

9 May 2022

Write Mind

Mental Health Awareness Week edition

The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is loneliness. This edition of Write Mind spotlights how Mind in Bradford helps people struggling with loneliness and the power of having someone to talk to.

Befriending service relaunches to whole of Bradford and Craven

Mind in Bradford's befriending service, Community Companions, has re-opened for referrals and is now available to anyone aged 18+ living in Bradford and Craven.

Face-to-face visits have also been re-introduced for the first time since the pandemic began.

Community Companions supports individuals who are socially isolated, lonely or alone to access local community groups and activities.

Support is delivered by befriending volunteers, who have helped over 100 people in the last year.

In the last 12 months the service changed to support individuals aged 18+, lowering the age from 55+. The service only operated in Baildon and central Bradford and was completely telephone-based.

The service's re-launch will also include a tiered approach to find out what each individual wants to get out of befriending.

Volunteers will support this by setting goals with their matches, and support will be offered for three to 12 months.

Now, there is the option to meet face-to-face in the community too in Bradford and Craven districts.

To find out more or make a referral, visit: mindinbradford.org.uk/support-for-you/community-companions/.

To apply to become a volunteer befriend, visit: mindinbradford.org.uk/community-companions/.

TEA 'N' TALK groups launch

Mind in Bradford has launched Tea 'n' Talk groups for anyone who might be feeling isolated, lonely or alone.

The volunteer-led groups will be held monthly at Bread + Roses, a cafe in Bradford, and Kipling Court, a retirement home in Bradford. Mind in Bradford has also partnered with Chatty Café to run a monthly group at Idle Lounge Coffee House.

Volunteer Coordinator Donna Hudson said: "Whether you're on your own, with a friend, a parent with your baby, young or old, all are welcome and there's no need to book."

"Do come along and pull up a seat, get a drink, a biscuit, and have a chat with others!"

To find out when the next groups are, visit: mindinbradford.org.uk/news-blog/event-directory/.



Creative Corner

Finding words

By Roger Geeson and the Creative Writing group

The creative writing group at Mind in Bradford has been doing creative things with words every Monday afternoon since we restarted as a face-to-face group in mid-February.

We have been enjoying having a go at all sorts of writing – stories, descriptions, memories, poems, observations, letters, songs. We have been finding our words.

Words are free. They are everywhere. We use them all the time – for thinking, for talking – and for writing. This is what some of our group members have said about words:

Words can be doors and windows. Windows to escape through. Windows into the imagination, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary. Doors to come in through. Doors opening into our everyday experiences, making the ordinary make sense.

Words can be signposts, they can be traffic lights, places to stop and go. Words can be the past, the present or the future. Words can be a lot of fun.

Words can be hot or cold, hard or soft, sweet or sour. Words are here, there and everywhere, near and far, lost and found, something and nothing (summat and nowt), high and low, then and now, swings and roundabouts, bricks and mortar, bread and butter, hopes and fears, strange and familiar, open and closed, full and empty, fast and loose, endings and beginnings.

Words can come and go, sing and dance, duck and weave, ebb and flow. They can be you or anybody else you want them to be.

The Creative Writing group is a friendly, informal group. We combine talking and writing. We are always very happy to welcome new members. So why not come along?

Find out what you can do – and what writing can do for you. Find your words. Every Monday, face to face, from 1pm to 3pm. To come along, call 01274 730815 or email admin@mindinbradford.org.uk.

Inert Conspiracy

By a Mind in Bradford client

So often in life things we have break down
They come to a stop at a critical moment
As a child the toy that explodes when friends come
That moment always brings sadness and frustration
This always happens to embarrass you
Oh, you conniving contraptions

The ingredients gathered together for baking
The birthday ticking down, closer and closer
Then as the eggs went into the mixture, “Crackle-Crak-Phut”
Smoke starts pouring out of the casing
The mixer is switched off it’s kaput
Oh, you conniving contraptions

The word processing machine that you always rely on
It knows everything does everything it's so clever
The autosave is one of its saving graces
It is there working away no matter what. “p'donk” Blank screen!
System hiccup, three hours work lost, it hadn't backed up.
Oh, you conniving contraptions.

Love

By Paul Foulds

Love is like a good dream

Love fills the silence in between

Love is like the colours of the flowers

On a summers day

Love is gentle passionate and gay

Love is like the stars in the sky

And the moon shining bright

Love is like smiling eyes.





that expression said so many times by many various people and it's true.

