Anxiety: a whole-body experience
“Start thinking wellness, not illness”
Kate Allatt
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When we decided to focus this issue on anxiety, even as someone with experience of anxiety, I underestimated what a huge topic this is and how broad the range of symptoms and diagnoses is. To simply say someone experiences anxiety doesn’t cut it, at all.

Indeed, tell someone with no experience of mental health challenges that you are experiencing anxiety and they are likely to assume you are experiencing nervousness or extreme worrying, when in fact it can be physically debilitating.

I know through personal experience and the stories of others, as well as the professionals helping to put this issue together, that anxiety is actually a very physical health challenge, in that so much of the experience is physical. As a result, you can experience a frightening cycle of the mental affecting the physical and the physical affecting the mental, and so on. We take a closer look at this in the feature on page 10.

This summer issue as a whole takes a look at the connection between mind and body, including the benefits of physical activity on our mental wellbeing (see page 26). Being active doesn’t have to mean doing sport or going to the gym. There are lots of ways to be active. One of the great things about physical activity is that there are endless possibilities and there will be an activity to suit almost everyone!

A wealth of research has shown the connection between mental and physical health, and now approaches are being developed to support both. For example, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is a talking therapy that can help you manage your challenges by changing the way you think and behave. It’s most commonly used to treat anxiety and low mood but can be useful for physical health challenges.

We’ll be looking further into support and therapies in a later issue – we simply didn’t have room for it all this time! In the meantime, take a look at a practice many people find helpful for general wellbeing, Mindfulness. Perhaps not the ‘fluffy’ relaxation method some have thought – read all about its benefits on page 22.

Enjoy!

Kelly Mansfield, Editor
Every month we dedicate pages of Speak Your Mind to our readers’ creative work. We’re always looking for something new and different demonstrating how people express themselves through creativity, so if you have something that fits the bill then get in touch!

We’re interested in poetry, creative writing, artwork, photography… Or perhaps you have something totally different – we’re open to ideas!

Please get in touch at symmagazine@cpft.nhs.uk
First-ever chatbot to help people discuss mental health launched

Ogilvy UK and the mental health anti-stigma campaign, Time to Change have debuted a brand-new platform to help people across the country support loved ones who are struggling with their mental health. The bot, called Charlie3000 (Charlie for short), will share simple tips and friendly reassurance to show that being there for someone isn’t as difficult as it seems.

The campaign’s first-ever chatbot serves as a reliable friend, helpful and positive, with the ability to provide assistance and advice. As well as sharing ideas from within the app, Charlie can also direct users to other mental health resources and organisations. Charlie will be unveiled across social channels: Facebook and Instagram, which will direct users to the Facebook platform.

Jo Loughran, Director of Time to Change, said: “Charlie is the next step in helping people feel equipped and comfortable to be there for a friend, and help direct them to the resources so no one feels like they have to face these challenges alone.”

Shish Patel, ECD, Ogilvy UK said: “How we interact and seek support has changed dramatically over the last few years, and how we help one another is evolving as well. The digital world can be an overwhelming place, and that’s why it’s so important to harness the positive tools we can create so people can be there for one another no matter where they are.”


Mental Health Awareness Training to be rolled out to secondary schools

Over 1,800 secondary schools and colleges will receive free Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) delivered by mental health charity, the Anna Freud Centre, as part of a government-funded drive to promote whole-school approaches to mental health.

The training will take place across England in over 130 locations between September 2019 and February 2020. It covers:

- What the evidence tells us about mental health challenges in schools
- Spotting the early signs of mental health challenges
- Positive approaches to promoting mental health and wellbeing in the whole school community.

The training programme is available for two members of staff from each school.

Jaime Smith, Programme Director for the Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools Programme at the Anna Freud Centre, said: “This training gives schools and colleges a vital evidence-based grounding in mental health. Addressing children's mental and physical health is one of the most important things we can do for children and their families.

“Knowing how to support is vital not just for the young person's but also for the teacher's wellbeing.”

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said: “Children and young people's mental health is a top priority for this government... This adds to a range of important work already taking place in schools to support pupils’ mental health.”
Primary care services need more support to prevent suicides

Primary care services can help people at risk of taking their own lives before they reach crisis point if they are given the right support, according to research published by Centre for Mental Health and Samaritans.

**Strengthening the frontline: Investing in primary care for effective suicide prevention** explores the role of GP services in helping people who are at risk of taking their own lives. About 6,000 people die by suicide each year in the UK. Only a third are in contact with mental health services in the year before their death, but many visit their GP in the months before their death.

The report identifies five areas for improvement to help GPs to offer life-saving support:
1. The provision of effective, ongoing training for GPs
2. Investment in the capacity of primary care services to enable longer appointments and continuity of care for patients needing ongoing support
3. Emotional support for GPs themselves
4. More effective care pathways for people who feel suicidal to clinical and social support
5. Opportunities to refer patients who need more specialist support.

Centre for Mental Health Chief Executive Sarah Hughes said: “General practice is the heart of the NHS and GPs are often in contact with people with suicidal feelings. Knowing how to help and having the right structures in place to do so can be critical in saving a life. This may be as simple as ensuring someone sees the same GP at each visit and following up when they don’t come to an appointment.”

Jacqui Morrissey, Assistant Director of Research & Influencing, Samaritans commented: “As suicide is very complex and specific, our GPs need specialist training... Investment from a national and local level to equip our frontline physicians with the right knowledge and skills to support people at risk of suicide could make a life changing difference.”

Download the report at [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/strengthening-frontline](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/strengthening-frontline)

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New text messaging helpline for people in crisis

Shout, a new text messaging helpline that supports people in crisis, has been launched. Shout operates 24/7 and connects people in need to trained volunteers who provide help at a time when it is most needed. As texting is private and silent, it opens up a whole new way to find help. It provides instant support – you can have a conversation at any time. Texting is a trusted and familiar form of communication.

Shout is powered by a team of volunteers who are trained to create a safe space for people experiencing mental health challenges.

Victoria Hornby, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Innovations, said: “We know that tools are needed to have conversations about mental health and to support people in times of crisis. At Shout, we are using technology to provide a safe space for anyone who needs it to have conversations wherever they are and whenever.”

Working with charity partners over the past year, Shout has already supported more than 60,000 conversations in its first year.

For information about Shout, and volunteering opportunities please visit [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)
Taking place this summer...

**Illuminate Confidence for Change**
Confidence for Change is a unique course which focuses on building self-confidence and strengthening self-belief at a fundamental level, enabling people to make productive changes in their lives as they define them. This includes getting closer to work, volunteering, achieving health goals, managing anxiety and mental health. The course takes place over four days, one day a week, in a group setting. To find out when courses are running, go to https://illuminatecharity.org.uk/confidenceforchange_1.php. You can also email for further details at info@illuminatecharity.org.uk.

