



NHS

**Surrey and Borders
Partnership**
NHS Foundation Trust

Recovery College Newsletter

Week 1: Connect

25th March 2020



OUR MESSAGE FOR THIS WEEK

The Recovery College Team wanted to find a way to keep in touch with you, to give you information about the status of the Recovery College, and to help challenge the sense of isolation many of us are feeling.

We recognise that the unexpected change in routine can be challenging, and that the current situation is causing a lot of anxiety, worry, loneliness and frustrations amongst other things. Some people may be feeling some of these things for the first time, but for others it may be making existing feelings worse. Next week we will be looking specifically at ways to deal with anxiety.

One way we will support you in the coming weeks is to email you a weekly newsletter featuring information, and hints and tips from some of our courses.

This week we will be looking at **CONNECTING** with people.

Please also look at our Facebook page (even if you don't usually) as The Recovery College Team will be posting supporting information to it more than usual.

QUOTES

“Compassion opens doors to human connection”

“A connection is the energy that exists between two people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship”





BENEFITS OF CONNECTING

Relationships and connections with people are good for our mental health. They can help us:

- Build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- Feel valued
- Share positive experiences
- Receive emotional support
- Support others

But it's all too easy to miss out on opportunities to connect with others if we don't make them a priority or don't feel able to interact. Even the seemingly small act of smiling at someone else can improve your mood.

People we can connect with include partners, family, friends, co-workers, health care providers, neighbours and shop staff.

CONNECT WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE COMMUNITY

ACTIVITY: The Recovery College Team encourage you to share stories and photos of how you have connected with other people this week on the Recovery College Facebook page.

You may have found a creative or novel way to connect with somebody, or maybe you have picked up the phone and called someone when you don't usually.

Be inspiring and share your connect story with other Recovery College students!

<https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

All Facebook posts must be approved by a moderator before being posted to the Facebook page so may not show up immediately



WAYS TO CONNECT

Why not **phone** someone for a chat? Find out what they've been up to lately, and tell them how you're getting on. You could use the opportunity to get back in touch with someone you haven't spoken to for a while. If you like to see the person you're talking to, why not try a video chat? There are plenty of free ways to do this from your mobile phone or computer, like Skype, FaceTime or WhatsApp.

If you prefer **writing**, you could send someone an email with all your news, catch up by text message or WhatsApp, or write a letter. You could also include photographs.

If you're worried about running out of things to say, perhaps you could choose an activity to both do separately before, like watching a TV program, or cooking a new recipe, and discuss it together when you chat.

If you're missing that connection with people who have an understanding of mental health conditions, **Mind** offers an online peer support community where you can be yourself, called Elefriends. <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/support-community-elfriends/>

Other ways to connect with people include: eating dinner with the people you live with or playing a board game with others. Building a puzzle together can be helpful if you want time with somebody but don't want to talk much.

Consider switching off the TV or taking a break from work to give you more time to connect with others.

Share this newsletter with someone. Email it to somebody. Print it and put it through your neighbours door...even better, have a conversation on the phone or over the fence about it together.



CHALLENGES OF CONNECTING

In many of our courses we discuss the importance of healthy relationships. Healthy relationships give each person a choice to be in the relationship. There is a give-and-take balance between each person in any relationship. Look at how much you do in your relationships because you want to and how much you do because you think you should. Try to keep the “wants” and “shoulds” in balance. Whilst you may need to help others more than usual at the moment, it is also important to look after yourself.

As you build or maintain a relationship it is important to ask yourself some questions:

- Is this a healthy relationship for me?
- Is this relationship mutually respectful?
- Does this relationship contribute to each person’s positive self-regard?
- How is the balance of give-and-take?

Social media can be a quick way to keep in touch with what lots of people are doing all in one place, but it can be filled with negativity and worrying messages. This can increase our sense of anxiety, isolation, and feelings of powerlessness. It’s worth thinking about the effect social media has on you – does it make you happy, stressed, angry, anxious? If it creates more negative reactions than positive ones, maybe you could consider keeping your use of social media to once or twice a day, and for a limited time.

