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Mental Health Helplines

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
0845 769 7555

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk
0300222 1122

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk
08444 775 774

BEAT

www.b-eat.co.uk
0800 801 0711

Bipolar UK

www.bipolaruk.org.uk
0333 323 3880

CALM

www.thecalmzone.net

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
0844 477 9400

Depression Alliance

www.depressionalliance.org

Family Lives

www.familylives.org.uk
0808 800 2222

Gamblers Anonymous

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk
0845 769 7555

Mencap

www.mencap.org.uk
0808 808 1111

Men's Health Forum

www.menshealthforum.org.uk
020 7922 7908

Mental Health Foundation

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind

www.mind.org.uk
0300 123 3393

Narcotics Anonymous

www.ukna.org
0300 999 1212

No Panic

www.nopanic.org.uk
0844 967 4848

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000

OCD Action

www.ocdaction.org.uk
0845 390 6232

OCD UK

www.ocduk.org
0845 1203778

PAPYRUS

Young Suicide Prevention Charity
www.papyrus-uk.org
0800 068 4141

Relate

www.relate.org.uk
0300 100 1234

Refuge

www.refuge.org.uk
0808 802 5544

Rethink Mental Illness

www.rethink.org
0300 5000 927

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk
116 123

Sane

www.sane.org.uk
sanemail@org.uk
0845 767 8000

Shout

www.giveusashout.org
Text SHOUT to 85258

Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org
0808 168 9111

Young Minds

www.youngminds.org.uk
0808 802 5544

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Follow us on social media:



Mental health needs you

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Aspire2. Enjoy some well-earned rest!

Firstly, I'd like to thank you for reading this digital newspaper. The idea was for this to be our first physical copy but unfortunately, we have been let down by our sponsor at the eleventh hour. Read more about that below this column.

Secondly, I hope you and your family have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year and you're able to get the much-needed rest that so many of us find so little time for. Our mental health relies on stress-relief and down-time.

As we head into the new year following the results of the general election, it is vital that we don't forget the needs of those with mental health conditions. By now, it is clear that the election was won on one policy alone: Brexit.

While it's understandable that many are passionate about seeing Brexit done (or undone) in the way they wanted, it is worrying that this issue completely dominated the election when so many other aspects of society are in crisis.

Take, for example, the NHS. Our country relies on this incredible service which is sadly in freefall. Mental healthcare is in trouble if the NHS is. If we're going to

struggle to get help with physical health conditions, what hope do we have for mental health ones?

As reported in this month's Aspire2, almost one in five under-18s wait over four hours in A&E for mental health care. We also learned earlier this year that people are being sent miles from home because of a mental health beds shortage and that we are experiencing a national shortage of psychiatrists. On top of this, the suicide rate rose this year to a level not recorded since 2002.

If things are going to get better, mental health services and the NHS as a whole desperately need funding.

But it's more than that. The fact that Brexit was the main policy people voted for means that as a nation, we are not taking health concerns seriously enough. This simply has to change if mental health in the UK is to improve. We need to continue the fantastic work of raising awareness of mental illness and make sure the new government knows how vital it is that we make progress.

Sam Atkin, Senior Editor.

Can you help us?

Providing news and views, bringing together charities, signposting services and publishing helpful and interesting articles, Aspire2 is a project to put mental health on the frontline of public consciousness.

We aimed to do this by launching our first FREE physical-copy newspaper this month. Everything was in place: the printers, the distributors and the sponsor who would help us fund the free newspaper.

As mentioned, the sponsor pulled out at the last moment and so we were left with the only option of cancelling our physical launch and making this a

digital-only newspaper once again. This was devastating and showed more than ever how important it is that businesses display a real care and understanding of mental health.

Here's where you can help us move forward to that vital first physical-copy newspaper

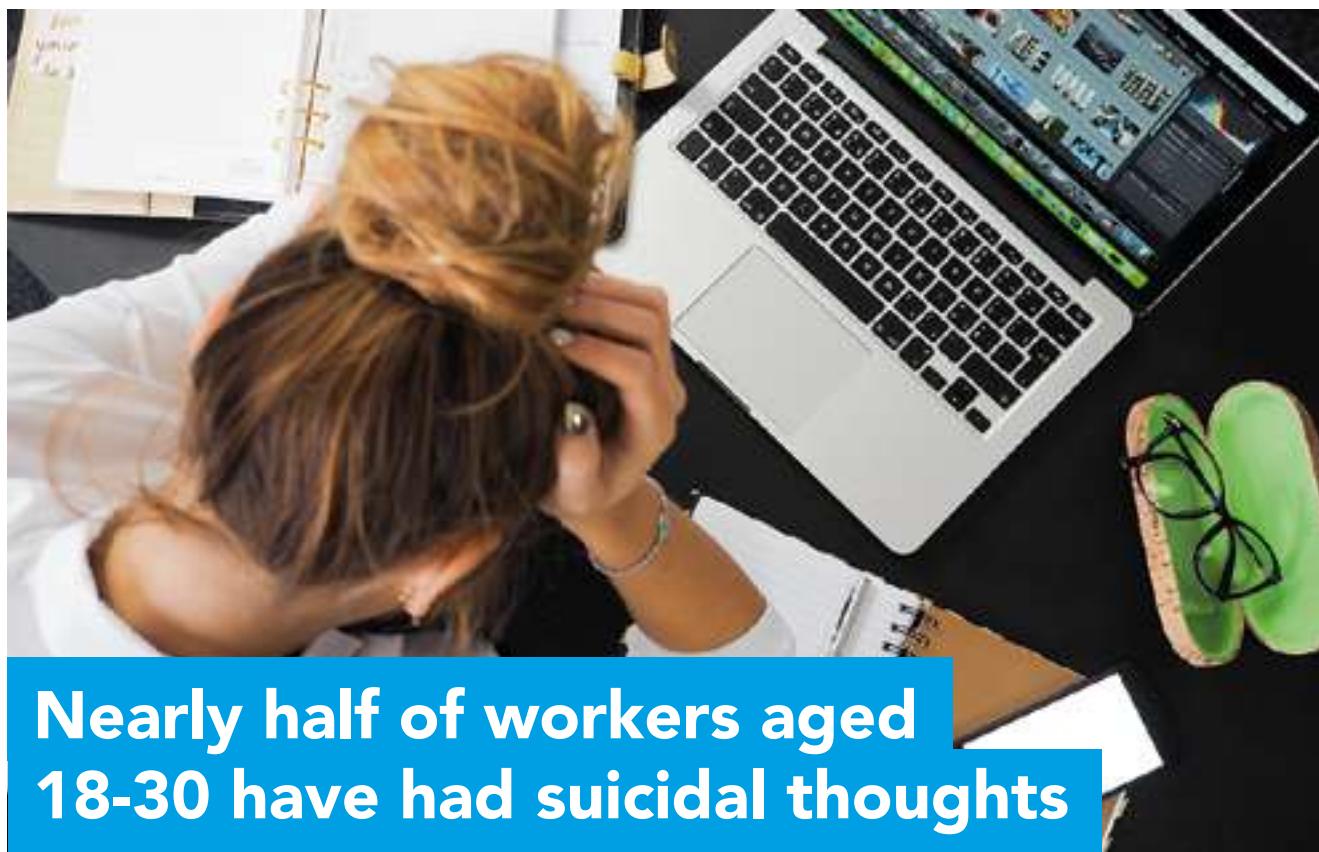
We are still looking for sponsors for our newspapers. If you would like to get involved and show your business' support for mental health, please contact Peter at peter@aspire2.org.uk to discuss how you can help us, with a range of options including advertising and editorial.

We support...



If you would like your mental health charity to appear here, contact Peter at peter@aspire2.org.uk

aspire²



Nearly half of workers aged 18-30 have had suicidal thoughts

Survey finds that young people also feel more pressure in their lives than older colleagues

Research on nearly 4,000 people over two years has found that 48% of workers aged 18-30 had experienced suicidal thoughts or feelings, compared to 35% of older colleagues.

The survey by Accenture on behalf of This Can Happen (a conference on positive mental health in the workplace) also found that 45% of 18-30 year-old

workers admitted to avoiding talking about their mental health while at work, compared to 22% of older employees.

On top of this, 40% of younger workers said the pressure of their job affected them on a daily basis.

Barbara Harvey, managing director and mental health lead for Accenture

UK said: "It's clear that many young people face challenges with their mental health before they enter the workforce and while working, and that they are affected more often than their senior peers. Therefore, mental health must be a priority issue for employers."

Businesses need to ensure there is "an open, supportive work environment which enables employees of all ages to look after their mental health, support one another, and perform at their best," Harvey said.

The study highlighted the importance of a supportive working environment, with 41% of workers in such workplaces experiencing mental health challenges compared to 65% in less supportive companies.

This Can Happen founder Zoe Sinclair said: "With this survey we hope that many employers will examine their recruitment, induction and management styles to support younger members of their workforce."

"Undertaking large scale insightful research programmes that highlight the challenges faced by those entering the workforce is an integral part of what This Can Happen and Accenture are working towards."

Help for suicidal thoughts

If you're feeling like you want to die, it's important to tell someone.

Help and support is available right now if you need it. You don't have to struggle with difficult feelings alone.

Phone a helpline

These free helplines are there to help when you're feeling down or desperate. Unless it says otherwise, they're open 24 hours a day, every day.

IMPORTANT: If your life is in danger call 999.

Samaritans – for everyone

Call 116 123

Email jo@samaritans.org

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Call 0800 58 58 58 – 5pm to midnight every day.

Papyrus – for people under 35

Call 0800 068 41 41 – Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm, weekends 2pm to 10pm, bank holidays 2pm to 5pm

Text 07786 209697

Email pat@papyrus-uk.org

Childline – for children and young people under 19

Call 0800 1111 – the number won't show up on your phone bill

The Silver Line – for older people

Call 0800 4 70 80 90

Talk to someone you trust
Let family or friends know what's going on for you. They may be able to offer support and help keep you safe.

There's no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings – starting the conversation is what's important.

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need us
Talk to us,
we'll listen

Chris D'Elia/Photographer/Samaritans

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We're here if you need us.

samaritans.org

A registered charity

Call free day or night on

116 123

Email

jo@samaritans.org

Children with suspected autism wait over 19 weeks for first mental health appointments



New data has suggested that some patients who are thought to have autism have waited around four months to have their first mental health appointments.

This is despite the government's advice that people suspected to have the condition should be assessed by mental health services within three months of being referred to 'avoid impairing an individual's development and placing pressure on families and carers.'

NHS trusts said the waits were caused by an "unprecedented demand" following newly-published statistics showing patients at 10 out of 25 English health trusts waited an average of 137 days after referral – against a target of 91 days – in spring 2018.

Jane Harris from the National Autistic Society (NAS) said: "Long waits can be traumatic for autistic children, adults and their families, who are often already vulnerable."

"For the first time - after years of campaigning - we have NHS statistics on how long children and adults are waiting for an autism assessment in England," she said. "It's an important first step but the data itself is deeply disappointing," she added.

The NAS had been asking for a detailed breakdown of waiting times but said the

newly released figures were "simply not good enough to give a clear picture of how long children and adults are waiting for an autism diagnosis across the country."

Indeed, these average waiting times relate only to around 1,430 out of 5,200 patients.

"We've been calling for national autism diagnosis data for years, because that's how we can make sure that services are meeting needs and accountable to autistic people and their families. But what's been published isn't enough to give us the national picture at all," Harris said.

Southern Health Trust, which operates in Hampshire, reported an average waiting time of 221 days for patients in spring 2018. They said the demand for services had grown by more than 20% since 2015.

"Whilst we have received a slight increase in funding during this time, the increased awareness of autism and subsequent demand has not resulted in as big a reduction in our waiting lists as we'd hoped," said Rob Guile from the trust.

"We agree that the current waiting times are not acceptable for local people," he added.

FA Cup third round ties to kick off late for mental health campaign

Matches in the third round of this season's FA Cup will kick off a minute late as part of a campaign Heads Up and the NHS' Every Mind Matters, which aims to promote better mental health.

This is in hope that it will encourage fans to 'Take a Minute' to think about their own mental wellbeing.

The FA's chief executive, Mark Bullingham, said: "While delaying kick-off times by 60 seconds is a simple idea, it provides a powerful platform for us and our Heads Up charity partners to deliver a really important message on mental health."

"We know men in particular can be reluctant to talk about the subject, so it is important we use football as a vehicle to stress the importance of mental fitness," he added.

Godric Smith, chair of the Heads Up campaign, said: "The FA Cup is a competition for everyone - for clubs big and small - and we want to use its power to help show that we all have mental health and that we can all take a minute to focus on how we can start to improve it."

Each of the 32 matches will be played over the weekend of 3-6 January.





Questions
about
mental
health?

Mind Infoline: **0300 123 3393**

Text 86463 | info@mind.org.uk

Open Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm.

We provide information on
mental health problems,
where to get help, treatment
and advocacy.

mind.org.uk/info



Mind is a registered charity (219830). Registered company in England number 424438.

