

Issue 3

Reconnection

Weekly



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Welcome to Issue #3 of **Reconnection Weekly!**

involved in the production of Re- check out our Recovery Service connection Weekly! We had lots Facebook page for regular upof contributions for our ongoing dates and ideas. Paws for Thought project over the last week which is fantastic. We are here for one another. We are here to offer you support Let's stay connected! during this uncertain time and bring you ideas to inspire and uplift you during lockdown!

Issue #3 is the first of a two-part series dedicated to increasing our wellbeing whilst staying safe at home. This week you can read about the benefits of practicing Yoga, why laughter is so good for our mood and why good sleep hygiene is so important for our health. If you have ideas for wellbeing you would like to contribute, or find something you'd like us to cover next week get in touch!

We are working together with our readers to offer useful resources, creative outlets and interesting practical ideas to try out whilst at home. Please get involved by sharing with us the things that help to keep you feeling well and what you've

WELCOME!

been doing during lockdown, the more ideas we have the more support and resources we can Thank you so much for getting offer to you all. Don't forget to



If you would like to get involved, please send your ideas, suggestions and photos to any of the following -

Tracy.Thompson@cgl.org.uk

Bex.Poyser@cgl.org.uk

Emma.William@cgl.org.uk

Gracie.Rosemin@cgl.org.uk

Reconnection Weekly is sent out on a Thursday and we ask that contributions are sent in no later than the Monday in order to be featured in that weeks newsletter. Thank you!

THE BENEFITS OF PRACTICING YOGA



The word Yoga is derived from the sanskrit word "Yuja", which means 'union.' Yoga is the practice of connecting the mind, body and breath. Yoga classes often incorporate movement of the body in postures known as "Asanas", with meditation and breath exercises known as "Pranayama." In Patanjali's "Yoga Sutra", "Ashtanga" is the path of the eight limbs of Yoga. This eight-limbed path describes more than the physicality of a Yoga practice, it is a guide to living a life with purpose and meaning; it provides a compass for moral and ethical bearing, teaches self -discipline and turns us towards a path of health, whilst acknowledging the spirituality in our human nature irrespective of religion.

Yoga has so many benefits for our mind and body. It increases our muscle strength, flexibility and mobility in the body, improves our balance, provides the building blocks for healthy posture, improves focus and feelings of wellbeing. Having a regular Yoga practice promotes mindfulness and self-awareness in everyday life, positively affecting our relationship with ourselves, others, our decision making, focus and productivity, amongst many others!

Multiple studies show a decrease in the primary stress hormone cortisol with regular Yoga practice, decreasing our experiences of stress, dis-ease, fatigue and low mood. Cortisol levels influence the levels of serotonin in the brain, the happy neurotransmitter. When we practice Yoga, we feel the benefits of lower cortisol levels and higher serotonin levels which help ease symptoms of depression. Lower cortisol levels also help the body keep calcium in the bones, protecting our bone and joint health and protects the immune system.

The emphasis on staying in the present moment and finding peace in your practice by stepping away from our experience of everyday life lessens symptoms in conditions such as generalised anxiety disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Yoga has shown promise in eating disorder treatment, early studies in this area has noted that Yoga positively affects our body image, ability to accept difficulties and experience of ourselves for who we are.

> "Breathe in deeply to bring your mind home to your body." Thich Nhat Hanh

Yoga may decrease sleep problems by enhancing production of melatonin which regulates sleep and wake cycles. It also has significant effects on some of the main contributors to poor sleep, such as anxiety, pain and stress.

Yoga is being used as an alternative and complementary therapy to combat many mental health conditions including depression, but also with physical health complaints like high blood pressure, digestive issues and chronic pain. Yoga has been proved to be therapeutic in many chronic pain conditions including chronic back issues, carpal tunnel syndrome, arthritis and osteoporosis, this is because Yoga helps to keep the spine supple whilst also increasing bone density and health. Studies done specifically on chronic carpal tunnel pain sufferers showed better results with a daily Yoga practice than wearing a wrist splint for management.



Practicing Yoga increases overall blood flow through the body, improving circulation of oxygenated blood. This lowers blood pressure and reduces risk factors in heart disease whilst increasing cardio-vascular function. It increases circulation of lymph fluid which is rich in immune cells, aiding the function of the immune system and can even reduce inflammation markers in chronic and acute inflammatory conditions.

