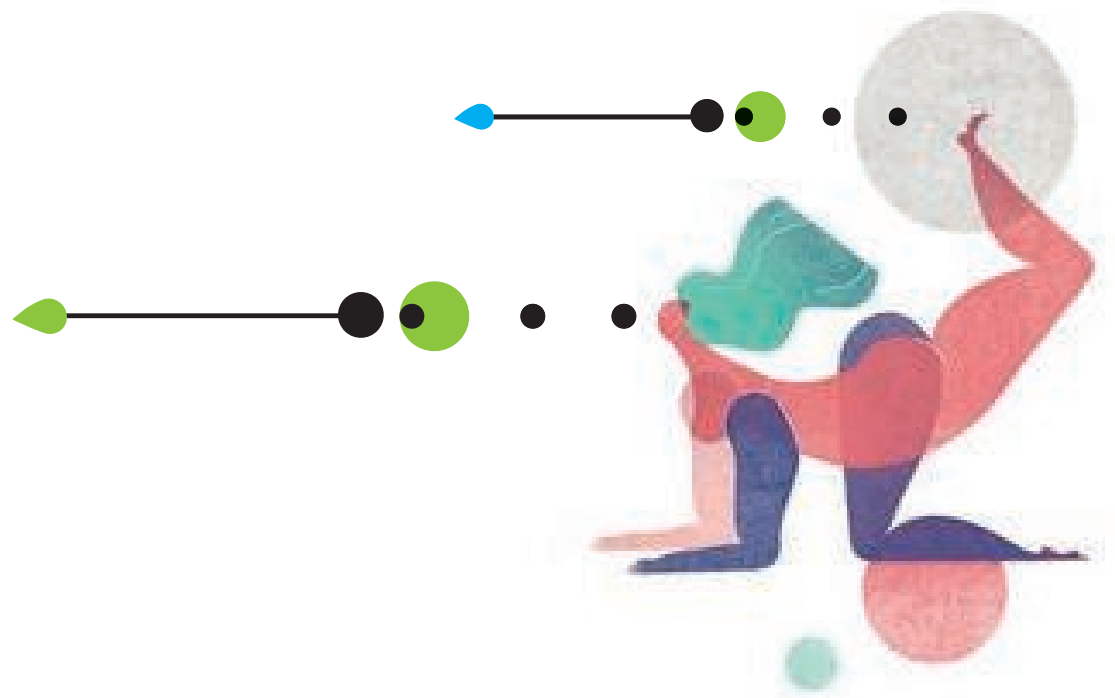
It will be very informal and relaxed. And we do not get stressed by deadlines or big forms! Also, if you'd rather discuss issues 1-2-1, we will just find a quiet space for that too. It is all part of our exciting Recovery through Rights (RTR) project which will run a series of workshops after Easter.

Time: 10am – 12pm

Day: Friday

Date: Weekly from 17th January

Facilitators: Davy King and Ineke Gijbers



12

YOGA FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH (TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA)

"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 mental health.

Everybody is welcome, absolute beginners with limited movement to those with an interest in the mind, body connection to mental health.

There is no touch or adjustments made by the teacher. Mats are provided.

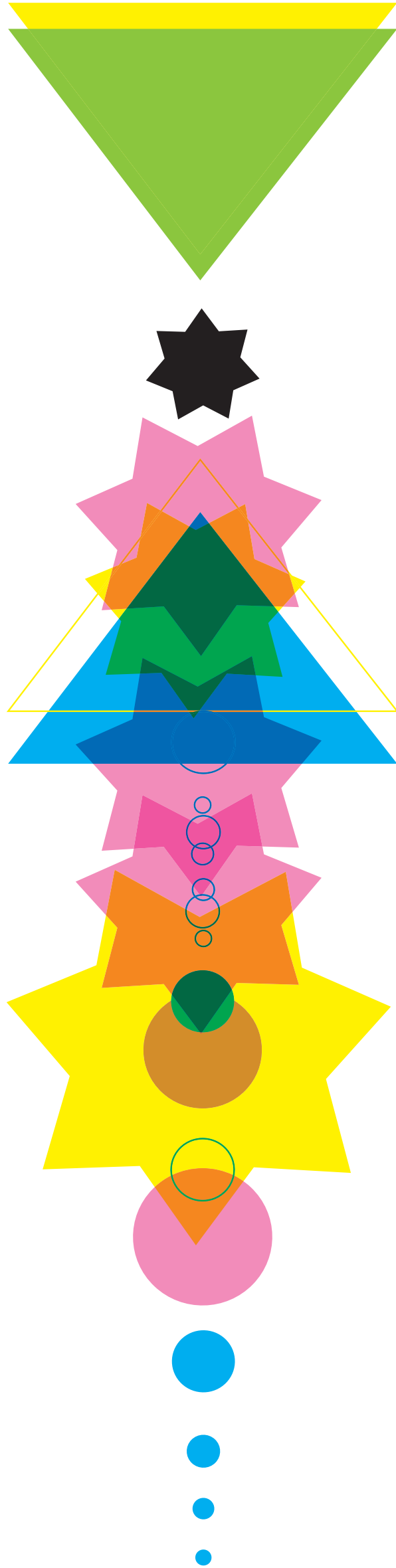
It's good to wear comfy clothes that you feel relaxed in.