Depression 'five times more likely' in young women subjected to sexism

Research shows "a clear and damaging link" between sexism and young women's mental health



A new report by the Young Women Trust and UCL has found that women aged 16-30 who have endured sexism are five times more likely to have clinical depression.

The survey of 2995 16-30 year-olds found that women aged 16-30 are most likely to experience sexism at school, at work, on public transport or in the home. Those who were subjected to sexism had higher levels of psychological distress for as many as four years after.

Sophie Walker, chief executive of Young Women's Trust said there was a "clear and damaging link" between sexism and mental health in young women. She also called for more specialist young women's mental health services and investment in actioning violence against young women and girls.

"What too often is dismissed as young women lacking confidence is, in reality, a crisis in mental health caused by a sexist society. Sexism is deeply affecting young women's lives, their economic freedom and their health," she said.

"That is why the next government must take urgent and concerted action to prevent yet more young women from experiencing sexual harassment and abuse, and the long-term harm this can cause. It's not just about recognition of the damage sexism inflicts."

"We need mainstream services supporting young women experiencing mental ill-health from having sexism thrown in their faces day after day to be able to sensitively ask them about their experiences of sexist discrimination, abuse and violence, and then provide appropriate support and signposting. As one of our Advisory Panel Members highlighted in the report, 'sexism sits in the core of you and if you try and ignore it and don't address it, it rots away and the problems permeate to other areas of your life,' she concluded.

Vicki Nash of Mind, said: "We know that discrimination, harassment and trauma of any kind can lead to someone developing mental health problems. This report shows how specific experiences of sexism can have a real, detrimental impact on mental wellbeing and should be taken into account when women seek support."

"This is also why it is vital that people are able to access the mental health services they need when they need them. We hear every day from women with mental health problems who have struggled to get the right help even though one in five women experience a common mental health problem, such as depression, and experiences of sexism can increase the likelihood of this," she concluded.

Help for depression

If you're experiencing depression, caused by sexism or otherwise, there are people you can talk to. The first step is to contact your GP, but other services can help too.

Mind, YoungMinds (for under-18s), Samaritans and Sane are all able to help with questions you may have about the condition.

You may even be suffering without realising. Take a moment each day to assess how you are feeling. If something seems different or wrong, you may need to speak to your GP.

We believe that no-one
affected by mental illness
should face crisis, distress
or despair completely alone

SANEline

0300 304 7000

4.30pm – 10.30pm daily



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SANE offers emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental health problems through our helpline, Textcare and our online Support Forum where people share their feelings and experiences.



One in seven children develop a mental illness according to major new study

Study also finds girls more susceptible to schizophrenia, OCD and mood disorders than boys

One in seven people under the age of 18 will develop a mental illness such as depression, anxiety, ADHD or schizophrenia – more than the number with cancer, diabetes or AIDS combined.

The study, published in JAMA Psychiatry, is based on findings from 1.3 million Danish children monitored from birth to the age of 18.

It found that 15.5% of boys and 14.6% of girls were diagnosed with a mental illness before the age of 18.

The study also found that girls were more susceptible to schizophrenia, OCD and mood disorders than boys, and that anxiety was the most commonly diagnosed mental illness in girls, who were also more than six times more likely to have an eating disorder.

ADHD was the most common condition for boys, who are more prone to mental illness at a younger age.

Corresponding author Professor Soren Dalsgaard, a child psychologist at Aarhus University in Denmark, said: "Worldwide, this nationwide study is the first, to our knowledge, of the incidence



of the full spectrum of diagnosed mental disorders in childhood and adolescence."

"These findings suggest precise estimates of rates and risks of all mental disorders during childhood and adolescence [and] are essential for future planning of services and care and for research," he added.

"Knowledge about the epidemiology of mental disorders in children and adolescents is essential for research and planning of health services," Professor Dalsgaard concluded.

If you are concerned about the mental health of your child or another young person, YoungMinds has a Parents Helpline.



Read something you'd like to talk about?

We want to hear from you!

Our 'Letters to the Editor' section is your opportunity to speak about mental health; your experiences, your opinions on our stories or your frustrations. Praise breakthroughs, celebrate successes and more!

If you'd like to get involved, email our editorial team on:

editor@aspire2.org.uk

Let's talk about mental health!



Parents Helpline

Need some advice about your child's behaviour or emotions?

Contact YoungMinds'
Parents Helpline
0808 802 5544
youngminds.org.uk/parents

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Having a mental health crisis?



Text YM to 85258 for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

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Almost one in five under-18s wait over four hours in A&E for mental health care



This is despite the imposed maximum wait time of four hours

Young people experiencing a mental health crisis, including patients who are potentially suicidal, are having to wait for over four hours to be seen in accident and emergency.

New NHS figures from hospital trusts supplied to the Labour Party showed that 17.8% of people aged 17 or younger waited for more than four hours to be seen for psychiatric problems such as depression and self-harm.

Emma Thomas, chief executive of YoungMinds, said long waits can make someone in crisis feel even worse, and increase the risk of harm: "We work with young people who have waited months for mental health support and who have started to self-harm or become suicidal, who then go to A&E because they don't know where else to turn."

"But despite the best efforts of staff, it's often a stressful and frightening environment, and not somewhere a desperate child or teenager should have to wait for hours before getting help."

Thomas said young people need easier and better access to mental health services: "If young people do reach crisis point, there need to be places they can go instead of A&E, where they can get the help they need in a space that feels safe", she explained.

In total last year, 26,593 children and young people aged 17 or under went to A&E as a result of mental health issues. If the figures in the report from the 65 trusts that supplied data were replicated nationwide, almost 5,000 young people waited more than four hours to be seen for their mental health.

"Young people should have the support they need for their mental health to prevent them from reaching crisis point and no child should be faced with long waits for help in a crisis", said Labour's Barbara Keeley, who obtained the figures.

NHS' Long Term Plan

NHS England says by 2023-2024 everyone in England, regardless of age, will be able to access mental health crisis services, available around the clock as part of the 111 helpline.

The plans include "24/7 provision for children and young people that combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions" and crisis resolution home treatment services for adults, as well as "a range of complementary and alternative crisis services to A&E and admission within all local mental health crisis pathways."

Wales: "Life-changing" mental health service to be expanded to GP surgeries

A mental health service at three hospitals in north Wales is set to be expanded to GP surgeries.

The "life-changing" I Can centres at Glan Clwyd, Gwynedd and Wrexham Maelor hospitals, launched as a trial this year, offer support to patients in A&E departments who may not need medical treatment or a bed.

The scheme will now be rolled out in GP surgeries and community centres in the hope that more people will be able to get support closer to home. So far, over 2,500 people have used the centres at the hospitals in Wales.

The I Can centres employ both volunteers and paid staff, many of whom have experience of mental health issues.

Shannon Doherty was helped by I Can staff in Wrexham Maelor Hospital in March and now works as a paid supervisor there.

"It was just a chance to be real and open rather than looked down on and judged. It's nice that the staff and volunteers have lived experience because they see it first-hand and know what it's like," she told the BBC.

"It's been really life changing and it feels amazing to be appreciated for the lived experience I have. It's given me that drive to strive for better, to work my way up, and to make sure that others don't go through what I went through," Shannon concluded.

Lesley Singleton from the health board said: "I think we're encouraging people to talk about their mental health much more. What we're seeing then, is more people presenting with those problems and inevitably they're going to turn up at night time, to A&E, where the lights are on, to get some help."

News review: Autumn and Winter 2019

2019 was a hugely significant year for mental health. Distressing statistics and bad-news stories were common and the term 'mental health crisis' was bandied about more than once. With British politics in turmoil over issues like Brexit and the environment the growing need for better mental health services was often ignored.

This roundup of stories published by Aspire2 between August and December 2019 demonstrates why that trend cannot continue into 2020.

Suicide rate at 16-year high in UK

It was reported in September that 6,507 suicides were recorded last year, an increase of 12% on the previous year and the highest rate since 2002.

Suicides in boys and men significantly increased, as well as in women under 25.

Men still accounted for three quarters of all suicides in the UK.

122,000 NHS patients wait eight weeks or more for mental health appointments

In September, it was revealed that people seeking help with mental health conditions are being kept on "hidden waiting lists."

More than 122,000 people were made to wait more than eight weeks to see a doctor following their initial appointment, when the nationally-set target is a maximum of six weeks.



**Read the full story in:
October's Aspire2**

NHS Every Mind Matters initiative launched

A new government campaign aimed at supporting people with mental health conditions was launched in October.

The aim was to empower people to practically manage their symptoms to stop their mental health escalating, easing pressure on clinical services.

The move came under criticism by many who felt the campaign showed the government didn't understand the investment needed in mental health services.

Read the full story in: November's Aspire2



'Alarming' shortage of psychiatrists as one in 10 UK consultant posts unfilled

In October, a report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists found that 9.6% of consultant psychiatrist positions in the UK are unfilled, a number which has almost doubled since 2013.

These gaps in the workforce for psychiatry "come at a time of soaring demand for mental healthcare, with a shortage of psychiatrists contributing to the lengthy waits for treatment many patients face," the report warned.

Read the full story in: November's Aspire2

News review: Autumn and Winter 2019

'Terrible suffering' for children with learning disabilities in mental health hospitals

In November it was reported that the human rights of children with learning disabilities and autism are being breached in mental health hospitals, where they are enduring 'terrible suffering.'

Patients suffered poor care and abuse, and their parents and families were often ignored by staff.

The report called for changes in the mental health act so that fewer patients were detained.



**Read the full story in:
October's Aspire2**

Hundreds of mental health patients sent far from home because of beds shortage

A report released in November by the Royal College of Psychiatrists found that between 700 and 800 patients were sent to hospitals miles away from their homes because their local units didn't have enough space.

The treatment of these patients was described as "shameful" and it was suggested that sending them to units away from home actually makes their conditions worse, rather than better.

**Read the full story in:
December's Aspire2**

Child suicide rate rises and child happiness at lowest in a decade

In September, figures released by the Office for National Statistics showed that suicides in 10 to 19-year-olds rose by 13.9% from 2017 to 2018, with the figure set to rise further.

YoungMinds said there needed to be government action to ensure young people can get help long before they reach crisis point.

In the same month, The Children's Society reported that almost a quarter of a million children in the UK are unhappy with their lives, which they called a "national scandal."

Read both stories in full in: October's Aspire2

"Sort out dementia care" - Dame Barbara Windsor's plea to PM

In August this year, former Eastenders star Dame Barbara Windsor, who suffers from Alzheimer's launched an open letter to the prime minister calling for action on the social care of people with dementia.

Currently, people affected by dementia typically spend £100,000 on care because of failings within the social care system.



**Read the full story in:
September's Aspire2**



Dementia UK provides specialist dementia support for families through our Admiral Nurse service.

When things get challenging or difficult, our nurses work alongside people with dementia, and their families: giving them one-to-one support, expert guidance and practical solutions.

If you're caring for someone with dementia or if you have any other concerns or questions, call or email our Admiral Nurses for specialist support and advice.

Call 0800 888 6678 or email helpline@dementiauk.org
Open Monday – Friday, 9am – 9pm
Saturday and Sunday, 9am – 5pm

www.dementiauk.org • info@dementiauk.org



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Helping families face dementia

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Monetary advice for people with mental health issues: Why isn't this everywhere?

The Guardian's Public Service Editor David Brindle explains Hertfordshire county council's money advice unit for people with mental health issues, which has helped secure an extra £19m for those that need it... and why this should be implemented nationwide.

When David Clappin died, he had £3.44 to his name, six tea bags, a can of soup and an out-of-date tin of sardines. A post-mortem found no food in his stomach. The fridge, where he needed to keep the insulin for his diabetes, was switched off because there was no credit on his electricity account.

Clappin was an ex-soldier who had worked for BT but given up employment to care for his terminally ill mother. He had mental health issues which, combined with his diabetes, should have meant he was on disability benefits. However, he had been on jobseeker's allowance which had been stopped a few weeks previously after he failed to attend an interview.

It is Clappin's death, formally attributed to lack of insulin, that fires up Gary Vaux when he talks about the neglect of mental health within the benefits system. A leading expert on welfare rights, Vaux heads Hertfordshire county council's money advice unit which for the past five years has run what he calls an "almost unique" project aimed specifically at people with mental health issues. The project team is so busy that it sometimes has to close to new referrals.

Since its inception in 2014, the team has handled 3,500 cases and helped secure an estimated £19m in extra benefits and debt write-offs. Health

professionals at the local NHS trust, where the core team of four advisers is co-located, reckon its work is also helping every year to prevent 40 hospital admissions plus more than 30 episodes each of homelessness, serious harm and debt recovery action among their patients.

For the past two years, an additional three advisers have been working as a crisis team with people living with mental health challenges but not immediately in the care of the trust. An external appraisal has found that, overall, the team's intervention is adding an average score of more than 10 to the health and wellbeing of people it advises where anything more than three is considered a "meaningful" contribution.

Why isn't there a Hertfordshire team in every community? This question was debated at a recent roundtable event convened by the Association of Mental Health Providers, which represents voluntary and community sector mental health organisations and which wants to see welfare rights acknowledged as key to prevention of mental ill-health and promotion of wellbeing.

