

Community Living Well

Spring 2019

Young Adults Focus



Community
LivingWell

Working together for your wellbeing

In this edition

Long-Term
Conditions



Staying Safe
Online



Securing a
Job Offer



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Welcome Letter

Welcome to the Spring 2019 Edition of the Community Living Well Magazine. This edition has special features on wellbeing and young adults.

Early adulthood can be a turbulent period marked by changes and growth physically, mentally and emotionally, with young adults facing a multitude of challenges as they attempt to find their way in life. Uncertainties relating to housing and jobs and pressures relating to technology, social status and cultural heritage can create a breeding ground for reduced self-esteem, anxiety and depression.

But what Community Living Well wants you to know is that you are not alone with this. We want to help you get through these struggles and that is why we are dedicating this issue to you.

In this special themed edition, you'll hear from young people who have used the service and their inspirational stories of recovery and emotional resilience.

From pointers on how to stay safe online, to our employment team's tips on how to secure a job offer or apprenticeship, we hope you'll find information that is of interest and support or that inspires self-acceptance.

As always, this magazine is about you - your concerns, achievements and ideas. If you have any suggestions, features or stories you think we should include then contact me, Tamsin, at tamsin.cogan@kcmind.org.uk

Happy reading,

Tamsin Cogan - Marketing Coordinator

How to Refer

You can refer to the Community Living Well service quickly and securely by completing the form found on this page communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/. Alternatively, you can ask your GP to refer you.

After we have received your information, we will be in touch within five working days. If you have any questions about the referral process or other parts of Community Living Well, please contact us on **020 3317 4200**

About Us

Eligibility

Community Living Well is a primary care service for anyone experiencing mental health difficulties who is 16 years or over and signed up with a GP in Kensington and Chelsea, Queen's Park or Paddington.

Community Living Well offers a different kind of mental health support. It brings people together from your local community groups, NHS and the voluntary sector in one service which will work alongside you and your GP to help you access the support you need.

Our model of care aims to:

- work as one integrated service that wraps around the individual
- work with the GP at the centre as the accountable clinician responsible for each person's treatment

Community Living Well Partners

Central and North West London NHS

Foundation – Primary Care Liaison and Psychological Therapies Services

Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster Mind

– Mother Tongue Counselling Service

Kensington and Chelsea Mind

– Peer Support Service

SMART

– Navigator and Employment Services

Wellbeing Support

Employment – Advice and support to gain or retain paid employment, improve employability skills and know your rights in the workplace.

Navigators – Practical help and support to access specialist advice on a range of issues including benefits and debt.

Peer Support – Social activities, peer support groups and one-to-one support with other people who have had similar experiences to you.

Self-Care – Activities which can help to keep yourself well.

Clinical Support

Psychological Therapies – Support for when you experience difficult emotions, such as low mood, worry and stress.

Mother Tongue Counselling – Culturally appropriate one-to-one talking therapies and wellbeing workshops in Arabic & Farsi.

Primary Care Liaison – Structured support from specialist mental health nurses and workers.

Find out more information and whether we can help you on our website

communitylivingwell.co.uk







Special Feature

Our editor Tamsin spoke to mental health campaigner and writer Rachel Kelly about how she has used her lived experience of depression to empower others also experiencing mental health issues. Her coping strategies and wellbeing tools can be found in her new book *Singing in the Rain: 52 Practical Steps to Happiness*

Learning from my Lived Experience

Rachel Kelly is an award-winning writer, journalist and mental health campaigner. In her early thirties, Rachel was diagnosed with serious depression after suffering two major bouts of the illness. These two episodes have become the defining events of her life. Since then, she has written about mental health and her recovery in several books and runs workshops for mental health services across the country including Community Living Well.



How did you get involved with the Community Living Well service?

I love working with other people and running workshops alongside services such as Community Living Well. I find myself coming alive when I am amongst a tribe of people who really understand my symptoms and experiences. Sometimes I can feel like

an imposter or as if I have made up my mental illness in my head but when I interact with others and hear their experiences, their words strike a chord and I feel less alone. The support I offer through the workshops works two-ways. When I am coming up with strategies, I love hearing fresh ideas from individuals experiencing mental health problems in the community.

Why do you like to speak publicly about your lived experience?

Whilst I believe we have come a long way in terms of reducing the stigma around talking about our mental health, I believe there is still a gap in mainstream discussions. We hear celebrities talking about their mental health but that often doesn't reflect our day-to-day experiences. Likewise, there is a general understanding that if you are suffering from real social deprivation then depression is a likely outcome. When it comes to the middle world – those with families and jobs – it has been harder to address stigma. Many may ask what could be wrong with you, when in fact anyone can suffer from a mental illness. Just because you have a privileged life, it doesn't mean you have a privileged health. This is a conversation that I felt I could make an addition to.

“There is still a gap in mainstream discussions on mental health”

Tell us about the holistic approach to mental health that helped you recover

The way that medicine has been structured historically has been with mental illness on the one hand and physical illness on the other. We are moving towards a place where it is now being suggested that we should view our mind and body as not just being connected but part of one system. Lots of interesting research is being published which suggests that chronic illness can underpin mental illness. Understanding and adopting this new whole-body approach means that if we can induce a physical calm, we can get to a mental calm as well. This helps with the shame and stigma and gives the notion of mental illness a whole different connotation altogether.

