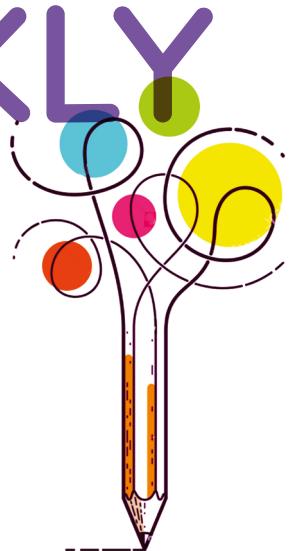


11th June 2020

THE ORC WEEKLY

This week's Newsletter is themed around the idea of **Being Creative**.

In this week's edition, you'll find some practical activities and ideas to make you think about all the different ways we are, and can be creative, and how this can have a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing. We are absolutely delighted to be sharing pieces written by students of the Recovery College in this edition too. Do keep an eye out for these, and we hope you enjoy reading!



What does 'Being Creative' mean to you?

Here are a few thoughts that we've come up with at the College about what Creativity means and represents to some of us. We encourage you to have a think about what 'being creative' means to you as you read this week's newsletter.

Being Creative is a very personal process and can mean different things for different people. Creativity is a skill that makes us human. It is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterised by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns and make connections between seemingly unrelated things, and to find the pleasing and the beautiful.

Creativity is not an instant thing and normally involves two processes: thinking, and then producing. Having new ideas makes us imaginative, but it's the process of turning those ideas into a reality that makes us truly creative.

We are all naturally creative, and as we grow up, we can learn to be uncreative. Creativity is a precious skill that can be developed and renewed, it is a skill that has the potential to calm the nervous system and decrease anxiety.

When you do something you love, you connect with yourself and the more you connect with yourself, the more you're able to share yourself with others.

Change of phone number for the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Phoneline

The 24/7 mental health helpline provides people with mental health advice during the coronavirus pandemic. This round-the-clock helpline will make it quicker and easier for people in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire to get the right advice they need for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people who need mental health care when their situation is not life threatening.

New phone number for adults: 0800 783 0119

New phone number for Children and Young people: 0800 783 0121

Passion for Photography - by Tony

Photography has given me something to do and learn about in my spare time for many years. Photography gives me that sense of purpose and enjoyment. Taking pictures is a way to experience the beauty and splendour of our natural world and gives me creative fulfilment. It helps me express myself artistically, and that's a wonderful thing. Creativity is a major part of

helping me to deal with my mental health and to make sense of the world around me. You don't need expensive camera equipment to enjoy photography, the most basic cameras or smart phone will suffice; all you need to have is passion.

Below are four photos using a Nikon Coolpix P900 Mirrorless Camera.



Photo A, is Buchanan Castle, Buchanan, Stirlingshire - Shutter speed. 1/100sec, Aperture. f/16, ISO. 100



Photo B, the Flying Scotsman at Alford Station in Hampshire - Shutter speed. 300/24sec, Aperture. f/2.8, ISO. 300

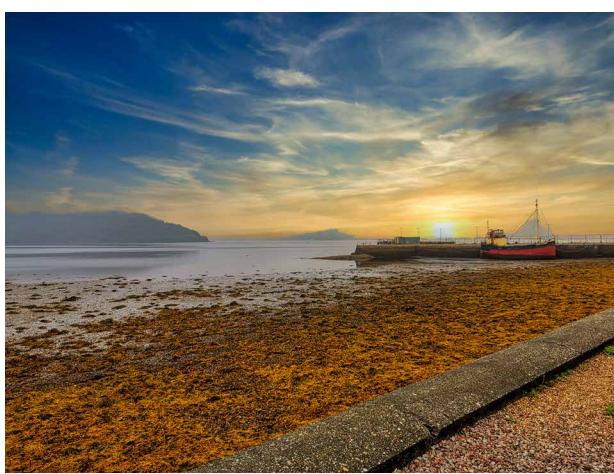


Photo C, is taken in Luss, on Loch Lomond, Scotland - Shutter speed. 1/30sec, Aperture. f/11, ISO. 500