Participants spoke of the rundown of general advice services under the onslaught of austerity, the way the benefits system is geared to disability rather than mental illness and the challenge of identifying and laying claim to savings within the broader



health and care system. Keeping someone out of a hospital bed may save the NHS £750 a day, but how can that money be channelled upstream into funding more advice workers?

On the plus side, the promotion of "social prescribing" by GPs was seen as an opportunity to highlight the vital role of welfare advice; promised reform of the Mental Health Act was viewed as a chance to get its importance referenced in statute; and other professionals – especially the police, dealing with spiralling numbers of calls involving people experiencing mental distress – were seen as potentially powerful allies.

Time is tight, however. Vaux is warning that for all the cases being dealt by his advice workers now, a deluge will arrive as the new universal credit benefit is rolled out for all claimants across the country by 2023. "We've not got anywhere near the problems with that yet," he says.

"We're just scratching the surface."

Let's talk...

Something on your mind? Need advice? If you need help, you can send any mental health questions you have for qualified psychotherapist **Kirsten Antoncich**. This is a fully anonymous service and your questions for Kirsten will be dealt with confidentially. Kirsten's contact email can be found on page 20.

Kirsten also writes a regular column for Aspire2, which you can read below.



New Year's Resolutions and how to set them

I'm not a massive fan of New Year. I used to find it came with lots of pressure to set some wildly unrealistic life goals, or to feel pressured into trying to have an amazing night that only ever turns out to be just okay.

New Year's resolutions have been around for a long time. The Romans would offer up promises of good conduct to Janus, the god who gave his name to January, the bleakest of months.

Janus was a pretty cool god who still has some relevance for our mental wellbeing today. He has two faces, one looking back to reflect upon the past and the other looking out forwards to the future.

January can be a time for reflection, a time where, like Janus, we connect with thinking about what has gone before and what is still to come.

Reflecting like this can be really fruitful as long as we remember to have self-compassion. So often our thinking gravitates to our failures rather than our success, to self-criticism rather than self-appreciation.

As an attempted remedy to this, our

New Year's resolutions can become filled with unrealistic expectations and goals, most of which trap us in a cycle of trying hard, going all out, failing, feeling the guilt and reinforcing all the original negative things we thought about ourselves originally.

If you want to set goals for yourself this year that's great. However I'd love you to set them from a different part of your personality this time around:

I want to bring in a type of psychotherapy that I'm really fond of. It's called Transactional Analysis (TA) and was brought to life by an American named Eric Berne. One of the main concepts around TA is client empowerment, teaching clients the skills and knowledge they need to better understand themselves.

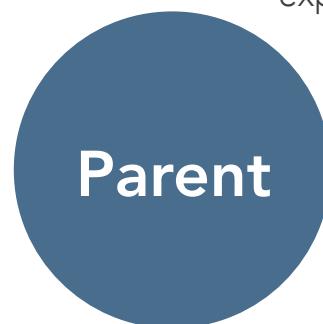
TA uses something called ego states. An ego state according to Berne is a distinct part of your personality that is responsible for thinking, feeling and behaving. Berne believed that we all have different areas of our personality that we respond, think and feel from and that in order to have good mental

health, we need to understand and be able to listen to each of them.

It can feel a complicated model to get your head around at first, but once you do, it's really useful for understanding how you work and once you've cracked it, it can then help you to look at how others function.

I want you to think about your personality and imagine that you have three separate parts to it

The Parent ego state contains behaviours, thoughts and feeling patterns of parent figures we have experienced in the past. They don't have to be your literal parents; it could be anyone you held as being in authority like teachers, older siblings, parents, school bullies etc. This part of your personality replays rules, expectations, ways of being that we have learnt from others, some not always helpful. It can be both nurturing and critical, it can keep us safe and keep us feeling low.



The Adult ego state is grounded in the here and now. It's logical, it can reason and rationalise. The goal in psychotherapy is often to strengthen this part of your personality, allowing it to listen to your Parent and Child but to not be overly swayed by them.

Child

The Child ego state contains our thinking, feeling and behaving from childhood. This part of ourselves can hold emotional memories and responses from the past including our past traumas. Often we can react according to the feelings we experience within this ego state.

Most of us grow up (despite possibly having available, loving parents) with unmet needs. These needs, located in the child ego state, can drive our behaviours. For example, someone who didn't get to feel safe when they were younger can try to pull others to them with their behaviours in a bid to meet those early safety needs.

The three ego states form part of our conscious and unconscious thinking. Clients will often say to me that they feel as if they have different parts to them, that they can almost hear or feel a battle going on in their thoughts – and in this model, they do.

To help you understand this model I want to give you an example:

John was raised in a loving family with a father who believed that you should pick yourself up and carry on. He hadn't had a day off sick in his life and was proud of that. John had distinct memories of feeling scared or upset when younger and his dad, trying to do the right thing, would tell him he was silly to worry or feel scared.



Try to be self-compassionate when setting new year's resolutions

John learned to stop talking about his feelings at a young age. As John grew up, he felt that people who expressed or talked about their feelings were weak and his depression worsened and after some persuasion, he sought therapy.

In therapy John was helped to see that the messages from his parents had been internalised and stopped him from acknowledging his own feelings. John's depression was a response to not being able to connect to his emotional world and use what he found there to change things in his life that were really bothering him.

You will have your own version of John's internal dialogue. Sometimes, rather than there being a responding thought, we can experience feelings like shame and anxiety.

I'll bring this back to New Year's resolutions now: If you're going to set goals for yourself this year, here are some top therapeutic tips.

Setting Authentic Goals

Set aside some quiet time, free from distractions, grab some paper so you can jot down your thoughts.

Start by writing down any values or things that people place importance on in life. They don't have to be important to you, you're aiming to have a list of say 10 written down.

Once you have your list, quickly tick the ones that matter to you, if others come to mind that aren't there, add them in.

Ideally you will have a tick next to a small number of values, five would be a great number to have selected.

Now, narrow your list down to two values that connect with you, two values that you feel are the most important. Try to listen for a "feeling" response to the values - it's really easy to pick the ones we think we "should" pick but these often are not our core values.

Once you have your two values, spend a little bit of time thinking about how you prioritise them in your life. Our personal values are aligned with our purpose and so often in life we can drift away from the things that matter to us, the things that make meaning in the world.

What small steps could you take this New Year to move yourself closer to those values?

Setting Goals using the PAC Model

Another exercise to try when setting goals for yourself is to use the PAC ego state model (Parent, Adult, Child).

Firstly, I want you to think about a goal you would like to set yourself for the coming week, month or the New Year.

Once you have the goal, I want you to see if it has any of the following thinking patterns in it:

- Pleasing others (putting others first, ignoring your needs and desires in order to please others)
- Trying hard (taking on a goal that you feel you should, even though deep down there is no real motivation)
- Being Stronger (setting a goal that requires you to distance yourself from your feelings)
- Going Faster (setting a goal that has unrealistic timeframes ultimately resulting in a potential fail)
- Being perfect (setting a goal that is unrealistic in that it requires you to reach goals that are set by others or

by your own internal critical process i.e. weight, looks, etc)

If it did then it was set using your Parent ego state to influence your thinking. I want you to listen to that parent voice and then see if you can push it to one side for now and connect with your Child ego state - your emotional self.

Think about what you need for this coming year. It might be an emotional need, a need for greater connection, a need to have some support, to be listened to, to be able to express your anger - it will be totally unique to you.

If you allow these Child ego state thoughts to come, try to be nurturing of them and don't fall back into being self-critical or moving back into a Parent ego state way of thinking.

One of the best ways to move away from mental ill health is to start to connect to those unmet needs and to the parts of our personality that we often don't have time to hear.

Once you have a sense of what you need, try to set a gentle goal around that need.

Try to avoid rigid timeframes or falling into the all or nothing trap (I have to complete the goal to a high standard or it's not worth pursuing. It's either completed or it's not - there is no half way). Make sure the goal is achievable, check to make sure you are not setting yourself up for a fail.

If you are able to take one thing with you into this New Year, let it be compassion. Get to know your ego states, listen to them, become aware of your internal conversations and treat them with compassion. They often belong to a different time in our development and they haven't yet realised that you have moved on.

I hope this New Year brings you everything you need.



About Kirsten

Kirsten Antoncich is a UKCP accredited psychotherapist who has worked in a variety of positions from the NHS to private practices.

Kirsten's research background was in self harm and suicide ideation and she has written guidance for professionals about supporting good mental health.

Kirsten works with children, young people and adults and is passionate about sharing access to mental health education. You can follow her on Instagram at @kirstenantoncich.

Please note: Aspire2 is sadly unable to offer a crisis service. If you are in need of immediate help, please visit your GP or any of the mental health services featured in this newspaper. These include the Samaritans, Mind and CALM.

The "Let's Talk" service is an educational service and questions and answers might be altered slightly to benefit a wider audience of readers.



**Send your questions to Kirsten at:
kirsten@aspire2.org**



@kirstenantoncich

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH THIS CHRISTMAS



Our Christmas tips are here to help you cope with the demands and pressures of the festive season.

Sadly, for some, Christmas is not always a time of celebration and cheer. It can be extremely difficult for those with mental health problems.

Every year we produce ten Christmas tips to help support veterans and their families, but in fact, it's advice anyone can use if they find the season taking a toll on their mental health.

Each tip will be shared on our social media accounts in the lead up to Christmas. To view all tips visit our website.



Our Helpline is available to veterans and their families throughout Christmas and the New Year on 0800 138 1619

You can also send a text to 07537 404 719 or email helpline@combatstress.org.uk.

combatstress.org.uk/top-tips-christmas



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The Christmas wrap-up

In December's **Aspire2**, we published several articles about the importance of thinking about mental health this Christmas – for yourself and for others. You can still go back and read them, but here's our summary of how to look after your mental health during the festivities and how you can make a difference to others.

If you're suffering with a mental illness, or even symptoms of one, Christmas can be tough. It's supposed be a time for happiness and you don't want to spoil anyone's good mood. But some conditions don't let you feel happy. Depression gives you very little control over how you feel and it can be difficult to gee yourself up when you don't even want to leave your bed.

Similarly, anxiety can be sent off the scale by the build-up of Christmas and the promise of seeing old faces, OCD can struggle because of being in different surroundings to normal and having unfamiliar routines, and eating disorders can be immensely hard to deal with because of the holiday's proclivity for being revolved around food.

And for many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, a major precursor of mental illness.

Looking after your own mental health

Regardless of your mental health, the most important thing is that you remember that it's okay to not feel like everyone else at Christmas. You cannot control your mental illness in such a direct way as to make it disappear, so it's important that you work out how you're going to cope with it in the meantime.

Yes, there are expectations but Christmas, above anything else, is a time for self-care, reflection and family.

As advised by our UKCP accredited consultant psychotherapist Kirsten Antoncich in our Coping at Christmas article from the previous edition, setting coping mechanisms and a structure for your self-care over the holidays is important.



Depression and anxiety in particular respond well to having a structure that allows you some time alone and away from people before a busy day of human interaction. This might be an earlier wake-up time or a particular time to leave your bedroom in the morning.

If you're staying somewhere you have your own room, this will help. It's okay to tell people you're going to take ten minutes, in which you can gather yourself and have a moment's rest. Alternatively, going for a walk will help too.

In an ideal world, you'll have family members that understand the nature of your mental illness. If this is the case, explaining the situation to

them might help them identify when you're struggling. They will then be more understanding should you decide to spend some time alone.

If your family doesn't know you have a mental illness, or is unlikely to understand, it becomes more difficult. Bear in mind though that they are your family and you may be surprised by their empathy.

They don't have to understand your condition, just be aware of what will help you feel better.

Of course, telling your family about your mental health can be daunting and if you don't want to do that during the festivities, that's okay too. Identify what your coping methods will be and stick to them.

If you have friends who you talk to about your mental health, bear in mind that they're only at the end of a text. If that friend also suffers with a condition, you can 'buddy up' and help each other through the day.

Finally, it's important to get plenty of sleep. Though Christmas is a time for rest, the festivities can be quite full-on and it's perfectly acceptable to get an early night to make sure you get a healthy 8-plus hours – especially if you have young relatives who might be up early on Christmas morning!

For more information on how to manage your mental health this Christmas, visit Mind's website.

Looking after the mental health of others:

If you know that someone you'll be spending time with over Christmas struggles with their mental health, there is enormous amount you can do to help them.

It is important you understand that even though Christmas may be the happiest time of the year for many, it can be difficult for people with mental health conditions – and that they would enjoy Christmas to the fullest if they could.

Kirsten's advice from the Coping at Christmas article is to make it okay for them to not be okay.

The fact that you know about their condition is a great head-start. It means that they will be more likely to feel comfortable talking to you about what they need over Christmas. Something as simple as acknowledging that they're not purposefully in a bad mood, won't want to eat the same portion size as everyone else or need some time alone can make a big difference to help them feel calm. In turn, this makes a wider difference as mental illness thrives on stress.