**Michaelhouse Singers**
This friendly choir is open to anybody with mental health challenges – whatever their age – and their carers and friends. It meets in the Michaelhouse Centre every Friday and is supported through voluntary contribution from those attending. The Michaelhouse Singers give occasional public performances. Arts and Minds invites people to come and sing at Michaelhouse, Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 1SU from 2.30-3.30pm on Fridays. www.artsandminds.org.uk/projects/michaelhouse-singers

**Mind Wellbeing Workshops**
Half-day, skills-based workshops which aim to help people cope with the ups and downs of life. These workshops are all free and take place in Mind’s Cambridge, Peterborough and St Neots offices. Workshops are funded to support people with their mental health. Courses on Anxiety Management, Anger Management for Men, Anger Management for Women and Mindfulness are available. www.cpslmind.org.uk/what-we-do/wellbeing-service/wellbeinggroups-workshops/

**Make, Do and Mend Workshops**
Make, Do and Mend hold a variety of workshops for people with mental health challenges, which are designed to nurture self-esteem, personality and character using a strengths-based approach. Workshops provide opportunities to master new skills in a supportive, relaxed environment. If you have experience of mental health challenges, live in Cambridgeshire and would like to attend one of the workshops you can sign up and become a member via the members page at www.makedoandmendinfo.co.uk/members or call 07736 916 431. Or simply go along and see what they do!

**The Green Backyard Community project**
A vibrant community project in the heart of Peterborough, the team have transformed a once-derelict allotment site into a beautiful and productive community garden that is open to everyone. There are plenty of ways for anyone to get involved on site; gardening, animal care, building work and many more jobs need doing every day. Just drop in or visit www.thegreenbackyard.com. They’re open 11am-4pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

**Moodswings groups and workshops**
A range of popular workshops designed to help people cope with a variety of difficulties. Delivered in a friendly, informal atmosphere by experienced trainers, these include: Anxiety Management; Self-esteem and Assertiveness; Sleep; Anger Management; Management of Psychosis (Funny Feelings); and Mood Management. Although priority is given to people on Moodswings’ Recovery and Support projects, other people can apply. www.moodswings.org.uk/what-can-we-do/workshops

**Meetup clubs and groups**
Meetup is a large network of self-organised clubs and community groups, making it easy for anyone to organise their own local group, or find one of the thousands already meeting face-to-face, to help its members better pursue hobbies, advance causes, network with peers, get health support, or just arrange a friendly playgroup for their kids. Find out what’s happening around the world and start meeting up with the ones near you at www.meetup.com

**CP Learning Trust workshops**
CP Learning Trust delivers a range of fun, informative and creative workshops – from rug making to barge painting to gardening and much more – across Peterborough, Fenland, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire and Kings Lynn. www.cplearningtrust.org/whats-on

Telephone: 01354 696479
Action for Happiness – Exploring What Matters course
The Exploring What Matters course gives you the chance to meet friendly, like-minded people and find simple ways to make yourself and others happier. This eight-week course is based in science and helps you:

- Meet with like-minded people to explore what really matters in life and find new ways of looking at things.
- Learn from the experts through videos, mindfulness exercises and a handbook full of resources to help you break big ideas into manageable chunks.
- Take small actions each week by taking time to reflect on how to create happiness for yourself and those around you.

People find the course really enjoyable and often refer to what they learn as life changing.
To find a course near you visit: www.actionforhappiness.org

Arts on Prescription Workshops
A series of weekly art workshops for people experiencing depression, anxiety and/or other mental health challenges in Cambridge, St. Ives and Peterborough. Led by a professional artist and a qualified counsellor, they offer the chance to experience working with a wide range of materials and techniques, including drawing, printmaking and sculpture. Sessions last for two hours and are open to all abilities.
www.artsandminds.org.uk/projects/artsonprescription
Telephone 01223 353 053

VoiceAbility Dreamers Bar
Dreamers is a lively drop-in information bar in Huntingdon providing a safe area where local disabled people can access information about what is happening in their local community, and how they can get the support they need.
Contact Lydia Eldridge via email on lydia.eldridge@voiceability.org or telephone 07920 481985

Cafe Discussion Group
A small, friendly discussion group for those in recovery. A chance to air what's on your mind amongst kindred spirits. Supported by Fulbourn Chaplaincy, the group runs on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at The Locker (Old Clowns Site), 54 Kings Street, Cambridge.
For more information call Mark Woods 07432 600 102 or email coast@live.co.uk

Lifecraft creative groups
A range of groups which offer the opportunity to explore new methods of expression in a supportive environment:

- Craft for Smiles Workshop – Tuesdays, 12pm-2pm
- Singing Group – Thursdays, 12pm-1.30pm
- Art Course – Fridays, 2.15pm-4.15pm
www.lifecraft.org.uk/our-services/creative-groups

Rethink Mental Illness Groups
Rethink groups take many forms depending on the needs of the group members. Groups can be for carers only, for people who have lived experience of mental health challenges, or both. They also have some siblings groups. Activities vary and can include a focus on self-help, information, peer support, campaigning and fundraising. Group meetings vary; some weekly, some monthly and others support each other by telephone and internet.
www.rethink.org/services-groups/service-types/support-groups or telephone 0121 522 7007

Richmond Fellowship community-based support
Support provided on a group or individual basis to help people access social networks and peer support and engage in everyday mainstream opportunities. Groups are incredibly diverse, from art studios and gardening therapy to cafes and musical support groups. All services are tailored to meet local needs and are designed to encourage each individual’s sense of security, purpose and fulfilment.
Visit www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/our-range-of-support/community-based

Andys Man Club
A peer-to-peer support group for men, taking place in Peterborough. Men are welcome to come along for a “brew and a chat”. Based on the fact that suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45, the group aims to let men know that it’s ok to talk.
To find your nearest group visit the website: www.andysmanclub.co.uk

If you’d like to share your experiences of any of the courses/groups featured, or indeed tell us about something we haven’t covered, please email us at symmagazine@cpft.nhs.uk
Anxiety: a whole-body experience

When we experience anxiety, our body goes through some very physical as well psychological challenges. It can be a vicious cycle between the mental and the physical, one impacting on the other. So, how do we get on top of it? Hannah Grundy, Office and Volunteer Coordinator at Anxiety UK, takes a look.

When we experience anxiety, our body goes through some very physical as well psychological challenges. It can be a vicious cycle between the mental and the physical, one impacting on the other. So, how do we get on top of it? Hannah Grundy, Office and Volunteer Coordinator at Anxiety UK, takes a look.

When people think of anxiety it is often the psychological experiences that tend to first come to mind, but, more than other mental health challenges, there are also some very real physical experiences linked to anxiety, which bring with them additional challenges and difficulty to function.

When we experience anxiety, our body goes through a chain of events that is designed to help us when we are in situations of real danger: this is known as the ‘flight or fight’ response. As a result of this response, we can have a range of physical experiences that we may not initially realise are linked to our anxiety.

These can include:

- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of ‘butterflies’ in the stomach
- Increase in heart rate
- Palpitations
- Hot flushes
- Increased perspiration/sweaty palms
- Feelings of nausea
- Wanting to go to the toilet more often
- Dizziness
- Shaking
- Headaches
- Dry mouth
- Blushing

Whether you experience one, two or a wide range of the above when you are anxious, these challenges are easier to manage if you are able to acknowledge that these are linked to your anxiety. These types of experiences are very common and while they can certainly be unpleasant, they are completely normal during periods of anxiety and stress. Also, don’t forget that everyone experiences anxiety in different ways and so you may have had experiences that we haven’t highlighted.

