

New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College Autumn Newsletter

October 2021



New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College - Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Trust.

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter

Welcome to the New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College Autumn Newsletter. This term, we focus on how to combat loneliness, how to manage stress and Winter health. We are also launching our Welcome Journal full of tools and ideas to manage your mental health and wellbeing. Read on to find out more!

Student Development

The College Welcome Journal

A journal created by students for students to help manage mental health and wellbeing

Earlier in the year, we co-produced a fantastic new tool for students to aid their recovery and improve their mental health and wellbeing, anytime, any place! And now, it's available as a free download for all students who register in the college.

This journal serves as an introduction to college and is full of helpful tips about managing and supporting your mental health and wellbeing. Things that you might try in your everyday life and interactive activities you can complete as and when you feel inclined to, from mindfulness exercises and creative writing tasks to tips for getting a better night's sleep.

To get a free copy, all you need to do is enrol, sign in to your online account, and navigate the resources section.

You will also find a helpful resource for creating your wellbeing recovery action plan, as promoted in our recent ['why having a recovery plan helps your wellbeing'](#) seminar.

Student Development Programme

If you like to get involved in co-production opportunities, why not enquire about joining our innovative [student development programme?](#)

The student development programme gives individuals an opportunity to reach personal goals and allows students to move forward in their recovery. If you want to know more, please contact the college on:

Tel. 01442 864966

email newleaf.wellbeingcollege@nhs.net.



Nature Photo



September in the Lake District: by Irma

No matter the weather or how dark it feels, there is always an opportunity to see the light through the clouds and bask in the beauty around you. What inspires you? Send your photos to newleaf.wellbeingcollege@nhs.net.

Quotes of the Term

The leaves are about to show us how beautiful it can be to let go. Unknown

Embrace being perfectly imperfect. Learn from your mistakes and forgive yourself. You'll be happier. Roy Bennett

A tulip doesn't strive to impress anyone. It doesn't struggle to be different than a rose. It doesn't have to. It is different. And there's room in the garden for every flower. Marianne Williamson

Courses, seminars and workshops not to be missed!

[Employment: the pros and cons of telling employers about your health challenges](#)

11/11/2021 11:00 – 11:45

[Five steps to wellbeing](#)

15/11/2021 1:30pm – 4:30pm

[Sleeping Well](#)

02/12/2021 13:30 – 16:30

[Having a Positive Relationship with social media:](#)

01/12/2021 18:30 – 21:30

Visit www.newleafcollege.co.uk to see our full range of courses. If a course doesn't meet your requirements, please send your suggestions to students@newleafcollege.co.uk

Winter Health – Nutrition and Immunity

The role of nutrition is essential in maintaining mental and physical wellbeing, particularly during the colder months. Poor nutrition can lead to low mood, lack of energy, compromised immune system and exacerbated pain. Meeting your nutritional needs boosts immunity, helping you prevent and fight infections, improving mood and energy levels, and contributing to overall emotional and physical wellbeing. Try to ensure a balanced diet and include:

Vitamin D – Supports muscle and bone

health, the immune system and plays a part in fighting respiratory infections. Found in eggs, cereals, oily fish, red meat and liver.

Vitamin C – found naturally in fruit and vegetables, boosts your immune system and helps prevent and fight colds and flu

Zinc – can be found in fish, dairy, eggs, and cereals and supports immunity.

National Stress Awareness Day 2021

Autumn and Winter can be a stressful time of year: Christmas is around the corner, which for many can bring with it financial and social pressures; winter illnesses are on the increase; there is a lack of sunlight impacting on people's mood and health, and there is possibly less social interaction with the lack of options for meeting outdoors.

It's **National Stress Awareness Day on 3rd November 2021** – a

great time to identify and reduce the stress factors in your life. Stress is a natural part of life, and stress is an important motivator. Still, it becomes problematic when we do not find ways to deal with our stressors or use unhealthy behaviours as coping mechanisms. Long-term stress can escalate and contribute to more permanent issues for some people, such as anxiety, depression, and unhealthy coping strategies. It can also lead to high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke, so we must try to minimise stress where we can.

Find a balance between different areas in your life – self, family, leisure, work, social, home. If one area is getting all the focus and others neglected, this could lead to problems for you and those around you.

Prioritise time for self-care – whatever that means to you. Some suggestions include making time for a long bath, journaling, walking in your favourite spot, reading, watching a funny movie, a massage, cooking yourself a nice meal, going somewhere you have always wanted to go! Prioritise some time to take care of yourself and nourish your mental health and wellbeing! Sometimes, we need to reset.

