

26th MARCH 2020

THE ORC WEEKLY

Hello and welcome to our 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.

This newsletter will always have a focus on the theme of hope and positivity, with plenty of ideas to keep yourself occupied. There will also be up to date signposting at the bottom of each newsletter for you to have a look at if you do need extra support.



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.

Five Ways to Wellbeing Focus

Each week, we're going to focus on some of the Five Ways to Wellbeing – we often mention these on our courses!

A quick re-cap – The Five Ways to Wellbeing are:

Connect
Be Active
Keep Learning
Give
Take Notice

5

This week we're going to focus on the importance of Staying Connected, and how we can Keep Learning.

Online Courses Next Term

We are currently exploring how we can offer some courses online next term. We know from feedback that what students really like about our courses is hearing others' stories and sharing their own, so we want to make sure that talking to each other remains a key part of our courses.

We are thinking of offering 1 hour online workshops on a range of themes. 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 you would enrol on our face to face courses. Students would need to use a computer, laptop, tablet or phone to join in. Students would be able to see the tutors and also see any other students who agree to be part of a live group.

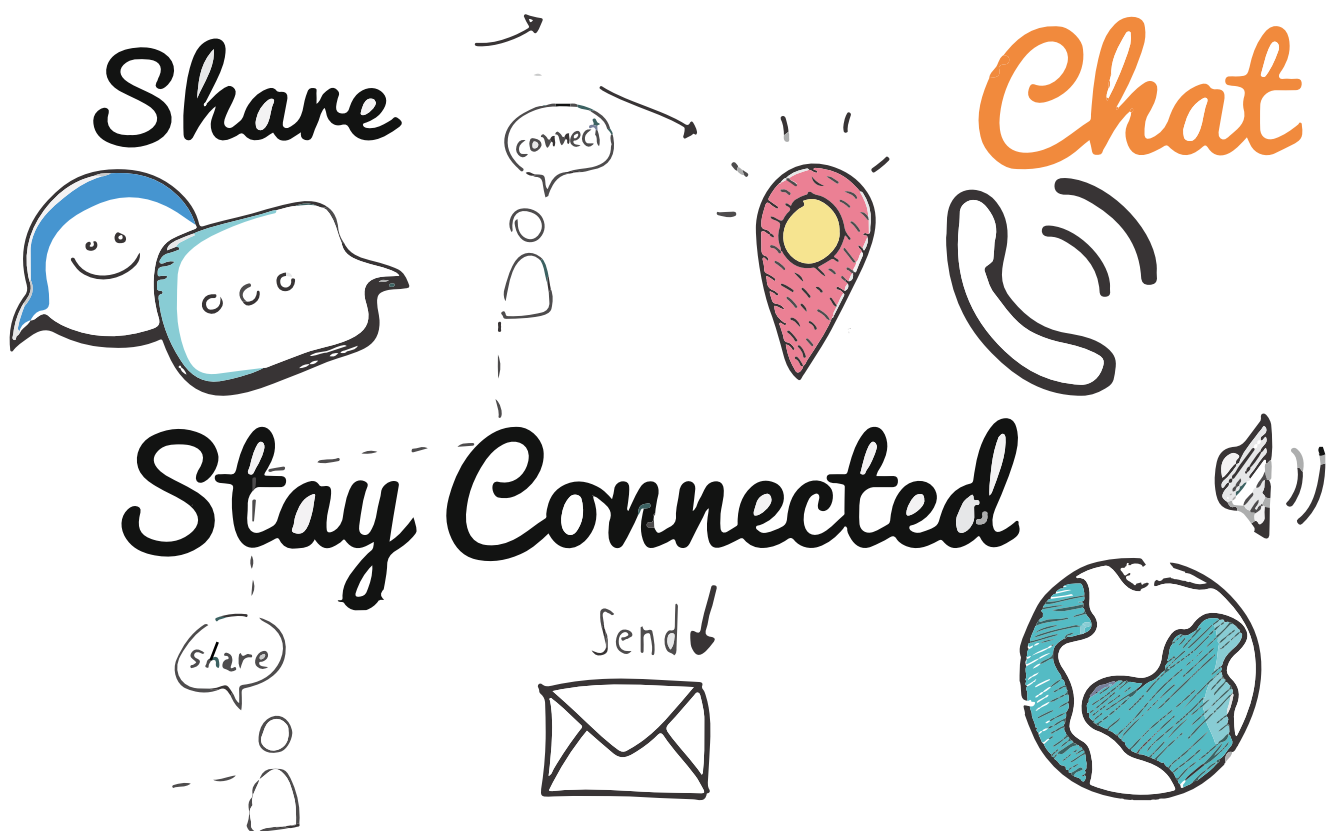
We'd really appreciate your input on how we can make this work, so we will be sending a questionnaire about this soon – so do keep an eye out!

