

# CHANGING HABIT

## PUTTING THE UNITY IN COMMUNITY

MENTAL HEALTH  
AWARENESS ISSUE

SPRING 2020



Right: Emily Johnson, Assistant Principal at Broadstairs College

## Mental Health Awareness at Broadstairs College

By Emily Johnson, Assistant Principal at Broadstairs College

I work at Broadstairs College, which is a further education provider. Each year I see a variety of mental health concerns ranging from anxiety and depression to eating disorders and self-harm.

The demands on external services often exceed the availability of help. As a

consequence of this, individuals can experience long waiting times to see a counsellor or other services to support with their mental health.

As a provider of education to around 1,450 students from the local area, it is important we consider the impact mental health has on individuals in education, and seek to remove as many barriers as possible, to enable students to achieve their full potential, whilst building independence and resilience. Well-being requires a whole college approach, such as having well-being policies in place, appropriate support, trained and informed staff, and signposting to external services.

Firstly, it is important we know about individuals' mental health. In the past individuals often perceived talking

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*"The challenge is clear. In 2018, researchers who surveyed almost 14,000 first-year college students (in eight countries) found that 35% struggled with a mental illness, particularly depression or anxiety."*

(WHO, 2018)

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#### The purpose of this newsletter is to:

- Share good well-being business practice
- Contribute to making Thanet a happier place to live, work and visit
- Strengthen communication in Thanet by putting 'unity' into community
- Share good news, business initiatives and uplifting Thanet community experiences
- Encourage next generation involvement and share opportunities

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### Welcome to our first HABIT newsletter for Thanet businesses

Health and Business in Thanet, 'HABIT', was created in October 2017. Its key purpose, starting with businesses, is to help address the long-term deprivation of the Thanet District Council population by raising awareness of the positive actions that can be taken to improve the health and well-being of our 141,000 population.

This followed a significant personal experience that made me view life, health and well-being very differently. I started to share my experience and gather information from many colleague business people and voluntary organisations on what is being done locally to promote a healthy lifestyle. I established that a great deal of improvement would be welcomed.

To meet the need I set up a cross-sector (public, private and voluntary) strategic steering group. The purpose of this group, which has been meeting for 30 months is: "A collective drive to determine how to better promote health and care services and encourage self-management of lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical movement. Also exploring means of how best to collaborate with NHS Mental Health services."



This ambitious goal will only be achieved through collaboration between the public, private and voluntary sector.

HABIT focuses on achieving positive lifestyle impact on local employees by sharing good information with local employers. This newsletter is to provide two-way communication and positive 'uplifting' news during lockdown. We would love to hear from you with your ideas and suggestions.

Along with key business partners that include Francesca Donovan, Centre Manager, Westwood Cross Shopping Centre; Rachel Baker, Manager M&S; and David Foley, CEO of Thanet Chamber of Commerce, I'm fortunate to have a driving force behind me to change, for the better, the Thanet environment.

At our first meeting we considered some of the serious health issues that our excellent NHS are addressing. They are: obesity, diabetes, and mental health, all with some of the poorest statistics in Kent local authorities. Fran suggested that the steering group set the goal of putting 'unity' into the business community. With your involvement and support we will achieve this.

*Brian Urwin*

CEO of Think Healthy Me Ltd &  
Chairman of Health and  
Business in Thanet

### Some useful websites:

#### Priory Wellbeing Canterbury

0808 163 1732

[www.priorygroup.com/locations/priory-wellbeing-centre-canterbury](http://www.priorygroup.com/locations/priory-wellbeing-centre-canterbury)

#### NHS Mental health helplines

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines)

#### Mind Mental health charity

0300 123 3393

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

#### Samaritans

116 123

[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan)

#### Porchlight

0800 567 7699

[www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk)

## Mental Health Awareness cont. page 1...

about mental health as embarrassing, or failed to recognise that they might have mental ill health symptoms. Every student of ours has a settling in review with a Progression Mentor when they enrol, where they can discuss any barriers they may have. This is where initial discussions take place with regard to their well-being and mental health, and allows us to identify support they may need.