"Be aware of your own responses because sometimes we can accidentally shut conversations down. So if somebody says they're feeling a bit low, we might respond with 'well it's Christmas, it's okay' but you should allow that lowness to be there – we don't have to fix it, we just have to acknowledge it and create a space for people to talk," Kirsten explained

You don't need to know everything about their condition but basic empathy and thoughtfulness go a long way.

Loneliness

For many, Christmas will be a time

of loneliness, which is often closely linked with mental illness. Indeed, loneliness has been associated with a 40% increased risk of dementia in older people. And it isn't just the elderly that suffer. Loneliness is now a major issue for young people too.

This is something we can all help with.

We know that talking to strangers can be daunting and small-talk is far from everyone's cup of tea. But a simple chat with a neighbour, shopkeeper or someone sat next to you on public transport can make a massive difference to how people feel.

If there are people you haven't spoken to in a while, get in touch. It's easier than ever to check up on someone and while we're all busy, you might want to plan five or ten minutes in your day's schedule to send a few texts or Facebook messages, or even make a call.

If you have elderly relatives who live alone, taking half an hour per week to go and see them or help them with grocery shopping can make an immeasurable difference.

A spare chair: Part of the Campaign to End Loneliness, A Spare Chair is an initiative to help people who might be lonely at Christmas by inviting Christmas dinner if you have a spare chair.

Loneliness is a major theme of this

month's Aspire2, and you can find more about it on pages

Volunteering

Volunteering at Christmas can help anyone who suffers with a mental health condition while also those who might be spending Christmas alone or in poverty. According to Mental Health Foundation, giving to others through volunteering can help to take you out of yourself, increase your self-esteem and boost your wellbeing.

It can be especially helpful for people who struggle with intense attention and gives you a reason to be out of the house with focus shifted away from you. This calms conditions like depression and anxiety.

"Research suggests that volunteering is linked to improved life satisfaction and wellbeing, and lower levels of depression."

"The most commonly reported activities included helping: older people (59%), children and young people (54%), the homeless (53%), supporting mental health projects (49%) and helping refugees and asylum seekers (32%)" – Mental Health Foundation.

For information on volunteering this Christmas, visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk/christmas/blog/how-volunteering-christmas-can-benefit-your-mental-health



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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

The true meaning?

How the meaning of new year's resolutions can be re-evaluated, and how that can help our mental health in 2020.

Written by Alex Morrell

What is a resolution?

New Year celebrations bring the promise of fresh starts and self-reflection. For better or for worse, it is both a retrospective and prospective holiday. Now, the idea of what the future holds in general is one which causes feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in most of us, but for those who may not have experienced complete happiness that year the turn of the decade this time around may seem even more intimidating.

So, the ritual of making resolutions in the hope of self-betterment, be it social, physical or emotional, can be a daunting process - but it need not be, if we truly understand we cannot expect ourselves to change a year (or more) worth of habitual behaviour overnight and stick to it without fault. Fault is part of the process.

What I'd like to do is to delve into the word 'resolution' itself (don't worry its more interesting than that bit in Countdown we all make a cuppa during). I really believe if we look back at how the word became what it is to us nowadays it can enlighten us to a better approach to what a new year's resolution may actually mean. Okay? So, eyes to the whiteboard please.

'Resolution' was first recorded in late 14th century French as 'résolution' meaning "a breaking into parts," which comes directly from the Latin 'resolutionem' or "process of reducing things into simpler forms".

The New Year's 'resolution' we know now in reference to a specific intention to better oneself is from much later (at least 500 years) and really took place in common tongue

during the 19th century. These New Year's 'resolutions' were a promise rather than an ongoing action and were almost always religious in nature.

So, we've gone from the idea of breaking a certain issue into smaller simpler forms to one of a promise and declaration of something that will change from that day until the foreseeable future. I know which type of 'resolution' I'd be more attracted and hopeful in trying. Lets 'break' our problem into 'simpler parts' and stop promising ourselves huge declarations that stay in our minds one daunting yearlong contract.

Currently, one in five people in the UK make resolutions at new year. These are mostly younger people, with 37% being between the ages of

18 and 24. The most popular this year are predicted to be: exercise more, lose weight, reduce stress, help the environment and turn vegan.

Well first of all telling yourself to be less stressed is a sure-fire way just to add to it, I think we can all agree. Like telling yourself to fall asleep, it's a paradoxical loop of exhausted unhappiness. The kicker is, only 27% of people who make them actually keep them anyway. It seems the tradition needs a slight overhaul, so here is what I'm suggesting to you.

Redefine 'resolution' to yourself. Take the older definition of breaking things down into smaller manageable and simpler steps. 'Lose 10lbs' sounds a lot more intimidating than 'eat less refined carbohydrates in January and start at home exercising one a week in February...etc.' It's an ongoing change rather than an overnight transformation and just like any job, breaking it down into components not only makes it simpler and less overwhelming but a lot more feasible to complete successfully.

Self-care: The new resolution?
So, regular small instances of self-improvement, enjoyment and reflection for the betterment of our overall mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is the new approach.

What this sounds a lot like, is self-care; that new-fangled sounding buzz-phrase found in countless blogs and self-help websites. →It can be confusing as to what self-care actually is and what is isn't which warrants further investigation (after all it seems to be the alamode betterment strategy).

When asked the question: "Do you take care of yourself?" most of us will answer "yes" — we'd even think, "What kind of question is this? Of course, I care about myself!" But, when asked, "In what ways do you take care of yourself?" — well, that's



where the tricky part begins, and where the new year 'resolutions' can come in.

Self-care is basically the actions that individuals take for themselves, on behalf of and with others in order to develop, protect, maintain and improve their health, wellbeing or wellness. It is an action, something to be done and maintained. Like the original 'resolutions' mentioned earlier it is an overall goal of wellness tackled in smaller, more doable and regular ways.

Practicing self-care isn't always easy. Most of us are crazy busy, have

stressful jobs, or are too consumed with technology to make time for ourselves. Me-time is usually last on the agenda. Worse, we can sometimes feel guilty about taking the time required to take care of ourselves. So, getting started with self-care can be challenging.

An initial hesitation may be the reputation of 'self-care' as something people use and excuse for self-interest and decadent activities. Knowing what self-care is not may be helpful to know. It is not something that we force ourselves to do, or something we don't enjoy. It isn't an exercise in self-discipline, nor should

it drain us, it should in fact enrich our lives and make us a happier and more productive person, for the benefit of both ourselves and others.

Self-care isn't a selfish act either. It is not only about considering our needs; it is rather about knowing what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves, which in turn makes us able to take care of others as well. That is, 'if I don't take enough care of myself, I won't be in the place to give to my loved ones either'.

For many of us in the UK living currently with any form of mental illness our new year's resolutions may take the form of recovery of some sort. While this is great as a proclamation of a conscious effort to do what we can to make living with our symptoms better, it also carries the possibility of 'failure to get better' and this is where trouble can arise. For some the fear of 'failure' is enough to stop them taking on the goals of recovery at all.

Some examples of effective self-care are:

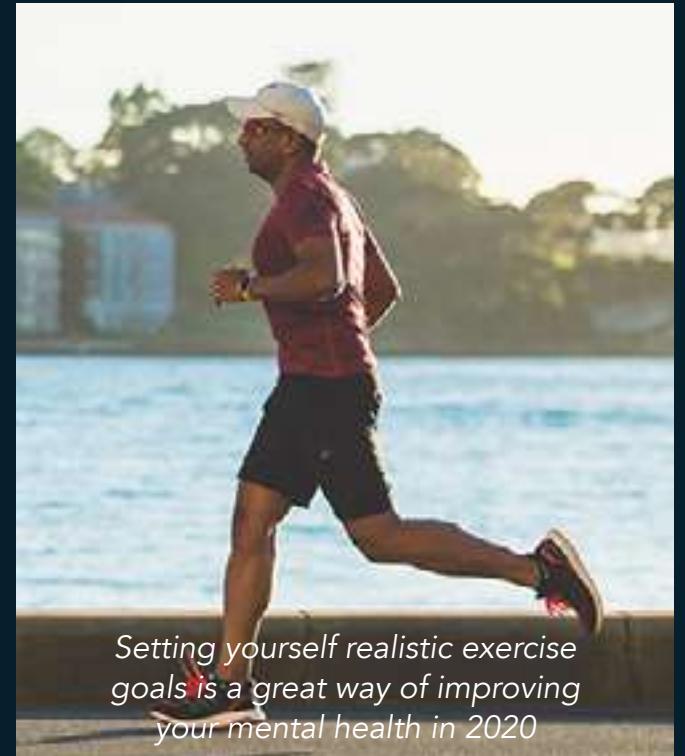
- Develop a regular sleep routine.
- Aim for a healthy diet.
- Take lunch breaks.
- Go for a walk at lunchtime.
- Use your sick leave.
- Get some exercise before/after work regularly.
- Keep a reflective journal.
- Engage with a non-work hobby.
- Turn off your email and work phone outside of work hours.
- Make time for relaxation.
- Make time to engage with positive friends and family.
- Develop friendships that are supportive.
- Write three good things that you did each day.
- Play a sport and have a coffee together after training.
- Go to the movies or do something else you enjoy.

In reality, failure is an inherent part of recovery. If it were so easy and we never failed at all, the outcome would hardly be worth the conscious effort. Recovery can mean different things to different people, however, for many, recovery is about the realisation of goals, and the development of relationships and skills that support a positive life, with or without ongoing mental health problems. What is important is the notion that a failure, whilst disappointing or disheartening does not mark the end of a recovery journey, but simply a 'bump in the road'.

So, you tell yourself that on January the 1st you're going to start exercising once a week at home. Brilliant. But on January 20th you have to stay late at work or have appointments that take up what would otherwise be your workout.

To some this makes the entire journey a 'failure'. But if we break our journey down into smaller more manageable parts (like before) it becomes simply an 'off day' and can easily be rectified and put us back on the track we have set for ourselves. Think of this as a 'micro-bump' in the over all 'macro-goal', small parts of one overarching goal. This makes room for slip ups and mishaps and allows breathing room in recovery for instances in which we may take one step back instead of one forward, the goal is still the same we have simply taken a momentary lapse in pace. Think small to think big, be reasonable with yourself.

For example - If someone told you they were quitting their dream of becoming a singer because they hit one flat note, you'd tell them 'not to be silly' and 'keep going', that no one is perfect and slip-ups are completely normal. Then think,



Setting yourself realistic exercise goals is a great way of improving your mental health in 2020

do you apply the same optimistic, self-forgiveness that you do with others? The answer for most of us is 'not really'.

'Failure' can be such an awful and off-putting word; it can loom over our heads like a personal raincloud if we allow it to. So, lets change the word 'failure' to reality, because 'failure' is a reality of progress for everyone. We all stumble, be it physically, emotionally or mentally and mental illness can magnify these feelings of disappointment if we think of the reality of failure as an inevitable defeat. It isn't.

So, this New Year's Eve, rethink what you mean by a 'resolution'. Let's go back to its roots as breaking something down to smaller and more manageable parts. Steps in a journey not a one-time declaration or binding contract in which failure means you've failed. But one in which those small steps allow for slip ups and natural human shortcomings.

Recovery, like resolution is an ongoing conversation. Be reasonable, be kind to yourself and don't let the fear of imperfection stop you from making 2020 a year in which you take conscious steps to a happier, healthier and more enjoyable life.

TIME

SOMETIMES HUMANS SAY THEY'RE FINE
WHEN THEY'RE NOT. BUT WITH MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS AFFECTING 1 IN 4 ADULTS,
TO REALLY FIND OUT, **ASK TWICE.**

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Rethink Mental Illness

Not just the elderly

The UK's loneliness problem... and how you can help

Loneliness can be life-altering for those who experience it and life-threatening for those who experience it most severely. It can also be a nervous minefield for those who want to help, but don't know where to start. So, whether your friend has told you they're lonely, you suspect your neighbour might be, or you just want to help more widely, here is some advice offered by professionals in this field. But as always, good intention and any sort of effort is always worthwhile regardless.

If your partner is lonely

Relate counsellor Barbara Honey offered her advice: 'It's not uncommon for people in relationships to feel lonely: "They can be surrounded by people, they can be in what looks like a happy marriage or a good relationship, and they can still feel lonely."

For a person supporting a partner who's lonely, the key is listening and trying to empathise with them. Ask questions like: 'Is there anything I can do so you feel less lonely?' 'Are there any particular times when you feel lonely?'

Honey says the biggest mistake people who want to help often make is saying, "why don't you just join a club, or just take up a hobby, or just get out more". The word 'just' is problematic, she says, "because you're giving the impression that you're suggesting something that would be very easy. And for someone who feels lonely, it can be extremely difficult."

Counselling might also help, as this would explore in greater detail what is causing a partner's feelings of loneliness with the help of trained professionals and regular instances of support.



If your friend or family member is lonely

The simplest way to lessen the feeling of loneliness is by meeting new people, according to mental health charity Mind. So, if a friend or loved one has expressed that they are lonely, it could be worth offering to try a new hobby with them or join a gym together.

Not so much a new club but a shared experience between the two of you that allows for the introduction of new people but isn't reliant on it. Fitness has been proven to boost mental health massively and it's a great opportunity for both of you to catch up. Even regular walks have huge mental health benefits as well as physical.

