

Thanks Giving

Welcome to issue #23. Hoping this find you all well, hard to believe we are fast approaching December. As well as a time of joy and celebration, Christmas and New Year can be a difficult time of year. This year, we also face new challenges, unknowns and stresses over the festive period from coronavirus. We've been working with our partner agency **Health in Mind** to produce a booklet on the Scottish concept of 'coorie' as a way to help us look after our mental health and wellbeing this winter.

Coorie is all about comfort, snuggling, looking after yourself and others. It's about embracing the benefits of the outdoors and being surrounded by nature. The booklet will focus on the things we can all do to look after our mental health and wellbeing in our homes, whilst also encouraging us to get outside and embrace the benefits of nature. It will also include information on a range of support and helpful contacts.

"Coorie in for Christmas" will be available online from 1 December at <https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk> and <https://www.edinburghthrive.com/> and we will have printed copies available too. Please let us know if your agency would like some printed copies and with the support of our incredible **Network Rail Colleagues** we will endeavour to get these delivered to you. Please email: linda.irvinefitzpatrick@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk by 4 December.

You can also keep updated on support available during the festive period and on Christmas Day in Edinburgh at the iThrive online space <https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk>

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and once again sincere thanks for all your contributors and for your continuing feedback. Please keep sending us ideas and contributions: linda.irvinefitzpatrick@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives."

John F Kennedy

Thrive on Thursday – Our next dialogue session

Our next "Thrive on Thursday" dialogue will take place on **Thursday 3 December at 12.00 noon to 1.15 pm**. This will be led by Inspector Graeme Shearer, from the Negotiator Unit at Police Scotland. Graeme will be talking about how they work with people in crisis and the training they provide for Police Scotland staff. To join the online conversation please email thrive.edinburgh@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk and we will send you a link for MS Teams.

Think Positive - Students' Mental Health and Wellbeing

In Edinburgh we have a very large student population which adds to the diversity and vibrancy of our capital city. We've been working with Jess from **Think Positive** which is Scotland's student mental health project, hosted by NUS Scotland. The project aims to find ways to support students experiencing mental ill health, tackle stigma and discrimination, and promote wellbeing in colleges and universities across Scotland.

Jessica Smith from Think Positive was delighted to provide this update for Thrive Edinburgh:

"The annual Scotland's Student Mental Health Conference took place on Wednesday 28th October and Thursday 29th October 2020. The aims of the Conference were to showcase of initiatives from within the sector; facilitate a discussion on the future of student mental health at a national level and provide an opportunity to meet leaders within the sector. Videos from our Conference can be found on our [#SSMHC2020 playlist here](#). Please do share these videos - we're really keen to hear about what you'd like to see more of, and what you think we could do differently next time.

We're also looking for representatives from across the sector to join our **National Action Plan working group**. We know that there are lots of fantastic initiatives, projects and services in Scotland for universities and colleges to utilise, but that it's so difficult to work out what's out there, how they fit together, and what's best for each set of student demographics. So, we'd like to co-develop a resource for the sector that puts all of that information in one easily-accessible, easy to read place, considering what it is students, students' associations, institutions, external mental health organisations, the Scottish Funding Council, the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland can be using – and what support they need to engage! We'd love for you to join us [here](#).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03EWRhUtNOY&list=PLKSWudzQEIAq0vBrq0_7rZssRTGahmVtB

And lastly, we are continuing to run our **Weekly Forum meetings every Wednesday** into January. If you have any new projects you'd like to share, or feedback you'd like to ask for, please do come along and join us! We're a very friendly bunch and we have hosted a wide range of discussion topics from online training to how to signpost to a Penumbra service to how we can embed mental health and wellbeing into the curriculum.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above further, please don't hesitate to get in touch! Jessica.Smith@nus-scotland.org.uk

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festive 2020 and getting ready for 2021

Feedback on 2020

The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF), led by the Mental Health Foundation, took place as an online programme from 4 May-31 July 2020. It was decided that SMHAF 2020 would take place online over a longer period of time, creating space for those involved to adapt and develop new creative projects, as well as ensuring that audiences had opportunity to enjoy as much of the programme as they could while dealing with the various pressures of life under lockdown.

“In this unprecedented and difficult time, it is more important than ever for us to continue to connect with our incredible festival community and bring Entertainment and important mental health content to our audiences. While we were obviously disappointed not to be hosting our annual festival in its usual form this year, we are delighted to be able to showcase an online programme of events beginning in May, creating opportunities for engagement and conversation and supporting artists to create new work. In presenting the festival in this way, we are also taking the opportunity to explore ways that we can use digital content to make our festival even more accessible in the future and reach a wider audience.”

- Gail Aldam, Arts & Events Manager, Mental Health Foundation

My Experience of Isolation – programme continues

SMHAF’s 2My Experience of Isolation commission is still ongoing. There is new work by [Amble Skuse](#), a composer and violinist whose chronic fatigue syndrome has meant that she mostly worked from home long before lockdown. She has created an improvised musical piece that explores how isolation can cause a “looped psychological experience”.