College opens up many possibilities and experiences that can have a positive impact on mental health, alongside a supportive environment that promotes resilience. One of the most important mechanisms for supporting good mental health is talking about it. It's not healthy to try to ignore these feelings. We need to acknowledge them, get support and talk about it. Your immediate support group such as friends and family are important and should support you in a non-judgemental way. Regular check-ins and time to talk are essential, as is the ability to be kind to yourself.

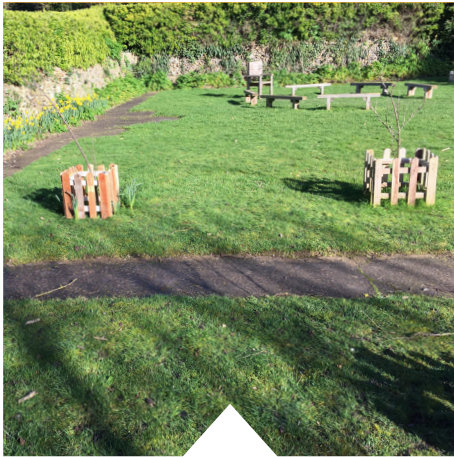
Everyone's mental health journey is individual to them. There are a range of external services available, including your local GP, additional services for men and women, local support groups, online information which can be accessed 24 hours, texting services for those who don't want to talk and many more on the internet. A few examples are at the bottom of the page.

*Emily Johnson*

### Services available to students on-site include:

- Counselling services;
- Listening ear services;
- Pastoral and bursary support;
- Well-being room and workshops;
- Well-being mini libraries;
- Student mental health awareness sessions throughout the year;
- Enrichment opportunities, such as trips and excursions;
- Sporting activities, including yoga and football;
- Guest speakers who raise awareness of mental health issues;
- Accessible trained Mental Health First Aiders;
- Celebrations of achievements such as the student awards.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THANET



### Ramsgate Community Memory Orchard

The Sunken Garden, as it has been known, had been neglected over the years, but the Memory Orchard (first suggested by Emma and Sam, members of the local Westcliff community voluntary groups) is now a space where people can experience peace and quiet. This calming sensory space has been designed for people to remember loved ones that have experienced dementia. We also want the space to nourish the local community. The central bed has been planted with fruit trees, herbs and other edible plants kindly donated by local businesses, community groups and individuals. We invite you to try the produce and learn how to grow your own. Please take only what you recognise and need. We hold regular community events down here so keep an eye on the notice board for future reference.

**Brian Urwin**

### Type 2 Diabetes community group

A new Thanet-wide Diabetes Community Support Group has been set up to help people manage their diabetes diagnosis with a view to preventing serious health issues. Managing Diabetes means looking at how you live your daily life; diet, exercise, medication and treatment. This can be a daunting task without support.

The group is made up of people living with diabetes or pre-diabetes who have begun their journey to manage this disease. Perhaps we can help you, or perhaps you can help us? We meet on a monthly basis, bringing together our unique experiences, understanding and successes. This enables us to share new information and ideas which each of us can take away and try out. You might be doing things already which are working for you, which we could learn from. Our group's modus operandi is to aim at sustainable lifestyle change through personalising the support we give. Everyone is different. If you would like to join us, or find out more, please contact [diabetesthanet@outlook.com](mailto:diabetesthanet@outlook.com) or visit [www.DiabetesThanet.uk](http://www.DiabetesThanet.uk)



## NEW HABITS



### Real life savers

Access to defibrillators in our community is vital and Westwood Cross feel proud to be in a position to have two such machines on site, one portable and one static. This is a lifesaving piece of equipment and we therefore wanted to ensure that the local community had access to it.

The defibrillator is located on the wall outside TK Maxx, providing visitors easy access to treat sudden cardiac arrest. Westwood Cross Centre staff are trained in first aid and how to use the defibrillator, just look out for the logo on their uniforms, however clear instructions on how to use the equipment is displayed on the front of the unit, allowing anyone to make use of it in an emergency. The most important thing to remember in the event of any emergency is before you do anything else call the relevant emergency service. This is to ensure that they are on their way and that they are on the telephone to assist you.

