



Compass
RECOVERY COLLEGE

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

PROSPECTUS 2021

Welcome

Compass Recovery College continues to run **free mental health and wellbeing workshops**, both online and in person.

Whether you are a returning participant or new to Compass Recovery College, there's **something for everyone**. The wide range of workshops we offer are an educational route to **recovery from mental health challenges** and **increasing positive wellbeing**.

Workshops focus on **self-management skills and living well**, with the aim of all our participants becoming experts in their own self-care. All our workshops are **co-produced**; designed and delivered by people with lived experience of mental health challenges together with mental health professionals. Our aim is for everyone to feel listened to in a safe space, with the opportunity to connect with others.

Everyone is welcome and everyone is a participant, whether affected directly or indirectly by mental ill health. So whether you are struggling yourself, or perhaps you are a carer, family member or professional who would like to know more about mental health and wellbeing, we can help.

Your journey begins here.



Our Workshops



Mental health workshops:

designed to help us understand mental health challenges and teach skills for self- management.



Wellbeing workshops

designed to improve wellbeing and help keep us well



Creative workshops

To explore our creative side.



Social Sessions

Informal, drop-in sessions to chat about how we are, meet new people or old friends.

These vary from one off workshops to longer workshops running for up to 10 sessions. Some of our workshops are online via Zoom and MS Teams, some are in community venues.

Check out our [website](#) for a full schedule of current courses

[ENROL HERE](#)

Make sure **you enrol with us** (it's free!) so that you can register onto your chosen workshops: 0118 9373945, compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk

Mental Health Workshops



INTRODUCTION TO ANXIETY

Everyone feels anxious at some time in their lives. These workshops help us define what anxiety is, why we experience it and how we can deal with it and recover.

These workshops will provide you with a safe place to reflect, discuss your concerns, and identify positive and achievable coping strategies.

We will look at:

- How anxiety impacts on our mental wellbeing
- The different causes of anxiety
- How we can manage the feelings

4 SESSIONS



WHAT'S DIFFERENT TO US IS NORMAL FOR YOU

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behaviour. It is not a mental health condition, but it does affect how people experience and see the world. ASD can make managing certain areas of our lives more difficult, such as becoming distressed when there are changes to routine or finding certain situations anxiety provoking.

These workshops will look at the ups, the downs and the positives of ASD, from someone who lives with their diagnosis in their adult life.

2 SESSIONS



LIVING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDERS

Bipolar is a mood disorder characterised by extreme changes in mood. Although we all have mood swings, in bipolar disorder these can become unmanageable and overwhelming.

We will look at:

- The facts and realities of bipolar disorders
- How it can affect our lives and relationships
- Common triggers and challenges
- How it is diagnosed and treated
- How you can manage it
- How you can support someone that you care about.

2 SESSIONS

Mental Health Workshops



GRIEVING LOSSES

Experiencing loss is part of life whether you have lost a loved one, the end of a long life relationships, the loss of a job or the loss of an important friendship; learning to accept the new situation and living a fulfilled life after loss might seem nearly impossible. In these workshops we will consider how we all grieve in different ways and how we can support ourselves through the process and, with time, find meaning to our losses.

We will look at:

- Understanding different types of grief
- Understanding the stages of grief and identifying where we are in the process
- Learning to treat ourselves kindly in grief
- Learning new ways to decrease suffering after a loss

3 SESSIONS



LIVING WELL WITH OUR VOICES

This group is a collaboration between voice hearers, professionals and peer support workers as we plan how to live with voices and auditory hallucinations. These workshops are grounded on the acceptance of lived experiences of voice hearing. Co facilitated by a voice hearer, the workshops will focus on understanding and working with the voice hearers experience. Group members will be invited to nominate topics for discussion.

6 SESSIONS



A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Sleep is more important than you might think. A single sleepless night can make us irritable and moody the following day. It's not surprising therefore that chronic sleep problems may have an impact on our mental health wellbeing. This is a two-session workshop that will look at the factors that can adversely affect our sleep. You might be surprised how many there are.

