

2nd April 2020

# THE ORC WEEKLY

**Hello and welcome** to our second special edition of the Recovery College Newsletter, The ORC Weekly. With uncertain times at the moment, all of us at the Recovery College are determined to keep supporting our Students in new and innovative ways that don't have to rely on courses in person.



**A QUICK NOTE:** We will not be posting any medical advice – we believe that is best left to the superb people at the NHS, so please do look at their website for the latest recommendations, and listen to government advice.

## Latest Update on Online Courses

We are hoping to reopen the College as soon as possible, but at the moment we can't say when that will be, so we are exploring offering courses online next term. We know from feedback that what students really like about our courses is hearing others' stories and sharing their own stories with fellow students, so we want to make sure that talking to each other remains a key part of our courses.

We want to offer short, online workshops that cover a range of topics. The workshops would be led by two Recovery College tutors, and students could sign up to join in at a set time in the same way as students enrolled on our face to face courses. During an online course, you would be able to see the tutors and also see any other students who agree to be part of a live group. You would need to be able to use a laptop, tablet, computer or phone to join in.

## Your Input: Student Survey

We'd like your input on how we can make this work. **Therefore, we'd really appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to answer a few Survey questions by going to this link: [LINK](#)**

*Rest assured your responses will be held confidentially and the only people who will be able to see your responses are the ORC office team*

# Poems for Breakfast

Oxford Poetry Library is a pedal-powered mobile poetry library which aims to be a free and open resource of poetry for everyone, no matter your background, reading taste or age. They want to foster a growing community of readers, provide a platform for local writers to share their work, and to encourage the exploration and appreciation of poetry throughout Oxford.

Under the current circumstances, they aren't able to use their pedal-powered mobile library to visit different places throughout Oxfordshire, so they have started a brand new initiative which we love called, '**Poems for Breakfast**': [LINK](#)

## Their Aim

**Make a poem the first thing you read every morning.** They want to help their readers through this

time by giving them a bit of poetry to read each morning over breakfast, rather than reading news headlines.

## How does it work?

They will send you a bit of poetry every weekday to digest throughout the day. All you have to do is add your email to the mailing list: [LINK](#)



# Skillshare

## What is Skillshare?

Skillshare is an online community with thousands of classes for people who want to be creative and who are curious! Skillshare has thousands of ideas for fun indoor projects to help inspire you from the comfort of your own home - it's a great way to *Keep Learning*. [LINK](#)

## Examples of Courses

Creative Writing for All: a 10-day Journalling challenge, Calligraphy for Beginners, Illustration and Inspiration: Keeping a sketchbook, Lettering for Self-Expression (and many, many more!)

There are well over 1000 free courses to choose from, so we hope you can find something you like! With the free Skillshare membership you can enrol on free classes and access videos and



tutorials. You sign up with your email address, and if you choose the Basic package, it's free! There are 1,677 free classes for anyone with the basic membership.

## One class we love

**Visual Journalling** - this online class takes you through 5 different exercises you can use to explore and express yourself and your feelings through art. The class breaks down the exercises into really small and manageable chunks - it is all recorded, so you can wind back, pause and repeat things over again as much as you like!

# App of the week: Action for Happiness

## What does this App do?

The Action for Happiness App will send you two friendly nudges a day - firstly that day's action in the morning, and secondly an inspiring message towards the end of the day. This app can be a really nice reminder to help you look at the positives - whether it's seeing a quote or posting a positive message. It can also help you find a sense of connectedness with an online community.

## How to download?

It is simple to download on your phone/tablet from the App Store, you just have to enter your email to get started, and it's completely free.

If you want further interaction within the app, there is also Community page where people can share their favourite quotes, or encouraging messages, to the rest of the Action for Happiness Community - this is another great way to Give and Stay Connected. You can look at these as much as you want, and there is an option to post if you would like to share something with the other members.

## The Coping Calendar

The Action for Happiness app has been created by the same people who make the Coping Calendar's each month that we often share at the Recovery College. The Coping Calendars are a great way of suggesting small, manageable ideas each day to help remind us of one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, and how we can put these simple practices into our daily routine.

To download the calendar for this month click here: [LINK](#)



Have a look at some of the examples on this page, to see if this app is for you



# Tutor Corner: Tony

**Our Tutor Corner is an opportunity to hear from one of our Tutors at the College each week as we catch up with them and discuss any helpful hints or tips they might have about maintaining their wellbeing.**

*This week we've been speaking to our tutor and office volunteer, Tony, who has written a piece below on how he has found ways to stay connected, and his top tips for relaxing and coping strategies during this time.*

"In these tough times we need to support each other and as a single person living alone, I have found that communication with my friends, family and support workers has been invaluable. The lockdown we are facing means a different rhythm of life, a chance to be in touch with others in different ways than usual. Be in touch with other people regularly on social media, e-mail or on the phone, as they are still good ways of being close to the people who matter to you.

Create a new daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself. You could try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, trying new relaxation techniques, or finding new knowledge on the internet. Try and rest, and view this as a new if unusual

experience that might have its benefits. Myself, I have found preparing meals in advance relaxing, as I have found with doing my long-awaited spring clean. Watching films on Netflix, Amazon Prime or YouTube has helped to pass the time and helped me to feel relaxed. The important aspect of moving forward is find something to help you feel calm and relaxed.