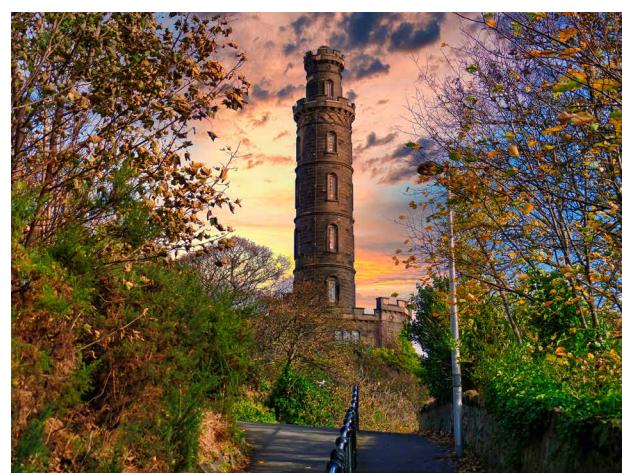
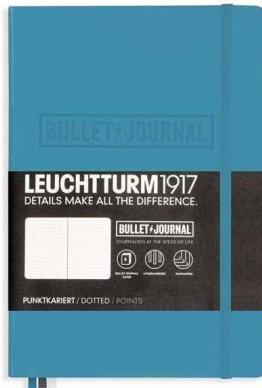
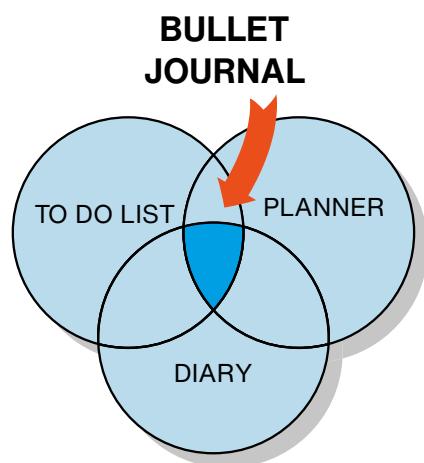


Photo D, is Horatio Nelson's Tower on Calton Hill, Edinburgh - Shutter speed. 1/30sec, Aperture. f/11, ISO. 60

In Praise of Bullet Journaling by Rosie

Despite the challenges of life in lockdown, this “new normal” has presented some unexpected opportunities. Previously, I’d been an intermittent diarist. Each January I would resolve to record daily my every negative thought and feeling, resulting in little progress. As meditators and neuroscientists alike will tell you, “where attention goes, energy flows.” Attention has the potential to change the structure of the brain (ever considered the less catchy ‘where attention goes, neural firing flows and neural connection grows?’). I didn’t look forward to diary-writing and after a few half-hearted entries I would soon get fed up and leave the remaining pages untouched.

When lockdown was in its early stages I found myself aimlessly browsing my local library’s creative writing section. I came across a book entitled How to Bullet Plan: Everything You Need to Know About Journaling with Bullet Points by Rachel Wilkerson Miller. I had heard of bullet journaling, but I still didn’t really know what it was. Is it a planner? A to-do list? A diary? It turns out it’s all of those things. Bullet journaling, so-called because it uses bullet points as its core structure and utilises dot grid paper, is an individually customisable organisational system. It declutters the mind, cultivates curiosity and helps us to remain focussed over time (watch the 2017



Tedx Yale talk by its inventor Ryder Carroll to learn more). And, as I’ve recently discovered, it is excellent for promoting and maintaining wellbeing. My mood has improved massively due to a newfound love of goal setting, leading me to run a half marathon (meditation, healthy eating and early nights have helped too). I actually look forward to opening my beautiful, brightly coloured journal every day and leafing through its thread-bound pages. Selecting the perfect pen and colouring in each square has become a daily ritual I relish. I am a true bullet journaling convert.