Staying Connected

- By staying connected, we can help support ourselves and each other. Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust, or even creating new ones is important for our mental wellbeing. You can stay in touch with people you usually see often, reconnect with old friends, neighbours or make new connections.
- Think about how you can keep in touch with people while you are at home. This might be setting up regular times to message, have a phone or video call or chat online.
- **Look after yourself and each other:** send a message to a friend or family member you haven't spoken to in a while, pick up the phone for a chat or send them a letter if you prefer writing things down (it's always fun to receive something in the post!)

If you can't think of anyone close by to chat to, there are plenty of support networks and volunteers out there to contact you too:

- Mind have a service called **Elefriends** – it is an supportive online community network which is easy to sign up to: <https://www.elefriends.org.uk/>
- Stay in touch with the **local community:** many of you might have had notes posted through the door or emails sent through – plenty of people in each local community are offering help and support. Whether this is picking up shopping or urgent supplies, posting mail or having a chat – they are there for you! If you aren't sure where the nearest local support group is in your area, you can click on this link to have a look: <https://www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups>

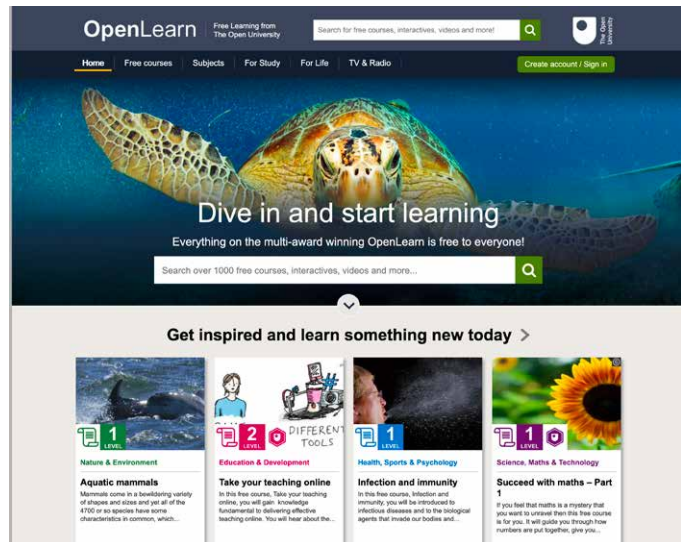


Keep Learning

Free Learning from The Open University:

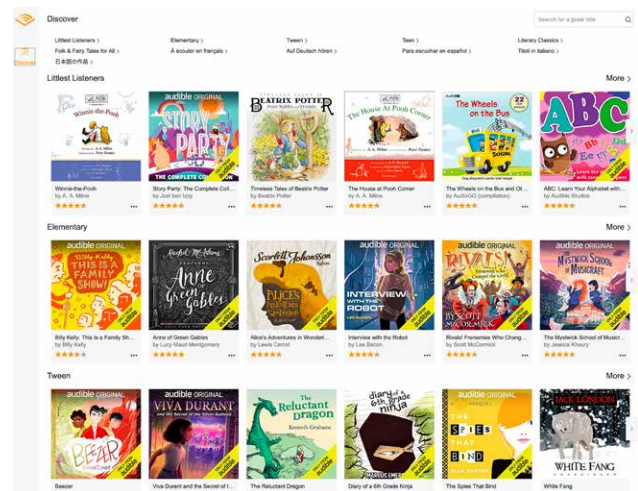
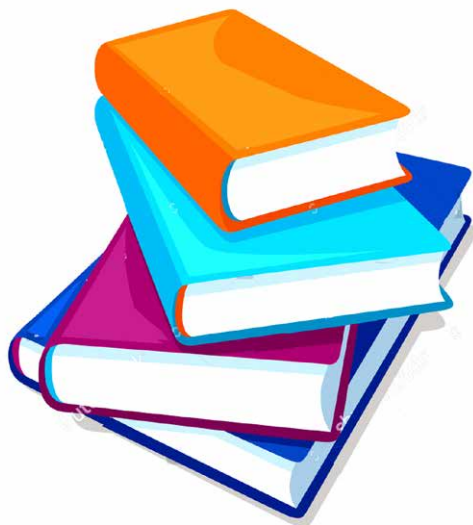
This is a fantastic resource from the Open University where you can find thousands of courses online, completely for free! These include interactive activities and videos on a variety of subjects from History and the Arts, Sports and Psychology to Language to Nature and the Environment. Please do have a look, we're sure there is something there for everyone!

[CLICK THIS LINK HERE](#)



Read or listen to a book

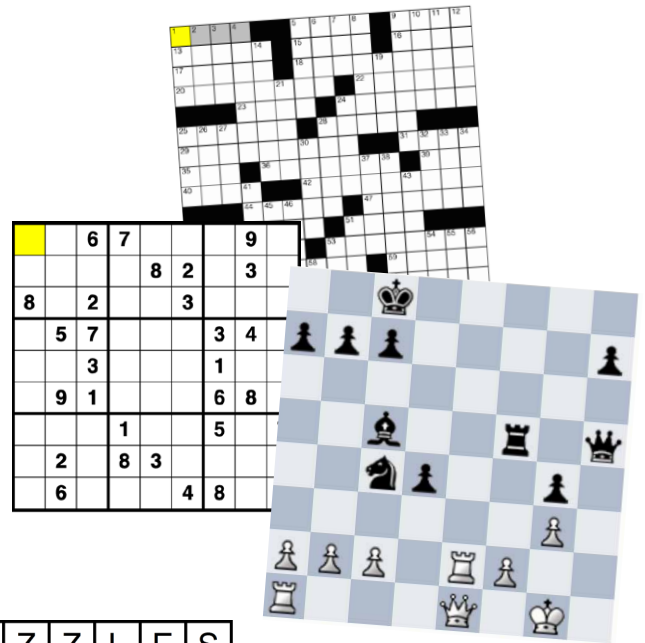
- Dust off a book you've been meaning to read for ages, or re-read an old classic or a comforting favourite!
- **Top tip:** Remember, this doesn't have to be a long novel. It can include recipes, magazine articles, journals and much more



- If you don't have access to books or magazines where you are living (or indeed, you might have read and re-read them all!) – have a look at this online resource from **Audible for free audiobooks**: <https://stories.audible.com/discovery> - these include literary classics, folk and fairy tales, as well as audiobooks for young adults and children to listen to as well – completely for free!

Crosswords, Sudokus and Colouring for Mindfulness

- Check out this excellent resource linked here: <https://simplydaily puzzles.com/>
- This website is full of crosswords (easy, medium and difficult!), sudokus and chess games online. You don't need to worry about a pen, paper or a printer as it is all designed to be completed online
- Equally, if you'd like to write things down, have a look through any old newspapers puzzle books if you have them, or create your own!



