

Compass Recovery College

A mental health and wellbeing
organisation

January 2023

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- What's Going on at Compass
- Creating Healthy Habits
- Setting Goals
- Our Showcase
- Employability
- Getting creative

Last term was a busy one for Compass. Here are some of our highlights

We registered **170** Participants

- We Ran **5** workshops for Professionals
- **76%** of participants reported Feeling better connected to others
- **63%** of participants reported building a positive sense of self-identity
- **70%** of participants reported Learning new skills and techniques
- We ran **16** unique workshops
- We attended **16** Outreach events
- **70%** of participants reported gaining a better understanding of the challenges they face
- **82%** of participants reported learning new coping strategies

What's Coming up?

As we Welcome in a New Year and new term, we have continued to develop our prospectus to ensure we continue to offer new and exciting workshops. With the Compass values at the heart of what we do, we have focused on building new partnerships and reflecting on our participant feedback. This has allowed us to co-produce some fantastic new workshops such as Employability and Mental health, Conservation for Wellbeing, Yoga (including for energy, parent and baby yoga and seated yoga), Autism and Mental Health and Wellbeing for Carers. Check out our prospectus for the full range of workshops on our [website](https://www.compassrecoverycollege.org.uk).

For more information please take a look at our prospectus and schedule. You can register online, or if you want to talk to us in person we will be running Information and Registration sessions on the first Tuesday of each month at Broad Street Mall, 1 - 3PM

For many people, Christmas and the New Year can be a particularly difficult and stressful time. We know that this year the cost of living crisis can make things even more stressful, so people may be feeling particularly low. Many of the things we might be worrying about will be out of our control, which can make it difficult to remain hopeful for positive change. At times like these, it is important to try and work out the things that we can do something about and focus our energy on those. Simple tips like finding the good things that have happened in the day, however small, have been shown to help us stay optimistic



Its also a time when we tend to reflect on the year that has passed and think about our goals for the future, such as becoming healthier or better organised. Often this can lead us to setting ourselves unrealistic goals which only make us feel worse when we don't meet them, reinforcing negative thoughts and making it difficult for us to keep motivated. This means that we soon find our best laid plans falling by the wayside.



Building new habits can be difficult, but they can help us make positive change in our lives, as when a new way of doing something becomes a habit (such as going for a walk or a swim, or going to bed earlier), it becomes automatic and we don't have to think about it. When something is a habit, it is easier for us to keep doing it in the difficult times when our motivation is low.

Compass has a brand new workshop in January: 'Habits and Routines for Positive Change'. It will look at practical strategies for building new habits, but in the meantime, keep reading for our top tips.

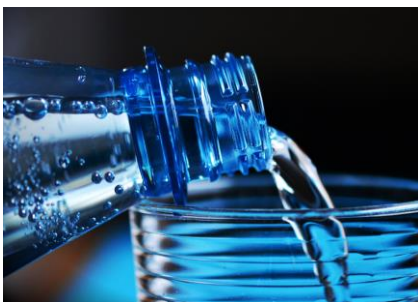
Here are some suggestions for keeping yourself well over the festive period:

- Be kind to yourself. Christmas is a stressful time, so when things are difficult try and talk to yourself as you would do to someone you loved. Try and focus on what you can control, rather than what you can't.
- Talk to someone. If you would rather talk someone who is not family or a friend, [Samaritans](#) are available 24 hours a day and [CALM](#) is available from 5pm to midnight every day. [Depression Xpression](#) hold monthly peer support meetings in Reading and online.



- Try writing down three good things about the day before you go to bed. This has been shown to help us build our ability to stay optimistic. [This worksheet can help you.](#)

- If you are going to set goals for the new year, start small and make sure you think you can achieve them. Make them measurable so you know you have done them and choose something you really care about. Break them into specific actions and schedule them in.



- To help it become a habit, find a small change you want to make and tie it to a habit you already have (for instance, if you wanted to drink more fluids, you could tie having a glass of water to preparing your breakfast). [Read more about habits here.](#)

Look out for our workshops for keeping well this winter, including topics such as: Money Matters, Low Mood and Depression, Wellbeing Welcome, and Wellbeing for Carers


Small steps, big changes

Occupational therapy looks to help everyone carry out tasks that are meaningful to them by providing ways to help overcome challenges. Focusing on activities that are meaningful to you can help you overcome challenges that may feel daunting at first.

Setting goals to help break down barriers into smaller, more manageable steps can help you achieve your desired outcome.

Small Steps Ladder:

Sometimes challenges can feel too big and it's difficult to know where to start- when this happens we need to break down the goal into **smaller achievable steps**.