What would you recommend someone do if they were struggling with any mental health issues?

The first step would be to visit your GP to discuss your options with them but there are also various wellbeing exercises that can be carried out at home. It is natural for you to feel wary of accepting that you may have a mental illness so physical strategies are often the best starting point. Breathing exercises and visualisation techniques can be easier to get our heads around and still involve taking some agency in our recoveries. Try reframing things in your head. Exercise can be quite daunting when we first approach it but if you reframe it as movement it opens up new ways to incorporate it into your lifestyle. Try creating a map of your workplace in order to introduce more movement into your daily routine e.g. using a toilet that is further away or adjusting your work journey. These small steps can give us more energy as well as moving us towards learning how to reframe larger concepts such as failure.

Tell us a bit more about the Calmness and Contentment workshops you ran with Peer Support

I have been running workshops for a few years now alongside support groups run by mental health charities. The most recent set of Peer Support workshops held at St Charles Centre for Health and Wellbeing were based on my new book 'Singing in the Rain' and included a four-part series of exercises that move up from easy to more challenging. The first part included strategies you can pop into your own mental wellbeing toolbox – breathing exercises and reawakening a childish wonder and delight in things. The latter half focussed on addressing perfectionism through drawing exercises and composing a letter to someone in order to convey our appreciation and gratitude. The workshops ended with some more challenging exercises – learning how to talk to yourself in a kinder way, addressing your inner critic and exercises on how you can escape your comfort zone and why that might help you.

What sort of tools would you recommend for someone who is trying to manage worry and stress?

From my experience, I found that none of the strategies provided all the answers but what worked for me was a broad mixture of approaches. I like aspects of mindfulness, nutrition (eating for wellbeing), appreciation and gratitude approaches. Everyone's mental health is nuanced and complicated. We are all facing different challenges and therefore different tools may work for us at different stages of our lives.

“I find myself coming alive when I am around a tribe of people who really understand my symptoms and experiences”



Long-Term Conditions

It can be devastating to be diagnosed with a long-term condition (LTC). It can mean getting used to new routines and changing the way we do things. There are things you can do that can help you when managing a LTC. This article explains what LTCs are, what you can do and where you can get support.

What are long-term conditions?

A long-term physical health condition is a health problem that requires ongoing management over a period of years or decades. We might manage this by using medication, therapy or other procedures.

Examples of long-term conditions

- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular (e.g. Hypertension)
- Chronic Respiratory (e.g. Asthma)
- Chronic Neurological (e.g. Multiple Sclerosis)
- Chronic Pain (e.g. Arthritis)
- Other Long Term Conditions (e.g. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or Irritable Bowel Syndrome)

How many people are affected by long-term conditions?

It is estimated that about 15 million people in England have one or more long-term condition(s) and approximately 4 million of this group experience psychological distress including anxiety and depression.

The impact of a LTC

A LTC can impact every aspect of our lives from our hopes for the future, to relationships, financial security, work and leisure time. You might have to manage new medications, diets, tests, and physiotherapy. Getting to know different healthcare professionals can also be challenging. Unsurprisingly, when you're trying to adjust to all of these changes your psychological wellbeing can be impacted.

You may start to notice negative thoughts about yourself running through your mind. You may notice that you worry about your symptoms getting worse and wonder what the future holds. Maybe you feel that you can't tell people about your LTC as they wouldn't understand. Sometimes we feel we have to manage things on our own. Some days it can be hard to take care of ourselves because we feel hopeless about things. If this continues you may start to feel low in mood or more anxious than you used to.

What can you do to manage your LTC?

- Try to be kinder to yourself. What would you say to a close friend who had a LTC?
- Pacing activities - look at the spread of your activities in any given week. Are there too many/too few?

- When having a difficult day what helps - listening to music, reading something inspiring, looking at a favourite picture or taking some time out for yourself?

How can we help?

The Psychological Therapies team offer therapeutic interventions that can support you when you are managing the demands of a physical health condition. This can be cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or counselling. They also run a LTC group which is based on learning to be kinder to yourself through self-compassion techniques, daily life practices and group exercises.

Further reading

Happiness Trap - Dr Russ Harris
Coping with the Psychological Effects of Illness: Strategies to Manage Anxiety and Depression - Dr Fran Smith

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

To refer to the Long Term Conditions team at the Psychological Therapies service, please fill out the form available here communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/ or call 020 3317 4200



If you have used a Community Living Well service in the past and would like to be part of our creative process through sharing your story, please get in touch by emailing tamsin.cogan@kcmind.org.uk



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I have two long-term physical health conditions and two long-term mental health conditions. They all impact each other. My physical health conditions include Gastroparesis which is a paralysis of the stomach. I was hospitalised on and off for four years with this digestive illness and had to have a feeding tube at one point. My neurological condition (Suna syndrome) is similar to epilepsy, with symptoms that imitate a migraine condition. It causes sharp bursts of pain throughout the head and face randomly (up to 100 times a day). Both conditions physically impact my life and it's very hard to live a day-to-day life with either of them. I also have long term depression and anxiety that I've had since I was young. I tend to find that the depression comes on during extreme bouts of physical pain.

