

Introduction

Welcome to the June edition of our Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter. Over the last two months many people have endured the impact of loneliness, isolation, bereavement, unemployment, and other hardships caused by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The heroes of our times are the NHS and care home staff and the other essential workers who have ensured our access to the necessities of life; alongside these have been the legions of volunteers who have given their time freely to support their neighbours, their communities, and the country as a whole.



It therefore seems very fitting that the first week of June is Volunteers Week. First established in 1984, Volunteers Week is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution and achievements of volunteers and to raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering. Bristol Mind's own volunteers have responded magnificently to the crisis: supporting people through our [helplines, counselling and advocacy services](#), people fundraising to support our services, and those supporting the general work of the organisation itself. Ex-volunteers have returned, while others have volunteered their time and skills to make [videos aimed at providing support for people](#). These wonderful acts are being replicated across many voluntary organisations in our area and throughout the country.

The scale of volunteering in our country is staggering. Almost 40% of adults volunteer in any one year, whilst the economic impact of voluntary work is estimated to be worth over £50 billion, and more than 1.3 million people give blood via the NHS. While many people's volunteering efforts have stepped up during the crisis, volunteering has long been crucial to many activities in our communities. Grassroots sport, for example, would collapse without the thousands of people giving their time freely on weekends and evenings; the early careers of most sporting professionals were facilitated by volunteers on pitches, on running tracks, or in swimming pools or sports halls.

A lot of voluntary activities have a very visible impact within communities, however less tangible and less visible are the impacts upon the volunteers themselves. While people give their time freely and without expectation of reward, volunteering provides many benefits to the volunteers themselves in both mental and physical health: it can help counteract the effects of stress and anxiety, combat depression, increase self-confidence, provide a sense of purpose — and can make you happy!

Many of you reading this will be volunteers, and I want to **thank you** for helping to create a society where people believe in the good of helping others, and in contributing to our communities. The efforts of volunteers have sustained many during these recent difficult times, and will continue to help us get through them.

Tom Hore, Director



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VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

Volunteers' Week is a UK celebration that happens every year between the 1st and 7th of June. It's a week where we celebrate volunteers and thank them for their incredible contributions.

Here at Bristol Mind, we couldn't provide our services without the continued commitment of our strong team of volunteers.

We've collected some insights from our volunteers and coordinators on this page and the next for you to read.



Community Outreach Advocacy

The Community Outreach Advocacy Service offers free one-to-one advocacy support to people who live in the Bristol community. This service is delivered by advocates who are fully trained volunteers. Everyone is friendly and understanding, with experience or understanding of mental health issues, and all of our volunteers are concerned about the rights of people who experience mental and emotional distress.

Our 2019 cohort of Advocacy Volunteers are in the process of putting into practice what they learnt on the basic training with clients. Many have now acquired quite a bit of experience and skill, and are an invaluable help to people. The 2019 group, although made up of very different people, gelled very quickly and became fast learners. As the coordinator, it's exciting to have such a diverse range of people to choose from when allocating clients to advocates, and to be involved with a team with lots of energy and enthusiasm. I have been in this post for almost 17 years, and still find it very rewarding - as do the volunteers!

We try to support and reward our volunteers as much as possible, not just during Volunteers' Week. We do this by:

- Verbally thanking them for what they do and giving positive feedback
- Providing ongoing training
- Regular one-to-one supervision (every four weeks)
- Monthly support and supervision group
- Social events (we're getting to be dab hands at skittles!)
- Providing interesting and challenging things to do.

Claire Barnard, Outreach Advocacy Coordinator

Our Volunteers' Stories



“Working as an advocate and having trained with Bristol Mind in particular has given me invaluable practical skills - as well as **confidence and resilience** - that I have been able to take forward in many aspects of my life.”

Outreach Advocacy Volunteer

“I have been a listening volunteer for Mind for a year and a half. I had thought about it for years, then my work changed, and I didn't have to travel so much - so I felt I could commit and signed up. I always thought I had something else I could give - **many people had said I was a good listener** so I thought I would put that to good use. I have had my own mental health struggles over the years, mental health helps us all in different ways throughout our lives, and sometimes we need a bit of help to get through it.”