Recognising that your physical experiences are a result of feelings of anxiety can be a really valuable step in helping you begin to be able to manage them. If we’re unable to attribute physical experiences to anything, this can actually lead to increasing levels of anxiety as we can become concerned that these are a sign of a serious medical condition, rather than linked to our mental wellbeing. Some people go to A&E thinking they are experiencing a heart attack, but in reality it is a panic attack. This shows how scary the physical effects of anxiety can be! So, next time you are experiencing anxiety or panic and find yourself with any of the above physical experiences, reassure yourself that these are completely normal and experienced by many others.

Many people have physical experiences of anxiety even when they are not in a frightening situation. This can often be the case when people feel overwhelmed by their anxiety, and this is when they begin to see the physical side of anxiety taking over their day-to-day life. Once this begins to happen, individuals who experience anxiety may begin to avoid the spaces or events where their anxiety, both physical and psychological, usually occurs. These avoidance behaviours can often increase anxiety and therefore create a continuous cycle where the anxiety can become increasingly overwhelming. If these physical and psychological experiences of anxiety are becoming overwhelming it is important to speak to a friend or family member and look into further support that may be available.

Often, the most intense physical reaction to anxiety is a panic attack. This can be a scary experience for many people and can include a racing heart, hyperventilation and sweating, along with feelings of intense fear. Panic attacks can usually last between five and 20 minutes and are usually related to a ‘panic spiral’. Focusing on the physical feelings of a racing heart and shortness of breath can often intensify the panic, creating the spiral.

There are many ways to manage panic attacks. One useful method is learning some simple breathing techniques, such as:

- Breathe in through nose for four seconds
- Hold for two seconds
- Breathe out through mouth for six seconds
- Repeat 10 times
- Place hand on chest to feel chest rise and fall with each breath
- Say in your mind “in two, three, four, hold one, two, out two, three, four, five, six” repeat.

“Recognising that your physical experiences are a result of feelings of anxiety, can be a really valuable step in helping you begin to be able to manage them.”
Following these breathing techniques can reduce feelings of anxiety and subsequently calm you down.

Other techniques to manage panic attacks can include mindfulness and meditation – see page 24 for further information on these techniques.

When it's time to get help
We have discussed how anxiety, the body’s response to stress, is how your body alerts you to threats and helps you get ready to deal with them. However, your body isn’t meant to always be on alert. Being in constant fight-or-flight mode, which can happen with chronic anxiety, can have negative and serious effects on your body, says Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP.

“Tensed muscles may prepare you to get away from danger quickly, but muscles that are constantly tense can result in pain, tension headaches, and migraines. “The hormones adrenalin and cortisol are responsible for increased heartbeat and breathing, which can help when facing a threat. But these hormones also affect digestion and blood sugar. If you're often stressed or anxious, frequently releasing these hormones can have long-term health effects. Your digestion may also change in response.”

“Anxiety is how your body alerts you to threats and helps you get ready to deal with them. However, your body isn’t meant to always be on alert.”

“If you are having worrying experiences and believe this may be related to anxiety, please ensure to consult with your GP to gain advice and support on how to manage your anxiety.”

Support from Anxiety UK
With an Anxiety UK membership you will receive a year’s subscription to a popular guided meditation and mindfulness app: Headspace. This can help you to manage and control panic attacks and other physical challenges linked to anxiety.

Anxiety UK can also offer support with all anxiety challenges. This can include anxiety, stress, anxiety-based depression, and any phobia you may be experiencing. There is a national therapy service providing Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counselling and clinical hypnotherapy. Members of Anxiety UK can access this service at a reduced cost. If you would like to find out more information about the accredited service, call the Helpline on 03444 775 774.

Furthermore, there is a range of self-help resources on the website that can help with reducing feelings of anxiety.

Resources can be found at www.anxietyuk.org.uk
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"If you're often stressed or anxious, frequently releasing these hormones can have long-term health effects. Your digestion may also change in response."

If you are having worrying experiences and believe this may be related to anxiety, please ensure to consult with your GP to gain advice and support on how to overcome your anxiety.

Everyone's experience of anxiety is different, but for me the physical experiences far outweigh any butterflies in the tummy or excessive worrying.

In fact, it's the thought that I might have those physical experiences when I am away from home that actually makes me anxious about going out - way more than worrying about anything else that might happen while I'm out. So essentially, I get anxious that I might get anxious!

What's difficult to manage with the physical side of anxiety is, I feel, that it can come out of nowhere. I can be somewhere, even at home, and as far as I am aware, I am not feeling anxious. But then, boom! Suddenly I feel very dizzy or hot or feel like I am going to pass out. This then leads to me noticeably panicking in my mind - what's going to happen next, am I going to collapse or cause a scene - and the physical challenges get worse. So, as far as I'm aware, the physical challenges come before the mental - although I'm sure that can't be the case. It means it's very difficult to explain to others what's going on for you.

There are also perhaps less common physical challenges, for example I experience really wobbly legs that make me feel really unsafe when walking and prevent me from going out alone; I worry that I will fall if I have no one to hold on to. Experiences like this can be quite life-restricting.

The importance is in realising that these physical experiences are linked to anxiety, as opposed to a physical problem, and can be challenged - it's just about finding the right solution to help you manage them.

Kelly

What comes first – the mental or the physical?
My philosophy on me

I held the belief that I won’t cope.

It is understandable that I hold this belief... I had a breakdown and not in a confused state. People leave me and I have been through life-changing events. I thought everything had been taken away from me. Because I was told I was worthless and fear being alone. I ended an abusive relationship.

However, the belief is unreasonable because... there is no evidence I am not coping. I am always moving forward in my recovery. I am not ill now. I am strong and have built up resilience. I can manage my anxiety better. I have changed and respect myself more. I have achieved a lot personally. I have genuine people around me who care.

It is unhelpful because... it increases my frustrations and brings up a sense of loss and sadness. It knocks my self-esteem. It knocks my confidence and my self-belief. It makes me feel incapable. It makes me feel that I don’t like myself and do not deserve moments of pleasure or a future.

A more helpful belief is... I survived and ended an abusive relationship. That I can pick myself up when times are hard and challenging. I am different. My sense of panic has reduced. When I slow down, I can see the facts and the truth. Change is not always a negative experience but not how you imagined it to turn out.

Since I have held this belief for a long time, it will take time and effort to change. What I need to do is... to be wanted by someone who cares about me and my feelings. To have a length of stability. Take things as they come; do not pre-empt feeling or emotions. Look after myself. Have fun with people who care about me. Look after myself. Slow down when feeling run down. Use friends and family to help comfort me and help me with my confidence in believing in my abilities. Accepting as much as I want to feel differently that maybe I have to let go or accept feelings may not change because pain I have endured.
Is your anxiety preventing you leaving the house?

Agoraphobia is a common mental health challenge with often debilitating effects, causing people to be trapped at home. Megan Smith, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner with Psychological Wellbeing Service (IAPT), discusses these challenges and the treatment available.

Everyone experiences certain levels of anxiety at some point in their life, for example before your driving test or a job interview, however it becomes a problem when it starts to take over your day-to-day life and leaves you feeling out of control.