If your business has a defibrillator on site please can you notify Brian Urwin at HABIT who is currently undertaking a register of defibrillators to share with the members of HABIT.

**Fran Donovan, Westwood Cross**

### Socktober

The 'Socktober' campaign was launched last year in support of general Mental Health Awareness. The customers and staff of Westwood Cross were asked to join in by wearing their loudest and brightest socks during the month of October.

However we couldn't have predicted that all over the country people were donning their brightest and wackiest pairs of socks to promote the message of being mindful of what may be going on underneath. By supporting our friends and colleagues, and raising awareness,

together we can help the 1-in-4 people who struggle with mental health issues - after all pairing is sharing! Socktober 2020 will build on the success of last year's event and will continue to focus on Mental Health Awareness during the month of October. Updates will be posted on [www.westwoodx.co.uk](http://www.westwoodx.co.uk) or on our social media pages.

**Fran Donovan, Westwood Cross**



# SPOTLIGHT

## 3 QUESTIONS WITH... **RACHEL BAKER** FROM M&S



### What does your business do to promote well-being at work?

We have a fantastic website designed for our colleagues called "Choices". The site covers exclusive deals and offers, but its main focus is supporting well-being. This could be financial, health or physical. From top tips and vodcasts to professional support for them and their family with counselling and financial advice 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

The business also ensures there are adequate refreshments in our team lounge area with bakery goods and fresh fruit.

### Why is well-being important to your business?

It is proven that if you invest in the well-being of your team that this will help reduce the sickness levels and in turn aid further success for the business and the service to our customers.

### What drives you to promote well-being in your business?

Promoting well-being amongst the team encourages trust, communication and loyalty between colleagues and the business. By investing in the team's health and happiness it gives a positive vibe and increases productivity.

**Rachel is the Store Manager of Marks & Spencer, Westwood Cross**



*Support is available  
and we're making plans*

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

### Coronavirus

As a focus group **HABIT** are dedicated to communication, coordination and collaboration and this will be more vital over the coming months when we transition from full lock-down to business as usual. We understand the impact the Coronavirus has had on a number of areas of personal health which include physical, mental, financial well-being. So over the coming months we will be sharing information and driving co-ordination in the following areas:

- Health and fitness, how to kick-start your journey
- Befriending in Thanet, launch of a new group website and arranging meeting points
- Type 2 Diabetes group, online & in person
- Making small changes for a healthy you
- Defibrillators in Thanet; sharing information and driving new locations
- Suicide awareness in Thanet, what we can do?
- What can be done locally to reduce climate change, every little helps.

We will update you on the progress of all of on-going projects in the next newsletter and at our **HABIT** meetings.

If you would like to get involved or contribute to our newsletter or projects please contact **brian@thinkhealthyme.co.uk**

**Mental Health Awareness week** runs from 18th-24th May this year, if you would like more information see: **www.mentalhealth.org.uk**

**The Ramsgate Crisis Café** is a safe and friendly place that you can come to if you are experiencing severe emotional or psychological distress. It is a drop-in service where you can access mental health support and advice from mental health and well-being workers.

### Address

34 King St, Ramsgate CT11 8NT

### Website

[www.eastkentmind.org.uk/crisis-cafe-2/](http://www.eastkentmind.org.uk/crisis-cafe-2/)

Brian Urwin is currently creating a **Community Befriending Group** for people seeking company and companionship. During lockdown he is exploring 'virtual befriending meetings'. He is also working on a Ramsgate Westcliff Children's Treasure hunt to discover where the fairies live. This will give children an interest while exercising with their parents. More information on these projects will be in our next newsletter.

Suicide in Thanet is the highest in Kent, so **positive steps** are being taken to reduce it. A poster urging people to stop, think, and call a loved one has been placed on the railings at the cliff tops in Ramsgate.