“**I see being a listener as a privilege:** being there for callers when they are struggling, listening to them and supporting them in a way that other people in their lives can't, and being with them through their time of crisis. I've learnt the power of simply being listened to, and I'm proud to be part of Bristol MindLine. When I joined, the training was fantastic, and the ongoing support from the team is invaluable for processing the things I hear each night. Being on the line has **inspired me to retrain as a counsellor.**”

MindLine Volunteer

“People who contact us for themselves or a loved one usually need two things: first, someone to listen and reassure them; then information about the options available to them. Talking can help people to feel less overwhelmed and to see that there is a way forward. **Having information at their disposal can help them feel more confident** about finding and accessing the support that they need.”

“One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is being able to offer a listening ear to people who may not feel able to confide in anyone else, or who may be feeling confused and unsure about how to find support.”

“I believe that mental health is - or should be - everybody's business, because mental illness can affect anyone; no-one is immune. And by the same token, **any of us can do something to make a difference.**”

Information and Signposting Volunteer



**VOLUNTEERS'
WEEK**

MindLine expanded its listening space to 7 evenings a week soon after lockdown

When face-to-face mental health support services have had to close temporarily, we knew the need for support would increase. The MindLine team are here to ensure you get that every night at the end of a phone. There's thousands of reasons people might call MindLine, and that's what makes it so valuable. Our volunteers are well trained to listen to anything you may bring; from loneliness and anxiety through to diagnosed mental health conditions, long-ago traumas, and bereavement.

Our callers ring with anything that's on their mind...

Talking about what's going on for you can be like letting the gas out of a shaken-up coke bottle... it releases that build-up - the pressure - and helps you carry on with your day, explore and find your own way through a difficult dilemma, or perhaps even get a better night's sleep.

During these challenging times of COVID-19, talking to someone could just simply be about connecting with another human being in a time of isolation, and it is that connection that can keep you going through the anxiety or loneliness.

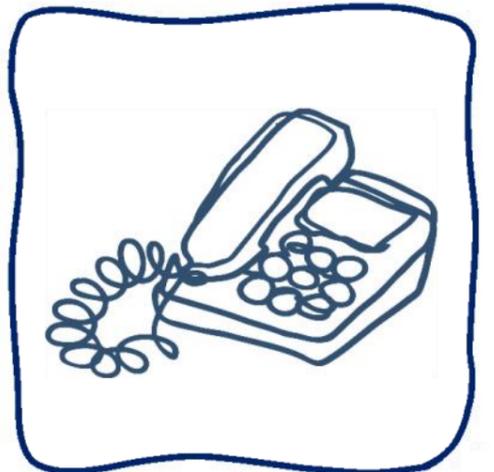
Of course, opening up can sometimes be more easily said than done. Making that call to a friend, a loved one, or to MindLine can seem like a mammoth step, and a brave one. Talking - and sometimes that can mean feeling vulnerable - requires certain conditions to be safe. If you've ever found it hard to share your feelings (and haven't we all at times!) it may be because you don't want to be a burden or you're concerned that the person wouldn't care or couldn't be trusted. Perhaps the conditions weren't quite right.

The difference at MindLine is that we uphold certain conditions to ensure that your conversation with our listeners is safe and secure:

- All calls are anonymous - you don't need to identify yourself.
- We are non-judgemental.
- We are accepting of you and whatever you bring us, and empathetic.
- And on a practical level: you can have one call a night, and that call can last up to 30 minutes if you'd like it to.

During the crisis, we've seen our call volumes substantially increase and we're so proud of all our listening volunteers for giving their time when the line seems more essential than ever.

Take a look at our Volunteers' Week section for some words from them on what makes listening such a valuable experience.



Here to listen when
you need to talk
0808 808 0330



For better mental health



Bristol Mind are excited to announce a new funder for 2020! We have received **vital support** from the Quartet Community Foundation for the expansion of our MindLine helpline.

We made the decision to expand our service to 7 nights a week during COVID-19; this grant is providing vital funds to help us deliver this additional telephone support.

Quartet is an independent organisation that serves people in the areas of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. Their focus is to **change people's lives for the better** across the West of England.

Thank you so much from everyone at Bristol Mind!



Bristol Mind's YouTube Channel - more free videos!