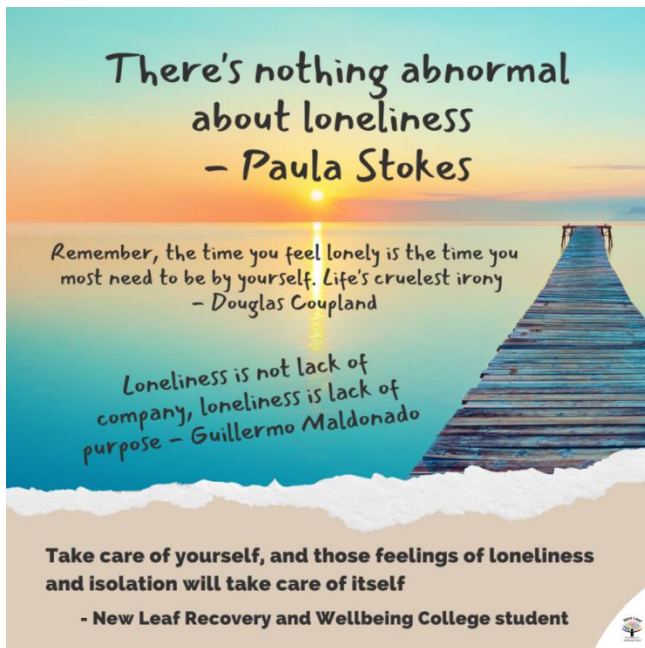
Exercise – whilst we might want to be wrapped up nice and warm until spring comes around again, all the evidence tells us that exercise lifts our mood by increasing those endorphins that make us feel happy and confident. It also helps us better deal with stress when it creeps up. Plus, exercise helps improve sleep patterns. So find what works for you. It may be running, swimming, a workout class, walking, or even dancing around your living room to your favourite playlist!

Sleep – the importance of a good sleep routine cannot be emphasised enough. It has a knock-on effect on most other aspects of your life: mood, immunity and physical illness, energy levels, concentration, appetite – the list goes on! Reflect on your current routine and whether it is working for you. If not, what can you adjust? You could also attend our [Sleeping Well course](#).

Be Present – stress can happen when we want to be somewhere else. For example, you are running late (you want to be where you are 'meant to be' at that time). Or when you are in a social situation, and you would rather be somewhere different. Bring yourself back to the moment – breathe, feel your feet, tap into your senses, observe nature. Worrying about being somewhere else will not get you there quicker, but your journey will be much less stressful if you bring yourself back to the present moment and then take action from there..

Attend a wellbeing course to understand how stress works and learn practical ways to manage stress – we [Understanding Stress](#) course focused on teaching you how to manage your mental health and wellbeing. There are many more courses you could try which may have a positive effect on your stress levels. For example, [Five Steps to Wellbeing](#), [Mindfulness for Everyday Life](#) [Art Journaling](#), [Wellbeing and Creativity](#) and [Understanding Anxiety](#). Please check out the website or call us for further details.

Reducing isolation and loneliness



COVID-19 has had dramatic effects on people's mental health and well-being.

People experiencing isolation and loneliness are higher than ever. People have said they have concerns about finances, relationships and physical health, among other things. We know it impacts people experiencing mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression. However, there are several ways to manage isolation and loneliness.

Read what Carrie has to say in our 'blog of the term'.

Tips to reduce isolation and loneliness

- Discovering / reflecting on your values;
- Telling your friends, family, neighbours or colleagues that you appreciate them;
- [Using service and apps](#), such as chatbots or helplines dedicated for offering support;
- Joining creative or learning based activities;
- Pet an animal (tip: you can borrow other people's animals!);
- Volunteer, join a club or give back to those in need;
- Say yes to meeting with others, whether face-to-face or over the internet;
- Develop your existing skills or learn something new
- Follow some of the suggestions from our [keep well at home](#) blog
- If working from home, encourage regular virtual meetings, facilitate get-togethers, network and access support or information provided by your employers

Read our '[Reducing isolation and loneliness](#)' blog for more details and tips.

How taking up meaningful activity helps

There is strong evidence that taking up employment or meaningful activity, such as volunteering, is beneficial for our mental health and can reduce feeling isolated. Read what one of our students has to say about their experience below:

"I have experienced being out of work and working in an unsuitable environment; both were isolating and contributed to anxiety and depression. I took some courses at the college, including [employment and self-management](#), [Understanding stress and spiritual self-care](#). These helped me evaluate what was important to me and I gained the confidence to apply for new opportunities. Working gives me purpose and something to be proud of. It challenges me, keeps me learning and it's fulfilling helping others. It has also increased my self-esteem and improved my social skills, as I now have more opportunities to connect with others.

Blog of the term

“A SMILE”

BY CARRIE LILLYWHITE



“.... one day we will be able to reach out and offer a comforting touch. You can smile with your eyes even when wearing that mask

A smile can be infectious and such a small gesture in what we are finding ourselves to be a difficult time. I've always believed if you smile, the world smiles back!

