

#SPRING\_2024



FREE

 **RE-CO-CO**  
RECOVERY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE

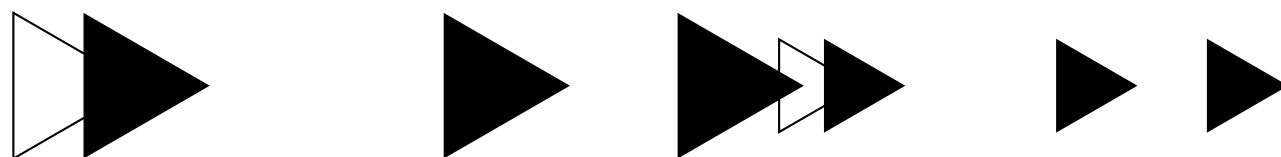
IN THE PROSPECTUS ARE DETAILS OF COURSES/WORKSHOPS, AND OF GROUPS.  
YOU HAVE TO ENROL BEFORE DOING COURSES OR ATTENDING GROUPS.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COURSE AND A GROUP IS THAT  
A COURSE RUNS FOR A SET NUMBER OF WEEKS, AND THEN COMES TO AN END.  
WE HOPE THAT STUDENTS WILL, AS FAR AS IS POSSIBLE, ATTEND EACH SESSION  
OF A COURSE FOR WHICH THEY'VE SIGNED UP.

GROUPS ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE MORE OPEN-ENDED,  
AND RUN WEEKLY/FORTNIGHTLY/MONTHLY  
AND YOU CAN COME TO A GROUP FOR A WHILE,  
NOT COME FOR HOWEVER LONG AND THEN SIMPLY RETURN.  
YOU COME TO GROUPS AS AND WHEN YOU CAN.

THE PROSPECTUS ALSO CONTAINS ARTICLES, INFORMATION AND ARTWORK.  
THE ARTICLES ARE FOR READING, THE INFORMATION FOR DIGESTING,  
AND THE ARTWORK FOR ADMIRING.

CONTACT DETAILS:



0191 261 0948



info@recoverycoco.com

[www.recoverycoco.com](http://www.recoverycoco.com)



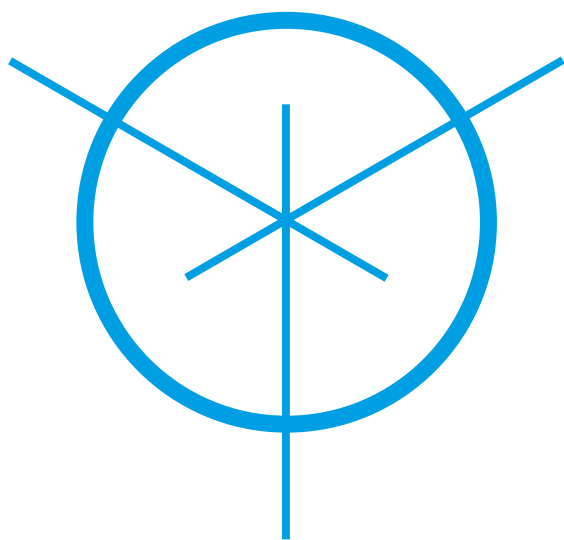
# BETWIXT & BETWEEN

BY ANGELA

I'm all for rule change, me. Disruption to the status quo. Redressing power imbalance and challenging tyranny and subservience to the old guard. Or at least in theory I am.

Times are certainly changing now.

The unspoken constraints of old, no longer apply. Maybe it's because the social contract has been broken. Maybe some folk are wholeheartedly evolving into not giving any fucks whilst others worry about anything and everything.



## Evolved disparity.

Take the Metro for instance. (Bottom line – admittedly rougher). Deafened by the same 3 classical tunes on a loop, that apparently keep the feral kids away from the concourse. Trying to look unfazed, whilst I stand and wait for a working man to finish rolling his massive joint on the seat, before I can sit down.

## More fool Him.

I wouldn't put anything in my mouth that's been on those seats. More than once I've made the mistake of just sitting down and realising 5 minutes later I've a got a pissy wet arse for work.

## Not my piss.

There's an edge and an uncertainty to what's acceptable. What's permitted. What we can do, what we are allowed to say.

This Prospectus isn't allowed in Newcastle libraries anymore because we are 'too political'. Censored.