One example of anxiety taking control is when it takes the form of agoraphobia, which is intense fear or anxiety about being out in public, open spaces or being in crowds. This is commonly associated with panic disorder due to wanting to avoid situations that might induce a panic attack. Panic attacks are caused by an adrenaline release creating intense physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, dizziness and nausea and importantly a catastrophic misinterpretation of those thoughts such as ‘I’m going to have a heart attack’ or ‘I’m losing control’.

Many people assume agoraphobia is simply a fear of open spaces, but it’s actually a more complex condition. Someone with agoraphobia may be scared of:

- travelling on public transport
- visiting a shopping centre
- leaving home

The severity of agoraphobia can vary significantly between individuals. The symptoms can be broadly classified into three types:

- physical
- cognitive
- behavioural

Many people with agoraphobia rarely experience physical symptoms because they deliberately avoid situations that make them anxious. The physical symptoms can be similar to those of a panic attack.

The cognitive symptoms of agoraphobia are feelings or thoughts that can be, but aren't always, related to the physical symptoms. Cognitive symptoms may include fear that:

- a panic attack will make you look stupid in front of other people
- a panic attack will be life threatening
- you would be unable to escape from a place or situation if you were to have a panic attack
- you’re losing your sanity
- you may lose control in public
- people may stare at you

Symptoms of agoraphobia relating to behaviour include:

- avoiding situations that could lead to panic attacks, such as crowded places, public transport and queues
- being housebound – not being able to leave the house for long periods of time
- needing to be with someone you trust when going anywhere
- avoiding being far away from home

Some people are able to force themselves to confront uncomfortable situations, but they feel considerable fear and anxiety while doing so.

So, how can you manage agoraphobia?

If you explain your symptoms to your GP he/she may be able to confirm/diagnose your agoraphobia. However, there are various effective therapies/management methods available.

CPFT Psychological Wellbeing Service is part of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services, which aims to make psychological therapies more accessible to adults experiencing common mental health problems such as anxiety, panic disorder and agoraphobia.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) highlights the interaction between our physical symptoms, thoughts and behaviour and teaches practical coping skills to manage the symptoms. Without support, a vicious cycle between your physical symptoms, thoughts and behaviour (see figure one, on page 15) can lead to significant distress.

In figure one, Sam is using avoidance to manage his anxiety. Long-term this causes further anxiety by reinforcing ‘my anxiety decreased because I escaped the situation’ and therefore undermining your ability to cope. Anxiety will increase every time you go back to the feared event and lead to further avoidance and withdrawal from society.

Treatments

Exposure and habituation therapy is a treatment for panic disorder and agoraphobia involving gradual confrontation to the feared event and learning to cope with the anxiety produced. It is a highly effective treatment for behavioural avoidance through a process
known as habituation; the natural reduction in anxiety that occurs when remaining in the feared situation over a period of time. This is because your body can physically only produce so much adrenaline and when the adrenaline produced matches the level needed for the feared event, then it will be used up with physical exertion (dealing with the dangerous event) or more likely in today’s society, not be needed and be metabolised back into your body (see figure two). In exposure, habituation means that future exposure to the feared event means less anxiety than the previous time therefore learning that

“Agoraphobia is intense fear or anxiety about being out in public, open spaces or being in crowds. This is commonly associated with panic disorder due to wanting to avoid situations that might induce a panic attack.”

Meet Sam who recently experienced an anxiety problem called panic disorder with agoraphobia

He experienced rapid rises in his anxiety levels, which built to a peak quickly. This could be triggered by his physical symptoms, places or even the thought of going out of his flat. He used avoidance to cope with how he was feeling and found it increasingly difficult to go out without having someone with him. This gave him some relief in the short term, but in the longer term maintained his anxiety. His panic attacks also started to happen at home out of the blue. He used an evidence based CBT approach called exposure and habituation to successfully address his difficulties.
the catastrophic thought did not happen and you can manage your anxiety. This process is done gradually working with a therapist over a course of treatment.

A patient described their experience: “Excellent tools to challenge my fears... better equipped to deal with panic attacks”.

**Exposure steps**

- **Step 1:** Create a hierarchy of avoidance, grading activities from least to most difficult.
- **Step 2:** Put the first stage of your hierarchy into practice (at least 50-60% anxiety). Go to the activity four to five times that week until you no longer experience over 40% anxiety. You need to go into the feared situation and wait until your anxiety drops by at least 50% from where it is at the start of the exercise (habituation can take up to two hours when you first try this out). Avoid any distraction during exposure to fully experience your anxiety.
- **Step 3:** Once you have completed the first step on your hierarchy, move to the next step that produces slightly more anxiety. Repeat step two.
- **Step 4:** Remember, this is a difficult treatment and any progress you have made is a great start. It takes time and commitment and you need to be able to set time aside in your routine to complete this treatment. If you have any difficulties and you would like some support, make are referral to our service. A patient who contacted our service for support reported after treatment that they feel they can “move on in life without feeling fear about what will happen”.

Treatment is available across Cambridge, Peterborough, Huntingdon and Fenland. Treatment can be offered over a variety of methods such as face-to-face, telephone, online and group work. You can self-refer through our website at http://www.cpft.nhs.uk or through GP referral. If you require any further information please call our service on 0300 300 0055.

“Long-term (avoidance) causes further anxiety by reinforcing ‘my anxiety decreased because I escaped the situation’ and therefore undermining your ability to cope.”
Beautiful Minds

Beautiful Minds is an initiative to unite beauty professionals across the country to raise awareness and donations for mental health charities, including Mind and Papyrus. Christopher Kitchen, Founder of Beautiful Minds explains how this initiative has really taken off.

Many of you reading this will know how strong the relationship is between a client and their beauty therapist. Those couple of hours each month spent having your nails or lashes done often lead to the most open and frank conversations of all. Factor in that these professionals have several of these exchanges each day and their importance as it relates to your overall wellbeing is really highlighted.

The cliché is that it’s good to talk but it really is! Only once we actually let it resonate that mental health is something that is within us all on some scale, then the stigma disappears and we can get on with helping each other. Much like we would pass water to someone we saw suffering from dehydration, being supportive of each other should be the natural reaction.

The reason I started Beautiful Minds was to give back not only to charities that have helped me personally, but also to an industry that has really helped cement my self-belief after years of depression and self-doubt.

Since working within the beauty industry, I have been introduced to some truly inspiring strangers that I now hold dearer than most people I’ve know my whole life. People that often turned to the industry as their escape and have since been on amazing journeys of both personal and professional fulfilment, it’s really infectious!

I originally planned for Beautiful Minds to consist of two weeks of fundraising events culminating on September 15th, but since the announcement at the end of January we have exceeded expectations and collected close to £7,000 in donations as I write this in May!

The response has been incredible with salons hosting fundraisers. Some are donating a percentage of their takings to the charities between now and September, when we will close the year’s fundraising efforts at The Royal Hotel, Clacton-on-Sea. There we will be hosting a night of live entertainment with a charity auction and so much more, in the hope we can add to the already amazing total of donations.