Yoga is used as therapy for reducing the intensity and frequency of migraines and headaches. Yoga may help to stimulate the vagus nerve (a cranial nerve responsible for activation of the parasympathetic "rest and digest" nervous system and relaxation response), which is proven effective in the reduction of migraines and symptoms of anxiety.

Pranayama can improve the efficiency of our breathing and increase maximum capacity of the lungs, improving the health of the lungs and benefitting asthma and lung disease sufferers. Yoga and Pranayama often practice breathing through the nose which helps to filter the air whilst regulating the temperature and humidity, helpful in asthma and allergies.

Perhaps the most beneficial of all, Yoga guides us to healing ourselves. It helps us build inner strength and awareness for transformation in our lives. It increases feelings of connectedness and compassion for ourselves and others. It strengthens our power to make positive change in our lives, and seeing this ability in ourselves inspires hope. Hope alone can be healing.

If you have any questions on the benefits of Yoga or would like to read more studies, email me at <u>Gracie.Rosemin@cgl.org.uk.</u>

RECONNECTION WEEKLY

SLEEP HYGIENE



WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO PRACTICE GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE!

Sleep hygiene is a term used to describe the habits and practices we have which determine the quality of our sleep and wake cycles. Sleep is a fundamental part of life and is essential for our physical health and recovery, maintaining a healthy immune system, regulating our emotions, stress management and improving our productivity. 67% of the UK population have struggled with sleep in some way and 30% struggle with insomnia. Other signs that mean you could benefit from better sleep hygiene include not being able to fall asleep, waking a lot during the night and being sleepy during the day.

Sleep is moderated by our circadian rhythm, also known as the body's internal clock. Our rhythm follows a distinct light/dark cycle, based on the rhythms of sunrise/sunset. The circadian rhythm is responsible for regulating many of the bodies processes, but perhaps most importantly helps our body to know when we should be awake and asleep.

We reset this circadian rhythm roughly every 24 hours when light enters the body through cells in our eyes. Daylight is rich in blue light which sends signals to our brain to produce melanopsin, a protein that determines how awake and alert we feel. In the evening the natural cycle can be disrupted by light from our environment and electronic devices that also emit blue light, affecting the natural rhythm. The brain continues to send signals to produce melanopsin and reducing the production of melatonin in the brain, our sleepy hormone.

"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened.

PEACE OUARTERS

appiness nev

being shared'

SLEEP HYGIENE

Many other things can affect our quality of sleep, some of the biggest culprits being stimulants like caffeine and nicotine, stress from our environment, and lack of routine around sleeping and waking. However with some small daily changes, we can improve our sleep hygiene and set ourselves up for improved mental and physical health:

- Get out for some gentle exercise; 10 minutes of walking or cycling is enough to have dramatic effects on our sleep quality. Couple this with exposure to natural light during the day, to optimise the wake cycle in the circadian rhythm.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine late in the day. Our sensitivity to stimulants can vary a lot, but the earlier on in the day that we halt our intake, the better our ability to fall and stay asleep!
- Limit daytime naps to 20 minutes, preferably earlier on in the day. Anything longer than this prohibits the positive effect of short snoozes on mood and productivity, and affects our sleep cycle at night.
- Create a calm and soothing environment that facilitates the best nights sleep. Turn the lights down, close curtains, make sure your bed is comfortable, and the room is cool (our temperature fluctuates with our circadian rhythm and a cool room helps us to fall asleep). You could also try wearing ear plugs, an eye mask or listening to white noise to lull you into slumber!
- Create a bedtime routine to help your body recognise that it is time to wind down and prepare for sleep. This might include having a warm shower/bath, putting on pyjamas, light reading, gentle stretches and putting electronics away/onto night time mode. Avoid as best you can upsetting or emotional activities and conversations before bed.
- Help train the brain by going to bed and waking up at the same time, even at weekends.
- Check out CBT-i Coach, a cognitive behavioural therapy app designed for helping with sleep patterns and insomnia.

Try these tips and let us know how your sleep is impacted! If you would like to learn more about the science of sleep check out "Why We Sleep" by Matthew Walker or visithttps://www.sleepfoundation.org.

