



Newsletter

No 42

17/07/2025

Dear Students,

Happy 10th Year Birthday for Recovery in Mind!!



On the 15th June we entered our 10th year here at Recovery in Mind. Each week rolled into a term, each term into a year and then we found ourselves moving into the 10th. Our team has remained very stable over this period, and I think that's a testament to all of us and you for getting involved and keeping us gainfully busy developing new ideas for courses and workshops and putting them on for all of you to benefit - which I hope you all have in some way. So, instead of celebrating simply one day I decided that we should, collectively, celebrate during the entire year. Next month I will 'reveal' a list of events to mark the celebrations. Of course, we will have a party but

there will also be many things to get involved with including applying for some awards, some fundraising efforts and promoting Recovery in Mind within the community of West Berkshire. We have all benefitted from Recovery in Mind in so many ways.... helping us to find our way forward following difficult mental health challenges, gaining confidence to widen our world (how did it get so small during those tough times??) or improve our relationship with ourselves and others. When I started out imagining Recovery in Mind following my own attendance at the Hampshire Recovery College, I didn't know how long the venture would last. But it was naive of me to think there would be an end date when we were no longer needed - struggling with thoughts and feelings and how that affects our lives is all part of being human and we won't be the last to struggle this way. Unfortunately, there will be others who will need our help in the future. So, please ask yourself what you can do to help us help others in the future.

On a final note, may we wish you an enjoyable summer break. We will be returning in September with another collection of courses and workshops. Many people who find their way to Recovery in Mind do so on the recommendation of friends so please do encourage others to join us if you feel able to.

Angela and the Recovery in Mind Team

Please note that, as usual, the office is closed over the summer holidays. Course and workshop bookings can be made through the website but please do not expect other communication during the summer period as the staff team work term time only. If you should require mental health support during this time, please take a look at the emergency contact details at the bottom of the newsletter.

Summer Wellbeing Day at Mapledurham House



On a lovely sunny Thursday morning in June a number of RiM staff and students met at the beautiful Elizabethan Mapledurham House near Reading and next to the Thames for our 'Wellbeing Day out'. Ali Eyston, the mother of the current owner, had invited us to meet her in the peaceful grounds and gave us a lovely, history-filled tour of the house and gardens.

We firstly visited the Water Mill where a photo was taken decades ago for 'Black Sabbath's' first album cover. Then we walked to the main House where we learned about the historic importance of Catholicism to its residents both past and present and were shown the secret 'Priest's hole' and many of the remarkable rooms and their ancient contents.

Following a picnic lunch under the shade of an enormous Cedar of Lebanon tree, we all spent an hour creatively. Either we joined a group doing art, or we read together the first section from the book 'The Wind in the Willows' which had been written by Kenneth Grahame, both activities inspired by the local environment.

Ali then invited us to have a delicious cream tea together at the enormous dining table surrounded by centuries old paintings, and candelabra. This was definitely our 'Bridgerton' moment! What a treat it was!

Our grateful thanks go to Ali for facilitating such a positive and exciting day out for us.

Here is some feedback from attendees on the day:



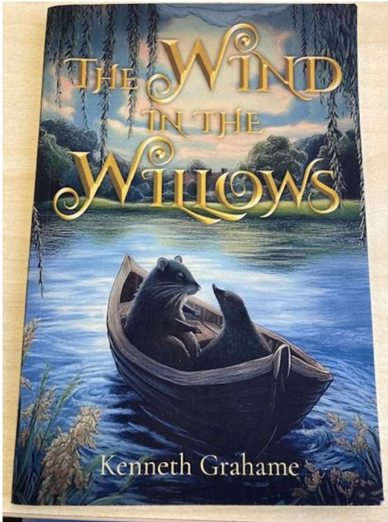
"What a treat, true meaning of 'Summer Wellbeing Day'. It's been good to stop and 'take notice' of the surroundings. Just simply 'Magical'!"