The generosity and support shown so far has been overwhelming – there’s even a full range of nail products made especially to support the Beautiful Minds initiative, including gel polishes, crystals, glitters and more, all in a beautiful shade purple. This has prompted nail techs across the UK to create some incredible art to help raise awareness across social media. Shown below is a selection of some of the beautiful, at times hard-hitting designs we have received. If you’d like to see more, please follow @beautifulmindscharity on Instagram.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this and also to Speak your Mind for allowing me to speak and share Beautiful Minds with you. Please pass it on to your hairstylist, nail technician or anybody that would like to get involved and help us in our mission to support these incredibly important charities.

You can find information regarding fundraising events, including our finale on September 15th via the Beautiful Minds Facebook and Instagram accounts or feel free to contact me directly @chriskbib.
Where does the idea for Barking Tales come from?
I’m a comedian and in 2014 I took my debut solo hour (called Barking at Aeroplanes) to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It was about all my struggles within mental health and the stigma that surrounds it. I was so touched by the reaction, how many people said it was such an important show and how refreshing it was to hear someone talk so openly about mental health, that I wasn’t ready to stop when the festival finished.

Around the same time there was an article about how comedians tend to be most prone to mental health challenges and, as I’d found it so cathartic, I figured there are so many acts that could too so decided to start a night like a regular comedy night but it’d be more of a safe space where the acts mainly do material relating to mental health. I will host it and it shall be called Barking Tales.

What is your role?
I’m on the door, host it, write new material each month as it’s not really the sort of night where the host/MC chats to the audience a lot. I make sure everyone’s alright, I also promote and book it.

Why do you think mixing comedy with mental health works?
It works because so many people are a little bit broken in some way or another and, more often than not, people that have experienced that have also experienced either people not understanding or simply not caring. This is a place where no one is made to feel like the weirdo on the bus because we’re all the weirdos on the bus!

Also, as people with mental health challenges know (it’s the people that don’t come, it’s never sparse and always a great atmosphere. It’s been at various venues, I like it where it is. Also, it was a bit stagnant to start with as I didn’t want to charge the people that come as so many of them aren’t up to working/volunteers, etc. So now I do it as a night where the comedians do new stuff so I just pay them expenses and then the audience just donate after if they can afford it. Then I save anything that’s left after paying the comedians’ expenses each week and put it towards a big Christmas special with TV acts, buffet, bar tab, decorations – well, whatever the donations can afford really!

On January 18th we were awarded the City Life/Manchester Evening News Award for “Best Comedy Club in Manchester” and we were up against The Comedy Store/Frog and Bucket, etc. so were so chuffed with that, couldn’t believe it!

Who is the team made up of?
Just me, although lovely regulars Jo and Mercy help me in any way they can too, which is really nice of them and very much appreciated.

Have they all had experiences of their own around mental health?
Oh yes, we’re all riddled!

“We’re often just laughing at the ridiculousness of how we’ve been treated as a result of our issue. That’s it, there’s never any belittling and always coming from a good place. People that would do that are not allowed in our lovely establishment.”

Barking Tales

Barking Tales is the world’s only monthly, award-winning, safe-space, new material, mental health, comedy/storytelling night. Comedian Harriet Dyer tells Kelly Mansfield how there can be ‘funny’ in mental health.
What response/feedback have you had? Great, people seem to come back. I don’t think it’s everyone’s cup of tea but that’s always going to be the way when you’re doing something a bit different. It’s definitely what I experience in my “normal” act too. If it’s not for someone that’s totally cool, I’ll keep doing what I do for the people that do get it.

Where does your material come from? Do you work alongside people with mental health challenges in writing your material? I’ve got bipolar and I’ve had a right ol’ life so my material just tends to come from my experiences within that. I used to be in despair that so many things would always happen to me but now I’m like, finally a use for all the nonsense!

Who tend to be your audiences? Usually anyone that has suffered or is suffering with mental health challenges.

Do you involve people from the audience in your act? Not really. Some people will join in as their autism means they don’t quite get the concept of a rhetorical question or every now and again the regulars will chip in (which is always coming from a really good place) but on the whole I think most people come because it’s not that kind of night.

Do you feel people in the audience connect with you? Why? Do they keep coming? Yes, because it’s somewhere safe, honest and non-threatening where everyone can be themselves.

There must be a fine line between being able to laugh at mental health and belittling, and therefore insulting, people with mental health challenges? How do you make sure you don’t cross that line? On the whole we’re laughing at our own experiences, no one else with mental health challenges is ever the brunt of the joke. We’re often just laughing at the ridiculousness of how we’ve been treated as a result of our issue. That’s it, there’s never any belittling and always coming from a good place. People that would do that are not allowed in our lovely establishment.

Is there any subject/area that you would definitely avoid? No, anything is fine if done with self-awareness, sensitivity if need be…and of course funny.

How would you approach something like bereavement? I’d just be honest. I’ve been a comic for eight years so it’s not that I’m just wanging out any old tripe about these things. By
now I’ve (usually) got a pretty good idea of how to construct a joke or a story with a beginning, middle and end (with a pay-off punchline) and lots of little funny bits peppered throughout, so I still know that whatever I’m talking about that needs be applied on the whole. Although having said that, I do bill the night as a comedy and storytelling night so sometimes say to the audience that, if you’re sitting there thinking “I haven’t laughed for a while” that means that bit is definitely a story!

As well as the audience, do the comedians benefit personally from their work? 100%. It’s so cathartic. Before I’ve apologised, because I think something might be too dark to talk about, but then I’ve done it, it’s gone really well and I’ve felt a big weight lift off my shoulders.

Do you think being able to laugh about mental health might help us to reduce the stigma attached to it? I think so. I think one of the main problems is mental health needs to be normalised more so people aren’t shunned with issues, made to feel like they can’t talk about it, etc. If you’re talking about it more, laughing about it and being around like-minded people all in a safe space I don’t see how that can be anything but a good thing.

Do you think this is something that could go nationwide?
It already sort of is as I’m currently doing Barking Tales or Barking at Aeroplanes (the original show it came from) in various venues all over the country and beyond. I don’t think there’s anywhere that Barking Tales couldn’t go as it’s something positive which there aren’t enough of.

For more information, go to: www.facebook.com/BarkingTalesManchester/
I make a habit of taking all of my photos on my mobile phone. For me, a good photo is not about the expense of my equipment and its technical spectrum but the idea behind the image and how it’s composed. I currently enjoy collecting images of one particular subject. It feels like a treasure hunt for me and I feel such excitement when I find my treasure to photograph and evidence as a permanent image. My current subject is boot scrapers. This has come about because of my growing interest in the history of Peterborough and its buildings. It’s important for me to understand the history of my community and my place in it.
Mindfulness and mental health

Mindfulness isn’t about sitting and picturing a beach scene and blocking out the ‘bad stuff’, but with gentle practice it can help us meet our emotions. So, what is it and how does it work? Here’s what NHS guidance says.

It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much. Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing.

Some people call this awareness “mindfulness”. Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. You can take steps to develop it in your own life.

What is mindfulness?
Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, says that mindfulness means knowing directly what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment.

“It’s easy to stop noticing the world around us. It’s also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living ‘in our heads’ – caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour,” he says.

“Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing.”

“An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment. That might be something as simple as the feel of a banister as we walk upstairs.

“Another important part of mindfulness is an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment.

“It’s about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives.”

How mindfulness helps mental wellbeing
Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better.

When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

“Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience,” says Professor Williams, “and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful.

“This lets us stand back from our thoughts and start to see their patterns. Gradually, we can train ourselves to notice when our thoughts are taking over and realise that thoughts are simply ‘mental events’ that do not have to control us.

“Most of us have issues that we find hard to let go and mindfulness can help us deal with them more productively. We can ask: ‘Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just getting caught up in my thoughts?’

“Awareness of this kind also helps us notice signs of stress or anxiety earlier and helps us deal with them better.”

Mindfulness is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) as a way to prevent depression in people who have had three or more bouts of depression in the past.

See the NICE guideline on depression in adults at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG90/ifp/chapter/About-this-information.

How to be more mindful
Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness.

Notice the everyday
“Even as we go about our daily lives, we can notice the sensations of things, the food we eat, the air moving past the body as we walk,” says Professor Williams. “All this may sound very small, but it has huge power to interrupt the ‘autopilot’ mode we often engage day to day, and to give us new perspectives on life.”

Keep it regular
It can be helpful to pick a regular time – the morning journey to work or a walk at lunchtime – during which you decide to be aware of the sensations created by the world around you.

Try something new
Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat in meetings or going
“Gradually, we can train ourselves to notice when our thoughts are taking over and realise that thoughts are simply ‘mental events’ that do not have to control us.”

“Some people find that it is easier to cope with an over-busy mind if they are doing gentle yoga or walking.”

Free yourself from the past and future
You can practise mindfulness anywhere, but it can be especially helpful to take a mindful approach if you realise that, for several minutes, you have been “trapped” in reliving past problems or “pre-living” future worries.

Different mindfulness practices
As well as practising mindfulness in daily

somewhere new for lunch, can also help you notice the world in a new way.

Watch your thoughts
“Some people find it very difficult to practice mindfulness. As soon as they stop what they’re doing, lots of thoughts and worries crowd in,” says Professor Williams. “It might be useful to remember that mindfulness isn’t about making these thoughts go away, but rather about seeing them as mental events.

“Imagine standing at a bus station and seeing ‘thought buses’ coming and going without having to get on them and be taken away. This can be very hard at first, but with gentle persistence it is possible.”

Name thoughts and feelings
To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them: “Here’s the thought that I might fail that exam”. Or, “This is anxiety”.

…”Gradually, we can train ourselves to notice when our thoughts are taking over and realise that thoughts are simply ‘mental events’ that do not have to control us.”
life, it can be helpful to set aside time for a more formal mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness meditation involves sitting silently and paying attention to thoughts, sounds, the sensations of breathing or parts of the body, bringing your attention back whenever the mind starts to wander.

Yoga and tai-chi can also help with developing awareness of your breathing.

Visit the Mental Health Foundation’s website for an online mindfulness course or details of mindfulness teachers in your area.

Is mindfulness helpful for everyone?
“Mindfulness isn’t the answer to everything, and it’s important that our enthusiasm doesn’t run ahead of the evidence,” says Professor Williams. “There’s encouraging evidence for its use in health, education, prisons and workplaces, but it’s important to realise that research is still going on in all of these fields. Once we have the results, we’ll be able to see more clearly who mindfulness is most helpful for.”

More tips for wellbeing
There are other steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing. Learn more about the 5 steps for mental wellbeing at www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/.

“Imagine standing at a bus station and seeing ‘thought buses’ coming and going without having to get on them and be taken away.”

Further information
BeMindful
bemindful.co.uk/

NHS Moodzone: Mindfulness
www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/
My “Monster”

Others see you as a monster
A recipe for disaster
A bad reputation
Let me give you the real explanation

He has a heart but a twisted mind
He’s unlike any other kind
He’s brought me darkness, he’s brought me light
He’s given me the strength to fight

A year ago, I believed my future to be
bleak and grim
For I am me and he is him
We come as a package, not unwanted baggage
One day I hope someone will see
he is not a monster he’s just another part of me

By Chloe

For someone like myself, who faces battles understanding their emotions, poetry helps to reflect on those difficult emotions and gives me an outlet and a voice. Within this poem I have touched on my idea that in order to start the path to my recovery I had to befriend what can often be seen as a “Monster”.

With darkness comes strength and remember every lesson is a blessing.

My diagnosis is a part of me but does not define me.
Healthy body, healthy mind

There are many reasons why physical activity is good for your body, but did you know that it is also beneficial for your mental health and wellbeing? The Mental Health Foundation explains how.

Being active doesn’t have to mean doing sport or going to the gym. There are lots of ways to be active. One of the great things about physical activity is that there are endless possibilities and there will be an activity to suit almost everyone!

It is recommended that the average adult should do between 75 and 150 minutes of exercise a week. This can be either moderate intensity exercise, such as walking, hiking or riding a bike, or it can be more vigorous activities, such as running, swimming fast, aerobics or skipping with a rope. Any activity that raises your heart rate, makes you breathe faster, and makes you feel warmer counts towards your exercise.

A study asked people to rate their mood immediately after periods of physical activity (e.g. going for a walk or doing housework), and periods of inactivity (e.g. reading a book or watching television). Researchers found that the participants felt more content, more awake and calmer after being physically active compared to after periods of inactivity.

Impact on mood
Physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on our mood.

“Participation in regular physical activity can increase our self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety. It also plays a role in preventing the development of mental health challenges and in improving the quality of life of people experiencing mental health challenges.”

Everyday things such as walking to the bus stop, carrying bags or climbing stairs all count, and can add up to the 150 minutes of exercise a week recommended for the average adult.

What impact does physical activity have on wellbeing?
Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even a short burst of 10 minutes’ brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and positive mood.

Participation in regular physical activity can increase our self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety. It also plays a role in preventing the development of mental health challenges and in improving the quality of life of people experiencing mental health challenges.
Impact on stress
The most common physical signs of stress include sleeping problems, sweating, and loss of appetite. Symptoms like these are triggered by a rush of stress hormones in our body – otherwise known as the ‘fight or flight’ response. It is these hormones, adrenaline and noradrenaline, which raise our blood pressure, increase our heart rate and increase the rate at which we perspire, preparing our body for an emergency response.

Physical exercise can be very effective in relieving stress. Research on employed adults has found that highly active individuals tend to have lower stress rates compared to individuals who are less active.

Impact on self-esteem
Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves and how we perceive our self-worth. It is a key indicator of our mental wellbeing and our ability to cope with life stressors.

Physical activity has been shown to have a positive influence on our self-esteem and self-worth. This relationship has been found in children, adolescents, young adults, adults and older people, and across both males and females.

Impact on depression and anxiety
Physical activity can be an alternative treatment for depression. It can be used as a standalone treatment or in combination with medication and/or psychological therapy. It has few side effects and does not have the stigma that some people perceive to be attached to taking antidepressants or attending psychotherapy and counselling.

Physical activity can reduce levels of anxiety in people with mild symptoms and may also be helpful for treating clinical anxiety.