Alternatively, you could set regular coffee dates or arrange to grab lunch or make dinner together and talk, which could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

If you're quite close, you could encourage them to join an online community. Sites such as Meetup.com allow users to find face-to-face groups of people of similar interests or aspirations; Empty Closets is an online community for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual,



transgender, curious or unsure (a demographic particularly susceptible to feelings of isolation); and Net Mums is an online community for parents which facilitates local meet-ups as well as acting as a chat and advice forum.

It's important to remember that not everyone will feel able to do these things, and many may find them difficult initially. Laura Alcock-Ferguson, executive director of the Campaign to End Loneliness, says when a person is feeling lonely it can really impact their self-esteem, which makes it harder to overcome.

Therefore, taking steps to tackle loneliness can sometimes feel "overwhelming" - particularly for the elderly and those with ill-health that prevent them from getting out as much. If this is the case, she recommends just picking up the phone and calling them, "as just a 10-minute phone call can make a big difference to a lonely person".

If you suspect someone is lonely
If someone hasn't explicitly told you they're lonely, it can be hard to know how to approach the subject. But for Richard Kramer, chief executive of disability charity Sense, the answer is

pretty simple: Talk.

"Strike up a conversation and discover the shared interests that are often the key to friendship," he suggests. "If you suspect a neighbour is lonely, stop by for a chat or invite them over for a cuppa, likewise if there's always someone on their own in your local pub, or even on holiday, take some time out to talk to them".

Alcock-Ferguson adds: "We can only truly tackle loneliness if we all play our part – and simple everyday actions really do help."

If you don't know someone who's lonely but want to help

Volunteering can be a beneficial way to tackle loneliness as it comes with a community of likeminded motivated people and gives a well-earned sense of accomplishment – and it's a great thing to do whether you're lonely or not.

If you want to specifically tackle loneliness through volunteering, places like Age UK, North and South London Cares, The Silver Line and Contact the Elderly specialise in forming relationships between younger and older people.

If you would still like to help the elderly but lack the time to volunteer, Age UK's charity director, Caroline Abrahams, says simple things like having a friendly conversation with an older person on a bus, picking up the phone to ring an older friend or relative for a chat, or offering to do the shopping for an older neighbour are all great ways in which the public can help combat the issue of elderly loneliness. "We can all do our bit to help fight the problem," she adds.

Richard Kramer, from Sense, says loneliness is disproportionately high among disabled people, with over half (53%) reporting experiences of prolonged loneliness, rising to three-quarters (77%) for young disabled people.

As such, he recommends getting involved in local volunteer programmes which bring disabled and non-disabled people together. "Sense offers a buddying programme which matches a young disabled person with a volunteer who will spend one session a week with them on activities in the community," he adds. For more volunteering opportunities and ways to help, visit the Do-It Trust or NCVO's volunteer centre finder.



Elderly people are more likely to be lonely...



But younger people are struggling too

How to make the most of 2020

Fulfilling goals is a great way to improve your mental health. Here, life coach Tomas Svitorka explains how to set achievable goals and how to fulfil them.

2019 is at its last stretch and a new decade is about to start. How has 2019 been for you? Have you achieved what you wanted? Are you proud of what you've accomplished?

As a life coach, over the last 6 years, I've been helping people become the best version of themselves and create a more exciting and more fulfilling life.

However, this doesn't just **happen**. Life doesn't just fall in place. In fact, life seems to love falling out of place whenever it gets an opportunity.

To change, improve, and create the future you want, you have to plan for it and stick with the plan.

Here are my three simple tips that will help you stay on track with your goals and make the most of 2020.

1. Set Exciting Goals with a big WHY

As Benjamin Franklin said:
"Failing to plan is planning to fail. If you don't have goals in life, you'll just drift and react to urgencies."

When you set goals, you have a direction. When you set exciting goals, you have direction and drive. To my amazement, most people spend more time planning their holidays than planning their lives.

Let's get your priorities right. Let's set some exciting goals you'd love to achieve in 2020.

Ask yourself: What would I want to change about my life or myself in 2020? Be realistic, but don't be timid. When you're setting goals, make sure they are specific, measurable, and with a deadline (we all get things done when there is a deadline).

When you set your goal, add your **why**.

Why do you want to achieve it? Your WHY will help you stick with it when times get tough.

Bad goal - *I want to feel better.*
 Good goal - *I will be able to run 5km by September 1st because it will make me feel proud of myself, and I'll become much healthier in the process.*

Bonus tip: I like to phrase my goals with "I will easily...."

When you start your goals with that phrase, it will make the thought of accomplishing them a bit more positive.

(In contrast, imagine you'd write "I'll struggle to ..." that would feel quite different).

2. Get accountability

When we set goals and no one knows about them, it's easy to fall off-track

when it gets tough because we can keep it to ourselves, and no one will ever find out. But when you have someone who holds you accountable not following through on your commitments is so much harder.

Accountability has been a pivotal force in my personal growth and accomplishments. Many of my clients chose to check in with me daily to confirm they are on track with their goals because of the positive impact it has on them.

Find yourself an accountability partner. It can be your friend, colleague at work, or ideally a coach.

3. Manage Your Expectations

We live in a world where everything happens very quickly. If you need to know something, you can google it in seconds.

And that is amazing, but it's has diminished our patience. People often expect that positive change happens just as quickly. Unfortunately not.

Be patient when you're working on your goals.

If getting healthy and fit will take a year, so be it, the price is well worth it. Lack of patience is one of the most common reasons people give up. Don't rush and enjoy the process, you're changing your life.

About Tomas

"My name is Tomas Svitorka, I'm a professional life coach, speaker, award-winning entrepreneur, and the founder of OK is NOT enough – the core philosophy I use to coach professionals and entrepreneurs to help create a more exciting and more fulfilling life."

<https://tomassvitorka.com> YouTube: [tomassvitorka](#) Instagram: [tomassvitorka](#) Facebook: [tomas.svitorka](#) LinkedIn: [tomassvitorka](#)

CALM IS THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY

CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
LIVING
MISERABLY
CALM

We are a movement against suicide,
the single biggest killer of men under
45 in the UK. Get support and join
the campaign at theCALMzone.net



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANOREXIA and BULIMIA

Around this time of year, the festivities invite a much more relaxed approach to eating and food in most of us; family meals, sweet treats and other Christmassy culinary comfort. So in this festive issue, it's important to shine a light on two of the most common eating disorders in the UK, Anorexia (Anorexia Nervosa) and Bulimia (Bulimia Nervosa), as the country gears up for the start of the seasonal splurge.

Written by Aspire2 Deputy Editor Alex Morrall.

To begin, we must first understand that while anorexia and bulimia fall under the umbrella term of an 'eating disorder' they are in fact two very distinct psychological conditions, with different symptoms and sufferers.

Too often the two are conflated and confused much to the chagrin of those living with one of the disorders. What is mutually shared between the two is the complex and multifaceted symptoms and causes of the conditions and how they may present as an externalisation of much deeper psychological stress or trauma. The number of people living with

either condition has skyrocketed in the past 30 years with somewhere between 1.25 and 3.4million cases currently in Britain. Here are some statistics to clarify:

- Cases present as 75% female and 25% male (neither are an exclusively female condition)
- Both conditions most commonly present at adolescence
- Cases can start as early as 6 and as late as 70
- Anorexia tends to begin between 16 and 17
- Bulimia tends to begin between 18 and 19
- 10% of cases are anorexia
- 40% of cases are bulimia

- The rest of cases fall under two other diagnoses. BED (Binge eating disorder) and OSFED (Other specified feeding or eating disorder)
- It is more likely to occur if someone in your family has had a similar eating disorder
- The highest chance for successful treatment and recovery is in direct relation to how early either condition is treated (the earlier the better)
- It is life threatening. Without treatment, up to 20% of people with serious eating disorders die.
- With treatment, the mortality rate falls to 2-3%

Anorexia Nervosa:

More commonly known simply as anorexia, this disorder is characterised by deliberate weight loss, induced and sustained by the patient. The disorder is associated with a specific psychopathology whereby a dread of fatness and flabbiness of body contour persists as an intrusive overvalued idea, and the patients impose a low weight threshold on themselves.

There is usually undernutrition of varying severity with secondary endocrine and metabolic changes and disturbances of bodily function. The symptoms include restricted dietary choice, excessive exercise, induced vomiting and purgation, and use of appetite suppressants and diuretics.

Eating is a base human need and to have something so vital severely affected by a psychological disorder is very difficult. Often, depression and anxiety accompany an eating disorder with the symptoms combining to great difficulty. The



behaviour associated with anorexia can contribute to a feeling of control.

Many people who have the disorder have said that they felt they could 'control' what they ate and their body weight when they didn't feel they could control other aspects of their lives.

There are many different reasons that someone might develop anorexia, but it's important to remember

that eating disorders are often not about food itself and is a mental illness, often linked to a feeling of helplessness, trauma or depression.

Bulimia Nervosa:

Known simply as bulimia, this is a different syndrome characterised by repeated bouts of overeating and an excessive preoccupation with the control of body weight, leading to a pattern of overeating followed by vomiting or use of purgatives. This disorder shares many psychological features with anorexia, including an overconcern with body shape and weight but is different in many other ways.

Repeated vomiting is likely to give rise to disturbances of body electrolytes and physical complications. There is often, but not always, a history of an earlier episode of anorexia nervosa, the interval ranging from a few months to several years.

The main defining factor of bulimia is the 'binge and purge' cycle of overeating, induced vomiting or use of laxatives to 'purge' the foodstuff from the body in an attempt to limit intake and lose or maintain weight.

Excessive exercising is also often seen and sufferers with bulimia tend to appear at a more normal weight than those with anorexia, but there are always exceptions to the rules. It's normal for people who aren't suffering from an eating disorder to choose to eat a bit more or "overindulge" sometimes. This shouldn't be confused with a binge.

During a binge, people with bulimia don't feel in control of how much or how quickly they're eating. Some people also say that they feel as though they're disconnected from what they're doing. The food eaten during a binge may include things the person would usually avoid. Episodes of bingeing are often very distressing.

The symptoms to look out for in others for both anorexia and bulimia are:

- Saying they have eaten earlier or will eat later, or that they have eaten more than they have
- Not being truthful about how much weight they have lost
- Strict dieting and avoiding food they think is fattening
- Counting the calories in food excessively
- Eating only low-calorie food
- Missing meals (fasting)
- Avoiding eating with other people
- Hiding food
- Cutting food into tiny pieces to make it less obvious they have eaten little or to make food easier to swallow
- Eating very slowly
- Taking appetite suppressants, such as slimming or diet pills
- Obsessive and/or rigid behaviour, particularly around food
- Irritability
- Excessive exercising – this might involve exercising when not physically well enough to do so, or feeling guilty or anxious about not exercising
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Compromise of education and employment plans
- Weight loss
- Lack of sexual interest
- Tiredness
- Feeling dizzy
- Stomach pains
- Growth of soft, fine hair all over your body (called lanugo)
- Hair loss
- Physical weakness
- Loss of muscle strength
- Swelling in their feet, hands or face (known as oedema)
- Other mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Symptoms unique to bulimia to look out for:

- Eating large amounts of food (bingeing)
- Hoarding food
- Purging after binging by

- vomiting, over-exercising, using laxatives or diuretics, fasting
- Organising life around shopping, eating and purging behaviour
 - Damage to teeth (vomiting can cause acid erosion)
 - Enlarged salivary glands
 - Calluses on the backs of the hand if fingers are used to cause vomiting
 - Stomach problems
 - Regular changes in weight, which may go up or down, though often remains "normal"
 - As difficult as it is to identify symptoms in others, it's equally important to be self-aware if you yourself are showing signs of either disorder:
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Spending a lot or most of time thinking about food
 - Feeling anxious and tense, especially around mealtimes or when eating in front of others
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Low confidence and self-esteem
 - Worries about weight and shape
 - Fear of gaining weight
 - More intense attention of body shape or weight
 - Feeling of loss of control overeating
 - Fear of fatness or pursuit of thinness
 - Underestimating or denying the seriousness of the problem, or believing there isn't a problem at all, even after diagnosis
 - Perfectionism and setting very high standards for oneself

If your friend or relative has an eating disorder, such as anorexia or bulimia you will probably want to do everything you can to help them recover and it is often difficult feeling like you cannot do anything to help.

But whilst no one can 'cure' them or make the recovery except themselves there are a few things you can do to help recovery along.

Keep trying to include them. They

may not want to go out or join in with activities but keep trying to talk to them and ask them along, just like before. Even if they don't join in, they will still like to be asked. It will make them feel valued as a person, both disorders can include feelings of low self-worth and increasing social isolation. Try to build up their self-esteem in any way possible, ensure they know how important they are to you and the value they have in the world.

Ultimately, it comes down to just giving them your time. Listen to them and try not to give advice or criticise – this can be tough when you don't agree with what they say about themselves and what they eat. Remember, just like depression and many other mental illnesses you don't have to know all the answers. Just making sure they know you're there for them is what's important. This is especially true when it feels like your friend or relative is rejecting your friendship, help and support.