The team at Bristol Mind have been super busy putting together more short, free videos from a variety of local trainers and experts, packed with advice and support to help us all look after our mental health and wellbeing during the current Coronavirus outbreak. You'll find our channel at <http://tiny.cc/bmyoutube>

We know that sometimes a friendly face can make all the difference - so we hope that you'll find our experts knowledgeable, and their advice on how to support yourself helpful and accessible. Our library of videos will be growing each week - so please [subscribe](#) to get updates on our most recent content!

The videos we now have available are:

- [A series of six videos on Mindfulness](#)
Mindfulness teacher and Practitioner Wendy Francis
- [Managing Stress and Anxiety during COVID-19](#)
Claire Plummer
- [Tips for Managers on Supporting Staff Remotely](#)
James Maher
- [Post-natal mental health during COVID-19](#)
Maria Viner, Mothers for Mothers
- [CBT for Isolation and Loneliness](#)
Chris Rowntree
- [Self-harm and Coronavirus - tips for coping](#)
Naomi Salisbury, Self Injury Support
- [Supporting Ourselves Whilst Working from Home](#)
Lisa Foote
- [Bereavement and Grief](#)
Ros Jiggins
- [Mental Health Tips for Unpaid Carers](#)
Carina Andrews
- [Managing Anxiety While Restrictions are Lifted](#)
Ros Jiggins
- [Personality Disorders and Complex Trauma](#)
Iola Davies, Emerging Health CIC
- [Supporting Someone who is Feeling Suicidal](#)
Maggie Cameron

Women Without Borders; A Women's Group

Negat Hussein, Group Coordinator



As we enter the third month of lockdown, many people are feeling the effects of isolation, separation, and uncertainty. Many support groups have had to stop altogether or adapt to keep in touch with members at a time where people, connection, and support are crucial.

Bristol Mind has an ongoing commitment to reach out to wider communities living in our city. We recognise that many people have come in need of refuge, and our aim is to help those people's mental wellbeing in whatever way we can. In order to help achieve this, Bristol Mind proudly runs [Women Without Borders](#). WWB is a women's refugee group; members' pre-school aged children also attend. The group's purpose is to **create a safe space**, for members to enhance their wellbeing and connectedness.



The group usually meet every Friday at Barton Hill Settlement. The mornings include workshops on a range of topics and activities, from discussions about women's health and wellbeing, arts and crafts, to baking and sharing recipes. The organisers encourage members of the group to take an active role in what the group provides for each other - sharing skills and experiences from around the world, **enriching understanding of each other** as well as providing support. The group also runs regular drop-ins and has organised local outings.



WWB quickly responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding that their members would need increased support. In the first week of lockdown, and following government advice, WWB made the difficult but necessary decision to close their drop-in service and stop their weekly face-to-face meetings. Within a week, they redesigned their activity to provide weekly support over the phone, to check in on members' wellbeing, and crucially, to share the latest NHS and government information - **translating this into Arabic and Somali where required**. They were also able to check on members' access to food and essential items, and where appropriate, refer them to local aid.

To **keep up morale** and protect the women and their families from isolation, the group has been working with a qualified nature / green space facilitator, organising fortnightly video activities for the families at home and in their local outdoor space. Furthermore, the members have access to an online English class twice a week.



Negat says "It's important for Women Without Borders to make sure our members **feel like they belong** and are part of the community, even from a distance. Our members are having a really difficult time, and they are **struggling with isolation**. That would be an issue anyway, but they rely on social drop-ins and English classes, as well as the support and kindness which has been lessened due to COVID-19. For many of them, this could contribute to a deterioration of mental health, due to an increase in isolation and a lack of psychological support or contact with others. Many of the members live in crowded households, with limited access to resources like the internet - it's not a good experience at all."



LGBTQ+ Counselling: Meeting Minds

Liz Sorapure, Projects Coordinator (MindLine and Meeting Minds)

At Bristol Mind we offer a range of services to meet the needs of everyone in our community. We believe that mental health support needs to cater for everyone, and that should support individuals in a way that works for them. Bristol Mind runs LGBTQ+ counselling as part of our Meeting Minds counselling service. As Pride season approaches, I wanted to share information about our service, including its inception and continued importance.