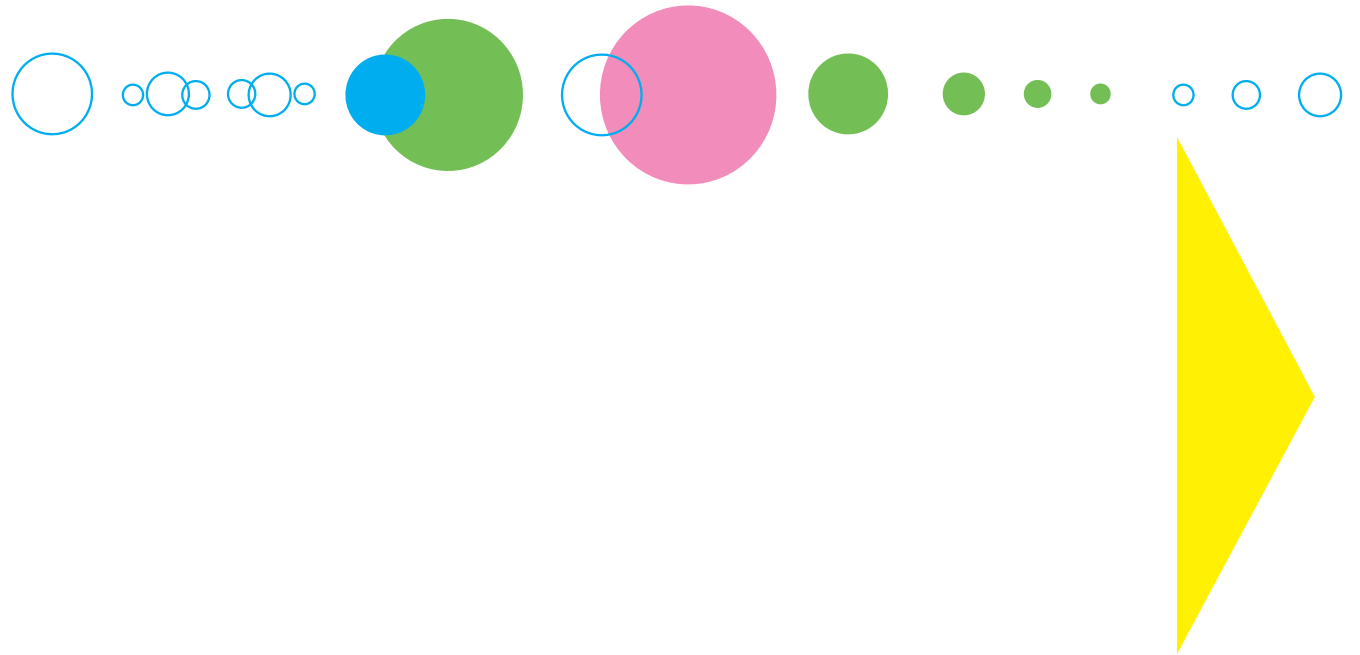
Time: 1pm – 2pm

Day: Friday

Date: Weekly from 17th January

Course Leader: Lorna Evans



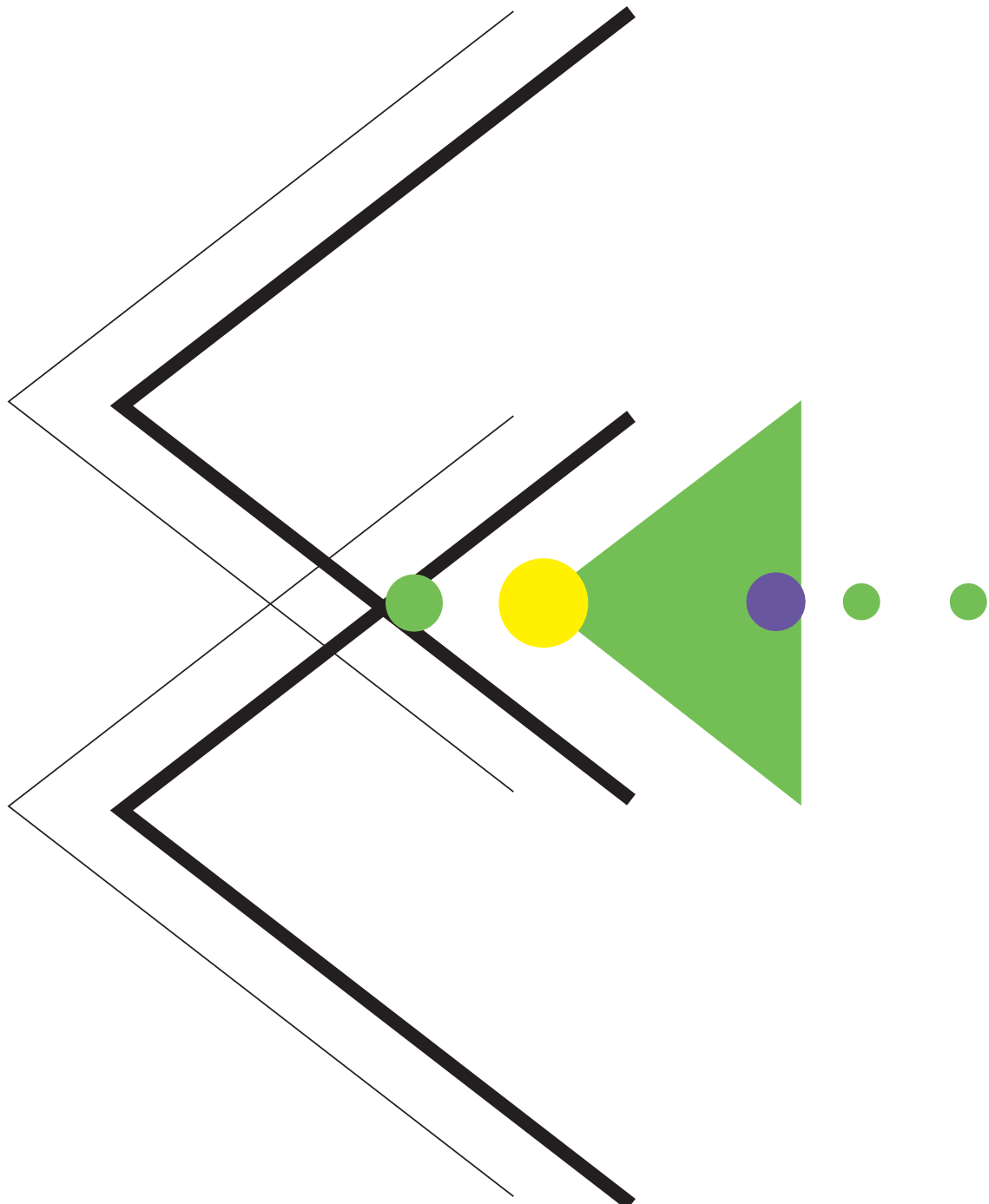


1

AUTISM SPECTRUM SUPPORT DROP-IN

Feeling awkward or out of step? Like some people just don't understand? Well come to a quiet, safe and relaxed environment where you can share your experiences of living with Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD, ADHD, Dyspraxia etc, learn about the spectrum itself, learn some coping strategies, make friends and have fun. Second aim of the group is to dispel the negative stereotypes associated with having a 'hidden' learning disability.

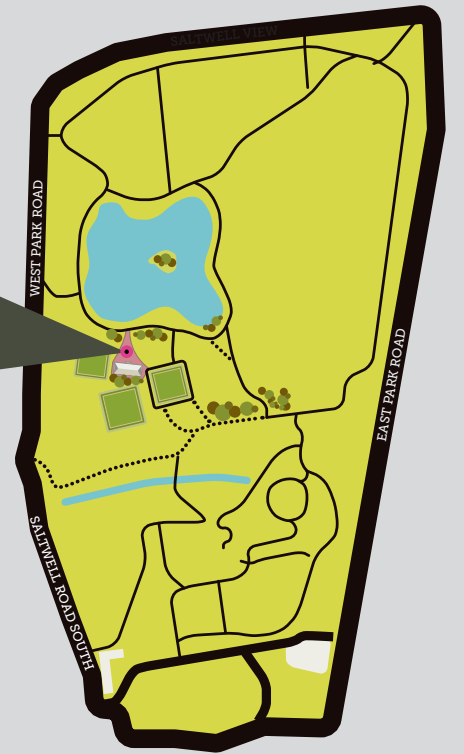
Time: 10am -12pm
Day: Monday
Date: Weekly from Wed 15th January
Group Leader: Mark Woollen



Recoco comes to Gateshead

Introducing Recoco Retreat
@ Saltwell Park

RE-CO-CO
retreat
at SALTWELL PARK



Recoco has been busy growing and extending our service into Gateshead.

The disappointment of not becoming the new custodians of Bill Quay farm gradually turned to joy and possibly some relief at being offered a fantastic and much more manageable space for us at Saltwell Park.

Over the past few years we have come to recognize how healing nature and the elements are to us Warriors. From leaning into the discomfort of bad weather and realizing how resilient we actually are, to hugging mighty oaks, breathing in the sturdy energy with birdsong as the theme tune to our transformation.

Gateshead Council found us an alternative to the farm because they liked what theyd heard and so since June we have occupied the Training Pavilion, next to the lake and already our approach is transforming lives.

So we present to you the Recoco Retreat. A place were folk come to connect, learn and realise the innate strength, skills and compassion that trauma and neglect can bring. Supporting each other to recognise the wealth of superpowers that have kept us alive and imagine a life were using those superpowers can bring satisfaction and purpose.

EXPLORING 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: Monday

Date: Monday 13th Jan, 20th Jan, 27th Jan, 3rd Feb, 10th Feb

Location: Recoco Retreat, Saltwell Park

Contact: ReCoCo -0191 261 0948

Facilitator: Raza Rahman

Courses and workshops available at Saltwell Park

You need to register as a ReCoCo student before you can put your name down for the following courses. Registration can be done quite quickly and its possible to register on the day that the course starts but you MUST arrange this with us before turning up.

If you would like to attend any of the following courses then please give us a ring and let us know if you are already a Recoco student, or otherwise arrange for someone to enroll you.

Please do not attend unless it has been confirmed that you have a place. Donations are welcome but don't let having no money put you off. Courses are free.

THE GET GOING GROUP

Day: Mondays

This is a closed social and education group for people with a learning disability and additional behavioral needs

There may be an opening for a couple of new members in 2020.

Please ring for details.

Location: Recoco Retreat, Saltwell Park

Contact: ReCoCo-0191 261 0948

Facilitators: Scott wall & Jane Bourne

Drop-in beginners mindfulness and wellbeing

Mondays from the 20th Jan 12pm-2pm

Drop-ins

Soup group

Mondays from the 20th Jan 12pm-2pm

A free bowl of hot and healthy soup. A chance to chat and connect with others and get tips on managing your mental health & wellbeing
Families welcome

CREATIVITY, MINDFULNESS AND CERAMICS

5 weeks of mindful creativity through the medium of ceramics.

Day: Friday

Time: 1pm-3pm

Date: 17th Jan, 24th Jan, 31st Jan, 7th Feb, 14th Feb

Location: Recoco Retreat, Saltwell Park

Contact: ReCoCo-0191 261 0948

Facilitators: Lyndsey Grieves & Recoco

Bensham Grove comes to Recoco

We are teaming up with our friends from Bensham Grove to deliver the following courses from The Recoco Retreat: Courses are free if you are in receipt of benefits.