"Such a wonderful welcome! Marvellous history and architecture and forward thinking for the environment - And sunshine! A perfect Day.... Thank you!"

"Special and a bit glamorous and talking to people was a delight! Thank you, Ali!"



'The Wind in the Willows': Reflections from the Riverbank



During our fabulous summer wellbeing day at the Mapledurham Estate, a group of us sat by the riverbank to read the opening chapter of 'The Wind in the Willows', inspired by the author Kenneth Grahame's childhood experiences of living beside the Thames in West Berkshire. We wondered whether the book was actually for children or adults, speculating that perhaps the best children's books contain plenty for adults to enjoy and ponder on too.

'The Wind in the Willows' recounts the adventures of Mole, Rat, Badger and Toad who, although animals, display many human characteristics which most of us would, I think, relate to. The book opens with Mole coming out of hibernation and emerging from his underground home into the open air and wider world. We first read this passage in one of our 'Reading for Recovery' sessions a few years ago during the pandemic and noticed the similarities between Mole emerging from hibernation and the rest of us coming out of lockdown. There was a sense that we all needed to re-discover and re-navigate the world we'd thought we'd known in order to develop our 'new normal' in uncertain and ever-changing circumstances.

On emerging from his underground isolation, Mole revels in his new-found freedom and soon finds himself somewhere he's never been before: at the edge of a river. And it is here that his adventures really begin.

The river as a metaphor for life is not a new concept but is beautifully and quite movingly depicted throughout the book. It is one we've used here at Recovery in Mind in our Kawa course, using a Japanese model whereby our life's journey is depicted as a river ('kawa' being the Japanese word for 'river'). As those of you who have attended this course will know, we've looked at the 'rocks' and 'driftwood' in our lives, ie our challenges and obstacles and resources to overcome or manage them in order to create and maintain the 'flow' of our lives and recovery.

I found this resonates with the river Mole encounters. There is a sense in which he is starting a new phase of life after hibernation which is perhaps not dissimilar to embarking on recovery after a period of ill health. To his surprise, far from being dull and dreary, Mole finds the river is teeming with life - and company. He is very quickly befriended by the Rat and becomes acquainted with a host of other animals who soon become firm friends. The river proves to be a place of both danger and domesticity, discoveries and delights. The emphasis on friendship throughout the book caused me to reflect on the value of connections and community. I know we talk about this a lot in Recovery in Mind, but I really think we cannot overestimate the vital importance of journeying alongside other people who 'get' us. And when we have a wobble or tumble (as Mole does when, at his first attempt at rowing, he overturns Rat's boat and ends up in the cold water), how reassuring it is to know that there are people 'on our side' who are there to support us, and who we in our turn support too.

Set in rural Edwardian England, 'The Wind in the Willows' is also a celebration of the natural world and, perhaps too, a simpler way of life in a pre-industrialised (and certainly pre-digital) age. The descriptive language of the landscape over the changing seasons is quite breathtaking in places and (in my view) the novel is worth reading for that alone. There is ample opportunity to pause, take notice of and savour the sights, sounds and smells of the riverbank, wild wood, etc.

We may not identify with every aspect of these characters' lives (they are, after all, somewhat quaint and at times ridiculous Edwardian gentlemen, in the main. Do any of us, for example, aspire to buy ourselves a black velvet smoking suit?! I know I don't!) But, through their comic adventures and mishaps, and the perhaps satirical but gentle humour, the friends' courage, concern for one another and companionship shines through. And, as with any journey, whether along a river, through the pages of a book, or a period of mental health challenges and recovery, the characters are not the same as when they first set out. They have each changed and grown as individuals through their experiences, gaining new insights and confidence and wisdom. So, perhaps not so very different from us today. Cath



Outdoor Swim at the Lido

We have enjoyed a few swimming sessions this term at the beautiful outdoor Lido at Northcroft Leisure Centre. One was in bright sunshine, the other in a short thunderstorm during which we were duly and hastily removed from the pool. Once dried we went inside for a



warming drink and catch up - so the time was still well spent connecting with one another. The setting is wonderful, the pool and changing areas are immaculate, and the water temperature is just right.