It's important for us to acknowledge our feelings, and we should also be aware of and try to avoid increasing habits that may not be helpful in the long term, like smoking and drinking. Taking daily exercise, like a walk, will help to reduce the sense of isolation and stress. What I found to helpful is to go through last year's holiday photos (see below) and turn them into art by using a programme called Affinity Photo. This also helps me to remember the joy of my holiday, and to remind myself that we can overcome our sense of despair.

We all need to cling on to the fact that we can overcome our predicament. It's not easy, I still experience anxiety and stress and the isolation being away from family and friends but I look forward to my next holiday and the work that I continue to do with the Recovery College."



*Photos from my Holiday to Scotland last year - Linlithgow castle and North Berwick fishing village*

# The Oxford Hub



## Oxford Together

Oxford Together is a campaign set up by Oxford Hub to provide support to those in need. The Oxford Hub staff and their fantastic team of volunteers are assisting people with shopping, collecting prescriptions, phone check-ins, and more.

## What kind of help is supplied?

The Oxford Together Team are working with communities and local services to provide four key functions to support people who are at high-risk or currently self-isolating:

- They recruit and train Street Champions who coordinate support on their street - your local Street Champion can help you connect to your local community
- Daily phone check-ins for people who are feeling isolated or lonely
- Practical support, such as shopping, posting mail
- Food distribution across Oxford for those having difficulty accessing food supplies
- Supporting people to connect with online groups

## Who are the Hubs for?

The Hubs have been set up to help those most in need:

- People who have received a letter from the NHS identifying them as high risk
- those needing food bank support or those having difficulty accessing food or medical supplies
- those with no local support from friends or family
- those with physical and mental health needs
- vulnerable individuals and families



## Getting in touch for help

If you need any general (not urgent) support, you can contact Oxford Together using their Online Request form: <https://oxfordtogether.org/>  
OR you can request support over the phone: 07957 105129 (between 9am-5pm, Monday Friday)

If you would like to find out who your Street Champion for your area is directly, you can do so by clicking: [LINK](#)

## For more urgent support needs:

For people with more urgent support needs, or who are particularly vulnerable because of age, health or mental health issues, the City Council's Contact Centre team can also help you get the support you need. They cover the North, South, West and Central Oxford.

You can contact the City Council Contact Centre on: 01865 249811 (8am-5pm) or fill out their online form: [LINK](#)

## Interested in volunteering for Oxford Hub?

If you're healthy and at low-risk, Oxford Hub are encouraging people to become a community champion and help others across Oxfordshire. You can sign up now using the following online form: [LINK](#)

# Recovery College Podcast: Episode 2

Our second ever podcast episode, 'Living Alone', explores our own experiences of mental health and how we can try to turn these into positives. We follow up from last week building on our Five Ways to Wellbeing, and discuss what our own lived experiences have been like so far whilst living alone during this particular time. We hope you enjoy listening!

Oxfordshire  
Recovery  
College  
Podcast

## Notes from this week's Pod-Guests: Clare

"I really enjoyed being part of the Recovery College podcast, in this episode you will hear me talking about my journey through the College starting as a student and now working as part of the fantastic core team.

I also chat about what I've been doing to manage my 5 ways to wellbeing during isolation and lock down, and share the value of an afternoon nap.

I hope you enjoy listening to it as much as we all enjoyed recording it!"

**Listen to the Podcast here:**

[LINK](#)

## Tony The fun of Podcasting

"I was asked by Liam if I wanted to take part in a podcast with Clare to discuss how my day to day life was going under the lockdown. Podcasting is new to me, and although I have listened to various podcasts on the BBC Sounds website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds>), I wasn't sure about taking part in one.

After giving it some serious thought, I felt that it would be important to share my experiences of lockdown, especially as I live alone. Life has been, at times, stressful and my anxiety levels high, but I have found the experience has given me an incentive to re-evaluate how I see life.

By using the podcast, it gave me an opportunity to share what I am doing to ease the loneliness that I feel, to give people hope that we all can work through this difficult time together. By doing the podcast I felt that by sharing and exploring ideas we all can help each other to build on our strengths and to develop new coping strategies during this difficult period."

## Forensic Spoke

This Podcast was developed in collaboration with the Forensic Spoke of the Recovery College team. We are working on ways to make it available to all Forensic Recovery College Students, as we want our podcast to be accessible for everyone, wherever they're listening.

**Please do remember that if you  
are in Crisis, you can contact:**

**Samaritans - 116 123**  
(free-phone, 24/7 support)

**Dial 999**  
if you feel you are at immediate risk

**Dial 111**  
if you need medical help quickly, but  
are not at immediate risk

**For a full list of organisations that  
you can contact, please click on the  
link below to head to the Signposting  
document on our website - [LINK HERE](#)**

**If you need to get in touch, please do so:**  
by emailing [contactORC@restore.org.uk](mailto:contactORC@restore.org.uk), you  
can also tweet us: @OxfordshireRC, find us  
on facebook: Oxfordshire Recovery College,  
or listen to us: <https://anchor.fm/oxfordshire-recovery-college>