CREATIVITY, MINDFULNESS WITH CLAY

5 weeks of mindful creativity through the use of clay

Day: Friday

Time: 1pm-3pm

Date: 28th Feb, 6th Mar, 13th Mar, 20th Mar, 27th Mar

Location: Recoco Retreat, Saltwell Park

Contact: ReCoCo-0191 261 0948

ZUMBA

Get your Zumba on. 10 weeks of movement music and connection in a safe space with people like you.

Time: 1pm-2.30pm

Day: Monday

Date: 20th Jan, 27th Jan, 3rd Feb, 10th Feb, 17th Feb, 24th Feb, 2nd Mar, 9th Mar, 16th Mar, 23rd Mar

Location: Recoco Retreat, Saltwell Park

Contact: ReCoCo -0191 261 0948

Facilitator: Louise McCarthy

THE RECOCO WELLNESS AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM @ SALTWELL PARK

We have diligently collected 5 years of evidence as to what people find most helpful from our 200 plus courses and workshops per year. Also, in what order education and exploration promotes self-actualisation and emotional and practical safety. We have consequently developed a 15 week program that we intend to pilot at our indoor/outdoor venue at Saltwell Park, Gateshead.

The program is a fusion of education, activity and wellbeing skills that will help folk understand where their difficulties originate from, manage their distress and learn to use their skills and insight to support themselves and each other through connection and validation.

It's a pick and mix approach. Not everything is for everyone but allowing students to explore the widest range of skills and knowledge empowers people to identify what's right for them. What works for them.

And as important, if not more so, as the course content is the connection that students make with each other and the course facilitators. Most of us, who have been disadvantaged in some way, or hurt, or exploited or neglected... struggle to open up to connection with others. Worried of the implications of being judged or realising our fears that the world is a threatening place.

Showing up, as you are and working with that, is accepted and encouraged. Accepting who and how you are through the acceptance and understanding of others is a core part of the Program at Saltwell Park.

Our program will help show you how resilient you already are. Realising what you have achieved despite the suffering that you have endured.

Through this shared understanding and acceptance comes balance and realignment. Physical and emotional strength grows as we inhabit our physicality and explore our personal beliefs. Trauma can take us out of our bodies in order to survive, so enabling control and recognising sensations is crucial. Together we lean into discomfort.

We now know that suppressing emotions causes harm. The body really does keep score so sitting with uncomfortable

emotions, memories and physical sensations is something that happens throughout the course. Learning to trust that you have control over what happens to you now and developing faith that discomfort does pass.

There's plenty of hippy stuff as well. Again, its not for everyone initially and a healthy dose of scepticism is encouraged if it's true to you and your experience. But tree hugging, Tai Chi, chanting, breathing, drumming; all helps us to feel fully present in order to feel fully alive.

The embarrassment that limits us is challenged. When parameters are reached they are pushed and if you stick it out you will transform the way that you experience your own being.

There's plenty of coaching. And rituals. And laughs. And tears. The peer support is implicit in everything as you extend yourself within your new tribe.

Realising long buried aspirations brings hope and the gentle realisation that you are already incredible and what you have learnt is of so much value to others. Your expertise is your ability to live through adversity. The disadvantage that you were served has been your University. Your survival is inspiring and can be used to build community.

This course is not for the faint hearted. YOU are not faint hearted. You are a Warrior that has used every ounce of what you have in order to stay alive. And however it's been judged, it's been successful to this point. Now it's time to use those innate skills you carry and help others like you. There is really nothing more cathartic and healing than that.

The first year of this Program is a pilot that is being evaluated. In order to do the course you must be:

- Brand new to Recoco (not already be a student)
- Receive treatment from a Mental Health Community Treatment Team (CTT or CMHT) in the Tyne and Wear area.
- Give permission for your anonymised data to be included in the study.
- Commit to attending all of the sessions (sessions can only be missed for exceptional reasons)

If this is you, or someone you are currently working with then get in touch

angela.glascott@cntw.nhs.uk

The Recoco 15 week Wellbeing and Transformation Program at Saltwell park

What students say about the Wellness and Transformation Program:

The group has built a truly strong interrelationship allowing us to explore and learn. It's innate character is what is different and cannot be duplicated by the 'care services' it is peer led and you feel that you are the expert.

I found the full course extremely useful. I'm able to use the things we are taught in everything I do. You can also use the skills to help others in need.

'The course has provided a safe environment to explore my own issues, supplemented by the experience of my peers. The atmosphere and understanding creates empowerment in the knowledge of understanding and acceptance of my peers.'

I now have aspiration for the future. I have been able to take aspects to facilitate my journey of recovery. Much greater insight.

I love how no matter what your issues are it didn't matter. The ethos of we're all in it together really shone through.

I love how no matter what your issues are it didn't matter. The ethos of we're all in it together really shone through.

I have not used Crisis Team since starting Recovery College. I feel I have the tools and the support I need.

My goals were just about trying to get better, but now I feel with my experience, I want to help other people like me.

Space available for Gateshead Community Groups

We want to share. If you are a group or individual who is helping community and you need a space to meet, or practise, or support, or allies, then get in touch and we can work together. We work on the basis of mutuality so if you've no money then that's ok. You will have something that will be a valuable contribution to the ReCoCo

CONNECTION & HEALING

Contain	Build	Explore	Transform	Finding Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRAP DBT Skills (Emotional reg, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Distress Tolerance) Self soothing Mindfulness Movement Breathwork Nature, the elements & perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity Drumming, singing Outdoor activity Mindful walks Gentle exercise Tolerance Strength Self belief Tai Chi Overcoming inhibitions Sensory strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation Anger/rage awareness & management Understanding self harm Pain management Outdoor activity Healing Letting go Creativity Superpower inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telling our story: through drama: Surviving & Thriving Peer Support Development Letting go Vocational support Exploring aspirations, Intention setting Community support Physical health check Healthy eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with community groups Identifying need in community Employability Skills Enhancing community groups Creating community support and action groups Creating opportunities to influence



A CONVERSATION WITH ALISDAIR CAMERON AT RECOCO (RECOVERY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE)

Hannah Marsden:
When did ReCoCo start and why did it start?

Alisdair Cameron:

We have been going for nearly five years in this form. Historically speaking, in the last 20 years or so, there have been quite a few mental health related charities and voluntary sector groups, who have had various degrees of collaboration and networking. Luckily we all got on with each other and had a similar outlook. So, when the Mental Health Trust were tasked with setting up a recovery college, we assisted them and then the progressive forces from in and out of the Trust were combined. We then pulled that element mostly out of the Trust and then that became ReCoCo.

ReCoCo started partly out of a desire for people who use mental health services or who experience mental distress to have more autonomy and more control over things. It's also partly a response to national and local cuts, meaning that there is far less formal or statutory support for people. Part of the 'neoliberal success' has been to encourage people to think that if they have a problem there will automatically be a service to meet that problem. We don't necessarily agree with that. We agree that there should be help but not necessarily in the form of a transactional service. The impact of deliberate austerity means that those services don't exist so that's where the need comes from. There is also something about trying to fight back against the loss of community-based resources of support, whether they have a mental health label or not. People are more isolated, there is more and more social atomisation and we recognise the many benefits of people having a greater social network and feeling more supported by people with whom they have the most contact.



Hannah:

So, you started five years ago, and I imagine in the time since then there have been lots of ups and downs. What is it that keeps you going?

Alisdair:

What keeps me going is seeing that when people come here, they do so because they are pleased to come here; they come because they want to, not because they are being told to. It's not all that difficult, it's about a basic human need: people want somewhere to go, something to do and some people to do it with. And if you start working in that way and helping to provide some of that then there its very rewarding seeing people flourish as a consequence. So that is what keeps us going and also our bloody mindedness. The world might be going to shit but I'm not going to sit down and just let that happen without trying to do something to take the edges off. I guess there are times when the chips are down and we start thinking that this is a thankless task, but when you realise comparatively speaking, personally I'm in a much better situation than many people that come to us, and I've been in their shoes and I feel a sense of duty, as do my colleagues, to try and help people to get to where we've got to. So, there is that sense of duty. And yeah there is a cussedness. We're mad as hell, we are not going to take it anymore.

Hannah:

To me that is what solidarity is, uniting with others against an oppressive force and keeping on turning up because of a sense of responsibility towards each other. But in your words what does solidarity mean in your work with ReCoCo? How do you practice solidarity?