COVID-19 is not just an illness; it's impacting all our lives. The vulnerable are lonely and isolated, people are losing their livelihoods; and mental health is on the rise. Life as we knew it is now what seems a distant memory, and there is no indication as to when we will return to normal.

They once said: “keep calm and carry on” and as a nation, this pandemic is ongoing and tough. You can smile with your eyes even when wearing that mask and it will go a long way...

Give a gesture, be kind and remember, this may be a test of time to us all; but we are not alone. The silent virus that strikes upon us has caused mass world- wide destruction...but with the act of kindness, humanity and caring, we can stand together and support each other. Remember, consideration for our key workers and taking the government advise, and the wheels will keep on turning.

Keep taking those small steps to keep each other safe. This small act and gesture will make a difference and we can fight this silent destructive virus and stand together as a whole world 🌍

....until then we must keep encouraging each other and be prepared to make a difference. To make it count. And one day we will be able to reach out and offer a comforting touch ...give a kiss on the cheek. Vera Lynnn once said: “keep smiling through”.

I know we long to hug and hold one another....We miss socialising like we used to... something we may of took for granted perhaps???? Which now feels like a lifetime ago. But please remember one day this will be a distant memory for us all, until that day comes, come what may, stay safe and keep smiling through little angels you are all amazing.

Support and tips for accessing online tools and services

Some organisations will host sessions to help you upskill and practice using technology to access support online. For those concerned with accessing online applications and services, below are several options you can consider:

- Local library members can take IT for beginner sessions and has an IT champion whose job is to help people access the internet
- There are a number of free IT courses online, such as those via the [national carers service](#)
- [Zoom hosts free training sessions](#) and there are a number of free [online videos for beginners on YouTube](#)
- Students can also take our '[getting comfortable with Zoom](#)' workshop, which is designed with giving people the opportunity to practice using Zoom in a safe and non-judgemental environment
- Perhaps try asking your family or friends to practice with you

Accessing computers

- Many local libraries allow members to use their computers free for one hour.
 - You can find your local library online or by calling 0300 1234049.
 - The library also offers IT lessons for beginners;
- Check if you can receive funding to buy equipment from the [Royal British Legion](#).
 - Those that have served or families of those that have served can contact them by calling 0333 258 5463
- Contact one of the following charities to see if you can receive support:
 - Rural Digital Inclusion Project 2021 – CDA East Herts - 01992 289060;
 - Community Action Decorum - cindy@communityactiondecorum.org.uk;
 - Digital inclusion project WHCVS – 01707 274861

Telephone numbers for crisis support

If you need help in a mental health crisis:

The quickest way to get help at any time of the day or night is to call the free-phone number: 0800 6444 101, or call NHS 111 and select option 2 for mental health services.

Samaritans:

Tel: 116 123
24 hours a day, every day

Sane out of hours helpline:

Tel: 0300 304 7000
from 4.30pm-10.30pm every day.



News and events

Suicide Prevention Awareness

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!

On 10th September, our expert by experience Louisa shared her story at the HPFT NHS virtual conference for World Suicide Prevention Day. Read Louisa's story to see [how she improved her wellbeing to overcome suicidal thoughts.](#)

World Mental Health Day 2021:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on people's mental health. This year's theme is "mental health care for all" and gives us all chance to talk about how we can make it a reality.

Black History Month: 1st-31st Oct

We are proud to be working in a multi-cultural environment that values equality and diversity. Throughout October, you can watch staff [videos from the HPFT Facebook Page](#) about why black history month is important and what we can learn from it.

Free HPFT event announcement:



Free tickets can be reserved via Eventbrite through this [news article](#) about the event.

Student Interview

I learnt how to harness social media for my recovery.

Why did you join this course?

Sometimes content and comments on social media can evoke negative emotions. I can also let it take a time away from me. I wanted to learn how to harness the positive aspects of social media for my recovery whilst limiting my exposure to the negative effects.

What did you like about this course?

The course was thought provoking. It was an eye-opener learning how social media works behind the scenes. I liked that there were different types of exercises and discussions and learned different strategies from each other.

What did you learn?

The course helped me identify how much time I spent on social media and what I can do to make the time more positive. It was helpful learning how social media works and why it can negatively affect our wellbeing, which has helped me to limit the negative effects.

What suggestions did you have for improvements?

My feedback included asking for more tips for adopting positive social media habits. I am looking forward to attending the course again after it has been reviewed.

Would you recommend this course?

Yes, especially for those who 'fall down the rabbit hole' when browsing or who want to harness the benefits of social media to help their recovery.

Inspiring Hope, Opportunity and Control



Contact the college

01442 864966

Students@newleafcollege.co.uk

www.newleafcollege.co.uk



**New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College is delivered by
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust**



Hertfordshire Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