Over the last few years, I noticed many LGBTQ+ clients accessing our general counselling service. Some mentioned how they had sought counselling before from other organisations and individual private therapists. This experience had not been positive, especially for some transgender or non-binary individuals. They told me that **often they had to “educate” counsellors** on language and feeling around gender identity, and some felt that counsellors were judgemental and out of their comfort zone.

Having already set up MindLine Trans+ in 2016, last year I suggested creating a specific service with **counsellors who openly identified as LGBTQ+**, to provide counselling to the LGBTQ+ community. Embarking on counselling can be challenging enough in its own right, so I felt that taking away this concern for potential clients would reduce anxiety.

We recruited 3 LGBTQ+ counsellors and very quickly started to get inquiries; since then, the service has only got busier. It's still low cost, sadly not free, but **we do try to make it as financially and physically accessible as possible**. We applied to national Mind for a small grant, which we were awarded; this helped us expand the service to North Somerset and South Gloucestershire residents as well as Bristol, as I'm conscious that people living in more rural areas have less support and fewer spaces to talk about gender and sexuality.

This service is incredibly important, especially during the pandemic. We're aware that people don't currently have the usual access to friends, support, and social groups. This can really affect mental health, so if LGBTQ+ people need support we're here - either through the helplines or counselling, which is currently online or over the phone.

The service is by **self-referral**, so anyone can apply for themselves. If you're interested in receiving counselling, please email counselling@bristolmind.org.uk and request a registration form for the LGBTQ+ service and we'll get back to you.

We're also looking to work with more LGBTQ+ counsellors - please email counselling@bristolmind.org.uk if you think you can help!

Our LGBTQ+ Guest Contributor for June 2020 - Hidayah

Each month we're planning to share an article from an amazing guest LGBTQ+ organisation to spread the word and to promote mental wellbeing in the LGBTQ+ community. This month we caught up with Hidayah to hear about what they do and how they've been coping with the lockdown.

Hidayah are an entirely volunteer-led charity who provide support and welfare initiatives for LGBTQ+ Muslims, as well as promoting social justice and providing education about the LGBTQ+ Muslim community in a bid to counter discrimination, prejudice, and injustice.



"We run events all over the country for our members to come and find a **sense of community and belonging with other LGBTQ+ Muslims**. During these events, topics could be centred around Islam and homosexuality, coming out stories, cooking/crafting together, or simply having coffee and meeting other people like us.

We typically have events happening **in the South West** with our South West Facilitator, Farina, hosting a poetry evening in April. She invited members to bring a poem (written or chosen) to share with the rest of the group. It showcased a lot of talent amongst our members, and for some of them, was the first time they had read their poetry out to anyone! We hope to bring another evening like this to our members soon.

With the current COVID-19 restrictions that the UK are adhering to we have, much like other organisations out there, changed the way we interact with our members. **We have moved all our events online**, and we're using the power of conferencing sites like Zoom to communicate with our members during this isolating time.

We've still been as active as possible. Our Leeds facilitator, Mo, **hosted a virtual Iftar this month** as part of Ramadan (the holy month of fasting for Muslims around the world). During this event, members were encouraged to bring their prepared meals and breakfast with us throughout the evening - we even had someone join us from India! We also had our Volunteer Group Facilitator, Mubeen, holding an informative evening on the last 10 days of Ramadan and providing some education around what these 10 days mean for Muslims and the importance of it.

In the last few months, we became concerned about how our members would feel during this lockdown. For some of them, it meant returning to homes from universities, or working from home all the time, and **being back in the "closer"**. We knew this would impact on our members' mental health and wellbeing, so we started having virtual meets instead. We make sure the content of these events are varied, from being light-hearted or educational to being a place where people can vent about how they're currently feeling. It certainly has brought our tight-knit community more together, and emphasized the importance of communication and keeping in touch with one another on a regular basis."

Fundraising Update

The last few months have been extremely difficult for people in our local community and across the globe. Despite this, our incredible fundraisers have been as busy as ever to raise awareness and support for our mental health services. To do this, a lot of fundraisers are taking their events and challenges online and promoting them through [JustGiving](#). We wanted to say a huge **THANK YOU** and share a few stories.