Be prepared for denial and resistance. There's a good chance your loved one may deny having an eating disorder or become angry and defensive. If this happens, try to remain calm, focused, and respectful. Remember that this conversation likely feels very threatening to someone with an eating disorder. Don't take it personally.

Getting professional help from a doctor, practice nurse, or a school or college nurse will give your friend or relative the best chance of getting better. But this can be one of the most difficult steps for someone suffering from an eating disorder, so try to encourage them to seek help or offer to go along with them. Even reading this article is a great start in self education for the betterment of you or those you care about.

But, if you feel that you may not need such support quite yet or you want to understand more there is a wealth

of self-help and self-care resources both online and in local communities throughout the country, books, meetings and online courses are there if you feel they may help:

HELP FOR EATING DISORDERS

BEAT:

Help for adults

The Beat Adult Helpline is open to anyone over 18. Parents, teachers or any concerned adults should call the adult helpline.

Helpline: [0808 801 0677](tel:08088010677)

Email: help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Help for young people

The Beat Youthline is open to anyone under 18.

Youthline: [0808 801 0711](tel:08088010711)

Email: fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Anorexia and Bulimia Care (ABC)

03000 11 12 13

parent helpline: Option 1

sufferer helpline: Option 2

self-harm helpline: Option 3

anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk

Provides advice and support to anyone affected by an eating problem.

Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice

aft.org.uk

Describes what family therapy is, and has a search facility to find a therapist in your area.

b-eat

adult helpline: [0808 801 0677](tel:08088010677)

youthline: [0808 801 0711](tel:08088010711)

b-eat.co.uk

Offers information on eating disorders and runs a supportive online community. Also provides a directory of support services at helpfinder.b-eat.co.uk

Q&A: Theo Paphitis

"Our colleagues are our biggest asset, so we must support them."



Owner of the Theo Paphitis Retail Group and former Dragon, Theo Paphitis oversees Ryman, Robert Dyas, Boux Avenue and London Graphic Centre. He's also taking major steps in ensuring the mental wellbeing of his staff is being made a priority. Aspire2 spoke to Theo about mental health in the workplace, what businesses can do to better help their staff's wellbeing and ask: Is Peter Jones really that scary?

1. How does the Theo Paphitis Retail Group (TPRG) support the mental health and wellbeing of its employees?

Do you cover this in staff training, senior management meetings, mental health first aiders, company policies offering support and advice, posters, counselling services, time off, area managers promoting wellbeing etc?

At TPRG mental health and wellbeing support are high on the agenda, and that includes anything from physical health and mental wellbeing to the likes of financial security. We have had a very strong partnership with the RetailTRUST for many years and they have supported many of our colleagues through bereavement, times of stress, anxiety to financial support and more. Our colleagues are our biggest asset, so we must support them in any way we can.

2. How do you personally deal with

the stress and pressure of managing a retail chain. What do you do to relax and unwind?

Owning many businesses and being involved in a variety of projects, from retail and property to education and charity, I do not have a huge amount of downtime. The key to not being overwhelmed by this is doing what you love and are passionate about, then it often doesn't feel like work. I also have ants in my pants, and have to keep active and exercise daily, as well as trying to fit in a walk with my dog Gladys either at home, or when she is in our office in Wimbledon. Keeping active is a great way to help deal with the pressure of the daily grind.

3. What can businesses do better to help support the wellbeing & mental health of its staff?

Listen to your colleagues and understand what they need. A good manager is someone who supports on many levels, not just developing in

the workplace, but understanding a colleague has a work life and a home life.

Businesses are doing more and more to focus on the colleague and their needs, inside and outside of work and that's right that we do. One in four people suffer from a mental illness on some level, and as such we are clearly all working with someone who needs support; it's giving people the tools to identify them too. It should also be part of a board conversation, and it was announced at our recent store manager conference that we are introducing Mental Health First Aiders to support colleagues across the business.

4. What comfort or support does bringing your dog into the office have on you and your staff team and your overall day?

My colleagues always say that the Gladys days are the best days, and she is a very friendly dog who pops into

the office regularly, and they love it. It also means I get a walk at lunchtime, which clears the head and sets me up for the afternoon meetings. Having a dog in the office is a lovely thing, and Gladys even has her own pass and dog bed, so she has her feet well under the table.

5. Do you miss the involvement of owning and running a professional football club and what football club do you support today?

I loved running Millwall and what an adventure it was, taking the team to the FA Cup Final against Manchester United and into Europe! Running a football club helped me to become the leader and businessman that I am today and I had an amazing time as chairman of Millwall FC. I wouldn't have changed that for the world. I'm still very much a Millwall fan.

6. Do you work and support any mental health charities yourself?

I support many charities through

the Theo Paphitis Charitable Trust, many focusing on wellbeing and mental health and we are always on the lookout for smaller mental health charities to support. I am also doing something for The Samaritans before Christmas to help raise awareness and funds for them; a wonderful cause.

7. What's your most favorable Dragon investment and is Peter Jones really that scary?

I invested a lot over the many seasons of Dragons' Den, and had the good, the bad and the ugly. There were quite a few good ones though so I can't pull out just one, and often that was more about the people and how well we worked together that led to the success. And, the tall fella isn't scary at all, he's a pussy cat! We've shared many business interests over the years, including Red Letter Days, that we sold a couple of years back.

8. How do you spend Christmas and the New Year?

Well, obviously in retail it's a busy

time of year, but it's a time for family and in the Paphitis Household Mrs. P ensures it looks like a wonderful winter wonderland at home for all the family to enjoy, including kids and grandkids. At New Year, it's more celebrations or even a spot of travel if I can fit it in.

9. If you had one message for the government and local authorities that would protect high street stores, retail chains, employment for millions of colleagues employed in the retail sector, what would it be?

Business rates, business rates, business rates. Hopefully Santa is listening, as a review of that is on every retailer's Christmas list.

10. Your message to colleagues, customers and the UK for Christmas and the New Year?

Be happy, be healthy, be prosperous and spend time doing what you love, because life is too short.



Place2Be is a national charity providing in-school emotional support to children and young people. Founded in 1994, we've grown from supporting a handful of schools to working with over 600 schools nationwide.

**Every child
deserves a
place
to be**

To find out how you can support us,
visit www.place2be.org.uk/support-us



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Place2Be is a charity registered in England and Wales (1040756) and in Scotland (SC038649), a Company limited by guarantee (with use of 'Limited' exemption), registered in England and Wales (02876150), registered office: 175 St. John Street, London, England, EC1V 4LW



FIND YOUR BRAVE



Sam Gard, Communications Officer at Place2Be previews Children's Mental Health Week 2020, the charity's most important annual event.

Mental health is something that affects us all, and no matter what age you are, it takes bravery to reach out and speak to someone when you are feeling down with the world. That is why the theme for Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week 2020 is: Find your Brave.

Children's Mental Health week runs from 3 to 9 February 2020, challenging people to start their year thinking about mental health, how it can affect young people and how we can support them.

Schools, youth clubs, organisations and individuals from across the country will be taking part by reaching out to local establishments, shouting about it on social media or organising fundraising events where they live. By combining our efforts, we have the potential to reach thousands more children, young people, families and teachers.

Bravery comes in all shapes and sizes and is different for everyone. It is defined often simply by overcoming our internal struggles. Bravery can be leaving your comfort zone, if only for a minute or two. Life can often throw challenges our way at any given time, often when we least expect. Bravery is not about coping with these challenges alone or holding them in, it's not about pushing them down until they spill over. To be brave means to find positive ways to deal with feelings

that are difficult, it means to overcome the challenges, even when it seems impossible. It means to look after yourself, and others.

So, this year Place2Be are asking children and young people to Find their Brave.

In 2015, Place2Be launched Children's Mental Health Week, an event designed to shine a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health. Now in its sixth year, Place2Be hopes to encourage more young people to than ever to get involved, spread the word and make a real difference in people's lives.

Since 1994 Place2Be's mission has been to provide in-school support for children and young people. In 1996, The Place2Talk, a self-referral service was launched as a quiet place where children in schools could come to talk and play during the busy school day, was operational and in schools. Since then we have grown from supporting just a few schools in inner London, to working with over 600 schools across the UK.

Skip forward to 2007 and our founder, Benita Refson was awarded an OBE for services to children and families. Following this, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge chose to become the royal patron of Place2Be in 2013.

Not long afterwards, in 2015, the first Children's Mental Health Week had been launched and has been supported by Her Royal Highness ever since, encouraging more people to get involved and spread the word each year.

At Place2Be, we are proud to be at the forefront of children's mental health services. The approach we take means we are able to provide early intervention, which can help prevent lifelong mental health issues. But even though the work we do has been able to reach so many children and young people across the UK, there is still a lot of work to be done.

We now know that one in eight children and young people have a diagnosable mental health problem and among teenagers and young people rates of depression and anxiety are increasing.

This is why Children's Mental Health Week is our most important week of the year. Together we can break down the perceived stigmas surrounding talking about mental health and all, in one way or another, Find our Brave.

To get involved with Children's Mental Health Week 2020, please visit <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/>

SILENCE OF SUICIDE

“

Silence of Suicide brings the bereaved,
those feeling suicidal and those who have
attempted suicide together in the same
safe, and confidential, space.

It's Time To Stop The Silence
Together, we can make things better

”



www.sossilenceofsuicide.org

info@sossilenceofsuicide.org

Registered charity number 1175795

+44 (0)7802 884984

In 2015, SOS Silence of Suicide was formed by Michael Mansfield and his wife Yvette Greenway-Mansfield following their joint experiences of bereavement through suicide.

Based in Warwickshire but operating nationally, the aim of SOS was to bring people together in a safe space where they could talk openly and honestly about the issues that contributed to their poor mental health, without fear of being judged and where the stigma, shame and silence that often surrounds these issues was eradicated. There can be no doubt that talking and being heard significantly helps those who are struggling, decreasing feelings of isolation.

It was and still is a unique concept that regardless of peoples' experience of suicide, whether through bereavement, attempt or consideration, they could all come together to share their experiences and thoughts. And through each other, they could start to create a support network for themselves, sometimes with the assistance of support groups near to where they lived.

Since 2017, when we became a registered Charity, SOS encourages anyone affected by ALL mental health illnesses to attend our sessions, which are free to the service user. You do not have to be suicidal to attend.

Our sessions last for 2 hours, but either ourselves, or a Samaritan (who attend most of our meetings) will happily stay behind afterwards to look after anyone in crisis, or for those who simply need to talk further.



@sos_initiatives

SOS has held sessions for Government Departments including the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison Service, Universities, local organisations, retailers to name just some, as well as national meetings for the public. We have also delivered speeches for various Corporates and Bodies. If you would like us to speak at an event you have, or are, planning, please email info@sossilenceofsuicide.org with the heading 'Speaking'.

If you feel that your community would benefit from an SOS meeting, please email us at info@sossilenceofsuicide.org so that we can discuss this further.

If you are a corporate body and feel that your workforce might benefit from an SOS meeting, please email info@sossilenceofsuicide.org with the heading 'Corporate'.

Michael and Yvette run SOS together, supported by other Trustees and Patrons and as with all charities, funding to enable us to deliver our work is key. If you would like to donate, please visit our website or donate through Just Giving and Amazon Smile.

We are also currently looking for volunteers, so if you have time to spare, are passionate about mental health and like what we do, please email us at info@sossilenceofsuicide.org with the heading Volunteer.

To keep up to date with what we are doing, either visit our website or our social media pages. And don't forget you can purchase one of our stunning new calendars for 2020 or an SOS logo T-Shirt through our website.



SOSSilenceofSuicide

Meet the team

Yvette Greenway-Mansfield - CEO

Michael Mansfield - Trustee

Shakila Holden - Trustee

Earl Pinnock - Trustee

Hugh Quarshie - Patron

Maxine Peake - Patron

Gary Webster - Patron

Wendy Turner-Webster - Patron

Professor Sean Duggan - Patron



Michael Mansfield and Yvette Greenway-Mansfield



Gary Webster



Earl Pinnock



Shakila Holden



Wendy Turner-Webster

Got some free time?

Consider volunteering for SOS and help make a difference.

info@sossilenceofsuicide.org



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The Frank Bruno Foundation: An Introduction

Rachael Hayward, Charity Secretary and Project Development Manager explains the origins of the Frank Bruno Foundation and the difference it hopes to make to lives.

Our Vision

The Frank Bruno Foundation will provide a safe environment to residents of England, Wales and Northern Ireland over the age of 10 years old (there is no upper age limit) facing and recovering from mental ill health symptoms by opening dedicated provisions to deliver wellbeing sessions alongside non-contact boxing workouts bringing together healthy bodies and healthy minds.

Our programme will help to bridge the gap between the services available and those needed.

To help raise public awareness and understanding of mental ill health, and to break and knockout the stigma attached to this.

The Frank Bruno Foundation was founded by Frank Bruno MBE following his own painful experiences with mental ill health and the treatment he received when he was sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983.

During the time Frank was an in-patient he was unhappy with the treatment he and those around him received; the inappropriate use of mind-

altering medication that prevented his ability to function.