I had just undergone a major operation for my Gastroparesis and was having quite a difficult time. The prospect of going back into education had left me feeling stressed. This triggered severe anxiety, which coupled with the fact I was experiencing intense pain, had a significant impact on my depression levels. I felt like I needed support that I wasn't getting otherwise.

I had various therapies prior to this that were associated with pain management - some helped and some didn't. This was the first time I was seeing a therapist because I felt like I needed active support specifically for my mental health. Life before I had therapy feels very different to life afterwards and I found the sessions incredibly helpful. Getting things off my chest and having someone who would listen to me was very beneficial as I felt like I had been living in my own head. I was aware of techniques such as writing things down and talking to people I trusted but these weren't actions that I had ever implemented in the past. In the lead-up to the therapy, I had been experiencing anxiety at the thought of leaving school due to my health conditions. The support I received helped me to realise that this wasn't an ending to my dreams, but instead an opening to other pursuits.

One of the main reasons I went to therapy was because I had been struggling a lot with the fact that I had missed so much of my education. This made me feel like I wasn't good enough because I wasn't able to deal with my illnesses or accomplish the same academic achievements as those around me. Through my therapy, I was able to accept that my life experience has been very different to most people's. My abilities are different as I haven't had the same experiences and opportunities as other people. My therapist helped me see that this didn't mean I wasn't able to do certain things, it just meant that they may take a different form for me. I learnt that it's okay for me not to succeed at everything as there will be other opportunities out there. This was a huge revelation to me because before that I had a very specific life plan mapped out. It was liberating to be able to put that to one side and thrive outside of my regimented idea of what my life was going to be like.

“Through my therapy, I was able to accept that my life experience had been very different to most people's”

One of the topics I covered in therapy was my feeling of unease at the thought of no longer being sick. I had been ill for such a long time that I didn't really know who I was outside of my illness. I still struggle with this – who I am when I'm not in pain and crying on the floor - because it's such a huge part of my identity. I found through healing and accepting my conditions I have learnt that I have lots of other facets and that my illnesses don't define me.

“I can put measures in place to keep my mental health up even when I’m feeling physically unwell.”

I always knew there was a connection between my physical and mental health as both would deteriorate at the same time. The sicker I was the more depressed I felt and the more likely I was to experience dark thoughts. After having therapy, I realised that I can manipulate my better thoughts and experiences. If I can recognise that my mental health suffers when my physical health does, I can put measures in place to keep my mental health up even when I'm feeling physically unwell.

After therapy, I started having a routine for the first time. I always thought a routine would never work for me but I now have a solid idea of what my day is going to look like every morning and checklists of what I want to do. By keeping my brain occupied, it allows me to stay on top of my physical and mental health needs.

You're never as alone as you think you are. There will be people out there who not only understand but can help you overcome what you are going through, even if they can just make it an easier burden to shoulder. Taking that first step is the hardest part but once that's over you have done the most difficult thing there is to do and the only way is up.



What is a PCLN?



In each edition we will be sharing information with you from around the whole of the Community Living Well service. This month we take a look at the Primary Care Liaison Nurse team.



Community Living Well have 11 PCLNs



Last year the PCLN service received 1672 GP referrals



The PCLNs work at three hubs and GP surgeries across the borough

What is Primary Care?

Primary care is the day-to-day healthcare available in every local area and the first place people go to when they need non-emergency health advice or treatment. It places GPs as the first point of contact for new symptoms or for concerns about physical or mental health.

If you are experiencing negative changes in your mental health, your GP can advise you on the treatment options available to you, such as talking therapies or medication. However, there may be times when your GP believes that you require a more specialist form of support and it is at this point that they may consider referring you to see one of our Primary Care Liaison Nurses.

What is the Primary Care Liaison Service?

The Community Living Well Primary Care Liaison Nurse team (PCLN team) is a nurse-led service supported by consultant psychiatrists. PCLNs support individuals with common complex mental health difficulties or those with stable severe and enduring mental health conditions who require support following their discharge from a secondary care mental health team. Community Living Well nurses provide a brief intervention service and can work with you for up to six sessions.

What is a Primary Care Liaison Nurse?

Studies have shown that mental health nurse-led liaison services in primary care are highly valued by GPs and improve the quality of care for patients through their skills in assessing and managing risk (Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing).

PCLNs are experienced mental health practitioners who have developed knowledge and skills through evidence-based intervention training and working in different mental health settings. PCLNs can work proactively with you and your GP by offering specialist medication and treatment advice.

You may feel that due to problems and issues in other aspects of your life that you are not ready to commence treatments such as Talking Therapies. A PCLN can support you with these

difficulties so that you can take up treatment when you feel that the time is right.

Mental health is complex and determined by a range of social, economic and environmental factors. As a result, you may find that you have many physical, social and mental health needs. A PCLN can help you to find solutions to life's challenges by linking you to Community Living Well Navigator, Employment and Peer Support services who can help to address your various needs. They can also provide support for your family members and wider support networks where it is needed.