Avon Harmony A Capella Group organized a truly breathtaking virtual fundraiser for us with [their rendition of True Colours](#). Mary Williams, a member of the group, said:

“We recorded a version of True Colours in our own homes, to help the local based charity Bristol Mind raise funds to support their work during and after the Pandemic. I know local charities will be having reduced funding coming in, yet more than ever these mental health services are vital to people. They are there at the end of a phone when people are struggling with

increased anxiety, depression, mental illness and worries in very uncertain times. We hope that by making this video that we can help raise funds for them, **but also raise awareness that people can seek help** if they feel they need to speak to someone. It is very important to get people in the South West to know they exist and continue to function despite the lockdown.”

The group recorded their individual parts on their phones at home over a period of two weeks, and then mixed the audio to make this stunning track - which is accompanied on YouTube by a selection of photos and videos of members' lockdown experiences.

“The choir, which cannot meet in person for the foreseeable future like many others, is vital for our mental health - and so we meet online once a week for a virtual rehearsal. Away from this we have been sharing stories, recipes, laughs, and a sunflower growing competition. We have adult women of all ages (from 20 - 76 currently), with many who are not able to work at the moment, some who are now shielding, and some who live alone. It has been a scary experience, as many didn't have the technology at first, but slowly but surely they are embracing it. **This was our way to help others during an event that we feel rather helpless about.**”

Our supporters are challenging themselves while raising funds. Below are a selection of those who got involved in our **Virtual Marathon** - well done to everyone taking part, and those who have completed it this May! You can take part by walking, running, or cycling, and the challenge is open all summer. Sign up [here](#), as a team or an individual, to support our local mental health services while staying active! All you need to do is set yourself a time frame and a target, then record your progress.



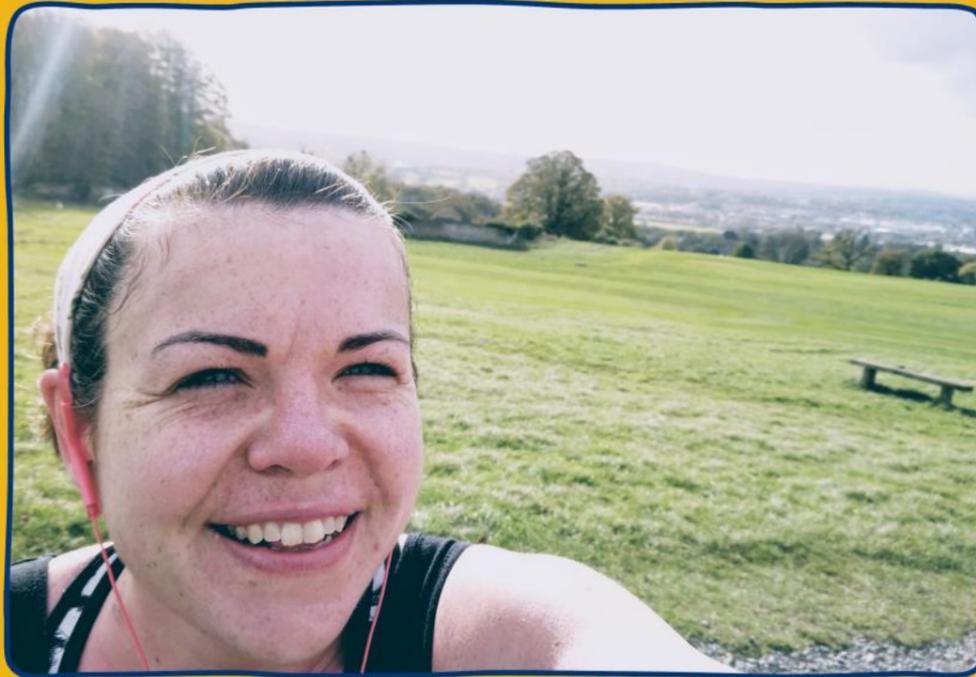
If you would like to fundraise for us, or if you have any questions about fundraising for Bristol Mind, please email Leilah King at fundraisingcoordinator@bristolmind.org.uk

Mental Health Awareness Week

May 18 - 24 2020

“my big tip is: listen to your inner critic, listen to the tone and the attitude and the language that your inner critic uses, and think: ‘would I be happy receiving that from a loved one? Would I be happy giving that language to a loved one?’, and if you wouldn’t, try and catch yourself doing it, and **try and change the tone.**”

“For me, **exercise is absolutely key** in helping me manage my mental health. If I don’t run regularly, my depression really takes hold, so I make sure to get out and do it even if I really don’t feel like it.”