You can also see more work by multidisciplinary artist [Amy Rosa](#), who is creating a series of photographic self-portraits with accompanying creative writing/spoken text about living with complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

International Film Competition and Writing Competition

The International Film Competition is open until 18 December 2020. We’re interested in films that explore mental health, and the various ways this term can be understood and reflected. Films can address specific mental health issues, but the festival is also keen to encourage innovative and diverse approaches. Filmmakers at all levels are encouraged to submit, especially those based in Scotland. **Please share this opportunity with any filmmakers or arts/film networks you are involved with:** <https://filmfreeway.com/ScottishMentalHealthArtsFestival>

SMHAF 3 – 23 May 2020 – Normality?

You can read more about the thinking behind this year’s theme of “Normality2 on the SMHAF website.

2020 highlights

10,000+ event engagements

75+ events

13 weeks

10 International Film Awards

3 Writing Awards

7 commissioned projects

Thrive on Thursday – Dialogue Series #4 - The Garden Cure

Perspectives

Jan Cameron, Author of *The Garden Cure: Cultivating our well-being and growth*, detailed the benefits from tending green spaces can bring tremendous benefits to mental health and promote longevity. She explained how gardening can be powerful as a healing mechanism to help in times of distress, anxiety or depression.

She described how **Community/therapeutic gardens** offer a real social mix and opportunities for building relationships and sharing problems working side by side which can be more comfortable than face to face and can be a beginning of a relationship. Jan explained therapeutic activities that can be done in the garden such as mindfulness exercise and play activities.

She detailed tools and techniques detailed in her book **“The Garden Cure”**, used in therapeutic and community garden setting that can apply to help support her own and others’ physical and mental well-being especially when life is challenging. She hoped her book can benefit individuals and professionals.

Dialogue

What was asked and said in chat box

Fiona wanted to hear more about sematic experiences. Jan advised, in her practice, she would introduce the subject but not use it as a tool. They were lucky to have a small pot of money that they could use for some people to go and see experienced staff in this approach. Jan gave an example of sematic experiencing - when two people facing one another, one begins walking to the other, and the person standing has to say when to stop (when it is not comfortable anymore). For people what is telling them to stop, the sematic experience, is different.

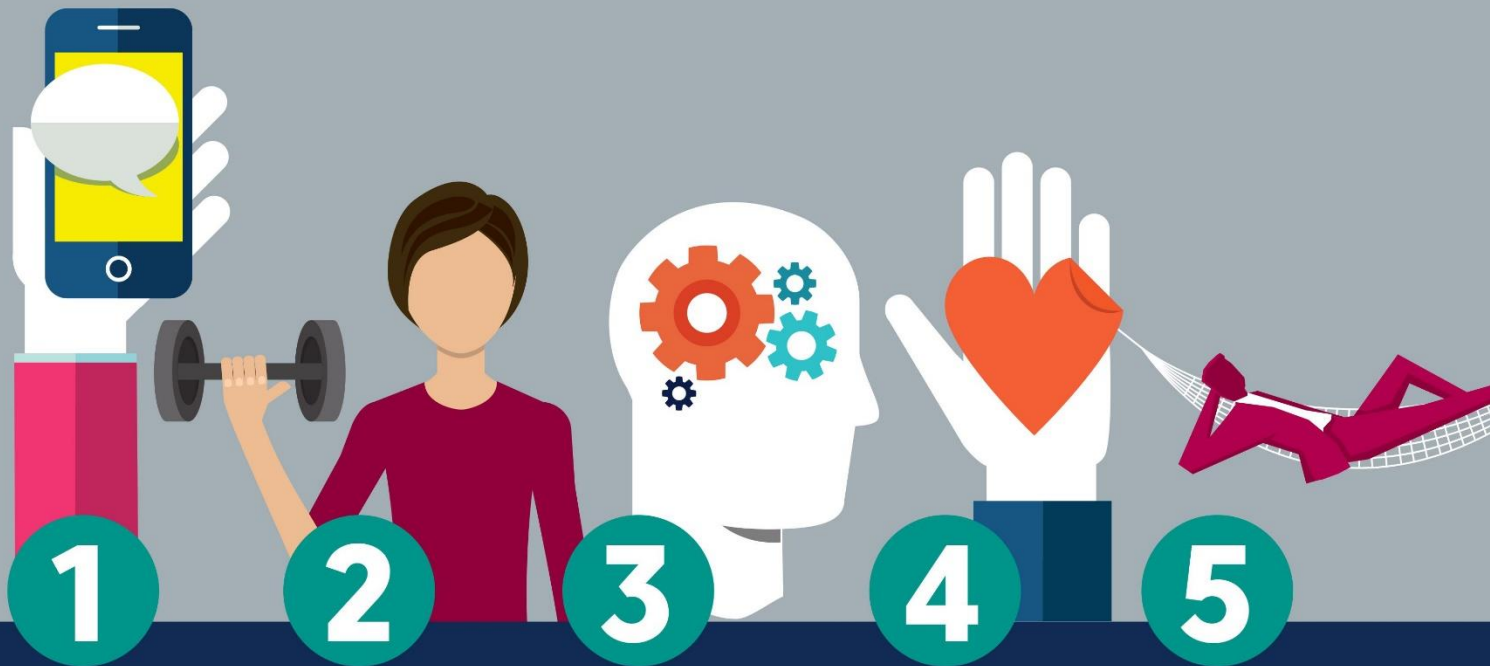
Fiona asked Jan what her thoughts are on peer support in therapeutic settings. Jan began by highlighting the conditions need to be right and the first aid tools are always important to this. Jan told a very warming story of a young man who was experiencing social isolation and the thought of Christmas frightened him but how a lovely gesture from another trainee, in lending him his x-box, totally brightened him and his Christmas up. Jan gave another example of people just being there to listen, to give a friendly empathic ear, when the lady told them her daughter was moving to the Sudan. Peer support enormously valuable.