Swimming is very important to me in terms of my ongoing recovery. For you it might be walking the dog, going off for a cycle or a hiking

adventure. Whatever we enjoy that gets us outdoors, pours fresh air into our bodies and gives us joy is well worth the effort. Perhaps you might get a bit more active over our summer holiday period whilst we take our annual break from courses and workshops? Whatever it is..... enjoy! Angela



Creativity in the Wild - July 2025

The morning was warm and bright but not too hot when a small group of us met at Snelsmore Common for our outdoor creativity session. It was lovely to meet in such a beautiful place to work together on a creative project. Firstly, we took a mindful moment to individually gather 'found objects' of interest from the forest floor such as leaves, twigs and moss and put them together on a picnic table. We then reviewed and admired what we'd found and even tried to identify items on an App.

Together we decided on 2 themes to create our temporary collages:



- A wood- complete with squirrel (and crocodile!!)
- The face of the 'Green-man'.

We were so pleased with our joint creative efforts and were then able to return all the woodland items to their original 'homes', having enjoyed our endeavours and co-operated for our time together.

Fiona & Sarah



Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. Davies



A reflection on Leisure by W H Davies

While reading the latest National Trust magazine, I came across an article entitled, "Rambling: A Beginners Guide". There were 5 top tips which included wearing the appropriate footwear and clothes. Top tip number 5 was "Enjoy the journey". It made reference to the W H Davies poem. This set me thinking. I have known and enjoyed this poem for years. Reading it again I was struck by the advice given, which seems to be telling us to practise mindfulness while out walking.

Slow down your walking and take notice of your surroundings. Connect with what you see, hear, smell and touch. Take the opportunity to enjoy where you are. Allow nature to soothe you. Gillian.

30 Things to do to help you feel slightly happier this summer...

Everything's feeling a bit stale? These small tweaks to your routine may turn things around, boost your mood and could even make you feel like a better person ...

1 Borrow a dog. It will force you to get outside. If you want the joy of a pet without the expense and commitment, mooch with someone else's pooch. Try BorrowMyDoggy, or a more informal arrangement; one of our RiM students has been doing this very successfully for months. Taking a dog for a walk is instant serotonin. You play with the dog, plus you're plugged into a community of dog people. Everyone talks to you and only when you return home do you recognise, you're flush with fresh air and social interaction and have more energy.

2 Get a Wi-Fi extender Then work/use your computer from your garden/balcony all summer long. Invert screen colours to make it easier to see in the sun.

3 Eat more salad. There's a lot of it around at this time of year and it's so good for you! Be inventive and add some fruit into a salad or fresh herbs.

4 Go to an art gallery and stare at a picture for ages (mindfully). "Think of looking at a painting as physical exercise - gym for the eyes. You'll get more out of paintings the more you move around them. Stand back, then up close, look from the left, then right. Above all, give it time. Views from different angles add up to slow absorption that will open the door to a life-affirming experience that can take you out of the ordinary, into the happy."

5 Start a recipe club Like a book club but for food - challenge yourself to try one new dish each week and share it (with any tweaks) on email.

6 Discover secrets about your immediate surroundings With Wikipedia Around (insert the address and it'll tell you all about the area). Don't forget to turn off your location when you're done.

7 Get some proper 'bin shoes' AKA garden/backdoor shoes that you aren't embarrassed to be seen in by the postie. Also, for: hanging laundry, watering plants, feeding the birds and barbecues.

8 Paint your nails in rainbow colours with each nail a different shade; looking at them will instantly cheer you up.

Paint your nails ... and borrow a dog.