“One thing that ‘s been really helping me during this lockdown is to think of **one positive thing about each day**, and to share it with someone. I’ve been doing this with a group of friends every day, and usually listening to what’s brought my friends joy is actually the best part of my day, too, whether it’s big or small.”

The theme for Mental Health Awareness Week this year was **Kindness**, and we asked our supporters to share some ways in which they are kind to themselves and look after their own mental health. We’ve loved seeing all of your contributions - including our star appearances from Bristol-born Premier League footballer **Herbie Kane** and Great British Bake Off contestant **Briony May Williams!**

A few of your top tips are collected here - thank you to everyone who shared, and keep practicing kindness and self-care!



“The past few months have made me realise that I love a nice cup of loose leaf tea. I like the ritual of making tea, brewing the tea and enjoying the tea. If I do a thing that I find difficult, **I reward myself** with a lovely cup of tea.”

“I take care of my mental health by getting out and staying active. **I set myself a challenge** to mix it up.”

“I find **writing poems and a diary of how I feel** really helps me when I’m struggling.”

“I have found **painting and drawing animals helps me** because I love animals, so I always like the attention I’m spending on that particular subject.”





"The New Normal"

As we head into a post-lockdown phase, we are finding that people are worried and anxious about returning to normal life. We caught up with one of our supporters to hear about her experience:

"It feels wrong to say you have found peace during a Pandemic. It feels wrong admitting that you prefer to see people less often. I feel guilty admitting that the lockdown has eased my anxiety. But **why have I felt better**, and what can I learn from it?

When I was much younger, I had a breakdown which emotionally scarred me and left me with an undiagnosed anxiety disorder. For me, this has fluctuated, but is always there in the background. I have also experienced bullying and discrimination, which has contributed to me getting stuck in a cycle of expecting negative things to happen. My anxiety tends to centre around being affected by others and what they think of me. In late 2019 and early 2020, I was going through a tough patch in my personal life and I was experiencing lots of stress and anxiety. I had constant headaches, felt isolated, and this put a strain on my relationships.

When the pandemic started, **at first, I was incredibly worried** like many others. I worried about my physical welfare, worried about my loved ones—some of whom work in the NHS. As the weeks progressed and some of my concerns started to subside, I got into the swing of working from home. It wasn't easy and things were up and down, but I noticed I had started to feel better. Not just better than a few weeks prior, but better than before the pandemic. My constant headaches had stopped, my panicked outbursts had stopped or significantly lessened. I started taking up old hobbies, and making new ones. I started colouring in and cycling, which help me to relax.

The slower pace of life has made me not worry as much about going out and not being as accepted or likable as other people. I think I have always been a closet introvert or mixed bag, and **this period of enforced minimal socialising has made me feel less anxious** about it. Not getting the bus twice a day, not having to interact with the general public, not feeling like I need to be constantly achieving something (whether that's creatively or socially) - all of this has helped me.

Now we are approaching the end of Lockdown, a 'new normal', and it's made me worry about going back to my old life. I have been reflecting on what has been different, and whether I can carry things forward.

I think if you struggle with dealing with other people and if you find certain situations challenging, then not having to deal with things isn't a long term fix. But **understanding what you can do to help yourself** relax or to stem the spiral of negative emotions is helpful. Understanding what you find difficult and working on how you can react differently can help you. I have been listening to some self-help audios to reflect on this and to be more conscious of what's going on. I'm trying, like many, to be kinder to myself and to others."

If you need support, you can find more information on Bristol Mind's services on our website [here](#).

You Snooze you Lose, Right?

PURELY BALANCED
CREATING CALM

WRONG! Why sleep should be a choice
not a chore

Emma Cook, Director and Founder, Purely Balanced



After a day of work life, family life, and social life, sleep isn't something we take care of - it's just something that signals one day is done and a new one is coming. For years and years, we thought of sleep as something we didn't have to pay much attention to. Recent studies, however, have changed the way we think of our sleep hygiene and sleep routine: study after study now shows that if you can improve your sleep, you improve your mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

Sleep is your body's time to rest, but your brain puts it to good use. In our deep sleep state, our brains clean up and reset our systems from the day we had, ready for the day to come. Sleep is what builds and develops our subconscious, rebalances our hormones, and helps our bodies to produce cytokines to help fight off infection. If it's done right, sleep resets and refreshes us, and makes us a lot more responsive in our thinking and our focus.