Jenny highlighted the need for staff within community gardens to get support themselves as they are often working with people with quite complex and stress provoking problems such as addiction, death, schizophrenia. Also, it can be quite difficult to manage the range of need and the relationships between them. She suggested it would be great to have a network of which offers community gardeners a space to come together to offer peer support. Jan suggested co-mentoring as a potential way too. It was agreed this will be added as an action to be taken forward.

In the chat function a few people mentioned the work Edinburgh Lothian Health Foundation led by Dr Rachel Hardie are currently progressing on Green Prescribing. There was mixed feelings on Green Prescribing as often the barrier is people having the confidence or physically being able to get to the venue. Jenny referenced a report from Vienna University which found green prescriptions can actually inhibit people to attend. Jan agreed with this perspective and emphasised people needed to want to go!

		<p>Nick was keen that we know what we have and that we need to have a mapping exercise of what is out there done.</p> <p>Linda summarised the session. She emphasised that we should not over professionalise our greenspaces/gardens and take away from their natural beauty and healing qualities, however there were opportunities to ensure when people do visit they get the right response and the best experience. With the development of the Thrive line which shows spaces and places throughout Edinburgh that promote positive wellbeing, Thrive will be working with staff in these settings to provide some awareness raising sessions based on attachment theory and importance of relationships.</p> <p>Linda was excited at the thought of creating a community gardens/greenspace community of practice based on the discussion from today emphasising the need for networking and support for staff.</p> <p>Linda suggested if people hadn't seen this ted talk yet they should check it out. Ted Talk on guerrilla gardener (inspiring!) https://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la</p> <p>Jan encouraged everyone to check out her book 'The Garden Cure'. If there is anybody struggling to get a hold of it Jan is happy to be contacted directly.</p> <p>Jan asked to share a couple of references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabor Mate's work on addiction (2008) - <i>In the Realm of the Hungry Ghost, also has lots of online talks on you tube</i> • Peter Levine (1997) - <i>Walking the Tiger</i> • Mathew Johnstone (2005) - <i>I Had a Black Dog (about depression)</i> • Babbette Rothschild (2006) - <i>The Body Remembers (trauma) and Help for the Helper. (Overwhelm/burn out)</i>
<p>Connections Made</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners from Community Gardens • Thrive Team with Jenny Hill • Shared information on Greenspace Prescribing (led by Dr Rachel Hardie)
<p>Actions for the Thrive Team</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Community of Practice for Greenspace and Community Gardner's – <i>Thrive Team and Partners</i> • Mapping of Community Gardens – <i>Thrive Team</i> • Define schedule for Thrive Line awareness sessions – <i>Thrive Team</i> • Watch Ted Talk – <i>All</i>

5 ways to wellbeing whilst staying at home during the Coronavirus



1 Connect

It can be stressful being at home continuously, so keep your spirits high by reaching out to your connections; send a text or even video call.

<https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/online-marketing/social-media/skype-alternatives>

2 Be Active

Whether it's by stretching out or becoming your own personal trainer, staying active will keep your mind and body healthy.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-51959557/coronavirus-the-green-goddess-returns-with-self-isolation-fitness-tips>

3 Keep Learning

Our brains love to learn, so keep them engaged and challenge yourself to read a book, work on some puzzles or even try out a new recipe.

<https://www.classcentral.com/collection/ivy-league-moocs>

4 Give

Give some time to listen and help those around you, even the smallest act of kindness can improve your mental wellbeing.

<https://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/volunteer/covid-19-faqs>

5 Take Notice

Take notice of your surroundings and practice some mindfulness, making sure that you keep a comfortable space to relax.

<https://www.headspace.com>

Many people could be feeling more isolated and lonely over the coming weeks, so if you are feeling distressed, in a state of despair, suicidal or need emotional support, the following organisations can offer support:

Breathing Space
0800 83 85 87
Mon-Fri (6pm-2am)
Sat-Sun (24 hrs)

Samaritans
116 123
Mon-Sun (24 hrs)

The Silver Line
0800 4 70 80 90
For over 55
Mon-Sun (24 hrs)

Edinburgh Health and
Social Care Partnership