9 Wear one colour head to toe It may make you see your wardrobe in a new light! Cheerful clothes can be your armour against a day-to-day that threatens to grind you down. Embrace colour. Think pink today, be true blue tomorrow. Mellow out in yellow to bring the sunshine in. Make the world a little jollier, one pair of red socks at a time.

10 Put up a bird feeder Here's how to get birds to come, says the RSPB's Anna Feeney. "Finches, tits, and sparrows love sunflower hearts; the latter will also enjoy a mesh feeder with peanuts. Many birds like fat balls, though robins, blackbirds and dunnocks prefer a ground feeder tray (avoid this if there are cats in your area). Place hanging feeders and bird tables high, and a couple of metres away from thick cover so birds can retreat from aerial predators such as sparrowhawks. Avoid anything

with salt, cooked food, loose peanuts and dry, hard foods or bread in spring and summer (chicks can choke on them). Clean your feeder with a mild disinfectant and hot water once a week."

11 End your working day properly Do something, anything, when you clock off - a walk; a swim; a free online yoga class or take some deep breaths in your outdoor space. Especially important when working from home.

12 Pick some flowers and foliage Head to your garden (or local countryside), pick, then arrange beautifully, says Alys Fowler. "A simple jar of the soft, brilliant green of new growth is uplifting and needs little else to adorn it. There are plenty of grasses in flower now and you'll be surprised how elevated they look once placed in a pretty vase. A single arching branch of foliage can make a statement or think of the vase like a clock: looking from above, place beech leaves, say, at 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock, lime leaves in between, then add the next thing. Knock the symmetry off with the odd stem placed here or there. If foraging, remember to pick sparingly from several plants. With woody stems, bash the bottom to help water uptake." Angela is inspirational to me, by doing this whenever she can.

13 Head to the water Paddle, kayak, or watch it flow past, it doesn't matter- enjoy the change of pace and perspective.

14 Learn a new, achievable skill on YouTube. It could change your life. These days you don't need to worry about not knowing stuff. Just type your personal failings into YouTube and there'll be a big, beardy American come along to explain. From simple life hacks such as destalking thyme (pull it through a colander) to longer-term projects such as teaching your child to ride a bike, YouTube is there to enrich your life. So, fix that leaky tap, discover the joys of rollerblading ... or dare to dream bigger.

15 Read a new book The local charity shop will have some great books that you've never read. The cost is minimal and the possibilities endless. Mine sold me 5 books for £1 the other week and I've thoroughly enjoyed the ones I've read so far...cheap escapism, plus I've learned a lot!

16 Invent a cocktail or a 'mocktail' Here's one to start with: lemon juice, vodka, ice, sugar and crushed mint leaves.

Invent a cocktail ... and wear one colour head to toe.



17 Draw something every day Make a quick sketch of one interesting, funny, uplifting, memorable thing that happened. Keep in a notebook to build a visual diary, instantly carving out a moment's breathing space and lifting your spirits; zero talent required.

18 Change your lighting It can shift the mood of a room. "Switch off bright overhead lights in favour of side lamps that emit a softer, more soothing glow. 3 light sources per room, with a mix of floor and table lights, plus task lighting for activities, is good. If you do want overhead lights, soften with shades and use 'warm white' LED filament bulbs."

19 Keep a commonplace book Use it to jot down quotes, lines or jokes you like. For private consumption.

20 Switch to silicone-free shampoo Ideally in soap bar form, to save on packaging. Your hair will be thicker, and you'll barely need to wash it.

21 Burn incense Scents are subjective but choose one you like.

22 Surprise someone with something small but nice Think a takeaway (picked up, ideally) or a home-cooked meal, rather than a puppy.