Gracie.Rosemin@cgl.org.uk

AGE

GOOD MOOD FOOD

We all know that the food we eat can directly affect our mood. If you feel low or experience anxiety, it might be due to low levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin, which contributes to the overall health of the brain and nervous system, our feelings of wellbeing and happiness and memory and cognition.

Tryptophan is one of nine essential amino acids, 'essential' meaning we cannot produce it from scratch in the body and need to acquire it from our diet. The body uses tryptophan to make niacin (a B vitamin), and niacin has a key role in the development and availability of serotonin in the brain. Studies have shown that a diet high in tryptophan containing foods can be really beneficial for mood and sleep, especially for those diagnosed or with a family history of mood disorders such as depression. This is because these groups are more likely to experience negative impacts from low levels of serotonin. Luckily Western diets are often rich in tryptophan, here's a list of foods with high levels of the amino acid:

- Turkey and other poultry
- Eggs
- Salmon
- Soy products, like tofu
- Dairy products, like cheese
- Dark leafy vegetables, like spinach
- Asparagus
- Pineapple
- Bananas
- Raw nuts and seeds, like almonds and sunflower seeds.

FRIENDLY REMINDER: We have a subscription of the subscription of

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Tryptophan enters the brain more easily when eaten with carbohydrates, and eating a carbohydrate-based meal with no or little tryptophan also increases availability in the brain. This is because consumption of carbohydrates release insulin in the body and removes all essential amino acids except for tryptophan from the blood, making the brain easily accessible for tryptophan.

If you would like to read more on the effects of diet on mood, read this blog: <u>sapiensoup.com</u> or look up the research here: <u>www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov</u>



LAUGHTER

The Importance of Laughter

- It is hard to feel negative emotions while laughing
- Stress is reduced when laughing
- Energy increases while laughing
- Helps engage others socially which allows you to be less overwhelmed and more spontaneous and confident
- **Releases endorphins**
- **Eases Anxiety**

ISSUE 3

Improves overall mood and functioning

Laughter and mental health

- Laughter helps to think more clearly, breaks the cycle of psychological negativity and can help people communicate emotions.
- A stress management tool: A coping mechanism and great neutralizer: Laughter stimulates circulation, aids muscle relaxation and recharges our batteries by enriching the blood with ample supplies of oxygen, the lifeline of our system, cutting through energy-sapping emotions and replacing them with energizing emotions.

Laughter and emotional health

- Laughter can help depression and anxiety: Depression lives in the past and anxiety in the future. When we laugh we are in the present.
- Enables you to shift into a more positive mood quickly: Laughter is an effective re-covery activity at the start, or at the end of the workday or during a break.
- Provides low impact exercise and burns calories: When you laugh, all your body systems are affected in a positive manner.
 It is a unique way to enhance one's daily It is a unique way to enhance one's daily wellbeing.
- Regulates Blood Pressure: Laughter balances blood pressure. The relaxation of the muscles in conjunction with the increased heart rate allows the blood to flow more freely throughout our body. At the same time if our blood pressure is low it can be increased over time due to the aerobic exercise that it provides.
- Reduces Pain: Endorphins are our body's natural painkillers. They are released into our spinal cord and then distributed throughout our nervous system when we laugh. Regular laughter is often used to

assist with chronic pain management.

- Increases Oxygen: Laughter provides more oxygen to the brain and body cells. It does this by increasing the exhalation process. When we laugh the diaphragm forces the air from our lungs so that when it drops more air is inspired into the lungs ready for distribution.
- Boosts the Immune System: When you laugh, the diaphragm becomes a powerful for your lymphatic circulation, pump much like your heart serves as the central pump that propels blood through your blood vessels. This assists the lymphatic vessels in carrying this fluid through your body and helps your lymph nodes to clean and filter this fluid, removing waste products, dead cells, and even unwanted microorganisms.
- Maintaining clean body fluids is important because these are necessary for you to be at your best. Increased lymphatic flow equals an elevated, improved immune system.

"Your body cannot heal without play. Your mind cannot heal without laughter. Your soul cannot heal without joy

-Catherine Rippenger Fenwick

To read more about 'The Powerful Link Between Laughter and Mental Health,' please visit

power of laughter

vimeo.com/laughter



Laugh much. Be free. Love a lot. Be kind. Listen well. Be supportive. Live life. Be you.

ACTION JARS

Using action jars is a great way of breaking up our todo lists and giving ideas for how to fill the time. This activity is perfect to do with kids too, and they can create their own jars and plan their own activities! You can have as many jars as you'd like, categorising your activities as you choose.