Whilst detained, Frank expressed a desire to use the on-site gym to exercise, this request was generally refused. He considers that his inability to exercise was detrimental to his recovery.

Mental Health Services in the UK are limited and frequently appear in negative headlines. Our current mental health service cannot support everyone and early intervention is key to any possible chance of recovery.

The Frank Bruno Foundation will deliver our Round by Round programme to anyone over the age of 10 (there is no upper age limit) with low to moderate mental ill health, consisting of 12 weekly sessions of wellbeing and non-contact boxing.

The aim is to bring healthy-body and healthy-mind approaches together to provide a holistic and enjoyable approach to overcoming life obstacles and stigma.

The programme will strive to assist participants to build on their existing physical and emotional strengths and achievements, encouraging at



least 30 minutes of physical exercise every day to strengthen the mind, muscles and immune system, in line with guidance of the Chief Medical Officer.

Most people managing mental ill health lack motivation for day to day living and consequently become inactive and develop unhelpful coping habits. Once in this cycle it



can be very difficult to get out due to obstacles; e.g. lack of confidence, ability to make friends, lack of knowledge and cost.

The Foundation believes the key to motivation is to have a sense of control over what you are doing, when you are doing it and where.

Our programme will provide a safe and consistent approach in which people can begin to develop their identity again within a positive peer environment, helping to build confidence.

The aim is to provide participants with tools that can help them identify strategies to manage difficulties skilfully in fun and engaging sessions

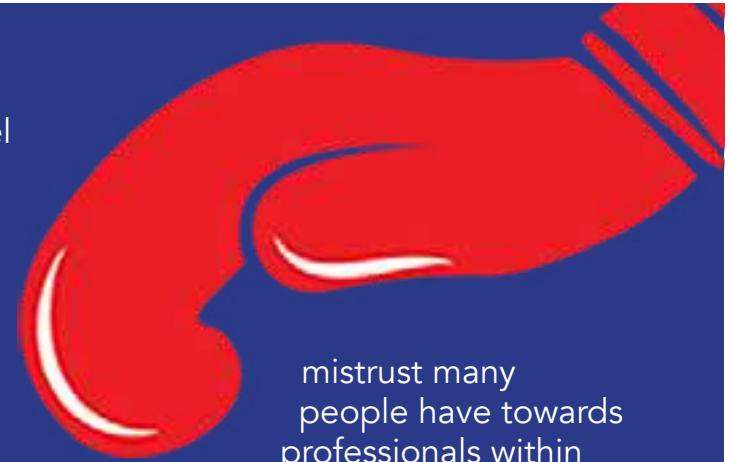
in which they can grow in confidence and ability, make new friends and feel the benefits of exercise physically and mentally, ultimately recognising through sport they are making changes that are within their control.

Boxing is a personal sport; it's about working on you and finding ways to improve. Non-contact boxing will help install challenge, commitment and control and in time, participants will learn to recognise when this resilience can be used in their everyday life, spending less time with feelings of self-doubt and focusing their energy on changing the things they have control over, setting goals and achieving them.

Supporting people to come up with specific solutions to the challenges they face creates unique local outcomes. Continuing with participation in sport will endorse these qualities and the Foundation will support all participants with weekly club fees for up to six weeks after the programme has finished as part of the exit strategy.

Participants will also have access to our need-led wraparound service. The Foundation will arrange for appropriate advice services to be available within the centre. The advice services will include (but are not limited to) welfare benefits, housing, CV writing, interview techniques and counselling.

The Round by Round programme is not complicated and early indications show that it is effective. The Foundation is unique in that it has been created in line with Frank's vision of helping people in a relaxed and informal environment. The



mistrust many people have towards professionals within mental health is widely reported and Frank is all too aware of this. He is keen to remove the 'white coat' and 'clinical' attitude to recovery.

Using his own experiences Frank has overseen the preparation and writing of the programme to ensure it reflects the options he would have preferred to have been offered during his own difficult times. Exercise promoted his recovery, along with changes to his lifestyle, and there are several media articles suggesting the same for other professional sports men and women. The interests of the individual are at the heart of what the Foundation does.

We have been fundraising for the past 2 years and have now secured our first centre. Refurbishment work is due to start before we can open our doors in early 2020 in Northampton, the location of our first centre. New Public Health England data shows that between April 2017 and March 2018 the proportion of patients within the local authority with depression was 12.3%. This figure rose from 8.9% in 2013-14.

Once our Northampton Centre is established, the long-term aim is to open centres across the UK, wherever the need is required.



To enquire, donate or fundraise, visit

[**www.thefrankbrunofoundation.co.uk**](http://www.thefrankbrunofoundation.co.uk)

Facebook: [thefrankbrunofoundation](https://www.facebook.com/thefrankbrunofoundation)
Twitter: [@FrankBrunoFound](https://twitter.com/FrankBrunoFound)

Standens Barn Community Centre
Walledwell Court
Northampton
NN3 9TW

Tel: [0300 365 1995](tel:03003651995)



Miles for Mental Health is here!

Miles for Mental Health is Rethink Mental Illness' first virtual event! Your challenge is to run a marathon over the course of a month in any way you want. Whether you want to run a mile a day for 26 days, spread it over the four weeks or do it all in one day. You may be new to running or a seasoned pavement hitter - the idea is to get out and run to improve your health and mental wellbeing while raising vital funds for Rethink Mental Illness.

Sign up at: www.rethink.org/milesformentalhealth

Email: events@rethink.org

Advice and Support

Our goal is to make sure everyone affected by severe mental illness has a good quality of life.

To find out more about future events, the work we do and support we provide, visit:

www.rethink.org

We provide over 200 expert mental health services in England. These can help you or someone you know with everything from advocacy, to housing to criminal justice and secure services, as well as nursing care and carer support, among others. You can also access over 140 of our local support groups which are run by people with experience of mental illness. Each one offers a welcoming, non-judgemental space in which you can talk openly about your experiences and receive support. Please go to our website at www.rethink.org to see what services and groups are in your area or call us on 0121 522 7007.

Advice and Information Service (RAIS)

Our RAIS service offers practical help on a wide range of topics such as The Mental Health Act, community care, welfare benefits, debt and carers' rights. We also offer general information on living with mental illness, medication and care.

Tel: 0300 5000 927 (Opening hours 9:30am-4pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: RethinkMailbox@rethink.org

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Monday-Friday 9am-4pm (excluding bank holidays)



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- Home Visits
- Signposting

- Emotional Support
- A listening ear
- Peer Support
- Social Activities

- Education
- Practical Support
- Weekly wellbeing cafés
- Dementia specialist nurses

Dementia Forward is North Yorkshire's leading support charity for people living with and affected by dementia.

We provide a highly responsive, personalised information, advice and signposting service to anyone whose everyday life may be touched by the condition. We achieve this through our experienced team of dementia support advisors, a local helpline, a dementia specialist nurse, home visits, wellbeing activities and educational programmes.

To find out more call our helpline on 03300 578592,
email info@dementiaforward.org.uk or visit us online at
www.dementiaforward.org.uk

Dementia
Forward

Care and Support for Life

Registered Charity no. 1148225

Art and Poetry

Each month, Aspire2 will feature artworks, poetry and other artistic expressions inspired by or created about mental health. We aim to feature works by renowned and upcoming creatives alike.



Black in Deep Red

by [Mark Rothko](#)

Our featured artist this month is American abstract expressionist Mark Rothko, who was known to suffer with addiction and depression until his death by suicide in 1970. His turn to darker colours coincided with his worsening mental health.

Hope is a thing with feathers
by [Emily Dickinson](#)

“‘Hope’ is the thing with
feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the
words -

And never stops - at all -”



by [Charlie and Eddie Proudfoot](#)

**Depression***by Mark Smith***Compassion***by Juansen Dizon*

Let the compassion be the blessing
you give
to the world

Work on your strengths, not your
weaknesses. How many of your New Year's
resolutions have been about fixing a flaw?

by Jonathan Haidt

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aspire²



Stepping Out

How one theatre in Bristol explores mental health through its productions and how it impacts the wellbeing of its members. Written by Aspire2 Senior Editor Sam Atkin.

The effects of the arts on mental health are by now well-documented. For some, engaging in acts of creativity, performance and expression, especially communally, can have a transformative impact on their mental health.

Theatre is one form that seems to be thriving, as evidenced by Stepping Out, a mental health theatre group in Bristol. Formed by CEO Steve Hennessy, Stepping Out has been performing mental health-inspired productions for more than twenty years and is the country's leading mental health theatre group.

I spoke to Steve about the theatre's work and how mental health is incorporated into productions through themes and performers; who are themselves mental health service-users or supporters.

"The vast majority of our shows feature mental health in some shape or form, especially the scripts that are written for us. Almost all of them feature mental health," he explained.

"Occasionally we do stuff that doesn't but that's only when the performers themselves are mental health service-users, so we have that mental health aspect in," Steve added.

One example of a show, performed earlier this year by the group, was *The Stranger on the Bridge*, which used the story of the Channel 4 documentary of the same name:

"One cold wet morning in 2008, 21-year-old Jonny Benjamin went to Waterloo Bridge with the intention of taking his life. A stranger stepped out of the rush hour crowd and talked him out

of it, in an act of kindness that was to change both their lives forever."

The theatre works with amateur actors and professionals alike with the aim of exploring mental health and improving the wellbeing of its members.

"Our range goes from enthusiastic amateurs to professionals who benefit their own mental health or support the more severe mental health conditions of others," Steve explained.

"There are a huge number of people who had not done any acting since their school play," he added.

Steve started Stepping Out in 1997 after his passions for theatre and mental health combined through his work.

"I was working at a psychiatric hospital

at the time and I started off running a small drama group. We were using creative means to help patients advocate themselves and express better what they wanted from services - and occasionally to make complaints too!" he said.

"I was always passionate about theatre and I guess it was about sharing that enthusiasm with others who might find it interesting. I've always been interested in the issues and the thinking behind mental health services and what makes good mental health: and the role of creativity in particular in maintaining good mental health," Steve explained.

Stepping Out grew from that point.

"We very quickly found out that offering people the opportunity for live performance in particular was a tremendously empowering, healing thing to do," he said.

Performing has had a major impact on the mental health of members of the theatre group (who numbered 107 performers this year), which Steve believes is a result of the effects of self-expression.

"Mental illness thrives on poor self-image and poor self-confidence and we create experiences where people feel confident and empowered and successful. They've got the attention of the audience who are cheering and clapping if they like what you do."

"There's also the feeling of achievement from learning a part, getting up on stage, performing it for a couple of weeks; especially if you've not done it before or only done it in a small way or a long time ago. We've had members



who'd never done any performance who were suddenly excited and energised by the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience," he said.

When asked for the most memorable transformation of a group member, Steve recalled:

"We had a young guy who came to us. He was about 18 and he'd spent most of the previous three years on a psychiatric ward. He was painfully shy, diagnosed with schizophrenia and didn't interact much. He was in a show and agreed to come on stage on the condition that he didn't have to say a line."

"He was in all our shows for five years after that and played lead roles, learning hundreds of lines. He was totally in his element and in his power, dominating the stage. In that same period of five years he left hospital, he gradually cut down on his medication and he got a

full-time job in mental health."

As well as performances, of which there can be between four and 10 per year, Stepping Out also runs workshops and social activities for its members. This year, the workshops included clowning, physical comedy, drama therapy and mime.

Acclaimed actor Sir Mark Rylance is a patron of Stepping Out, which has been a registered charity since 2007.



To find out more about the group, see upcoming shows or donate to the theatre, please visit steppingouttheatre.co.uk.



We're looking for contributions from readers on a monthly basis. Whether it's a poem, quote, short story, or a piece of art with a link to mental health, we'd love to hear from you!

Email editor@aspire2.org.uk to get involved!



Abbey Road Studios

From Despair to Abbey Road

Signed singer, guitarist, record producer and songwriter Jay Ebby East is a perfect example of the power that music can have on our mental health and our lives in general. Written by Global Sound Group's Lauryn Hall

Jay Ebby East's story is a special one. He is a prime example of how music can turn your life around for the better.

The singer-songwriter, guitarist and producer suffered for years dealing with the damaging effects of depression and addiction, to the point of suicidal thoughts. Jay spent two years in recovery, following the 12-step fellowship and turned his life around, now being sober for over 8 years.

Jay managed to build his life back up through his music. After years of hell, he finally found the light within his music. Eventually feeling a part of something thanks to his newfound home in the music industry. Music was there for him when there was a lack of help at desperate times of need.

Jay's most recent single, "In The City Tonight" was mastered at the legendary Abbey Road Studios. This was a life-changing, pinch yourself moment. He told me it was like 'walking down the hall of fame' walking into such a prestigious studio, where heroes of his once stood and recorded such iconic albums.

People told him time and time again that he would never achieve great things, that he would never get to where he is now. They told him he couldn't; but look at him now.