If you think this sounds overzealous or fanatical, there’s a reason: bullet journaling works. Here’s why. It’s a quick, simple form of regular note-taking (Carroll calls this “rapid logging”) that you’re more likely to stick to, because it’s flexible and uncomplicated. Consider the principle that nothing need be lost if it is written down. You create one single place to list all those films and TV shows you’ve been hearing about, or those books you’ve been meaning to read. All too often my smart phone gets in the way of good sleep, so I prefer putting pen to paper before bedtime. Some have suggested that writing, rather than typing on a laptop, allows you to better organise your thoughts and can even boost memory.

Getting Started

The first step is to arrange your calendars, known in the bullet journaling world as ‘spreads’. These are commonly broken down in to annual, weekly and monthly. You can include daily spreads too, if you decide to use your bullet journal more like a diary (I keep a separate reflective journal). Then you can add in your other sections. A key one for me has been my mood tracker (I call this ‘mind and body’). I log the good habits I want to stick to and the goals I’d like to achieve. I also record my workouts. You can even log when you do your chores, last visit the dentist, or take your car for its MOT – called a ‘when did I last...?’ log. When life is especially hard this becomes an invaluable resource. This approach focuses on

achievements and prioritising your values, rather than denying yourself or giving things up.

If this all sounds a bit too much to contend with, I can assure you it isn't. I use about half an hour every Sunday to review my week and set up next week's pages, then about 5 minutes at the beginning and end of each day to fill it in. The secret is keeping it simple; only keep the sections that work for you. Finding that you're not filling in your daily diary? Write a weekly summary instead. Not sticking to the habits you're tracking? Throw them out and set new ones. You can change your system along the way.

The Science-y Bit

Increased self-awareness can bring about change. This is a central tenet of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), a type of talking therapy developed by psychology researcher Marsha M. Linehan for people who experience strong emotions. By tracking your mood, sleep, exercise, energy levels and physical health status you can increase your awareness of thoughts and feelings in relation to your activities – and hopefully begin to see patterns. Goal attainment can increase positive emotions – and we will reach our goals sooner and more easily if our emotions are positive. Positive psychology pioneer C. R. Snyder said that clearly conceptualised goals provide direction and an endpoint for hopeful thinking. This “hope theory” can be applied to our own bullet journal method. Reflecting on our progress encourages positive motivation. It helps to ask yourself questions such as “what is going on?”, “where do I want to go?” and “what is stopping me?” If we view barriers to growth as challenges to overcome, using questioning and reflection to plan an alternative route to our goals, we are said to have “high hope.” High hope has been associated with many benefits, including increased wellbeing.

The “father of positive psychology” Martin Seligman has spent his life’s work researching wellbeing and happiness. His Three Good Things exercise, explained in his most recent book Flourish, invites you to write down three good things that happen each day. Then you answer one of the following questions: “why did this good thing happen?”, “what does this mean to you?” or “how can you have more of this good thing in the future?” These questions encourage us to immerse ourselves in the good event, which increases positive



emotions. It's possible to incorporate this exercise into your bullet journal – and you should, because once you start you'll want to keep going. Alternatively you could keep a daily gratitude list or note down one achievement each day. These exercises may even support healthier thinking patterns, in the same way Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) aims to do. For example, one very effective CBT intervention is Behavioural Activation, which focuses on behaviour and environment. Tracking good habits and logging your daily activities – known as Activity Scheduling – increases the amount of positive reinforcement you experience. By keeping a record of your achievements you build evidence to challenge negative thinking biases. Become your own therapist!

Why else do I like bullet journaling? Because it is associated with positive emotions, not negative symptoms. Our brains have a natural tendency to focus on what goes wrong in our daily lives, as my previous diary attempts had illustrated. Using a bullet journal for wellbeing encourages us to dwell on the good things instead. It's not a CBT worksheet with a mysterious acronym. Or a mnemonic that's actually not so easy to remember. Or a digital calendar on an app. It is a holistic tool: something you can choose to build and create according to your own unique agenda. And that's very empowering.