PCLNs bring together an important framework of people involved in your life to ensure maximum quality of care is delivered to you. Through liaising with your GP, family, multidisciplinary teams and hospital specialists, our nurses can ensure that your treatment is effective and goes as smoothly as possible.

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

Your GP can refer you to the Community Living Well Primary Care Liaison Nurse service. Book an appointment so that you can talk through your options with them.



Multicultural Conversations on Mental Health

Culture and language can prevent many people with mental health problems from accessing treatment, but organisations like the Community Living Well Mother Tongue Counselling service are increasingly recognising this and tailoring their support to suit the needs of their multicultural communities.

Here at the Mother Tongue Counselling service we know that whilst mental health is widely recognised and understood by many cultures, it can still be a taboo amongst others. Prejudices, negative stereotypes and cross-cultural differences in the acceptability of psychological treatments can mean that many adults face hurdles when trying to access help.

Your family may have reservations on exposing personal and family matters to outsiders, concerns about confidentiality or a general lack of trust in service providers which all hinder your ability to seek support. They may also neglect the issue of mental illness because of a feeling that it brings shame on them and the reputation of your family.

Without professional help, the difficulties you are experiencing can be compounded by the feelings of shame associated with your culture's attitude toward your illness. Balancing this tension with the expectations of your community or family can be distressing and may exacerbate your depression or anxiety. When mental illness is not treated, it can also manifest as physical pain too, through fatigue, lower energy levels, aching muscles or headaches.

Even if you cannot communicate your struggles to your family or support network, it is vital to remember that you are not alone. To the right are some tips on how to take the first steps towards accessing help and improving your situation:

“ The workshop facilitator brought up interesting topics of discussion and paid attention to us all individually. I was able to make changes and have some conversations with my family which I had been avoiding. ”



REDUCE THE STIGMA

Remember that a mental health issue is not indicative of a personal shortcoming or character flaw. Asking for help with a mental health condition such as anxiety is just the same as asking for help with a bad back.

TURN TO FRIENDS

If you're finding it hard to confide in your family or reach a common understanding, have a chat with a friend who may be able to give you a fresh perspective on your situation. The stigma surrounding your illness may leave you feeling lost, alone and as if you have no one to turn to but friends can be an important part in your recovery.

INVOLVE YOUR FAMILY

Ask your counsellor or treatment team to sit down with your family and explain to them why you have this condition and what they are doing to help you. This may improve your family's understanding of your illness and reassure them that with the right help you will get better.



COUNSELLING

Mother Tongue Counselling offer up to 12 1-1 talking therapy sessions in Arabic and Farsi languages, for adults who are registered with a GP in Kensington & Chelsea, Queen's Park or Paddington. We also offer one-off self-help workshops and weekly psycho-educational groups on topics related to mental health awareness and wellbeing for all BME groups. They can be arranged with existing groups or community members.

SPEAK TO OTHERS

Seeking support from someone who knows what it is like to be in your shoes can validate your concerns. They may be able to share coping mechanisms and tools that have helped them. The Community Living Well Peer Support service brings people together with lived experience of mental health difficulties who use their own experiences to help one another. Details on how to refer yourself are on **page 21**.

SEEK SUPPORT

You can access a culturally appropriate support helpline. Services such as the Muslim Community helpline offer emotional and non-judgemental support via an online chat or over the phone (020 8908 6715). You can also purchase a self-help book or search online for tips on how to manage your wellbeing. Check out our **How to Access Support Online** article on **page 22** for further information.



How to secure your first job offer

Studies show that unemployment adversely affects mental health. Having no work can make us feel worthless, undervalued and fearful for the future. With no purpose, structure or money, we may feel adrift and anxious. Being unemployed can also affect our confidence and self-esteem and make us feel that we lack control over our lives.

Young adults in particular may find it difficult to secure work because they don't have the right qualifications or skills. Employers can be reluctant to recruit those with less experience and some may even perceive young workers as less reliable. As a result, young adults who are unemployed find it hard to break the cycle of no job – therefore no experience – therefore hard to get a job.

Our **employment team** shares some of their recommended pathways into work that may help you overcome some of the initial obstacles associated with trying to secure your first job.

Work Experience and Internships

Work experience provides an opportunity for you to learn key employability skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication and time management. You will be gaining practical experience which will make your CV stand out to employers. It's also the best way to get a real sense of your chosen industry as you'll get a chance to speak to employees and ask them questions directly. You can find out about opportunities at job fairs, search for placements online or target employers speculatively to arrange work placements.

Work Shadowing

Work shadowing is an informal type of work experience where you observe someone in their role to understand how they do their job. It is usually short-term (a few days at most) and unpaid. It aims to provide insight and understanding rather than hands on experience. Opportunities are rarely advertised publicly, so it's up to you to approach the organisations that you're interested in working for. Write to them explaining why you would like to shadow them and how you feel this could benefit you.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way for you to get involved with your local community and develop skills that can enhance your CV. As well as boosting your self-confidence, volunteering can also expand your professional network as you are introduced to individuals from your field who have shared commitments and goals.

Networking

Sometimes it's not what you know, it's who you know. Attend careers fairs which are held throughout the year to speak to the people involved in recruiting staff.

Listen to Other People's Advice

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Other people have been in your position and they might know just the thing to say or do to help you.