I can be at work or with friends in town or at a park and when my mood is on the slide, I feel so disconnected to the people around me, my friends, my family.

I'm already aware of this feeling I have on the top of my head which feels like a great big brick that gets heavier and heavier. It's almost like a fog that descends and this invisible brick that weighs down on top of me becomes heavier.

You go along with people clinging on to hope that things will improve and you'll feel better. Sometimes I do, then sometimes I don't.

It becomes exhausting keeping up that pretense, to try to remain strong-minded and determined to keep fighting it.

My sleep patterns become disturbed, my appetite becomes challenging, my concentration becomes concerning and my energy is zapped.

I can't be bothered and I've found myself going from feeling lonely to being alone; off sick from

Loneliness

By client and volunteer Ian Lamb

I could be surrounded by people who I know and love but yet, still feel lonely. I've heard

work, not going out, not washing and changing my clothes to not getting out of bed.

That fog becomes like a thick blanket. That brick upon my head is now so heavy, I can't think clearly. I'm in hell and then I feel nothing! ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

Other than that heavy feeling inside my head, it's like everything else has vanished. I've disappeared in this black hole, like a void of nothing.

I should talk, I need to talk but I don't want to talk. I avoid people, talking, answering the phone or even text messages. It's all been sucked out of me. Now I am on my own! Because who's going to understand all of that?

Gratefully, there are places to go to. It does require a great deal of strength because this a battle, especially as you're either ringing or visiting somewhere that you've never been to before.

I don't know how I managed to get myself to Mind in Bradford but I did. I'm so glad I did because there are people there who do understand it.

It isn't the quick fix we all wish it would be. But I know I'm somewhere that has people who have similar experiences which has helped me knowing that I'm not the only one.

And with the right help and support, you'll get there too.

Read in full: mindinbradford.org.uk/news/loneliness-blog/.



Celebrating befriending

Mind in Bradford's befriending service, Community Companions, **supported over 100 people** in the last year struggling with loneliness. Here's what a couple of them had to say:

"It means the world to me to have someone to talk to" - anonymous client



"I get along with my befriend like I've known them forever." - client



Who's Who? Donna Hudson

What's your role at Mind in Bradford?

Volunteer Coordinator, recruiting, training and supporting volunteers across all services and running the Mind in Bradford (MiB) befriending service Community Companions. I have now been at MiB for three years.

What have you done previously?

I worked at the Yorkshire Building Society (YBS) for 12 years. I started in the branch network on the counter, then moved up to head office to work in the Community Team, looking after the Charity Partners. Before that, I was Assistant Manager in a restaurant.

Why did you want to work at Mind in Bradford?

I had heard a lot about Mind and being made redundant really makes you think about your wellbeing. I also had a keen interest in befriending and its impact after processing lots of deaths at YBS - you really see the impact of those left behind and the loneliness.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Speaking to all the different people. I love to get to know my volunteers, being out building relationships,



networking and making people smile, but also really enjoy the volunteer induction sessions.

What do you like to do outside work?

I am part of the 'Our House' family, a group of people who all follow the same DJ. We Zoom some weekends, dancing round our living rooms and also have events in the flesh! I also bake and love going walking with my French Bulldog, Frank.



"I am taking part in Carry the Burden to bring awareness to the silent struggle so many of us go through with our mental health." - Chloe, fundraiser

Carry the Burden is back!

Carry the Burden is back for 2022! Mind in Bradford is asking the people of Bradford district and Craven to carry any item for 24 hours in recognition of the invisible burden a mental health problem can be.

Take part any time before the end of May to raise awareness and vital funds for your local mental health charity.

Scan the QR code to sign up! →

Or visit: mindinbradford.org.uk/carry-the-burden



Mind in Bradford's Walk & Talk group

This newsletter is produced by clients and volunteers and does not necessarily represent the views of Mind in Bradford. To submit, e-mail copy to communications@mindinbradford.org.uk.

To talk to us about your mental health, call Guide-Line free on 08801 884 884 12pm-12am or chat online at www.mindinbradford.org.uk 12pm-12am. For urgent help, call First Response on 0800 952 1181. You may be referred to our safe space The Sanctuary, open 6pm-1am.