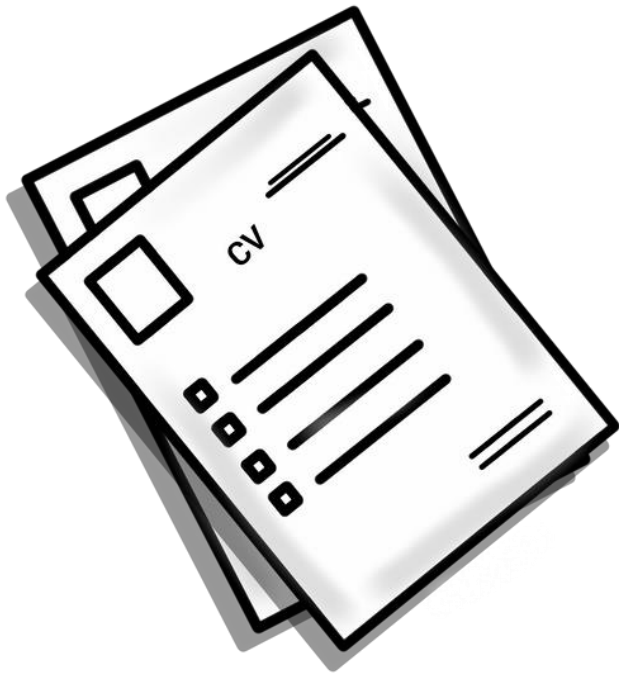
<p>My Goal: What do I want to achieve? Example: I want to tidy my kitchen after cooking</p>
<p>Break down the steps that would need to carry out in order to complete your goal: Example: Put away dishes in dishwasher, wipe down surfaces, wash items that cannot go in dishwasher, put food back in fridge.</p>
<p>Arrange your steps in order of difficulty: Put the hardest at the top (4) and the easiest at the bottom (1) - This creates your ladder! Example: Put away dishes in dishwasher, wipe down surfaces, Wash items that cannot go in dishwasher, put food back in fridge.</p> <p>4- Clean items that cannot fit in dishwasher 3- Put dishes in dishwasher 2 - Wipe down surfaces 1- Put items in fridge</p>

This goal type is great for everyday tasks, and can also double as a reminder or a way to build routine.

Our Compass 'Goals Flyer' demonstrates a range of goal types to help us on our road to recovery, as they are a great way to help organise your tasks as well as maintain your motivation and resilience when working towards your larger or more difficult goals. Check out [our website](#) for the full flyer, which includes strategies for SMART goals and MICRO goals too.

Entering or re-entering the workforce after a period of mental ill health or wellbeing challenges can be hard. We have therefore partnered with New Directions College to start developing a series of workshops which addresses employability and mental health.

These workshops will discuss the benefits of employment skills, support the building of goals and healthy habits, and share strategies for improving personal wellbeing.



Through conversations and fun interactions, participants will explore what their transferable skills are, what they want to get out of employment and which tools may best help them express themselves.

We will work on CVs and personal statements as well as mental health coping strategies and skills to keep well when looking for and in work.

You can register for these workshops via our [website](#) and read more in our prospectus

Partnerships

Working with our partners is central to our mission here at Compass, enabling us to expand our work and to reach right across Reading to support people from many different backgrounds who may not otherwise hear about us.

Recently, our collaborations have been a great success, allowing us to target key areas, such as disadvantaged groups and areas of high deprivation. We have developed workshops specifically targeting the needs of those communities that we are supporting.

We are always looking for new partners, if that could be you, send us an [email](#)

A Play Made By You



Promotional image from Rank and File theatre for A Play Made By You.

Compass Recovery College were delighted to work with Director Jude Haste and her team at Rank & File Theatre to write, devise and perform a Play written in partnership with refugees, asylum seekers, and those with lived experience of disablement and mental health challenges.

"Where Do We Go From Here" was written in partnership with members of Compass Recovery College, Reading Refugee Support Group and Reading City of Sanctuary and performed on Wednesday 9th November in front of a full-house at the South Street Arts Centre in Reading.

Compass participants joined workshops from August to November 2022 to devise, write and rehearse a new piece of theatre with people from different backgrounds and communities. Under the guidance of Jude Haste's team, including BBC Radio 3's Fiona Talkington, the group brought together creative pieces of work of the very highest quality and shared their experiences of mental health challenges, the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, loss of identity, loss of freedom, loss of physical capabilities, homelessness, bereavement, climate change, and the universal feeling of grief and loss.



Mikhail Franklin, Writer and Actor, during A Play Made By You.

The performance brought together the cast as they congregated at a train station under the guise of discussing the critical topics and life-stories of the performers at a train station. The Performance culminated in a Q&A led by Fiona Talkington of the cast, representatives of GWR and the audience themselves.