Understand the Job Market

Do your research and stay up-to-date with current industry trends and technology. You can also sign up for job alerts to avoid having to trawl through job search engines on a daily basis.

Never Stop Learning

Get onto one of the many free education courses out there. Find out about local organisations who offer support on how to job search, apply for jobs and prepare for interviews. Check out SMART Works in our **Local Services Directory** on **page 26**.

Make your CV personal

Your CV shouldn't just be a list of work experiences. Update your CV every time you do a course or learn a new skill.

Believe in Yourself

No matter what happens try to stay positive. There is a job out there for everyone, you just need to be persistent to find the right one for you.

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

To refer to the Employment service, please fill out the form available here: communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/ or call 020 3317 4200

Special Feature

Volunteer Centre
Kensington & Chelsea

Kensington & Chelsea
College

Westminster College

princes-trust.org.uk
resurgo.org.uk/spear

rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/kccentral



Unsure how to take the first steps in your job search?

Our employment team are on hand to help. We offer up to 15 one-to-one sessions with our advisers who will listen to your individual support needs and base your sessions around what your goals are and what you want to achieve.

Check out how the team helped Hannah land a job in her dream field.

To refer to the Employment service visit our website: communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/

Hannah's Employment Story

Since leaving college Hannah had been working as a waitress at a high-end restaurant. The long hours combined with a lack of support from her employer and the physically demanding nature of the job had led to her feeling deeply unhappy in her role. Her work was even beginning to take its toll on her mental health, as she became increasingly anxious about going into work and experienced several panic attacks whilst on shift. As her wellbeing continued to deteriorate, she decided to take some time off to recover and consider her options.

During this time, Hannah was referred to

Community Living Well by her GP and began meeting her adviser (Pauline) regularly to discuss how she could move forward and progress in her desired career path. Hannah's confidence had been knocked by her experience of work and her self-esteem was very low. Her original post-college plan had been to embark on a career in marketing but she had been unable to find a suitable role due to her perceived lack of experience and eventually fell into hospitality as a 'temporary' position. Her adviser helped her realise that she had acquired many transferable skills as a waitress and that it wasn't too late to move into a role that she was more passionate about.

With Pauline's assistance and a level 3 Graphic Design qualification under her belt, Hannah began applying for entry level jobs in

marketing. After learning that she enjoyed photography, Pauline persuaded her to enrol in a short photography course at her local college. The programme helped Hannah to upskill by enhancing her eye for design and layout, a skill that is integral to many marketing roles.

Before accessing Community Living Well support, Hannah had felt very anxious at the thought of attending an interview. As part of the employment support offer, Pauline provided her with interview tips and techniques to manage her anxiety, as well as referring her to a one-day interview workshop run by a local training organisation.

She was initially nervous about attending but Pauline encouraged her to give it a try.

Hannah ended up finding the workshop very useful and particularly relished the opportunity to receive feedback on her answers in a warm and supportive space.

Shortly afterwards, Hannah was offered a one-year Marketing Trainee internship with a local design company. Whilst thrilled, she felt equally anxious about working in an office as it was a new and unknown environment.

A few months into the job, Hannah has settled into her new company well and is really enjoying her new role. She is grateful to the employment service for boosting her self-esteem and helping her to make a career move that has facilitated a positive change in her wellbeing.



Housing and Mental Health

Housing and mental health problems are often inter-linked. Whilst poor mental health can make coping with housing problems more challenging, homelessness or housing issues can cause a deterioration in your mental health.

People frequently approach or are referred to the Community Living Well Navigator service for direction and practical support when tackling housing problems or issues brought on by difficult and distressing living circumstances.

What impacts can housing problems have on your mental health?

On your relationship: Struggling with your rent payments or living conditions can cause arguments and place a strain on your relationship.

On your sleep: Stress, worry and noise may keep you awake at night and disturb your sleeping patterns.

On your social life: Living in an unsecure environment can negatively affect your self-esteem and cause you to withdraw from social situations. Decreased levels of interaction can in turn produce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

On your career: Your housing situation might depend on you being able to carry on working. If your mental health is affecting your ability to keep up your job, this can cause housing problems.

Physical Health: If the environment you live in is damp, has mould or is dirty – your air quality may be affected, and you may develop respiratory problems. Additionally, if your housing has inadequate facilities this can impact on how you look after yourself i.e. personal hygiene and maintaining a balanced diet.

Practical Difficulties: Having a mental health problem can make it harder to keep on top of bills and rent or talk to landlords or people from housing associations.

Stress and Anxiety: Feeling unsafe or living in a dangerous environment can generate feelings of stress and worry which may accelerate any anxiety you may be experiencing.

The Community Living Well Navigator team meet people regularly who are struggling with complex housing issues. Whilst every case is different and has its own unique set of factors, our navigators can use their expert knowledge of local services to tailor support to your individual needs.

Sarah's Story

Sarah was struggling with rent arrears after moving home due to over-crowding issues. Physically, emotionally and financially, Sarah found it impossible to resolve this issue alone. A consequent cut in her benefits coupled with a lack of support from her landlord triggered a severe decline in her mental health.