On the other hand, Fatigue is to blame for 70% of work-related accidents and 20% of road traffic accidents.



Emma's Sleep Tips

- Use an eye mask. Eye masks help your body produce the sleep hormone melatonin, because they create an equal darkness over both eyes - which lets the body know it's bedtime!
- Don't eat for three hours before bed. This allows your body time to digest the food you've eaten before you sleep, so that you can hit a deep sleep state earlier.
- Use sleep sounds - You can find some great ones on YouTube.
- Make sure you get 30-40 minutes of natural light per day, preferably in the morning (after 6am) and early afternoon (before 2pm).
- Start to dull your house down at night - turn off some lights, or get lower wattage bulbs. This mimics sunset and helps your body to know it's time to sleep.
- Have a digital detox before bed: set a time to stop using your phones and devices, or if you absolutely have to use them, turn on a blue light filter (in your phone's display settings). This filters out blue light - some phones will have an option to do this on a timer, so you can set it to filter at sunset and it will do it for you every night.
- Develop a "Switch Off Routine" - try to make it simple, so that you could do it anywhere. Use techniques like belly breathing or open posture to relax your system and signal that it's time to sleep.

Sleeping poorly for consecutive nights, or not getting enough time in a deep sleep state, has the same impact on the brain as intoxication. Our world of 24/7 availability has had a dramatic effect on sleep and sleep quality, which in turn is negatively affecting our mental health.

If you start with some basic sleep tips and work your way up to good sleep hygiene, it will make a huge difference in the long run.

Green and Growing

On May 13th, garden centres were allowed to reopen in England and Wales, the first retail businesses to restart trading since the government shut all non-essential shops. There is growing evidence that gardening can improve our mental health as well as having physical benefits. As well as connecting us with nature, it creates a focus on something outside of ourselves, and brings a great sense of achievement when things grow.



Garlic

To grow it, buy some fresh garlic from a local shop and get yourself a six-inch tall pot. Plant a large, unpeeled clove with the pointed side up, in well-draining soil. Keep the soil moist, and in a few days you should see a green shoot.

You can use the leaves as a delicious substitute for garlic cloves in many recipes: cut them off with sharp scissors, only a few inches at a time.

When the leaves dry, dig up the soil to harvest the garlic bulbs.



Potatoes

It's the last month to start growing potatoes, but the beauty of this versatile vegetable is you can grow them in anything from a bag to a hundred-acre field. Here, we're looking at a big bucket.

Choose a warm sunny spot and pick a late planting type (we like Charlotte or Maris Peer) for your seed potatoes.

Put some drainage holes in the bottom of your bucket, wash well, and fill the bottom two inches with broken pottery or large stones, followed by six inches of potting compost.

Place your potatoes, shoots upwards, two inches apart and cover completely with soil. Water weekly - more often if it's hot - and they're ready to dig up when the flowers wilt (around 70 days). Enjoy!



For Keen Gardeners...

You'll find tips for June from [Sunday Gardener](#), [Paddocks Allotments](#), and [The Eden Project](#).



The **West of England Sport Trust (Wesport)** are pleased to be the official sport and physical activity contributor to the Bristol Mind – Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter. www.wesport.org.uk/activeworkplaces

Physical Activity for Good Mental Health

Physical activity really can improve your mental health. If you build it into your day you will soon see the benefits:

- **Better sleep** - by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- **Happier moods** - physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy
- **Managing stress, anxiety** or intrusive and racing thoughts - doing something physical releases cortisol, which helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times
- **Better self-esteem** - being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals
- **Reducing the risk of depression** - studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression
- **Connecting with people** - doing group or team activities can help you meet new and like-minded people, and make new friends.

Mental Health Awareness Week gave us the opportunity to think about how we can use physical activity to maintain good mental health.

If you are lacking the connection with people during this time to help you keep active - there is virtual support out there. [Click here to find out about Coach AI.](#)



Sometimes it's great to just pause and consider how you look after yourself...