We will look at:

- What happens when we sleep
- Pitfalls to avoid
- How to improve our sleep

2 SESSIONS

Mental Health Workshops



EMPOWER YOURSELF TO STRESS LESS

We all have periods of stress in our lives but having the knowledge and tools to respond to that stress appropriately makes all the difference.

We will look at:

- What causes stress and how it affects us
- Practical tips and tools to reduce stress
- A problem-solving approach to managing stress

2 SESSIONS



BEING KINDER TO OURSELVES: BEGINNING SELF-CARE AND COMPASSION

For Health and Social Care workers

These workshops starts with two theory-based sessions, which explore how we can be kinder to ourselves, be in the present moment and practice self-care which nurtures us in difficult times. It will provide 'tiny habits' which can be incorporated into daily life. Two more practical sessions will then explore interoception, as we slow down and connect to what is happening in our bodies through gentle movement, self-massage and breathwork.

We will look at:

- Identifying how we can practise self-care for resilience
- Implementing different techniques which benefit wellbeing and can be done easily and anywhere
- Connecting with breath and body through somatic techniques

4 SESSIONS

Wellbeing Workshops



GARDENING FOR WELLBEING

Gardening is a great way to get some exercise, connect with nature and gain a sense of achievement, all of which can support us in feeling well.

We will look at:

- The physical and mental health benefits of gardening
- Practical skills and tool use
- What to grow when and where (with an emphasis on small spaces)
- Plant care
- Your gardening questions answered

6 SESSIONS



MONEY MATTERS

Dealing with money can make us feel anxious and this affects our well-being. These workshops will help you feel more in control of money and as a result less anxious.

The three sessions will:

- Show you how to check you are receiving all the income you are entitled to
- Share ways of dealing with debts, as well as organisations that provide free help
- Give budgeting tips to help keep your finances under control in the future

During these workshops we will be sharing information and organisations who provide free support with money matters. After each session Compass will send you our handout, giving the key points and links to the organisations and websites we talk about in the sessions.

3 SESSIONS

Wellbeing Workshops



LIVING A MORE MINDFUL LIFE

These workshops explore ways to be more mindful in our day to day interactions with ourselves, others and the world. Learning to press the pause button, to enjoy the little things in life and to be present to savour them minute by minute can help us reduce stress and anxiety and improves wellbeing.

We will look at:

- Understanding what mindfulness is
- Practicing mindfulness techniques
- Reducing stress and anxiety

4 SESSIONS



YOGA

Yoga can benefit both our physical and mental wellbeing. These workshops provide a supportive structured environment to learn new yoga skills so that you can take them away and continue to practice independently. Through gentle movement, deep breathing and concentration, yoga will leave you feeling relaxed and in a positive frame of mind.

6 SESSIONS



BREATHING AND MOVEMENT FOR RESILIENCE AND RE-SETTING

Through gentle and simple movements, with supported breathing practices, you will be guided into a relationship with your breathing. Beginning from where you are, perhaps from a place of discomfort and disturbance, you will be slowly guided and supported to influence and steady your breathing. By slowly bringing you home into your body and breathing, and changing the stress response, there is a possibility to feel a steadying support for your thoughts. These practices will have takeaway tools that you can use to form habits of support in your daily life.

5 SESSIONS

Creative Workshops



STORY TELLING

Telling stories helps us make sense of our situation. We learn new skills, improve self-confidence and make social connections. **Sharing stories is a way to value ourselves and have a sense of purpose. It can also provide structure at a time when normal life has been disrupted.**

Compass is working with, Story Buddies, an innovative, digitally based story telling project, to provide people with the chance to create and share their own stories and help others do the same.

6 SESSIONS



ART GROUP

Fun and experimental workshops which are open to everyone - from complete beginners to practicing creatives.

This term will start with 7 sessions with our arts facilitator Lisa-Marie Gibbs, to experiment with new themes and concepts. Each week will investigate a new theme and give opportunities to explore drawing, painting, collage, arts appreciation and much more.

It will then continue as a drop-in group until the end of term.

Join us to find a “creative flow” for wellbeing.

7 SESSIONS AND THEN DROP-IN



SINGING FOR HEALTH AT THE MERL

These workshops are designed for those experiencing the longer terms impact of Covid 19 in many different aspects of their lives.