Sarah met with one of our Navigators (Maeve) and they developed a Wellbeing plan together that focussed on building her a support network. Maeve accompanied Sarah to meetings with her landlord and was able to speak on her behalf to several agencies that provide specialist advice.

“Having a navigator to talk to can help (you) to define the problem clearly and identify what to do to improve your situation”

After this additional support, Maeve and Sarah began to talk about 'endings'. It is natural to feel apprehensive about support coming to an end. Our navigators will help build your confidence by equipping you with information on your rights and entitlements and making sure you possess all the tools and resources necessary to feel able to access services without their support.

In this case, Sarah was made aware of her local Citizen's Advice Bureau's drop-in times, benefits support offered by the Department of Work and Pensions and other wellbeing services such as Peer Support that could address her social needs.

“Maeve accompanied Sarah to meetings with her landlord and was able to speak on her behalf”

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

To refer to the Navigator service please fill out the form found here: communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/.

For more information on the service:

020 3317 4200

cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net



Peer Support Training

The Peer Support training course is available to people with lived experience of mental health problems who are living well, and who wish to increase their knowledge about Peer Support, gain new skills or consolidate their working practice.

The course covers a wide range of topics including: what is peer support?, the underlying principles of peer support and the essential skills to deliver peer support. These skills include: facilitation skills, active listening, boundaries, confidentiality, recovery language, disclosure and how to use your experience to help others. Irum, one of our Peer Workers, shares her training experience and how it helped her discover the perfect career for her.



Receiving Peer Support

In April 2017 I was referred to an organisation in my area which ran a peer

mentoring programme. I was under the care of a Community Mental Health Team at the time and I was not able to access therapy or receive any emotional support. I started to see a peer worker individually on a regular basis. She had experienced some symptoms which were very similar to mine – I had never felt so understood before.

Training to give Peer Support

After leaving education in June 2017 due to the way my symptoms impacted my ability to study, I began looking for jobs. When thinking about what job I wanted to do, I had a thought – I felt I had benefitted so much from the peer support that I had received and I was so inspired by my peer worker that I realised, this is what I want to do, and actually, this is one of the few things I maybe can do – you don't need a degree to be a peer support worker because your expertise comes through your experience. Uplifted by this revelation, I started searching for peer support jobs but quickly discovered that they asked you to have completed peer support training already.

With this new knowledge in mind, I began

searching for peer support training courses. I knew that some local Minds ran peer support training so I started looking at all the local Minds within reasonable distance to me and scouring their websites to see if they did anything related to peer support. I finally came across Kensington and Chelsea Mind and found that they were running just what I was looking for – a peer support training course, so I sent them an email and got myself signed up for their October/November course.

I attended the course and found it amazing – it was difficult and emotional at times but also educational and powerful, and I learnt so much. We looked at what peer support is in a mental health context, how it benefits both parties, and how we can deliver it. We looked at communication - how to listen actively and respond empathetically – in addition to boundaries, safeguarding, and group dynamics.

Being a Peer Support Worker

At the end of the course I was told there was an opportunity for Peer Support work with the Community Living Well Peer Support groups so I applied and began working in February 2018. For the first couple of months I only worked a couple of hours a week, but every few months this increased, and I now work 3 days a week. The role has improved my self-esteem, given me a sense

“I get those same benefits of feeling connected, understood and being part of a community”

of purpose and taught me skills which will help me throughout my personal and professional life. Starting conversations, speaking on the phone and meeting new people all used to be anxiety-inducing tasks (and don't get me wrong – sometimes they still are), but through this role I have learnt that when I put my mind to it, I am able to do things that I never thought I would be capable of doing.

Being a peer worker has allowed me to utilise my experiences in a way that will support others, as well as recognising my conditions for the positives they can produce. The role has also enabled me to help other people who are suffering, which is a big passion of mine. I don't want anyone to feel like they are going through a mental health illness alone. I feel better myself after spending time with others experiencing mental health difficulties – I get those same benefits of feeling connected and understood and being part of a community – and that is why I love being a peer support worker.

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

To refer to the Peer Support service, please fill out the form available here: communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/ or call 020 3317 4200.

If you are interested in our Peer Support training course then please email peersupport@kcmind.org.uk to receive updates.





Finding Support Online

Trying to access online help and support for your mental health can initially be daunting and overwhelming. With an abundance of resources available at the click of a button, it can be difficult to know how to find reliable information from a trustworthy source or locate a service that is the right fit for your needs. The first step you should take is to visit your GP, but you can also use online tools and indexes which make information more accessible, allowing you to learn from other people's experiences and ask questions you may feel uncomfortable talking about in person.

Local Health Services

Find services within your area which you can access freely and conveniently from health organisations, local charities, community groups or drop-in services. Mental health is unique to each individual and there is no one size fits all model of support.

You can try out a range of activities, from mindfulness sessions and crafts groups to theatre or lunch clubs, so that you can find out which work best for you. On the right are some websites you can use to search for things you can do near to where you live or work.

-  Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Directory - rbkc.gov.uk/az/records.asp
-  Kensington and Chelsea Mind Directory - directory.kcmind.org.uk/Pages/Subjects.aspx
-  Kensington and Chelsea Social Council Self-Care Directory - kcsc.org.uk/self-care-directory
-  One Westminster - onewestminster.org.uk/directory

These resource directories are designed as 'onestop portals' to help individuals and professionals find services in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster which promote and support mental health and




wellbeing. They allow you to narrow your search through a list of subject and category options.