You will need:

- -Jars, mugs, little boxes or containers to hold your actions
- -Paper cut into squares
- -Pen/pencil

Write one action on each piece of paper, fold it up and you can pick from the jar at random when you have time to add to your schedule.

Ideas:

- I use my action jar to help me schedule and complete chores, bills and work. My action jar includes activities such as Hoovering, Washing up, Cleaning the kitchen/bathroom, Food shopping, Pay bills, Declutter cupboards etc.
- My distraction jar is filled with ideas to fill time and helpful coping mechanisms, such as: Watch a film, Go for a walk, Read a chapter of my book, Sit and enjoy a cuppa, Ring a friend, Listen to my favourite playlist.
- You could make jars with ideas for self-care, meal ideas, craft activities, books to read... the possibilities are endless!

Send us pictures of your jars and keep us updated with your ideas!







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RECONNECTION WEEKLY

Recovery



WEEKLY RECONNECTION

THINGS TO DO!



'Slow TV' Slow TV is gradually (which only seems fitting) stepping onto the international stage, with broad-casters around the world putting their own spin on the concept; commissioning lengthy real time documentaries focused on everything from reindeer migrations to busses puttering around rural English towns. So what is the appeal of such shows? Primarily it's about slowing down; the shows are enjoyed for their meditative qualities, allowing audiences to switch off, unwind and escape for a few hours - a luxury we could all enjoy in these testing times. www.lonelyplanet.com/slow-tv-travel-videos

Cally Taylor's book club

The crime-fiction author Cally Taylor, who publishes under the name CL Taylor, is running an online book club for readers in isolation. www.cltaylorauthor.com

Feeding time at the zoo in Sydney

Australia's largest zoo has set up its own broadcast channel, with new videos daily: interviews with the keepers, feeding-time footage and 24-hour live streams of animals including tiger cubs and elephants. If the time difference means you don't want to watch live, you can catch them later on the zoo's Instagram, Facebook and Twitter pages, or on Taronga TV

Go to a gig in Nashville

The home of country music hasn't let the small problem of social distancing get in the way of its thriving live scene. The fabled Grand Ole Opry, where Dolly Parton and Loretta Lynn have graced the stage, broadcasts the world's longest-running radio show from its auditorium, and it's making sure the city never falls silent. The venue is maintaining a packed events schedule to continue its broadcasts, with artists performing to empty seats instead of the usual live audience. Put on your finest cowboy hat for a concert every day next week via visitmusiccity.com

A climb up El Capitan in Yosemite

Conquer your vertigo and traverse the world's toughest cliff face, El Capitan, in Yosemite National Park. Google Maps has created a virtual route up the granite monolith, 3,000ft to the top, with ultra-high-resolution 360-degree photos at each of the stopping points (or pitches), giving aweinspiring views over the fir trees - you can even see the minute grains of the rock in front of you. It's probably the closest any of us will come to climbing it ourselves.

Swim with sharks in Mallorca

Home schooling just got a bit more fun. Every Friday at 10am, the Palma Aquarium is opening its doors to live-stream a tour around the tanks that 8,000 marine animals call home. Broadcasts are on the Palma Aquarium Facebook page. Staff will take you around shivers of sharks, spindly coral reefs and neon-coloured shoals of fish.

Learn more about nature around you. www.walkwithtrees.com

On particularly rough days, I like to remind myself that my track record for getting through bad days so far is 100%, and that's pretty good.

Don't Forget!

Head over to our **Recovery Service Facebook page** to take part in our 'Wellness' sessions and have a go at a sleep-inducing meditation exercise called 'Tratak' on our YouTube page.

Thank you, Grace & Yvonne!

ISSUE 3

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

| I think the best advice I've ever received is 'be your own best friend'. No matter how much support you receive from other people, you need to support yourself too. Through being my own best friend and putting myself first, even when I've felt like I didn't deserve it, I've been able to push through the hardest times. -Meg | We would love to hear any words of wisdom or tips that you may have been handed down from family members or given by any inspirational people in your life. It could even be a passage from a novel or quote from someone fa- mous. Let us know so we can be in- spired each week! |
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THE EDGE

Woolly Wonders at The Edge



Flowers, bring me joy and a smiley face.