Where do I start?
Once you have decided that you want to be more physically active, there are a few points worth thinking about.

Ask yourself whether you’d prefer being indoors or out, doing a group or individual activity, or trying a new sport. If you’re put off by sporty exercises, think outside the box and remember that going on a walk, doing housework, and gardening are all physical activities. Also, would you rather go it alone or do an activity with a friend? Social support is a great motivator, and sharing your experiences, goals and achievements will help you to keep focus and enthusiasm.

Overcoming barriers
It can be a bit scary making changes to your life, and most people get anxious about trying something new. Some common barriers, such as cost, injury or illness, lack of energy, fear of failure, or even the weather can hinder people from getting started.

Body image can act as a barrier
to participating in physical activity. People who are anxious about how their body will look to others while they are exercising may avoid exercise as a result.

Exercising with a companion can help to reduce anxiety about how your body looks to others and may be particularly helpful during the first few exercise sessions.

Make time
What time do you have available for exercise? You may need to rejig commitments to make room for extra activities, or choose something that fits into your busy schedule.

Start slowly
It’s best to build up your ability gradually. Focus on task goals, such as improving sport skills or stamina, rather than competition, and keep a record of your activity and review it to provide feedback on your progress. There are many apps and social networks accessible for free to help.

Goals
It’s really important to set goals to measure progress, which might motivate you. Try using a pedometer or an app on your smartphone to measure your speed and distance travelled, or add on an extra stomach crunch or swim an extra length at the end of your session.

At home
There are lots of activities you can do without leaving your front door and that involve minimal cost. It can be as simple as pushing the mower with extra vigour, speeding up the housework, or doing an exercise DVD in the living room.

At work
Whether you’re on your feet, sat at a desk or sat behind the wheel during your working hours, there are many ways you can get more active. Try using the stairs for journeys fewer than four floors, walking or cycling a slightly longer route home, or using your lunch hour to take a brisk walk, do an exercise class or go for a swim.

Out and about
Being outdoors is a prime time for boosting your activity levels, and research suggests that doing physical activity in an outdoor, ‘green’ environment has greater positive effects on wellbeing compared to physical activity indoors.

Making small changes, from leaving the car at home for short journeys or getting off the bus a stop earlier, to higher-intensity activities like joining in with your children’s football game or jogging with the dog, can help to boost your mood.

For more details about how physical activity can help increase wellbeing and prevent or manage mental health challenges, read our full report, or get more information about how exercise can improve your mental health on our website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk.
forked lightning frets our dusk apart
deep crimson blood fills up his pen
the stain of words spreads from his heart
and thunder rolls on down his glen

she’d said he had an awful sword
this nib he holds in his left hand;
said “Use it well, or if not hoard
its strokes for seasons yet unplanned”

last night he dreamed his life were done –
woke up to count his sum bequest:
no, not enough from what he’d run
given all the years’ wide warp & weft

still, he’ll find peace in what he writes
to cleanse his soul, his inner kirk:
he’ll bleed a song by candle light
from the sump of days he’ll spend at work

envoi
“You’ve found your voice? Do mornings bring
the suns of brighter days awake?”
this great good luck he humbly rings
in pewter bell across our lake

By iain
15/06/2019
Goal setting

Goal setting isn’t just something high-achieving business people do in order to work their way up the career ladder – it’s something everyone can do and benefit from, says Sarah Balchin.

After doing a course at Peterborough Recovery College in 2016 that had a section on goal setting, I realised that this can be helpful at many different times in our lives. You don’t have to be at your best: if you are not feeling too well in yourself you can still set goals, but it may be a good idea to keep those goals really simple and make sure you choose something that you will be able to achieve.

All you need to do is break the goal down into small steps. Below is one example of a goal I have used for myself in the past.

Goal: Go to town.

Make a plan:
- How am I travelling to town?
- Could I ask a friend to go with me?
- Could I arrange to meet a support worker in town?
- Decide a day you are going to go to town.

What could go wrong?
- I may decide I don’t want to go.
- What if I get too anxious on the bus?

Achievement:
- You have gone to town by yourself, or may have gone to town with a friend or met with a support worker.

Reflection:
- How was your trip to town?
- How did it make you feel?

Did you feel anxious at all?
- What did you do to alleviate any anxiety?

Some people may not need to write a goal such as this down on paper. It could just be something you think through in your head. I prefer writing things down as I can go over it again if I need to.

“I also like to give myself a pat on the back and celebrate what I have achieved. I feel it is very important – however big or small your achievements.”

If you are feeling stronger in yourself and more positive your goals may be a bit more ambitious. Some examples may be:
- I would like to do some volunteering.
- I would like to do some more exercise.
- I would like to go abroad on a week’s holiday.

As with smaller goals, you just need to break these goals down into small steps. At the end of this article you will find a goal setting worksheet. This is a nice, simple worksheet that could be used as a part of your goal setting.

When I am setting goals for myself, I try to remember a few things. I may be setting a goal that will take me outside my comfort zone. This can sometimes make me feel a bit apprehensive. I try to tell myself I need to challenge myself in order to move forward in my life and I could maybe achieve my goal if I push myself a bit more. I am a realistic person, so I realise I may face a few challenges along the way. If things go wrong, I sometimes draw up a contingency plan!

One thing I don’t do is set myself a goal-completion date, although some may find it helpful to do that.

When I have successfully achieved a goal, I find it useful to reflect on what I have done. I think this is a good thing to do. You can learn from any ups and downs you’ve faced along the journey to achieving your goal. You can use these ups and downs as a stepping-stone to try and improve when you set yourself another goal in the future.

I also like to give myself a pat on the back and celebrate what I have achieved. I feel it is very important – however big or small your achievements. You may also like to share what you have achieved with your friends. Don’t feel you are showing off – you are just letting people know that you have worked hard to achieve a certain goal in your life – and I bet they would be very proud of your achievements!
# GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

**NAME:**

**Start date:**

**My goal is....**

**Steps to reaching my goal** | **Something that will help me reach my goal**
---|---
1 | 1
2 | 2
3 | 3
4 | 4
5 | 5
6 | 6

Have there been any setbacks to overcome along the way?

I will know I’ve reached my goal when:

**Goal completion date:**
When I lost my job in 2013 due to ill health I was naturally depressed by the rejection and also by the lack of support available. However, I knew that I still had skills to offer and started volunteering instead. It gave me a sense of purpose and it made a change to be appreciated. Unfortunately my health continued to deteriorate and despite my best coping strategies the depression took a hold.

A lot of advice is given to keep active as it releases feel-good chemicals, but when you have a chronic illness that is not easy to do. I used to walk miles when I was fit and able but now would be exhausted just going shopping. How could I find a way to be active and boost my mental health?

I tried a fitness group aimed at people with physical impairments, but, as I was the youngest one there and still least able to do the hour, it just highlighted how ill I was and compounded the depression. I gave mindfulness a go and found that being outdoors just feeding the ducks was uplifting. It was not so physically taxing – a short walk from the

“...I may only manage to fill one bag where others fill more but that does not matter. I have done something despite being ill and that sustains me until the next month.”