We're really grateful to be featuring a personal blog that acknowledges life changes, the impact these have, and how turning to activity has had such a positive effect:

“It was exactly what I needed. A focused hour on myself. I lost the weight and was able to get rid of any frustrations I had through the pads. It soon became the one hour a week where I could switch my brain off and not think or worry about anything. I only had the space to concentrate on what I was doing and keep breathing!”

Please take five to visit our website and [read the full blog post here.](#)

Finally: We have repurposed our Physical Activity for Good Mental Health workshop...

To be delivered virtually. It's been reduced down to just an hour to provide a start of the conversation. We're encouraging people to join us to see how incorporating activity into your working day can help you maintain good mental wellbeing. For more information, [visit our website!](#)

Mushroom Stroganoff

BBC

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
500g mushrooms, cleaned & sliced
1/2 tsp English mustard
1 tsp paprika
250ml veg stock (from a cube is OK)
200g rice, cooked to packet, to serve
200ml sour cream
1 lemon, cut into 6 wedges
salt & freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Heat a wide pan over medium heat

and add oil. When hot, add onion and a pinch of salt, cooking gently for 5-7 minutes until soft.

2. Add garlic, cooking for a further 2 minutes, then mushrooms for 5-6 minutes, until golden brown.

3. Add mustard and paprika. Mix well so that all is coated, then add the stock. Stir gently, then Simmer for five minutes.

4. Remove from the heat. Stir in the sour cream and juice from 2 lemon wedges. Season, then serve with rice and lemon on the side.



Sophia's Chocolate Banana Marble Cake

Ingredients

For the chocolate cake

85g self-raising flour
4 tbsp cocoa powder
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
75g caster sugar
1 tbsp golden syrup
1 egg
75g softened unsalted butter
75ml semi-skimmed milk

For the banana cake

80g softened unsalted butter

150g caster sugar
2 eggs
2 very ripe bananas
225g self raising flour
1tsp baking powder
4 tbsp semi-skimmed milk

For icing and decoration

50g icing sugar
5 tbsp cocoa powder
100g unsalted butter
a pinch of sea salt
rainbow sprinkles (optional)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C Fan, Gas Mark 4)

2. Start with the chocolate cake batter. Mix the flour, cocoa, bicarb, and sugar, then make a well and add in the syrup, egg, butter, and milk. Whisk until well-combined, then set aside.

3. Next, the banana cake batter: mash the bananas first, then add the remaining ingredients and mix.

4. Line two round sandwich cake tins with greaseproof paper. Spoon the two batter mixtures into the tins alternatingly, in a random pattern, then use a toothpick to swirl in a marble effect.

5. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean, then leave to cool on a wire rack.

6. While the cakes cool, whisk the butter for the icing until light and creamy, then mix in the cocoa, sugar, and salt.

7. Sandwich the cooled cakes together with icing. Use an offset spatula to smooth icing on the top and around the sides of the cake.

8. Finish with sprinkles, or a topping of your choice. Slice to serve.



Koucha (Cypriot Broad Beans)

This traditional recipe uses fresh broad beans, which come into season from June onwards. If all else fails, use frozen - but it may taste less authentic!

Ingredients

500g broad beans
2 cloves garlic, chopped
150ml white wine vinegar
2 tbsp olive oil
freshly cracked black pepper

Method

1. Cook the broad beans in boiling water for a few minutes to soften.

2. Heat the olive oil in a large pan. Add the garlic, fry until golden.

3. Add white wine vinegar, then the beans. Set aside for 2 minutes.

4. Serve with cracked black pepper.





About Bristol Mind

Bristol Mind is a mental health charity for people in Bristol and surrounding areas. We promote wellbeing and recovery through a range of services. We recognize that each individual is a resource for their own recovery: many of our staff, volunteers, and trustees have themselves experienced the impact of emotional and mental distress.

Although affiliated to Mind the national charity, Bristol Mind is an independently registered and funded charity. If you would like further information on any of the services offered by Bristol Mind, please don't hesitate to get in touch, using the contact details below.

The information provided in this newsletter is for guidance only. You should contact a doctor or health professional if you need urgent help or medical advice. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions about the newsletter, please email us at newsletter@bristolmind.org.uk

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