Alisdair:

Nobody's got enough of anything so we need to share and pool stuff. Look at where we've got to with the idea that competition and markets will deliver everything. They repeatedly fail and need bailing out to everyone else's expense. You've got to take a very dim view of human nature to think that the only way that humans can progress is by being at each other's throats as opposed to working together. It doesn't mean that it is easy to collaborate with people. We go by the rationale that people are canny and we like to think that they are not just selfish bastards. What we've found in practice is that if you give stuff away, before long people start giving stuff back to you. To practice solidarity, you need to be a little bit of a rebel and you also need to be a bit of hippy. Solidarity is partly an exercise in trust and in letting go of control, and lots of people find that very challenging. The biggest lesson I've learnt as an individual is to be ok with other people doing things that I might not have envisaged. I just think, I wouldn't have done it that way, but that's OK, and I'm alright with that. People are conditioned to expect uniformity – that they will get the same product or service wherever they go. But if we are going down a solidarity route, with people having increasing autonomy, there are going to be inconsistencies. People will be trying and doing things in a different way, and so we are not going to get the same level of consistency than we would with a corporate approach. Its about tolerating that difference.

Hannah:

Hopefully when the map gets more populated, we will be able to see that difference and diversity of approaches across it. All the initiatives we have spoken to are working from where they are at, with the tools they have to hand. There is a great plurality of attempts to make a better economy or a better world.

Alisdair:

Yes, there are many ways to skin a cat. Not that I'm into skinning cats.*

Hannah:

What is specific about the solidarity economy in this region? What needs to happen here? What is the potential?

Alisdair:

The North East is always getting the raw deal. We are always seen as peripheral because we are seen as on the margins and not worthy of investment. The one upside of that is that we tend to be seen as off the radar which could be seen as liberating, because if any of us in the Solidarity Economy were doing what we were doing in central London there would be a lot more scrutiny, and a lot more challenges. Because we are seen as irrelevant it does mean we can go off and try new things. We can use it to our advantage. Now I am not in any way shape or form saying that poverty is liberating, but the one upside is that if people don't give you anything, they can't tell you what to do.

Hannah:

Do you have any advice for other initiatives on the map, or for anyone out there who is trying to bring about a more just and sustainable world?

Alisdair:

I'd say, just get over yourselves. This is about being open and open minded. Be flexible and don't dismiss something out of hand. Work out what it is you are prepared to give up. It could be in terms of control, in resources, spaces assets. Let other people have something. To anyone trying to bring about a more just and sustainable world, I'd say it comes down to what you think of as human nature. People basically are kind of good, they don't need rigid controlling. So, trust in other people because without that level of reciprocal trust you are not going to get anywhere. Work out who your actual enemies are. They are usually those who have much more wealth and power. You might have differences of opinions with those who are working at the same level or who are lower down but acknowledge your own power and, because you are canny people, don't abuse it. Never lose hope. Otherwise all the bastards have won. Saying that the species is doomed, the planet is doomed, well that's a point of view but it doesn't help you psychologically and it doesn't help anyone around you and it is not necessarily an accurate view either. We might not avert everything that's undesirable, but we can always make a bad situation better.



Hannah:

At the very start of the mapping process you told us, “Just don’t make a shit map.” What makes a shit map, or a good map?

Alisdair:

It depends on how maps are presented and how people read them. A map can make people think in geographical terms, so people can check what is going on in their neck of the woods, but it’s about more than geography. There should be thematic elements to it as well. There are loads of things being done on housing, on environment, on food, for older people, younger people... so the map should be able to show these strands and how they are thriving. The idea of the ‘north east’ has a certain resonance but it is a cultural construct. There is no inherent natural boundary that goes around the North East, its entirely constructed so we need the map to get beyond geographical thinking.

Hannah:

One of the aims of the map is to create relationships between the different initiatives on it. If you were in conversation with another initiative from the map, what would you want to ask them or what would you want to talk about?

Alisdair:

I’d turn it around and I’d tell them what we have done to date and ask them, ‘what can we do for you?’ In our way of thinking, if you give something out people give you stuff back. Something might come to fruition, or it might not, but there is no harm in exploring it or talking about it. There is a duty on us all. It’s not just about us, it’s about everyone. So, let’s keep going, let’s not sit around asking for permission, let’s do stuff.

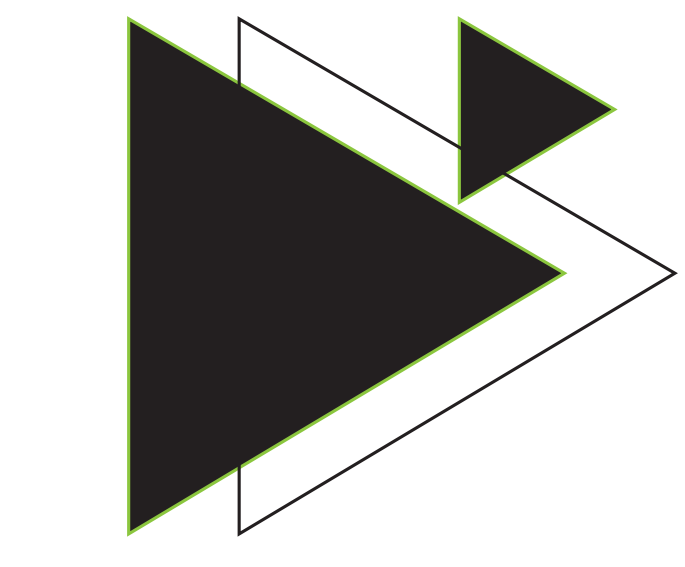
www.recoverycoco.com
www.twitter.com/RecoveryCoCo
www.facebook.com/RecoveryCoCo

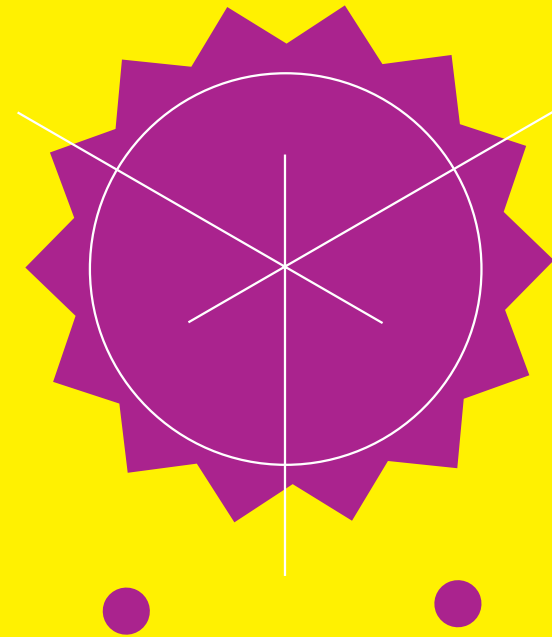
* Disclaimer: No animals were hurt in the recording of this interview.





BLOGGING MY
 BEST FRIENDS
 PSYCHOSIS
 THE
 Y





Seems strange that there is a “best” of psychosis. But I have found goodness in my life long struggle with mental illness and surely finding “best” in life shouldn’t be strange.

I decided to write a blog about mental health years ago but never started. I felt judged enough in daily life. Every time I told the truth about how I felt or what I’ve experienced to non-professionals I encountered one of two types of people. Interested or judgemental. Even then, interested was just that, interested. Sometimes I felt no better than a weird thing to be examined. Even if their intentions were good, my past experiences left me suspicious. I became withdrawn when it came to my mental health. Friends and family were mainly kept in the dark. But keeping them in the dark only made it harder for them when I got really ill.

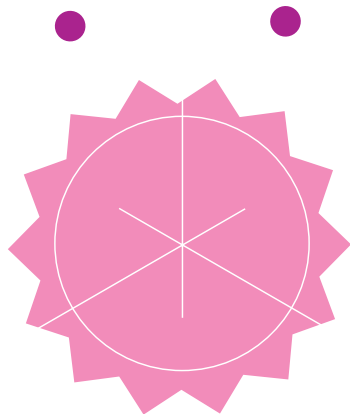
Diagnosed in 2009 I only started my lived truth in 2017. I was exhausted and relapsed. In crisis care my heart spilled to my family and friends about just how I hadn’t really been coping. My struggles with addiction. My previous attempts at my own life. I felt I couldn’t get lower, I thought I had nothing left to give. My life may be simple now a small family, two close friends and my boyfriend. But I’m still here and now, I’m trying to help others.