S I M P L Y D A I L Y P U Z Z L E S

App of the week: headspace

There are some fantastic apps for your smartphone and tablet out there. We will pick a new app each week that we think you should know about.

What is it?:

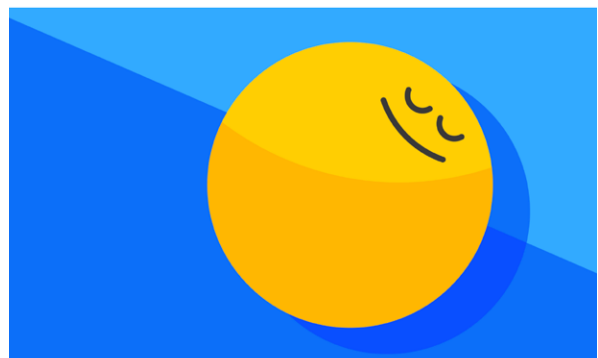
Headspace is focuses on very simple meditation and mindfulness. Headspace breaks down guided meditation into small, manageable chunks. You can choose different topics to focus on such as: anxiety, self-esteem or sleep, which come in the shape of mini exercises, mindfulness walk throughs and guided meditations each day.

Free of charge?

Headspace have made a section of their app, '**Weathering the Storm**' - this section has been made free to *everyone*. Weathering the Storm includes meditations, sleep and movement exercises to help you out during this time, however you are feeling.

How do I download it?

Type in Headspace on the Apps section of your phone, download the app and then search for the section called Weathering the Storm and click on this to get started for free.



Tutor Corner: Bill

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.

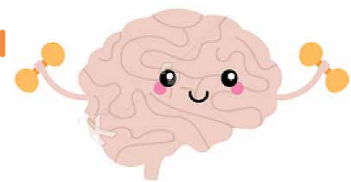
This week we've been speaking to our tutor, Bill, who's been telling us about ways he's been able to stay connected, and his top tips to keep learning

1. Have there been any ways over the last week you've been able to feel Connected?

"I am in regular touch with a number of tutors and friends via WhatsApp groups and these enable us not only to support each other but also to provide some humour. We've been for video walks around each other's gardens and will continue to do this as we do the daily gardening - Chelsea flower show here we come!"



2. Have you managed to learn anything new this week?



"Yes, I've learnt how to overcome new isolation situations by sometimes stepping away from the task when feeling overwhelmed, and then going back to it after a few minutes. I've also learnt that news broadcasts while updating you, can be quite negative on your mental health"

3. Could you give us your top tip for maintaining your wellbeing at home?

"Try to keep the brain active, have a routine, keep a diary (I started one in January and am still doing it). Do a daily walk and have a good hobby or possibly develop a new one"

4. Have you any final messages for our readers ?

"Keep safe, wash your hands, and use technology to keep in touch!"

Left: A beautiful photo of Spring daffodils sent in by one of our tutors on a wellbeing walk

BRAND NEW: ORC Podcast

Earlier this week we were delighted to announce the release of our **first ever** Oxfordshire Recovery College Podcast!

Please click on the following link to have a listen:

<https://anchor.fm/oxfordshire-recovery-college>

In this very first episode, our guests give a run through of their roles at the College and what we're up to at the moment at ORC. This podcast focuses on the Five Ways to Wellbeing and we share our own top tips - and even some pasta recipes!

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.

Oxfordshire
Recovery
College
Podcast

We want to hear from you!

We would really love to hear your ideas about how you are maintaining your wellbeing at this time, or any tips that you would like to share with others. There will be brand new guests on the podcast each week and we will be discussing a variety of topics on maintaining our wellbeing through these times.

If you do want to send in any suggestions, or would like to feature as a guest on the podcast, or even just to check in with us and say hello - please email us on:

contactORC@restore.org.uk

or message us on our twitter or facebook pages

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, you can also tweet us: @OxfordshireRC, find us on facebook: Oxfordshire Recovery College, or listen to us: <https://anchor.fm/oxfordshire-recovery-college>