I have tasked myself with creating a flower a day.

I need yours - all of them; big, small, multicoloured loveliness

Leaves too if you so desire.

I want to showcase all of them at a later date, as a symbol of our connectedness through creativity

I will introduce you to the lovely, inspirational and amazingly uplifting blogger Lucy @ Attic24, this is her pattern for teeny tiny flowers - I love her joy and zest!

Click Here

These are some of my currently unfinished fleurs - easy-peasy, smiley-miley!!

Edge Recovery Group Meetings

Edge Recovery Zoom meetings-

- Daily x 7 days
- **Time:**12.30-1.10
- ID: 160 596 836
- Password: 007707

Edge Record- Stay connected!

Keep up to date with online groups and activities by following their Facebook page and to join their WhatsApp group

Thank you, Gail!

RECONNECTION WEEKLY

CREATIVITY **Å R T** 8

Sa'adiah

Sa'adiah is a local freelance & community artist. Her practice focuses on such things as well-being, dealing with building confidence, self trust, facing fears and using art holistically. The work she has been doing for the past 9 years is very much needed at this time of uncertainty. She is running weekly online pay as you feel 'Flow art' sessions. Some are play based & others more struc-tured with themes

Join <u>'-Art for Well-being-'</u> Facebook group for upcom-ing events & details or alternatively contact via website sadisoularts.com



Tara Jane Crandon

Artist Tara Jane Crandon fills her sketchbooks with portals to fantastical natural settings.

Crandon combines her love of the environment with romantic dreams of castles, bountiful flowers, and winding trails. Each illustration is made using a combination of watercolor and gouache paint.

www.mymodernmet.com/tara-jane-crandon

The Importance Of Finding A Creative Outlet For Mental Health

www.vantagepointrecovery.com

Global connective colouring!! Get Involved! www.aspacebetween.co.uk/covid-19-connect

MUSIC & DANCE

Dancing!

Dancing is magic for the mind, body and soul! Join Morning Gloryville on Saturday 18th April 10am-1pm for their "Quarantunes" Sober rave for the NHS! Yoga, Dancing, UK DJ's and more!

Book here (donation-based): www.eventbrite.co.uk/wellness-rave



Sofa Singers

After watching the viral videos of people across Italy singing from their balconies, the choir leader James Sills, 37, from Wrexham decided to launch his own mass singalong. The Sofa Singers has already had more than 500 people from all over the world tuning in and taking part in Sills's 45-minute rehearsals.

Here you will find links to case studies and research reports for dance in health and wellbeing projects across the UK. These cover a range of ages and health conditions, preventative and ongoing activities-

www.danceinhealthandwellbeing.uk

Many people will be missing out on the physical and mental health benefits of dance in all its diversity. DANZ have put together a collection of FREE online dance resources that hopefully will keep you inspired to continue dancing at home during isolation-

www.danz.org.nz/dancing-during-isolation

POETRY

Well we should nest

With the word "wellness"

What is best

ISSUE 3

Is to Change Grow Live

Without negative stress

But when it comes along

Entices you to decide wrong

Harm reduction relapse prevention

Has helped me to be reborn

Sober safer greater !!!

POETRY CORNER -Unique Shofiq

Get involved!

Send us your favourite quote or a poem you've written

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RECONNECTION WEEKLY

Adult support

Samaritans -Call 116 123

www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help

Mind UK - UK Mental Health Charity with information and an online mutual support community

www.mind.org.uk/

www.mind.org.uk/support-community

Refuge - 07787255821

National Domestic abuse support - 0800 2000247

Men's Advice Line - 0808 8010327

LGBT support - 0800 9995428

Young people support

www.kooth.com

www.youngminds.org.uk

If you need urgent help text YM to 85258

www.childline.org.uk/get-support

Chat Health Cambridgeshire (school nursing team) Text- 07480635443

Parenting/carers support

If you need some support looking after your child's mental health, you can call 'YoungMinds' at 0808 802 5544 between 9.30am and 4pm every week day.

You can also email YoungMinds on their website, out of hours and they will get back to you.

Family Action

Telephone: 0808 802 6666

Text message: 07537 404 282

www.family-action.org.uk/

The FamilyLine service supports people who are dealing with family pressures in a new and innovative way by using a network of volunteers from across the country to support family members over the age of 18 through telephone calls, email, web chat and text message.