Health Help App Now

This new NHS app lists common symptoms and offers suggestions for treatment, based on your location and the time of day.

Health Information




Search the internet for information about your mental health issue(s), symptoms and treatment options. You may find researching your problems empowering as it can help you to feel proactive with your recovery.

-  NHS Direct - nhs.uk/conditions/
-  Mind - mind.org.uk
-  Time to Change - time-to-change.org.uk

Other People's Experiences

Find stories shared by people who have had similar experiences online. Reading other people's accounts can help

validate your own experiences, normalise your symptoms and encourage help-seeking behaviour. Online resources may also be useful if you feel socially isolated or less able to engage in face-to-face support.

-  BeyondBlue - beyondblue.org.au
-  Men's Health Forum - menshealthforum.org.uk
-  Elefriends - elefriends.org.uk
-  SANE - sane.org.uk

Wellbeing Related Materials

You can search online to find new tips to help manage your wellbeing from the comfort of your own home. For some people, being anonymous online can help overcome obstacles preventing them from seeking help.

Body and Mind CNWL Quarterly Magazine - cnwl.nhs.uk
Community Living Well Self-Help Resources - communitylivingwell.co.uk
Happiful Magazine - happiful.com



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s the world of the internet continues to expand, our reliance and dependency on it grows stronger. An online presence can be a force for good as it can help us connect in many ways, allowing us to hear others' experiences, express ourselves, challenge myths or raise awareness. Through online communities we can build support systems based on common commitment and interests - both of which have been shown to decrease depression. Despite all these benefits, always remember that maintaining an online presence is not without its risks. Below are some tips on how to stay vigilant when surfing the net so that you can minimise any negative effects that may result from frequent or inappropriate usage.



Staying Safe Online

1. Triggering Content

- ☐ To avoid triggering content - there are services available that block harmful content and trigger warnings. Warn Me is an app that is available for the Chrome browser which allows you to set up alerts for your chosen set of triggering words. Likewise, Soothe works to help block out undesired content from your browsing experience.
- ☐ If triggering content has already been viewed, have a self-care plan for when unexpected trauma reminders hit. Write down the strategies that have worked for you in the past and keep a copy with you.
- ☐ Breathing during and after a triggering episode is very important for restoring the body's equilibrium, particularly if the response has been heavily emotional. Inducing a physical calm can spur on a state of mental calm and bring you back to the present moment.

2. Online Privacy Settings

- ☐ Think about who will see what you share.
- ☐ Visit Stay Safe Online, an online hub that provides direct links to update your privacy settings on popular devices and online services such as: Amazon, Google Mail, Youtube, Instagram and Facebook.

3. Participate in a Digital Detox

- ☐ Try to take regular breaks from the digital world. The act of 'unplugging' may soothe any internet-induced anxiety you may be experiencing and lift your spirit as you allow yourself to take more notice of the world around you.
- ☐ To combat poor sleep cycles, try not to use your phone after 9pm. If you do need to use it, download the app Twilight which provides a red sheen setting that reduces the blue light transmitted from your phone.

What effects can the internet have on our mental health?

Compare and Despair Phenomenon

Spending prolonged periods of time on social media sites can mean that we end up comparing ourselves to others. The relentless emphasis on promoting a 'perfect' lifestyle can trigger feelings of inadequacy and insecurity and lower our self-esteem.

Triggering Material

Unintentionally viewing online posts with graphic images that may be related to a previous trauma can be distressing and upsetting.

Feeling anxious or stressed

You might feel overwhelmed by the pressure to be constantly 'present' by checking your social media accounts, replying to messages and participating in online conversations as and when they are taking place.

Difficulty sleeping

Excessive online scrolling late at night can disrupt your sleeping pattern and negatively impact on your quality of sleep.

Feeling lonely

You may find that using an online community doesn't enhance your social connectivity or provide you with the feelings of warmth and companionship associated with friendships forged offline.

Local Services Directory

There are lots of other services situated within both Kensington and Chelsea and Queen's Park and Paddington. We've included details of some of them below.

The Clement James Centre

The Clement James Centre aim to help everyone in the community to reach their full potential. This is achieved through support in the fields of employment, education and wellbeing.

Their employment support service helps people overcome barriers towards work, by assisting with interview preparation and job applications. The education services include English language, maths and ICT classes as well as career workshops, and a summer arts programme. The wellbeing services include a gardening group, fitness classes, cooking sessions and creative workshops.

Who is it for? Kensington and Chelsea residents

Website: clementjames.org

Email: reception@clement-james.org

Phone: 020 7221 8810



SMART Works

SMART Works offer a free 2-part interview styling and coaching support service to any unemployed woman with an upcoming job interview.

Appropriate for all ages, shapes and sizes, their outfits are professional, stylish, brand new or nearly new. Their interview coaching consists of a 1-hour bespoke one-to-one session from a professional interview coach, and over 60% of their clients receive job offers.