At this point today, Jay tells me that, in his words, he truly is 'living the dream.' After picking himself

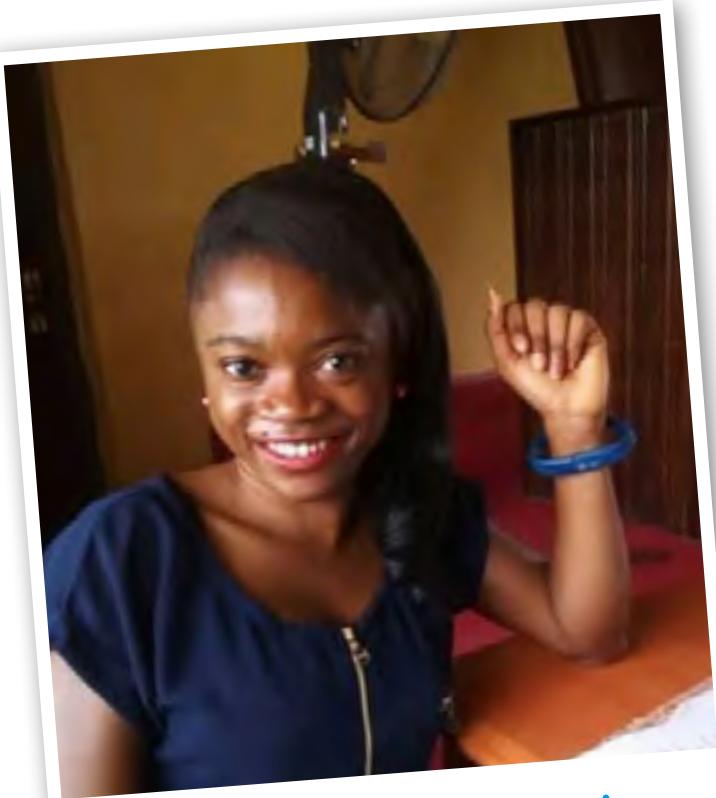
up from a true rock bottom to hearing his songs on national radio stations. Getting to spend such valuable time in one of the world's greatest and most prolific studios, Abbey Road is a dream come true.

Jay now goes out of the way to help others who are also struggling with similar issues, as nobody knows how it feels more than someone else who has genuinely gone through it. Jay hopes that now, his music can be an outlet for others who have also gone through mental health struggles and hat his success story will inspire others to go out and achieve their dreams, no matter what you have been through. Your struggles should never hold you back and every unique individual has the power to succeed and achieve even their wildest dreams.

Brought up surrounded by music - as his Dad was also a keen musician - Jay has a style reminiscent of Oasis, Neil Young and Richard Ashcroft, which is evident in his music.

His song writing has evolved as his life has turned around, from his debut single 'On The Other Side' to his newest single 'In The City Tonight' his songs tell the story of his journey. Jay Ebby East's heartfelt music illustrates his road to recovery and instils hope in others who have also suffered.

Jay's story is a story of hope, instead of what was at one time, a story of hell.



**Aspire2 Ambassador
of the month!**

Brand Ambassador of the Month

Every month, Aspire2 will feature a brand ambassador of the month. Our ambassadors are shining lights of social media, working hard to raise awareness of mental health and giving their time to talk to people who need help.

Our ambassador this month is Prudence Onaah, who represents Aspire2 in Nigeria.

Prudence is an author and content creator who has already contributed several articles for Aspire2. These include her latest, which discusses mental health in the workplace, on the next page.

With a keen interest in mental health, Prudence uses her social media platforms to express her passion for writing and often covers how mental health is dealt with in Nigeria.



@prudenceonaah

If you'd like to get involved as an **Aspire2** brand ambassador, email Tiegan at:

Tiegan@aspire2.org.uk



Hi everyone! I'm Tiegan, I'm the Social Media and Marketing Executive at Aspire2!

Each month I'll be giving updates on the work I do at Aspire2 and spreading the inspiring stories and amazing work of our brand ambassadors.

Since starting my role with Aspire2, I have been promoting the work we do and increasing our following on social media.

I reach out to people to create more awareness of the company and general mental health. I feel that social media can be a cruel place at times, so hopefully I inspire our followers and sign post people to services that will benefit them.

I couldn't be happier in the work I do, especially knowing

that it's going to have a positive impact on people.

I recruit brand ambassadors who are as passionate about mental health as I am; it's lovely to see how many people want to get involved and share their own stories!

If you think you have what it takes to become a brand ambassador feel free to contact any of our social media pages or email me at: tiegan@aspire2.org.uk

Follow us on social media!



Safeguarding Your Mental Health at Work

Aspire2 brand ambassador Prudence Onaah explains how a proactive approach can protect your mental health at work.

Mental health is an issue that is not discussed at work enough. We pay little attention to how our job is affecting our physical health and much less our mental health. This is a mistake, because our mental health has a profound effect on our productivity at work. Whether you are an entrepreneur, a solopreneur, a manager or an employee, your performance is largely hinged on the state of your mental health. You have to be healthy to be productive. You have to be in a great state mentally to go after your goals and tackle each task.

But our work environment can damage our mental health. When we handle toxic co-workers and bosses, we tend to withdraw or to attack the discomfort that they cause. If we are lucky, we find ways to improve the situation but sometimes it's not that simple.

We never take enough thought of our mental health while at work. Perhaps, it's time to change that. It's time to aspire to be mentally healthy.

You should start becoming conscious of how your work environment is affecting your mental health. Handling mental health at work starts from a place of self-awareness. Are you even aware that a situation is impacting you negatively? When you identify that a situation affects you mentally, you should actively work towards changing it for the better.

It's vital to safeguard your mental health at work because the stress that work brings can lead to mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. You can begin to lose your joy when it comes to work, and that's not a good place to be in.

Mental health violations at work can also take the form of work abuse. Do you feel obligated to put in more

hours? Are those hours going unpaid for, and would you rather avoid them? If your boss makes you feel that your best performance at work will never be enough, you might be facing a mental health violation. If you are like me, your solution might be to leave or switch jobs.

In fact, 12.7% of sickness absence days in the UK have been attributed to mental health conditions. What if there was a better way to handle this? What if you could make your mental health a priority at work? What if you could look out for yourself in a way where your mental health doesn't get violated in the first place?

Aside from creating awareness and extending help to people who might be mentally unhealthy, Aspire2 provides directions to organisations and charities where you can get the support that you need to overcome any mentally unhealthy situation. We are here to nudge you to Aspire2 be mentally healthy. But you have to take action. No one can do that for you.

If you are an employee, talk to your boss about the policies that are affecting your mental health. If you are an entrepreneur, get rid of those policies and create work-life balance. Take regular breaks during your workday. Group your tasks so that you take similar actions together.

Relax a little before you move to the next goals on your to-do list. Unwind whenever you can. Walk away from a situation before it gets toxic. Inculcate physical activity into your workday. Take walks during your lunch break and create moments when you are detached from the computer screen. Talking to your manager about an unhealthy situation is usually the first step to making it better. If you feel that you are often apportioned a disproportionate share of work, tell

your manager about it. You may get to acquire a workload that you can handle, in the future, and enjoy a better working situation.

Sometimes, the most mentally challenging situation is the commute. Instead of dwelling on everything that could go wrong as you go to and from work, use the time to unwind. Relieve the stress on your commute by not dwelling on how tedious your workday has been or on the traffic situation or the noise around you. Instead, think about everything that can go right and the warm shower waiting for you at home.

No matter how important the extra hours seem, it's always better to let them go. Dissociate your work from your family life. Don't take work home and leave the office on time. Keep leftover tasks until the next day.

When you create boundaries like this, you create a mentally secure space within you that you can always fall back to. Work calls should have a time-lapse within your day. Instead of scheduling emails and taking calls endlessly, set a time frame for that and stick to it. You can ignore calls from work at that time, or you can separate your work lines from your personal lines.

Safeguarding your mental health at work takes conscious effort. You have to make the decision to do that. The great thing about this choice is that it wards off the possibility of becoming entangled with mental illness that has roots in your work. If you need help with challenging situations at work, make the call, book the appointment.

Get in touch with mental health experts by reaching out through the helplines provided in this newspaper. It's time to aspire to be mentally healthy. I invite you to do the same.



**A campaign to inspire
people to live unapologetically
free and set personal development goals**



Feeling alone at Christmas

Aspire2 Brand Ambassador TimeToTalk on how you can help the lonely this Christmas.

Christmas can be a really lonely time. Everyone is celebrating with family and friends but there are some people who are struggling alone while you're enjoying yourself.

The first thing we relate to Christmas events is having a get together with family and friends and as much as it's a lovely thing to look forward to, some people can't do that.

Some are just lonely - for example elderly people who live with no family around them. This time of year can also be hard for people who have lost family or friends because it reminds us that they should be there.

The holidays can be the worst time of the year for lonely people and as much as we might love Christmas, we should take a second to think about how some people might be struggling while we're enjoying ourselves.

I think we forget about human interaction and actually taking some time out of days to check on the people around us. It isn't always easy to find the time and even remembering can be tricky when we have such busy lives. But it makes such a huge difference to those who are lonely.

What you can do to help others

If you know someone who is lonely during this time of year, here's a few things I think you might be able to do to make a difference.

- Check on your family, friends and neighbours.
- Send someone a card at Christmas. This shows you're thinking of them even if you can't physically be with them.
- Invite them around to spend Christmas with you.
- Find your local charity and help out.
- Talk to neighbours, people on the bus and shopkeepers.
- If you're also spending Christmas alone, why not invite them around and spent it together because actually, you might form a friendship for life.

Conversion starters

I know some people find it awkward to start a conversation with someone who they don't know very well and I totally understand this. So I thought I would give you a few conversion starters and topics to talk about which might help you to interact with new people.

- How has your day been?
- I hope you don't mind me talking to you, but I just thought I would check in on you

- Are you looking forward to the Christmas holiday?
- Are you spending Christmas with family & friends?
- What have you been doing today?
- What are you into watching on TV at the moment?
- How's the cat/dog? (If they've got one)
- What did you do as a job? (especially the elderly generation love talking about their past and giving advice)

I've spoken a lot about the elderly generation feeling lonely during this time of year but actually, young people struggle at this time of year too. If someone is lonely, they are going to feel as if they are a burden on you, so it might take a while for them to open up to you. You just need to make them feel like they're not a burden and that you're happy to listen and help.

So if you do one thing this holiday please go and check on your family, friends and neighbours. I hope everyone has a lovely Christmas and new year.

Enjoy yourselves but also please remember to stay safe and well.

Twitter: [@timetotalk19](#)

Blog: realtimetotalk.wordpress.com



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The Humane Wage

By David Jones

By 2024 the Conservatives want to bring in a minimum wage of £10.39 per hour. During the election, Labour argued a £10.00 minimum wage should be brought in by 2020. The average wage for someone suffering from a mental illness is likely to be less than £200 per week for their full-time employment.

I know, it's scandalous and says something about the management of the businesses that choose to pay their staff so little. I am not sure why I would want to wait another five years to be treated with respect and decency and earn a decent crust.

£10.39 in 2024 will probably be the same meaningless wage as today. Labour's pledge was more interesting in my view.

If my wages went up next year by £1 per hour, I would earn another £44.00 per week and on a four-week month £176, over a 52-week year that would increase my income by a further £2,288. That's a major increase for a pay rise that seems insignificant.

Without any suggestion of doubt,

people on low wages will suffer from more physical and mental health problems, more stress, a less healthy diet and social poverty. Obviously, there are economic costs for the employer about funding higher wages.

If a company employs ten staff, that economic cost would be £22,880 plus. The numbers would be even more frightening if you employed 100, 200, 1,000, 10,000 plus.

I fundamentally disagree with employers and politicians who seem to believe that underpaying anyone – regardless of their mental health – is morally and socially acceptable or that we somehow we should be grateful and bow our heads with gratitude.

Forget £10.39 in five years, what about the humane wage packet? Let's pay staff a minimum of £12 per hour across the board and regardless whether your 16 or 21.

Can you imagine the impact that would have on someone earning £9 per hour based on a 44-hour week? It's an annual wage increase

of £6,864. Now that is life changing money, less poverty, less social care benefits, improved standards of life, better physical and mental health and the majority of the working-class population can actually enjoy life rather than be in constant despair and never ending monetary fear and anxiety.

The humane wage is the only wage for modern Britain. A 'humane and free country' does not exploit the many and knowingly keep them on the breadline whilst the few cream off the riches.

Yes, I totally agree that employers have worked hard and have probably staked vast amounts of capital into projects and businesses. But can they look their employees in the eye with honesty, integrity, self-respect and honour and let them exist with constant financial instability?

One last and final point: I am disappointed that the majority have not risen in arms, and asked 'what's wrong with you people?' Wake up and demand a humane wage from a humane country.



How you can help us:

Aspire 2 depends solely on capital raised through advertising, donations, grants, and sponsorship.

Donations

We gratefully accept any and all donations. No amount is too big or too small and your money will be reinvested into the company to raise awareness of mental health.

To donate, visit aspire2.org.uk/support-us

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Sponsorship

If you would like to sponsor Aspire 2 we would be delighted to discuss this with you in more detail. Sponsorship packages are offered in the following areas and can be for periods of one, three or five years:

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 - Office Running Costs

**To enquire about advertising or sponsorship, contact Peter at
peter@aspire2.org.uk**

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