As the lights dimmed, and the curtain rose, the crowd applauded, partook in the Q&A, and were then heard discussing the important issues raised in the performance in the South Street Arts Centre bar and public area.

"Fifteen travellers, one platform, many ideas for discussion".

"Colour is the language of the poets. It is astonishingly lovely. To speak it is a privilege."
Keith Crown

Artist Lisa-Marie Gibbs has led Compass volunteers and participants on a journey of colour this term.

It started with a trip to the Oxford Museums of the Ashmolean and the Pitts-Rivers Museum for Compass' Volunteers. They then returned to Jelly Studios, in the Broad Street Mall, to create pieces of work inspired by colour.



The Colour Vision Artists Group were then invited over seven workshops to explore 'Colour Visions' through film, sculpture, photography, sound, visual arts and visits to artist studios and galleries. Under Lisa-Marie's tutelage, participants were guided to create new pieces of artwork focusing on exploring the different themes of colour.

'Colour Visions' is a new two-year Arts project funded by the Arts Council to help nurture individual perspectives through a collective vision. Colour Visions is designed to inspire and help us to connect with our mental health and emotional wellbeing through the inspiration of art therapy and creative wellness.



The aim of the project is to inspire us all in our own unique journeys of recovery.

Introducing: Sport In Mind Community Activator Program

Sport In Mind welcome a brand new team dedicated to working with those experiencing serious mental health illnesses. Funded by the NHS this new program aims to engage individuals with serious mental health illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar and psychosis.

The program aims to support individuals to get active, by providing 1-1 and small group sessions. Additionally the team will encourage people and support them to attend physical health checks and provide signposting to additional services.

Find out more by [clicking here](#)



Reading

"We are Sport in Mind – the charity that uses sport and physical activity to improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems". Our sessions take place every week, all year around. To find out more about sessions near you, check out our Activity Map on sportinmind.org or contact Claire on 0118 947 9762!

Reading Sessions

Day	Time	Activity	Instructor	Venue
Mon	11-12PM	Walk	Dave	Christchurch Meadows, Caversham, Reading RG4 8BY, meet in the middle of Christchurch Foot Bridge
Mon	2-3PM	Yoga	Julie	Meadway Sports Centre, Conwy Cl, Reading RG30 4BZ
Mon	6.30-7.15PM	Jog & Walk	Calum	Prospect Park, Liebenrood Road, RG30 2ND, meet nr changing rooms at car park
Tues	11.30-12.30PM	Dance	Josie	The Royal Suite, South Reading Leisure Centre, Northumberland Ave, RG2 8DH
Tues	2-3PM	Football	Ashley	Football Courts, Prospect Park, Liebenrood Road, RG30 2ND
Weds	12-1PM	Badminton & Table Tennis	Gill	Sports Hall, Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8EQ
Weds	1-2PM	Yoga	Ann	Room 2, Student Opportunities (ask RUSU reception) Reading University Campus, Pepper Ln, RG6 6EH
Weds	3.30-4.30PM	Tai Chi	Steve	Museum of English Rural Life, 6 Redlands Road, RG1 5EX
Thurs	12-1PM	Tennis	Gill	Indoors in the Tennis Dome, Reading University, Shinfield Rd, RG2 7BW
Thurs	6.30-7.15PM	Jog & Walk	Laura	Meet near statue, Palmer Park, RG6 1LF

Woodley Sessions

Day	Time	Activity	Instructor	Venue
Mon	12-1PM	Badminton & Table Tennis	Gill	Woodford Park Leisure Centre, Haddon Drive, Woodley, RG5 4LY
Tues	11-1PM	Allotment	Carolyn / Kev	Woodley Allotments, Reading Road, RG5 3AA (meet by the gates)

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ReadiFood Women's Work Experience

ReadiFood supplies emergency food parcels for those in need across reading. The women's work experience program offers an initial 2-3 hour session weekly for 4 weeks, with the option to extend. Tasks include sorting food and packing parcels, with the possibility of further duties throughout the program

ReadiFood provides a supportive working environment with opportunities to gain excellent work experience such as independent working and team work which looks great on a CV additionally employer references can be offered.

Find out more about volunteering [here](#)

food parcels for those in need



ReadiFood
Reading's Food Bank

Women's Work Experience
(Sponsored by SAGE Foundation)

ReadiFood is offering supported work experience sessions to women as part of a project funded by Sage foundation.

Ladies on the programme will be offered sessions in a working environment to build self-confidence in preparation for future work applications and interviews.

ReadiFood Food Bank, run by FAITH Christian Group, supplies emergency food parcels to people in acute need.

The **SAGE** programme is run by **Sarah Pedlow**
She can be contacted on 07444682146
or email sage@readifood.org.uk



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