23 Sign up to be a telephone befriender Try Age UK's service.

24 Don't be greedy - be generous. Greed is competition in material form. "It's about wanting more, often as a result of needing to feel safe or superior to others: accumulation as protection. At its heart is vulnerability. Think about why you want something and what need you think will be fulfilled by having it - will it fill that need? Having 'stuff' feels exciting to begin with, but then we habituate possessions; experiences actually become more golden as time passes. Being generous takes confidence, and it shouldn't be about leaving yourself with very little. It shouldn't hurt."

25 Go outside every day before 9am Morning light, says Russell Foster, director of the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute at Oxford University. This kickstarts two important components of health. "For most of us, it acts to synchronise our biological clock, or circadian rhythms, and the sleep/wake cycle, to the 24-hour rotation of the Earth. This harmonisation allows the delivery of the right materials, to the correct organs, at the optimum concentration, at the right time of day. Without this daily reset, our health slides into mush. But flicking the bedside lamp on is not enough! The clock needs bright light. So, fling back the curtains and sit by the window for at least 30 minutes. Better still, go outside. Bright morning light also drives an increase in alertness and mood.

26 Make a playlist for a friend with different music tastes from yours Then ask them to make one in return.

27 Find one practical way to make a difference "Few people set out to be a community champion: instead, they find something they're passionate (even angry) about and try to change it. They're appalled by litter on their street or feel lonely and want to reach out to others who feel the same or have a skill they'd like to share. They start tentatively making changes: they organise a litter pick, a coffee morning, or a workshop. One event turns into many. Friends are made. People begin to know them for their community efforts. But really, they just noticed something small and decided to do something about it. That's how it starts for them, and that's how it could start for you."

28 Posh up your toast Add olive oil, a rub of garlic and a few tomatoes; or butter, cinnamon, and brown sugar; or butter, honey, or peanut butter and top with banana slices. Yum!

29 Literally count your blessings Writing them down can help focus on the good things in your life, especially during bleak times.

30 Plant one (manageable) plant and tend to it Indoors, how about aloe, spider plants or cacti (that don't need much watering) or for outdoors, tomato and strawberry plants are especially cheering at this time of year.



Recovery in Mind Courses Autumn Term 2025

All the following courses can be requested via the website for students who have completed the Welcome to Recovery course. Please do get in touch if you need any help with choosing what to do next. We do reserve the right to guide students to the most appropriate course for them or to restrict repeat bookings if you have done it before to enable new students to have a place, so please don't be alarmed if you are put on a waiting list whilst we check availability or your suitability for the course or workshop!



Here is the link to the booking page [Step 2: All Courses | Recovery in Mind](#)

10th September - Craft Fair Preparation - Recovery in Mind have managed to secure a stall at the Newbury Artisan Christmas Market on the 15th of November so we need your help to make the items for the stall to sell! This is a chance to get involved, be creative and support the Recovery in Mind community by helping us to fundraise to support future courses and workshops. Each session we will focus on one specific 'make'. You can sign up for just one or a few of the workshops (6 in total) and come along and 'get in the flow'. All materials will be provided, and all produce will be kept ready for the stall.

11th September - Reconnect Walk - Join Angela & Cath at Snelsmore Common for a slow leisurely walk-through nature, stopping regularly to be in the moment and take notice. A chance to reconnect with Recovery in Mind and other students after the summer break - embracing Autumn and new beginnings.

17th September - Self-Compassion - Since starting Recovery in Mind in 2016 we have met dozens of students who struggle to show themselves 'Self Compassion' - the ability to be your 'own best friend' and share the kindness and wisdom that they are able to show others but not give to themselves. This is a common human trait - not just experienced by people with mental health challenges. This 4-week Self-Compassion course will provide an understanding of why humans struggle with it, how we can learn it and a set of very useful tools to develop it within ourselves.

18th September - Mindful Sewing - Encourages sewers to forget about perfection and forget about the finished article. Instead, it encourages the idea of enjoying the process of sewing for sewing's sake. It's about the journey, not the destination. It isn't about mending or making garments from a pattern. Neither is it about working towards a goal or a timeframe. This 4-session Mindful Sewing course is for students who would like to explore this technique. Each session will last for 2.5 hours during which you will have the opportunity to learn some basic principles and explore your own creativity using fabrics, threads, buttons, lace and other haberdashery items.