Watching, reading or listening to the news constantly can also be really stressful. It feels important to keep up to date with what’s happening, and it’s tempting to keep on checking for new information. If you only checked the news once or twice a day you would still be able to get all the details, and free up your time for more enjoyable activities.

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

Connecting is one of the 5 ways to wellbeing, which you can read about here and which we'll discuss more in upcoming emails

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/>

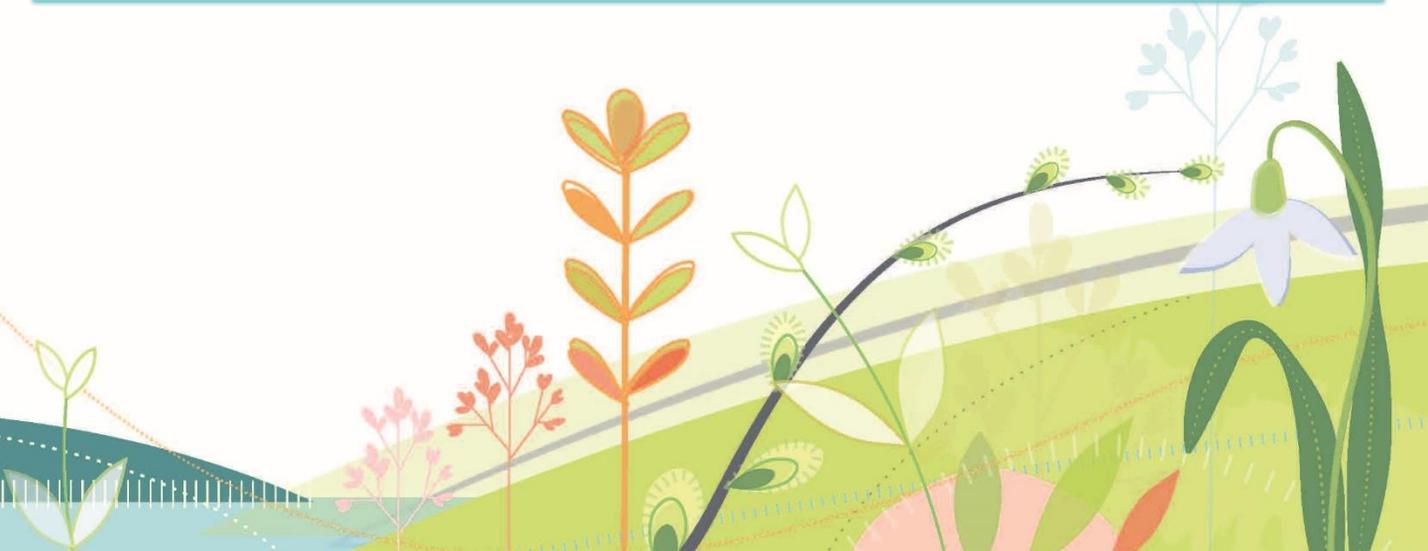
OUR COURSES

Courses are not currently running, but we are looking at new exciting ways to run courses remotely if the current situation continues for an extended period of time.

When our courses are back up and running, you can learn more about connecting on the following courses:

- Introduction to Recovery and Wellbeing
- Managing Intense Emotions
- Sustaining Meaningful Relationships
- Discovering Self Compassion

We'll let you know as soon as we have dates for running these courses again.



Our Recovery Colleges in Surrey and North East Hampshire & Farnham help people improve their health and wellbeing through courses on a range of mental and physical health conditions.

You don't have to be referred to become a student at the Recovery Colleges. We are open to everyone and all you need to do is enrol, which is really easy to do.

To become a student simply complete and return an enrolment form which you can get by contacting us.

We would be delighted to see you at one of our courses and look forward to meeting you.

If you have any questions or need guidance on completing the enrolment form please get in touch and one of our team will be happy to help.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

Webpage <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/recovery/recovery-college/>

Email recovery.college@sabp.nhs.uk

Text 07920 207046