I started Somehow Connected to Ninjas a few months ago and I have been amazed at how it has been received. Its unusual name has created a following of what I’ve named, fellow Ninjas, working together globally to change stigma and make sure no one else feels alone. What started as me telling tidbits of my life and experiences has grown to include a space for others to promote their causes for inclusion; and a space for DBT skills to help teach others ways to cope.

Somehow Connected to Ninjas got its name from a letter I received from my psychiatrist. I was so upset with this letter because when I read it I thought he purposely made me sound like I’d lost my mind. I was only calmed by an eye opening question from my mother, “well, did you say those things?”. I had to agree, well yes I did. I had talked about an episode where I believed my food was being contaminated. Conspiracy groups were trying to kill me and the only way I could imagine that they were getting to my food and drink without me catching them was ninja-like moves. Relayed back to me in the letter he wrote, “disturbing beliefs her life is at risk through poisoning, Somehow Connected to Ninjas”. Well, when I decided to make my blog, I would be a fool not to take back the language that had upset me as my own.

I’ve learnt how important it is for us to educate ourselves on mental health. The courses here at ReCoCo are outstanding. The wellness retreats which you can find online are great. Learning mindfulness is brilliant for grounding yourself and noticing your body. Unapologetically taking control of your self care brings so much strength and empowerment. And in our times of need, it is that strength we’ve allowed ourselves to find, which sees us through.

My aim to connect everyone, worldwide, to show people just how often when you say how you feel people reply “me too!” Has just begun. If you would like to have a look, get involved or simply share your thoughts you can find me at: connectedtoninjas.wordpress.com or @ToNinjas on Twitter.



What is **Converge**?

Converge is based at Northumbria University. We offer high quality, FREE educational opportunities to those in the community who use NHS and non- statutory Mental Health services, and who are 18 years and over.

Courses are short and accessible, primarily within Arts and Design, and are delivered by Northumbria Undergrad and post grad students, alongside support from academic tutors and Converge staff. All of our courses currently are delivered on campus. Although we offer extra-curricular opportunities throughout the year in the wider community. The focus of our courses is on subject knowledge not on mental health. Although arguably, to be part of something has the potential to be empowering and positive for one's Mental Well Being.

Individuals are enrolled on to programmes and become Converge students, with exciting opportunities to learn and explore new ideas, aiding recovery and support to develop skills in an inclusive and supportive environment here at Northumbria University.

Courses that we offer include Drama and Performance, Introduction to Fashion, Fashion publication and Introduction to creative Print. We are hoping to widen the offer of courses over this current academic year.

Principles of Converge

Students and artists: To work together as artists and students

A community of learners: To build a community where we learn from each other.

An engaged university: To engage and enhance the university and wider community.

Support: To provide a supportive and inclusive environment.

Respect: respect others, value yourself.

And above all ... be ordinary, be extraordinary, be yourself.

Hear what some of our Converge students felt about attending our courses:

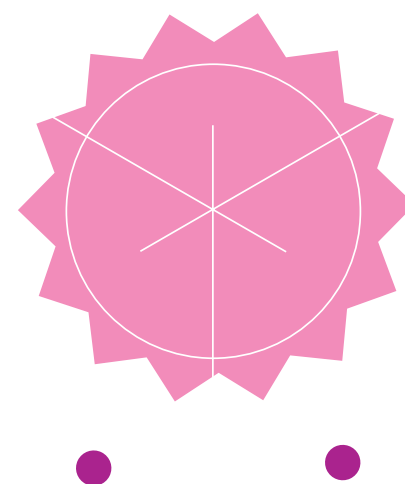
"It's been a great journey- I fully intended just to pop in on the first week and possibly stay for 10 minutes. However I didn't, and I've come every week and loved every minute of it! "

"Converge has allowed me to let off steam and step out of the shadows."

"Helped my confidence."

"The course has been eye opening for me. Converge solidifies how important the arts are."

"An amazing course"



For more information please contact
Ally Hunter –Converge Coordinator
0191- 243-7393
Ally2.hunter@northumbria.ac.uk

MAD STUDIES

We've co-constructed a course at Northumbria University, and have places on the course for ReCoCo students. It's free and no prior qualifications are needed.

It starts 27th January 2020 at Northumbria Coach Lane Campus, NE7 7XA. It runs each Monday 11am to 4pm (with an hour's lunch break) and concludes shortly before Easter.

We've used the title Mad Studies because that's a little bit provocative, designed to make academics a little uneasy, because the point is to critically consider all different angles of mental health with the service user/lived experience central to the discussions. So, there will be elements of history, of mental health politics, of definitions of madness, of how mental health sits within wider society, plus creative approaches and interactive activities.



If this sounds interesting, please get in touch with Alisdair at info@recoverycoco.com before the 20th of January 2020.

OVERCOMING OVERTHOUGHT

Inter-acting's participatory-led community have created an original story around the theme of mental health.

Ritual games have been played and long-time friends have been made.

The show is a mix of naturalistic story telling, comedy, verbatim and playback improvisation.



The improvised 'Overcoming Overthought' by Inter-Acting had its first showing at the Star and Shadow in December. It proved to be both an entertaining and interesting look at mental health issues through the eyes of Susan, the protagonist of the piece. The participants used a refreshing variety of styles to convey the themes, mixing in monologue, stand-up, and finally audience participation. Brave audience members shared some of their issues with

the on-stage team who 'sculpted' them along to music. This simple technique was amazingly insightful for the audience itself and those who had been comfortable enough to share on stage. Despite the freezing conditions outside that evening, we were treated to a unique experience that gave plenty of food for thought.

The Crack - Frances Porritt"



The NewBridge Project : Gateshead

The NewBridge Project and the Solidarity Economy Association have been collaborating to create a useful tool that can make visible and strengthen all of the organisations, projects, initiatives and individuals in the region who are offering an alternative to the extractive and oppressive mainstream economic system.

In short, we're creating a map of everything that is helping people to meet their material and social needs in ways that don't harm people or the planet, and in ways that are contributing to building a more just and sustainable world. Around the world, this type of activity is known as the solidarity economy.

We believe that the first step to strengthening our solidarity economy is to help people understand it better and to help those working within it to support each other. We're collecting information (data) from grassroots organisations, informal meetings, neighbourhood projects, local community groups, co-ops, and associations that share the values of the solidarity economy and using it to create a digital map and directory. The map was launched in September as part of For Solidarity, an exhibition presenting new collaborative artist commissions and a series of events that explore the map and respond to themes of Solidarity.



**GET ON THE
MAP FOR
SOLIDARITY**

If you would like to Get on the Map, please see the following link:

forsolidarityNE.solidarityeconomy.coop

Please spread the word about the work we are doing, and in particular, invite any initiatives you feel should be represented on the map. It's very easy to get involved, and you can get on the map by completing this short survey (it will take 5-10 minutes to complete!) telling us some information about what you do.

Or if you would like to have a chat, please call us on [+44 \(0\)191 477 1884](tel:+441914771884) or email Niomi Fairweather at The NewBridge Projec

HOW DO ORGANISATIONS LIKE RECOCO SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF THE REGION AND WHAT SUPPORT DO THEY NEED TO CONTINUE THIS CRUCIAL WORK? FINDINGS FROM A RECOCO SUPPORTED STUDY.

By Angela

Mental health care and treatment has always been a highly contentious subject, often delivered by fragmented and under-resourced services and with much of the support falling on the backs of local communities and the voluntary sector. However, today we are at an unprecedented crossroads, at a pressure point no one has previously witnessed and it feels like something is about to give. Did that grab your attention? ... read on...