23rd September - Positive Thinking - We can all find our thinking becomes distorted when we're feeling anxious, low, or under excessive pressure. This workshop is designed to explore practical ways of identifying and challenging our negative or unhelpful thinking patterns and replacing them with more positive and helpful ones. Changing the way we think can help us regain perspective and can be a powerful tool in the ongoing management of our mental health and wellbeing.

7th October - Get Motivated! - Are you finding it hard to get going? Is motivation in short supply? Are you finding it hard to break old habits and start new positive ones? If so, this workshop has been designed just for you! Come along and join us to begin the process of facing these challenges and developing and understanding a new pathway for yourself.

16th October - Let's Connect at the Watermill - As part of our 'Five Ways to Wellbeing: New Look' programme, we have the opportunity to visit the **Watermill Theatre, Bagnor**. We will be given a tour of the theatre followed by a workshop of interactive games, all designed to help us 'connect' with one another in new and different ways. This isn't about drama - it's about trying something new together and having fun in a friendly, supportive environment.

22nd October - Introduction to Five Ways to Wellbeing - The Five Ways to Wellbeing (devised by the New Economics Foundation) is a very simple practical framework which addresses five key areas of life which have been demonstrated to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. We have run this as a 5-week course in previous years and are now adapting it to offer an introductory workshop to consider the five themes of learning, connecting, keeping active, giving and taking notice, and how we might implement these in our everyday lives and habits.

23rd October - Mindful Morning - This session will focus on various aspects of mindfulness and give students a chance to experience different ways to practise 'being in the moment' which can be utilised in everyday life.

11th November - Recovery Street - Our Recovery Street course allows students time to think about various aspects of their own personal recovery journey. We do this by taking photos using either a phone or a camera (which we can provide) on different areas of our recovery in each session. For instance, we begin by taking images around Newbury town centre area on the theme of 'Where am I now?' Images often help us to think things through, give another perspective or help us share with others. This course is fun, creative, an opportunity to connect with other students and to reflect and think about your own ongoing recovery. This is based on a course that we have run previously using a new format, so you are welcome to do it again even if you did the 'old Recovery Street'.



External Links

ASD Adult Social daytime and evening groups

An opportunity for adults with Autism to meet and socialise with one another in a friendly, relaxed environment and plan and participate with support. These are small groups that are already well attended but we have some space for new attendees.

Social group for ASD adults 18 to 30 meets twice a month on a Monday (12pm - 2.30pm) and a Thursday (6.30pm - 8.30pm). The group decide where to meet by making suggestions for venues and then voting for where they would like to go. We usually visit cafes, restaurants and pubs in the Newbury and Thatcham area. The Monday daytime session is mainly a board game/card game session, and members can buy some food/drink at the venue. The Thursday evening session is usually for members to have dinner and a drink and, if appropriate, we play a card game. Due to the need to book tables members are requested to let group administrators know in advance that they plan to attend sessions. Members pay for their own food/drink.

Social group for ASD adults over 30's This group meets fortnightly on a Wednesday (2pm - 3.30pm). This is a new group; we meet at The Two Watermills Pub near Newbury College fortnightly. Chat and card/board game if appropriate on the day.

For more information about referrals, venues, dates and times contact organiser Tony Young (Support Time Recovery Worker, Newbury CMHT) email tony.young@berkshire.nhs.uk Mobile: 07796 276290

Further Help and Support

If you are struggling with your mental health and feel that you need further help & support here are some contact numbers for you:

West Berkshire Community Mental Health Team- 0118 904 3200

CRHTT (Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team)- 0300 365 9999

Samaritans - 116 123

NHS - 111

999 is for **EMERGENCY** calls only.