I have a website called *The Wellbeing Wordsmith*, where I publish my writing and wellbeing tips. Go to www.wellbeingwordsmith.com

How to Declutter Your Mind – Keep a Journal
by Ryder Carroll, TEDxYale (2017):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym6OYelD5fA

Toilet Roll Heads

Despite popular belief, we have all eventually got enough toilet paper. It was only a matter of time until an unassuming roll of toilet paper could become the medium of choice for an artist.... We bring you the toilet roll heads!

Each mask is made from a single paper roll, which is folded and squished into an expressive face. The pieces here have been finished with a coat of varnish and different colours.



Toilet-roll Heads
 "Lock down Origami"

Required materials /tools

STEP 01


STEP 02
 Fold on one side

STEP 03
 Measure 1/3 from the bottom edge and fold both ways.
 Mark the crease with your pencil.

STEP 04
 Create another crease-
 now in 45 degree angle
 on one corner.

STEP 05
 Open the roll.
 Carefully manipulate the roll to
 create nose and mouth- this
 take some patience.

**If you get frustrated please follow this link for
 more detailed instructions:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
 v=XvL9ID4G56M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvL9ID4G56M)**

**Fold the the top third to create
 eyebrows and ta-dah!**

Art corner

Each week we will be featuring something creative sent in by one of our Students at the Recovery College – whether this is an art piece, some writing, a picture or a recipe (the list goes on!) is completely up to you. We want to make the ORC Art Corner a permanent feature of our Newsletters and so we really encourage Students to share your ideas with us – these can be featured anonymously too, whatever you feel comfortable with.

If you do have something you'd like to send in to feature in our Art Corner, please do let us know by sending it via email to: contactORC@restore.org.uk

Starry Night Sky – by Luke Williams

“Walking down the river side and seeing the light twinkle like a trail left by dancing fairies on the water.

The lights of man dimmed into shadow compared to the majesty of the starry night sky. Two walk hand in hand waiting for the coming dawn.”

Luke Williams (Lambourne House)

Soap Modelling - Littlemore:

To make a soap sculpture, I cheese grate the soap bars and add a little bit of water into the mix.

I mould it all into a ball, a bit like the way you would use clay. I then wrap the soap balls in some plastic (bin bag) and leave it to rest for 1-2 weeks.

You can also add dye (which can easily be ordered online), or, use the insides of felt pens to colour the grated soap (see picture).

Think of an idea and start modelling using your hands. I have used a pen to help me model before but you don't really need any other equipment.

I like modelling flowers like these. I have started doing this to pass time, it's a nice hobby.



Getting Creative at Home - by Clare

I saw a post on Instagram of someone making a heart using just sticks, I couldn't believe how effective it looked, so decided to have a go at making one myself.

What you will need: Some cardboard, a hot glue gun, a pair of secateurs or good strong scissors, and some sticks.

On our evening walk with my dog I took a carrier bag and collected lots of different size sticks. I tried to collect thin ones, but you can use any thickness you want.

I found a cardboard box to cut and use as the base for my



heart (or whatever shape you wish to make), then using my secateurs I cut the sticks to the sizes I wanted to fit on to the heart base.

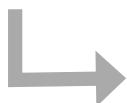
I then glued them all on (this bit can be quite messy as you need plenty of glue!) and left it overnight to dry completely. It took me about 3 hours to make, but this of course will depend on the size of your chosen shape.

It was really good fun to make and it looks lovely out in my garden. I have also seen some that people have spray painted theirs, but as you can see by the picture, I decided to leave mine natural.

Please do share yours with us if you have a go at making one, we'd love to see what you come up with!

Please do remember that if you are in Crisis, you can contact:

Crisis plan/part of care plan



Key Nurse/Worker

For a full list of organisations that you can contact, please click on the link below to head to the Signposting document on our website:

<https://oxfordshirerecoverycollege.org.uk/signposting/>

If you need to get in touch, please do so:
by emailing: petr.neckar@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk,
you can also tweet us: @OxfordshireRC, find us on facebook: Oxfordshire Recovery College, or listen to us: <https://anchor.fm/oxfordshire-recovery-college>