Here at ReCoCo, we all know that social inequality leads to poor mental health... just look around, how many millionaires rock up to WRAP awareness? And since the banking crisis (caused by the selfish rich, not the refugees- remember, they are on our side), austerity policy in the UK has led to year upon year increases in social inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest. If you don't believe me then check out the United Nations' independent and highly critical report here https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/poverty/eom_gb_16nov2018.pdf

But not only has austerity hit the poorest, sickest and most vulnerable hardest, it has also led to the drastic reductions of the very services that the poorest, sickest and most vulnerable depend upon to survive. Take that- kapow! Some may even say it is a deliberate ploy to kill the poorest, sickest and most vulnerable off. Not me though, that may get me on a Government watchlist, I will simply say that if I were to want to eradicate the poor and vulnerable without a public revolt, I would probably develop an austerity policy pretty much identical to the one the UK has endured for the past 9 years... Oh and get my rich media pals to point the finger of blame at another vulnerable group- say the refugees. Even as far back as 2015,

with austerity only 5 years on the clock, there was an estimated additional 1000 suicides as a direct result of austerity <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2017/nov/austerity-linked-120000-extra-deaths-england>. How many more has there been in the following 4 years? Not to mention the report in 2017 that highlighted the additional 120,000 deaths the UK has witnessed as a direct result of Austerity policy <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2017/nov/austerity-linked-120000-extra-deaths-england>.

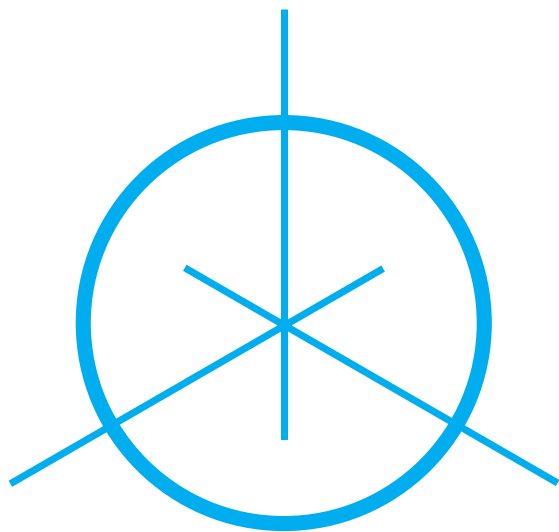
So, with people at their most ill and services at their least capable, the Government have developed their NHS Long-Term Plan to support and treat the health care needs of the UK population. In this document is the plan to expand the health care workforce, integrate health and social care and increase the opportunities for alternative providers to deliver the reconfigured services. All well and good but given that the current workforce is on its knees due to staffing shortages and financial constraints- where will the cavalry come from?

Step forward the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, who actually have been providing the mental health support to the population far longer than the NHS anyway. Plans to reconfigure mental health services is set to increase this role further, but what is the motivation? Is it because the VCSE provide truly holistic, asset based, community centred services? Or is it because they are cheaper? Does it matter anyway?

The VCSE sector in Newcastle Gateshead are supporting increasing numbers of people (sometimes double), whose needs are far more complex than the people they have helped before. In fact, it could be argued that the increase in demand for VCSE support is directly and inversely proportional to the retraction of statutory services. State provided services have shrank whereas the demand for VCSE services has rocketed. So have the VCSE sector seen an increase in their funding proportional to their increased capacity- mostly no. Most have seen real funding terms cuts in line with the reduction in Local Authority budgets, whom

traditionally support the VCSE sector. To cope, they have been forced into greater and greater cost efficiencies, reconfiguring the employment conditions of paid staff and increasing their proportion of volunteers to ensure people receive some support. The rise of the necessity to use a volunteer workforce has meant that often the people delivering the services are a mere few months ahead on the recovery journey from those they are helping. However, poetically and satisfyingly is that the results and impact these services are having are emphatically positive and ground-breaking.

Proceed with caution... Whilst it is nothing short of miraculous what the VCSE sector can produce out of the cast-off finances of the state, it is vital that the state supports and nurtures the sector to ensure it can continue. A recent study undertaken by some of ReCoCo's Peer Researcher's and Academic friends have identified some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current use of the VCSE, alongside developing some recommendations to nurture and support the sector.



Findings - The VCSE sector provide a diverse, accessible and valued range of interventions and services to large sections of the community. Demand for their services have increased (in many cases doubled) over the past few years, alongside the level of complexity in the issues people present with. They provide this through a mixture of paid and volunteer staff, with staffing numbers directly related to funding. **The constant threat and insecurity of loss of funding is the biggest threat to organisational survival. To ensure they can offer a service to their communities, the VCSE have to think creatively to resource their teams, with a potential over-dependency on a workforce with their own vulnerabilities.**

In short, the VCSE sector are seeing more people with far more complex needs, depending upon an army of volunteers whom have their own particular needs. The training and development needs of the VCSE workforce are resource dependent and training

is the first casualty when finances are stretched. This is despite the intensity of the services being delivered. To get access to training, some organisations have developed a barter/ reciprocal training arrangement with third sector and statutory sector colleagues. Two key training areas were identified- greater knowledge and understanding of mental health conditions and who and how to signpost the clients whose mental health needs are greater than their organisation can support.

Of great concern is that it appears that the shrinking of statutory provision has led to the VCSE working with increasingly complex mental health need, yet they have little to no formal access to education, training or supervision. All crucial requirements of a statutory health care provider.

So, what can be done? The amazing and vital work the VCSE provide the community should be recognised, nurtured and supported. This could be done by helping the VCSE learn how to apply for pots of money to strengthen their workforce and access the training they need. Statutory services have automatic access to training and development through regional pots of money and workforce development organisations. We suggest that the VCSE should have equal access to this opportunity- especially in light of the fact that the VCSE are providing so many of the crucial services that were once provided by the state, and should they be unable to provide this in the future, the impact on the state could be catastrophic. The VCSE should be supported to undertake a training needs analysis of their services, with ring-fenced training budgets to support future workforce development. **Finally, we would urge those in charge of regional workforce development to support the informal, reciprocal training set ups, providing funding and support to legitimise this cost-effective approach to create local and regional knowledge exchange hubs.** Not only could the VCSE sector access the NHS and Local Authority education and training opportunities, but they can themselves deliver training and expertise to the statutory sector on what they do best- person centred, asset based, community connected and focused care.

WHAT RECOVERY MEANS TO ME

Michelle Glascott

I USED TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS A PLACE IN THE FUTURE WHERE I WOULD BE "CURED", WHERE I WOULD NEVER GET POORLY AGAIN. IN RECENT TIMES I HAVE COME TO THINK OF RECOVERY IN THE SAME TERM AS ADDICTION. IT BOILED DOWN TO ONE SIMPLE TRUTH.

THIS IS WHO I AM.

ACCEPTING THIS HAS BEEN FUNDAMENTAL TO MY CONTINUING RECOVERY.

The Duck

Imagine a wind up duck, swimming along in the bath. On the surface, people just see you moving along calmly, unaware of the furious little feet paddling away.

At some point the wind up duck will runs out.

Recovery is about finding ways to wind the duck back up so it can keep going.