As a participant you can take it at your own pace. The health and wellbeing benefits of singing are huge, and singing is something that we can enjoy together. Award winning folk singer and trainee music therapist Jackie Oates will lead a series of gentle workshops in harmony singing using songs steeped in heritage and a shared humanity in the inspiring setting of The Museum of English Rural Life.

6 SESSIONS

Creative Workshops



WE ARE READING - THEATRE AND CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

Join Reading Rep for four creative workshops inspired by being proud of Reading. We will explore and create work through creative writing, drama and other artistic means. The format will be open and created by the group and their interests. The group is open to all, from those new to the arts to more experienced creatives.

This includes a trip to see the first production in Reading Rep's new season; DORIAN, which is a contemporary telling of Oscar Wilde's A 4 sessions and a theatre a trip

6 SESSIONS



CREATIVE WRITING

Creative writing can help us process emotions, gain perspective and get into a 'creative flow' which calms the mind and lightens our mood. Creativity in a supportive environment enables us to come together in challenging times and learn from each other.

We will look at:

- Expressing ourselves through creativity
- Sharing our histories and values through writing
- Connecting with others through literature
- Different creative writing forms

Social Sessions



WALK-TALK-WALK

A gentle half hour walk around Palmer Park and a chance to talk if you want to.

WEEKLY

COFFEE AND CHAT

These sessions provide informal opportunities to meet others in a social environment. Peer workers or Compass staff will be there to provide informal support

WEEKLY

Volunteer with us

Do you have lived experience of mental health challenges and feel that you're in a place of recovery at the moment? Are you a carer or supporter of someone with a mental health problem? Are you a mental health professional or do you have a professional background which could aid in others' wellbeing?

We welcome volunteers at Compass! Volunteering with us promotes self confidence and self-esteem, it helps others and it can help you build up your skills and knowledge too. From day-to-day tasks and administration work to co-producing new workshops or delivering on our existing workshops. We are looking for

volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Our Recovery College is driven by co-production and co-design, so we are looking to work alongside people who bring enthusiasm, skills and experiences to help us get it right.

Get in touch with us to chat more:
0118 9373945
compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk



What Our Participants Say



“Staff at Compass have an open heart. They are kind and generous. When I come to Compass I always feel that they are very friendly and kind. They listen to us and are there to help. I always feel very welcome.”

“This has helped me work on my stress and anxiety. I had been under the misapprehension that I had to prove my worth more so working from home, but now realise that I am more effective as a practitioner when I have taken time out to care for myself.”

Being Kinder to Ourselves, for health and social care workers

“It was nice to listen to others experiences and make sense of my own experiences.”

Why do we Hear Voices

“I really enjoyed Introduction to Anxiety, I thought it was a very interesting course. It helped me to understand my triggers and how my body reacts to Anxiety. I have started to use some of the strategies suggested on the course... These have helped me a lot.”

Introduction to Anxiety



FAQS

What do I need to do in order to join?

If you've never attended a Compass workshop before, you will need to enrol as a new participant. Please email or call us so we can take down some details and register you on the workshops you're interested in.

What will the format of the sessions be?

Our trainers provide resources and information and we hold discussions. No one is expected to mention their personal or professional life, their history or their physical / mental health challenges: however, if anyone does share anything, we ask you to treat what is discussed with complete confidence.

How do I access the online workshops?

You will need access to an e-mail address. You will need a PC/ laptop/tablet or phone and internet connection. All of our online workshops take place on Zoom or MS Teams. 24 hours before the workshop,

you will be emailed a link which you will need to click on to access the workshop on the day. The email will include simple instructions. You shouldn't have to download any apps beforehand to access the workshop, but it might be useful to do so. If you need any help with the technology, please don't hesitate to contact the team.

If internet connection is an issue we can provide you with a dial in link.

Get in touch to find out more about our drop-in information, enrolment and registration sessions.



Have your say

Co-production is at the heart of Compass Recovery College. Our workshops are developed with our participants, volunteers, carers and mental health professionals. This means that your feedback and input is essential.

We have regular feedback forums, where we focus on different topics so you can share thoughts and ideas with us.

Compass Website:

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