Who is it for? Any unemployed woman

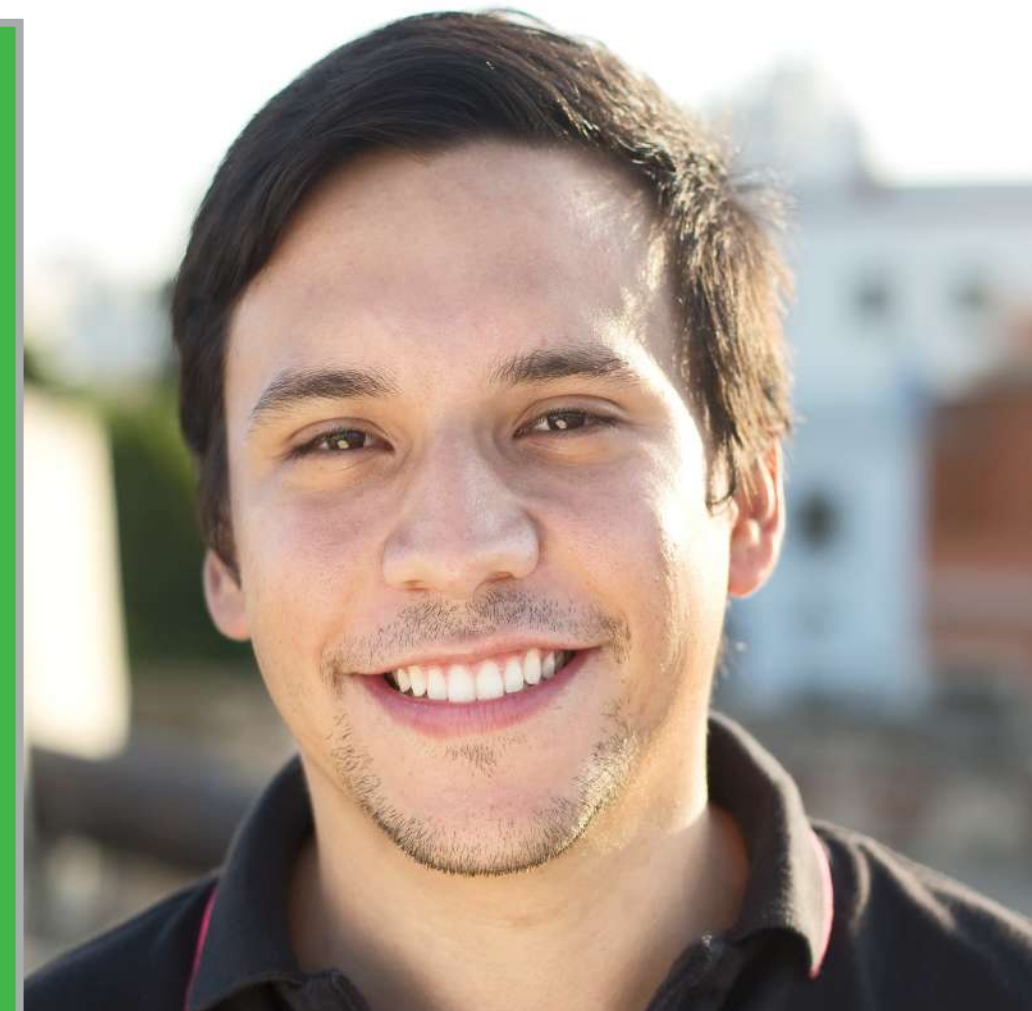
Phone: There is no referral form, all that is required is a phone call to 020 8962 6586 (Ladbroke Grove) or 020 7288 1770 (Islington).

Advocacy Choir

Interested in group singing? Join the Advocacy Project Choir for a chance to work with known performers and blend your voice with others to make beautiful sounds together. Singing can offer many unexplored health benefits, as choir members gain confidence and a real sense of achievement when they join. As well as having a great time, the choir aim to reduce social isolation, promote wellbeing and create greater community cohesion. You don't need to be a Pavarotti or a Mariah Carey to get involved as there are no auditions and attendees with all levels of experience are welcomed.

Who is it for? Kensington & Chelsea/Westminster residents over the age of 19 with lived experience of mental health difficulties

Location: Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, Queen's Park, W10 4JL



Advocacy Training

Are you unemployed and looking for training opportunities? The Advocacy Project Training Course will provide you with the knowledge and skills to empower people with mental health difficulties to make positive and informed life choices.

Who is it for? Anyone and everyone!

Email: choir@advocacyproject.org.uk

Phone: 07984 353 961



Community
LivingWell

Working together for your
wellbeing

Locations

CLW North Hub
St Charles Centre for Health
and Wellbeing, Exmoor
Street, W10 6DZ

CLW South Hubs
Violet Melchett Health
Centre, Community Living
Well, 2nd Floor, 30 Flood
Walk, Chelsea, SW3 5RR

Gertrude Street
15 Gertrude Street
London, SW10 0JN

Contact Details

communitylivingwell.co.uk
020 3317 4200 | cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net

Community Living Well is not a crisis service. If you are worried about your mental health or the mental health of a friend or family member then please contact the Single Point of Access on 0800 0234 650 for help, advice or support over the phone, 24 hours a day.