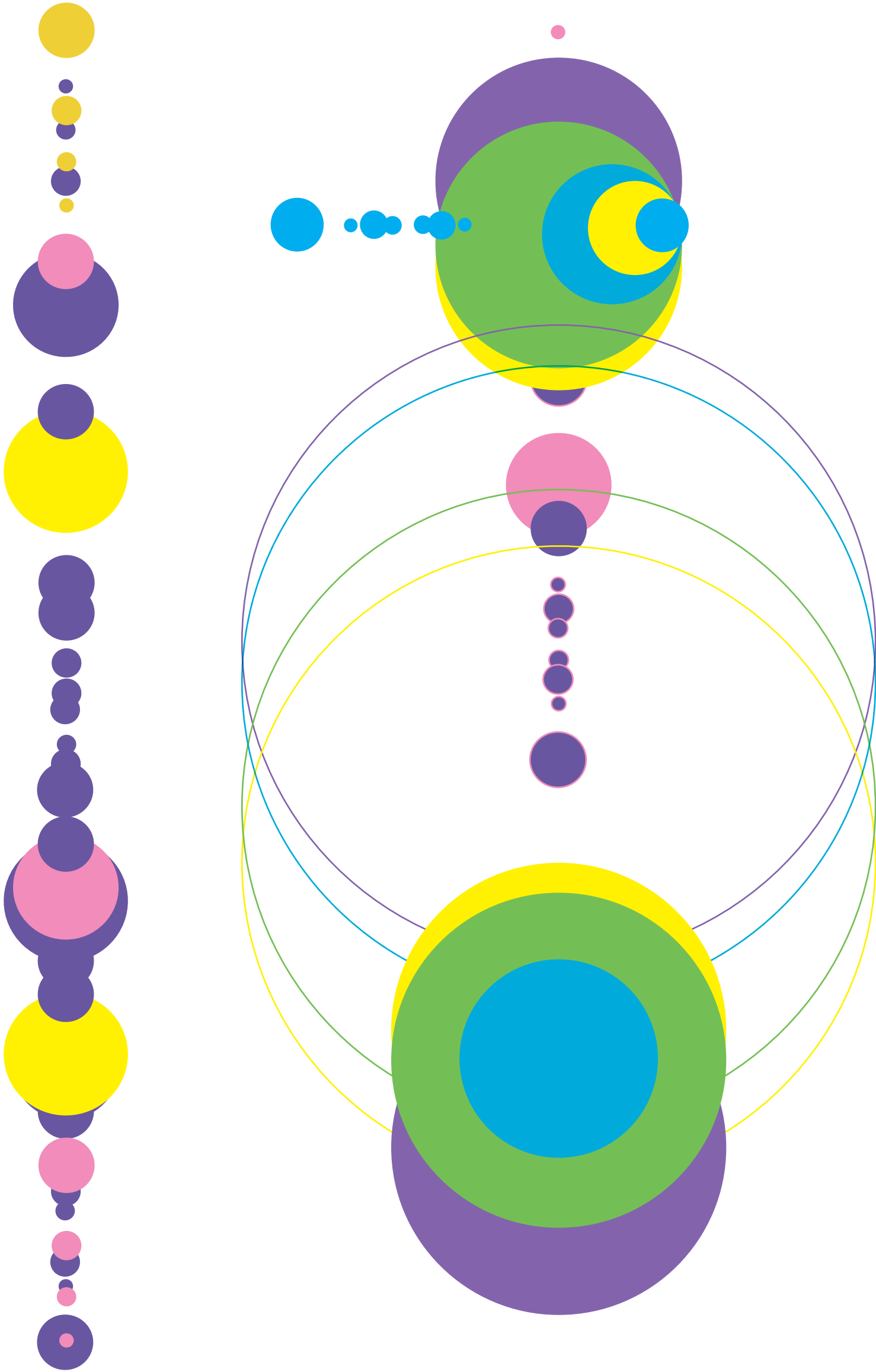
There are lots of ways you can wind up the duck. They can be things like wellness tools (i.e. going to the gym, watch movies or listening to music) to support from friends and family or having a goal to work towards.

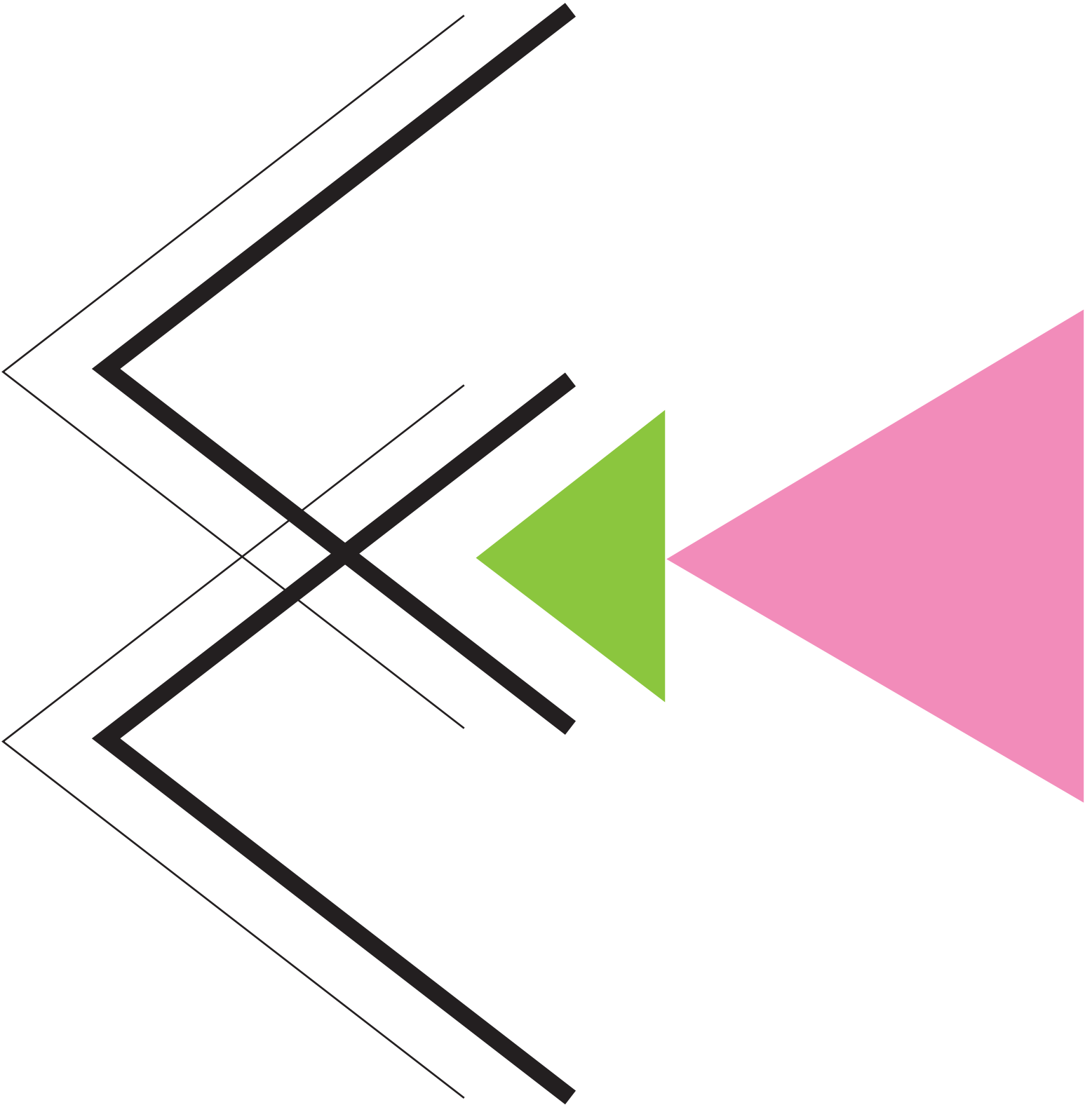
These things all help give you the strength to wind the duck up and keep going.

You can also wind the duck up using controversial wellness tools (i.e. drugs, alcohol and risky behavior) and being involved with toxic people because you have no one else.

These things can help you wind the duck up because they may have helped you in the past. You may find that they only give you a few turns of the key.

Sometimes things outside of your control can make the duck hit the side of the bath. If you have wound the duck enough it can struggle until its free.





INTER-ACTING THEATRE

INTER-ACTING.CO.UK

SOCIAL

FREE.

SATURDAYS.

17:00 - 19:00.

SPACE SIX

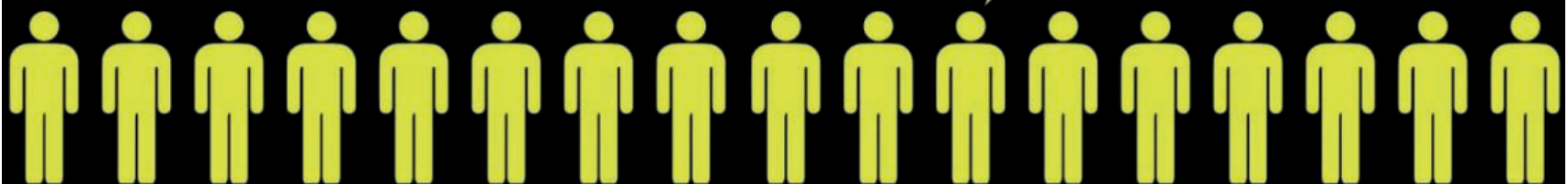


FLOOR SIX
39 PILGRIM ST,
NE1 6QE

#THEATREGAMES

GAMES, IMAGINATION AND
SURPRISES.

friends



Pride in Mind

A group for people from LGBTQI communities who experience mental distress

Pride in Mind

Pride in Mind is a Tyneside based support and social group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and Intersex individuals who also have mental health problems.

We recognise that LGBTQI people who access mental health services suffer from double discrimination; namely homophobia and transphobia, and the stigma of having 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 MESMAC in Newcastle. We also organise regular social and cultural activities and experiences which are free for our members.

To join Pride in Mind or for more information about the group contact Mish Loraine
 mish.loraine@netogether.co.uk
 0191 2330382
 c/o Launchpad, Broadacre House, Market Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6HQ

WOMEN'S GROUP

BLISSFUL

EVERY SATURDAY LUNCHTIME

tel: 0191 2330382
 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.