Feeling rubbish? Pick litter

Fay Belham explains how litter picking has led to her increased confidence and ability to manage her tough days.
car to the river at Thorpe Meadows, then standing for a few minutes throwing food (not bread anymore, as it’s bad for the birds), feeling the fresh air on my skin, listening to the birds quacking, hissing, etc. was very calming. I would feel better for doing it.

Encouraged by this I wondered what else I could try. That’s when I joined a litter pick. It was part of a small group and I could do as much or as little as I felt able; like Tai Chi, picking litter involves gentle stretching to reach those pesky bits of rubbish blown or tossed into bushes. Unlike formal exercise though, I could immediately see the impact I was having on the environment around me and this gave me a feeling of satisfaction. I had done a good job. I may only manage to fill one bag where others fill more but that does not matter. I have done something despite being ill and that sustains me until the next month.

Since then my confidence has grown and, although I still have bad days, I am more able to cope with them. I have something to look forward to. I feel part of a community – there are quite a few litter picking groups in Peterborough. It is also growing in numbers nationwide.

I am proud to have been accepted as a Litter Heroes Ambassador for Keep Britain Tidy. I may not be as active as the other 99 Ambassadors but that does not matter. It’s the taking part that is important. Raising awareness online is another skill I have, which does not overexert my body.

I do what I can rather than continually worry about what I cannot do, which was how I dealt with my situation before. Athletes have a sports psychologist to help them with their journey. We are no different – we need to work on our mindsets to cope with the long-term effects ill health has on us. How can we make lemonade out of the lemons we have been given? Or oranges? We all have something to offer – some talent within us – it might take a bit of digging but it can be found.

“We all have something to offer – some talent within us – it might take a bit of digging but it can be found.”
spot the difference

These two images may look the same but there are five subtle differences. Can you find them?
Useful sources of support and information

**ACAS**
Information and advice on workplace relations and employment law
www.acas.org.uk
0300 123 1100

**Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**
Children's mental health charity
www.annafreud.org
020 7774 2313

**Anxiety UK**
Charity for people with anxiety, stress and anxiety-related depression
www.anxietyuk.org.uk
08444 775 774

**Arts and Minds**
Arts and mental health charity in Cambridgeshire
www.artsandminds.org.uk
01223 353 053

**Best Beginnings**
Supports the mental health of pregnant women and new mothers
www.bestbeginnings.org.uk

**Blurt**
Support for people affected by depression
www.blurttout.org

**Campaign Against Living Miserably**
Charity dedicated to preventing male suicide
www.thecalmzone.net
0800 58 58 58

**Carers Trust**
Support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring
www.carers.org
0300 772 9600

**Centre for Mental Health**
Charity specialising in research, economic analysis and policy influence in mental health
www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk
020 7717 1558

**Change Grow Live**
Help and support across a wide range of areas including mental health, substance use, criminal justice and homelessness
www.changegrowlive.org

**Citizens Advice**
Free advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
03444 111 444

**Crises**
Charity for homeless people
www.crisis.org.uk
0300 036 1987

**Dancing With The Black Dog**
Charity dedicated to the eradication of the stigma of anxiety and depression
www.dancingwiththeblackdog.com

**Do-it**
National volunteering database
www.do-it.org

**Equality and Human Rights Commission**
Statutory body dealing in discrimination and human rights
www.equalityhumanrights.com
0800 800 0062

**Heads Together**
Campaign inspiring charities that are tackling stigma, raising awareness, and providing vital help for people with mental health challenges
www.headstogether.org.uk

**The Helpful Clinic**
A social venture that helps people cope better with everyday life
www.thehelpfulclinic.com

**Illuminate**
Provides coaching and personal development courses throughout the east of England
www.illuminatecharity.org.uk
01223 520124

**Imroc**
Works with communities to develop services, systems and cultures that support recovery and wellbeing
www.imroc.org
0115 9691300 ext 12485

**Inclusion Recovery Cambridgeshire**
Support for people affected by drugs and alcohol
www.inclusion-cambridgeshire.org.uk
0300 555 0101

**International Workplace**
Employee relations advisor
www.internationalworkplace.com
0333 210 1995

**Keep Your Head**
Local support for children and young people
www.keep-your-head.com

**Lifecraft**
User-led organisation offering creative activities, recovery groups, social activities and employment and volunteering opportunities
www.lifecraft.org.uk
01223 356 957

**Loch Employment Law**
Specialist employment lawyers acting for employers and employees
www.lochlaw.co.uk
0203 667 5400

**Make, Do and Mend**
Skills workshops, volunteering opportunities and peer support to people who have experience of mental health challenges
www.makedoandmendinfo.co.uk

**Making Money Count**
Provides financial information and support across Cambridgeshire, West Norfolk and Peterborough
www.makingmoneycount.org.uk

**Mental Health Foundation**
Charity for mental health, aiming to find and address the sources of mental health challenges
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
(0)20 7803 1100

**Mental Health Handbook, Lifecraft**
Information and contact details for relevant organisations such as advocacy, hospital services, housing, employment guidance, education, benefits advice and carers
www.lifecraft.org.uk/our-services/information/mental-health-handbook

**Mind**
Charity which provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing mental health challenges
www.mind.org.uk
020 8519 2122

**Mental Health Handbook, Lifecraft**
Information and contact details for relevant organisations such as advocacy, hospital services, housing, employment guidance, education, benefits advice and carers
www.lifecraft.org.uk/our-services/information/mental-health-handbook

**Money and Mental Health Policy Institute**
Independent charity committed to breaking the link between financial difficulty and mental health challenges
www.moneyandmentalhealth.org
0207 848 1448

**MQ**
Championing and funding research into mental health
0333 440 1220

**National Sleep Foundation**
Dedicated to improving health and wellbeing through sleep education and advocacy
www.sleepfoundation.org

**Recovery College East**
Delivering courses and workshops to explore and improve personal wellbeing
www.cpftrhs.uk/about-us/recovery-college-east.htm
Cambridge 01223 227510
Peterborough 01733 746660

**Red2Green**
Cambridgeshire charity supporting people with learning disabilities, on the autistic spectrum or living with mental ill health
www.changingtheredlightsgreen.co.uk
01223 811662

**Rethink Mental Illness**
Expert, accredited advice for everyone affected by mental health challenges
www.rethink.org
0300 5000 927
rethinkyourmind.co.uk

**Richmond Fellowship**
Recovery-focused organisation offering a range of mental health support services
www.richmondfellowship.org.uk
0207 6973300

**Samaritans**
Offers a safe place to talk at any time about whatever is getting to you
www.samaritans.org
116 123

**Scope**
Provides support, information and advice to disabled people and their families
www.scope.org.uk
0808 800 3333

**The Mix**
Support service for young people
www.themix.org.uk
0808 808 4994

**The SUN Network**
Aiming for everyone in Cambridgeshire to have equitable access to mental health and/or drug and alcohol interventions and services
www.sunnetwork.org.uk
07712 358172

**Time to Change**
Campaigning to remove stigma around mental health
www.time-to-change.org.uk
020 8215 2356

**YoungMinds**
Charity committed to improving the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people
www.youngminds.org.uk
Never give up on something you can’t go a day without thinking about.