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.



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

Canny folk, with lived experience of mental health problems, meeting every other Sunday for a ramble, amble, stroll or meander in the great outdoors. Nothing too strenuous, in good company, with all routes planned in advance and start/finish points accessible by public transport.

For further details, contact Chris Rooney.
 0741 595 4065
 christopher-rooney@hotmail.co.uk

c/o Launchpad, Broadacre House, Market St, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6HQ

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Unusual Experiences Educational Support Group

Meet Every Other Thursday @
 Broadacre House Room 0.6
 1pm-4pm
 Ring 07551136227 to confirm a place.



BE A GAME CHANGER

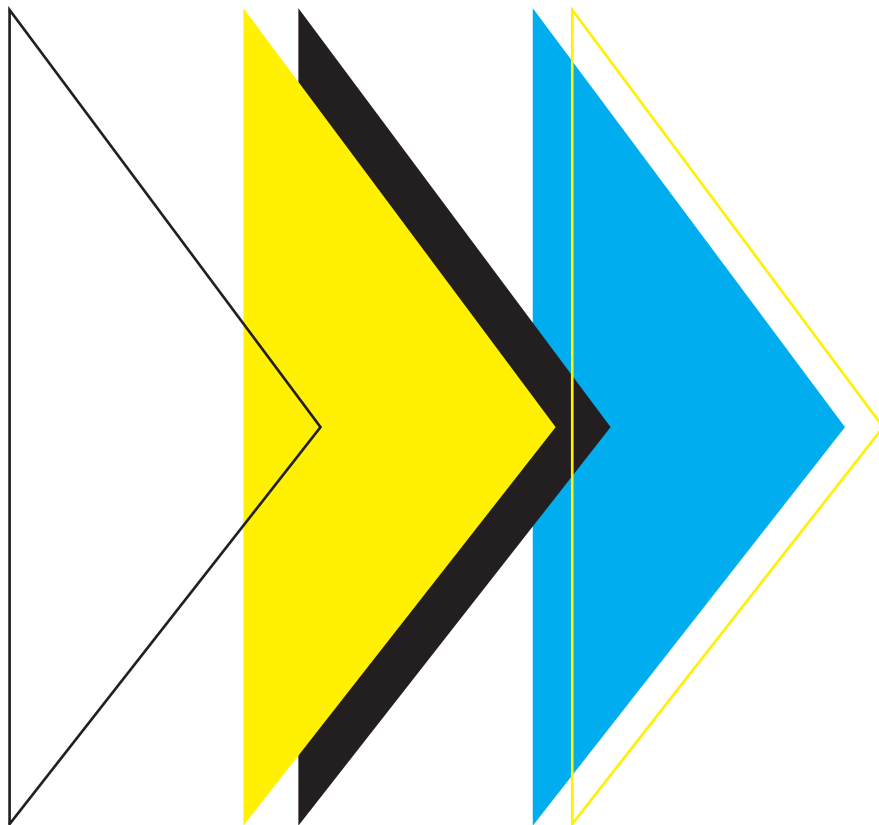
Telling someone to
'MAN UP'
 can result in a man
DOWN

Let's talk... more about
 mental health
 join the conversation by searching
 #BEAGAMECHANGER

#BEAGAMECHANGER
 nufoundation.org.uk/BeAGamechanger

NewcastleUnitedFoundation
 NEWCASTLE UNITED FOUNDATION
 Building a United Future

Newcastle City Council



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 ridding 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's perfectly normal to feel weird. If you'd like more information or would like to join us on a meet-up get in touch.



- @MENTALHEALTHMATES
- @MHMnewcNat & @findyourwe
- Mental Health Mates
- mentalhealthmatesnewcastle@gmail.com

www.mentalhealthmates.co.uk

DROP BY

Tues & Wed
1-3pm

INFORMAL PEER SUPPORT

Come by and chat with folk from the Recovery College Collective

Creative Writing

A free, relaxed and informal group, we meet every **Wednesday (11am-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.

Launchpad

GEEK GROUP

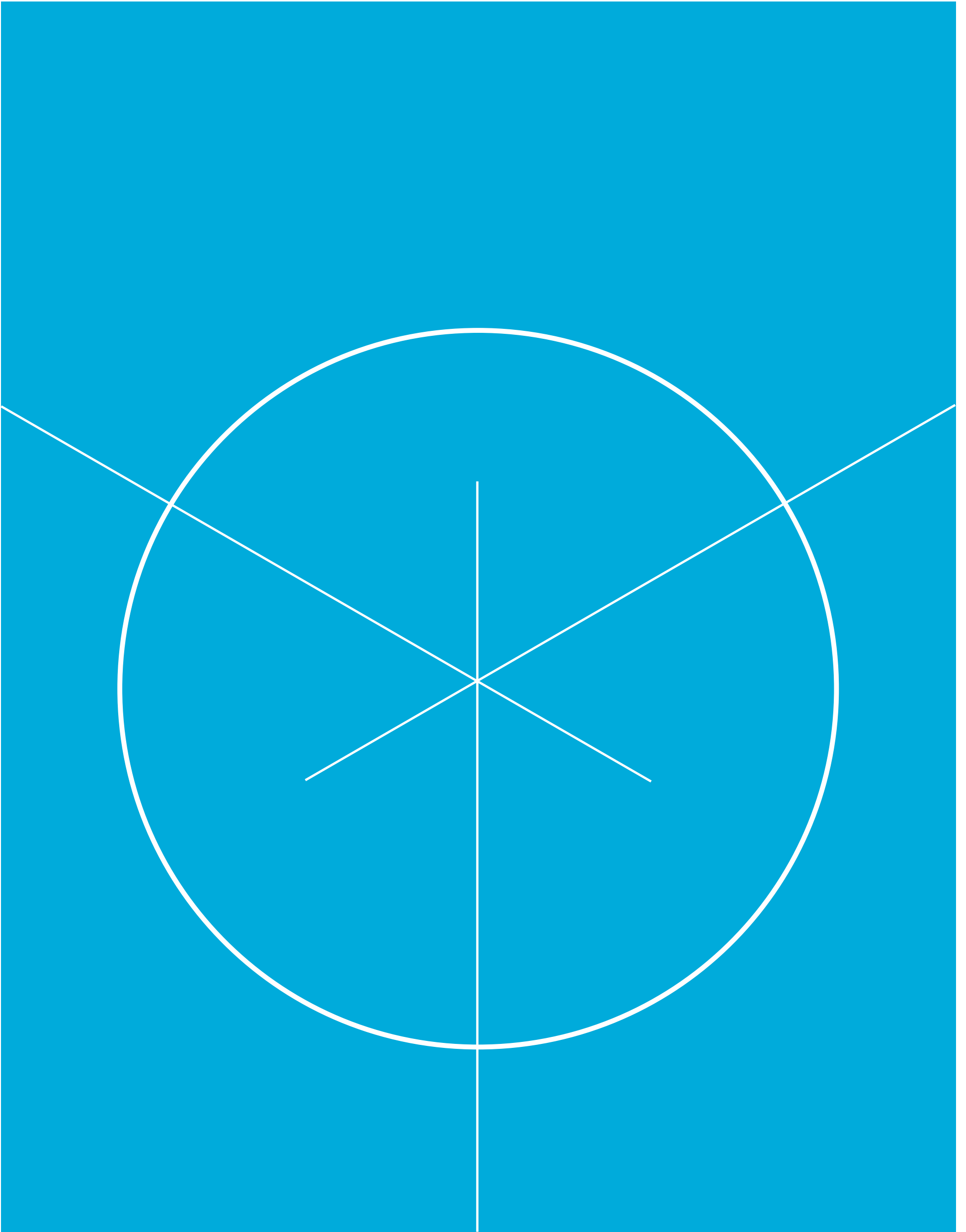
Computer games, comic books, tech, movies & TV, boardgames, sci-fi & fantasy, anime, & all that's geek cool.

With real people.

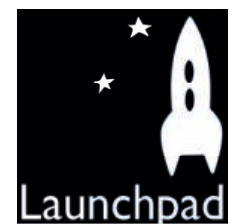
2pm to 4pm every Thursday

launchpadncl@aol.com 0191 2330382

Launchpad



RECOVERY COLLEGE IS A JOINT ENTERPRISE WITH THE
BACKING AND INPUT OF 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