I'm not sure what offended them or frightened them. My original thinking was that it was last term's cover 'Stop War'. And wondering whether 'More War' might have been allowed, such is the perversity of supporting 'Allies'. But I think it's probably been decided based on previous criticism of the odd Government policy. Which is a worry. Some things you aren't allowed to say these day..... (I'm just saying):

- Benjamin Netanyahu is a mad lesbian (being a mad lesbian I feel it's the only thing I can say about him without being cancelled and accused of anti-all sorts). Have a word with yourself Benjamin ya' big mad lesbian.
- The NHS is being systematically and deliberately destroyed/sold off, whilst we get older, unhealthier, needier.
- Kids are killing themselves. Suicide is a valid option for many more people these days. FFS.
- Excess deaths are everyone's business. They are running at over 30% for some age groups – although we are assured that we can worry less now that the ONS have changed their methodology. Thousands less apparently. Although those thousands of funerals still confusingly took place with those thousands of people still being deeed.
- And other things.....(truth will out)

## Or will it? In this post truth era.

I get frightened about it all. Not even consciously.  
I find my hands trembling and my body vibrate with  
adrenalin.

Not at work, where I'm laughing knee deep in constant  
craic and running about being part of something  
that's beautiful.

No, it's when I'm alone. And directly proportional to  
how much news I've watched. Panic setting in at all of  
the apocalyptic visions of adverse suffering I'm seeing,  
and not able to unsee. But I can't stop. Because I don't  
think I should. It feels like the least I can do.

A different, ancient, meaning of Apocalypse is to  
lift a veil. Yes it's catastrophe, yes it's destruction.  
But Apocalypse also describes the dynamic between  
collapse and renewal. That one cannot exist without  
the other and that right now we are in a time that is  
betwixt and between the two.

So try, when you can, to focus on  
the renewal bit. The bit that's full  
of creative potential.

Be the creative force, whilst it  
rains shit. Whilst systems and  
services rattle - pre collapse.

Find a place for you.  
Where activism and inspiration  
can burgeon from the hope  
you have left.

Here is good.

Angela



# DATA DAY PROBLEMS: A SAVAGE BYTE

BY ALISDAIR

The temptation when asked again for my regular contribution to the prospectus was to surf the zeitgeist, follow the fashion, and harness the wondrous powers of AI to write it.

However, even I am not that shamelessly idle, plus it's worth considering the implications and perils of the headlong rush towards a techno-utopian future driven by Large Language Models and the mirage of Artificial General Intelligence, all founded on the remorseless accumulation of yet more data.

On a prosaic, practical level, despite the hype, it doesn't work. AI isn't intelligent, it's more like very sophisticated auto-complete. It predicts according to patterns it detects in its source/learning material. In other words, it remixes along the lines of what's been written or said before, and neither factual accuracy nor meaning really come into play. At our last board meeting, as an experiment, we deployed AI to transcribe proceedings. What emerged was wonderful in its surreal weirdness, akin to an avant-garde play:

*Speaker 1*

Fruit is essential.

*Speaker 2*

Switch to Silent mode.

*Speaker 3*

Are we a cannibal?

*Speaker 1*

But while we're we, we never really. We've never gone out and put out anatolics and stuff like that, but.

*Speaker 1* (05:29)

Mobile number.

*Speaker 4*

Talk about stopping the wall.

*Speaker 2*

I'm not key.

*Speaker 7*

I'll just put the dentist.

*Speaker 1*

Ha ha ha yo.

*Speaker 6*

3 days away from Sunday sunk.

*Speaker 5*

What's the only movie?

*Speaker 6*

300 apparently, according to it was a drop in the auction.

*Speaker 4*

All the 3's that must drop the ocean to what?

*Speaker 2*

Best book in the world.

*Speaker 1*

There are no formal, yeah.

*Speaker 4*

What's the isobelle?

*Speaker 1*

Um it. What's a good?

*Speaker 2*

Football chant.

*Speaker 4*

Takes place on the chemist terraces. One has a rough ref, not quite full.

*Speaker 1*

Open the text.

Okay, mocking the shortcomings of a transcription AI is a bit like shooting fish in a barrel, but the promises made by tech evangelists can never be realised. We see, especially in health and social care, an intrusive and endless desire for ever more data, as if that'll magically provide an answer to knotty human problems. It's verging on a cargo cult, if we simply give up more and more to the all-seeing algorithm, then in its benevolence it will rain lovely solutions down upon us.

Yes, data, a.k.a information is useful, vital, essential, but we must always be aware of the limitations of what is capturable and reducible to the digital realm. Indeed, an over emphasis on what is measurable by the digital tools we have risks having profoundly unwelcome consequences, well beyond the obvious dangers of snake-oil being sold by tech bros. We dehumanise ourselves. This is not mere rhetoric, but something conceptually cancerous:

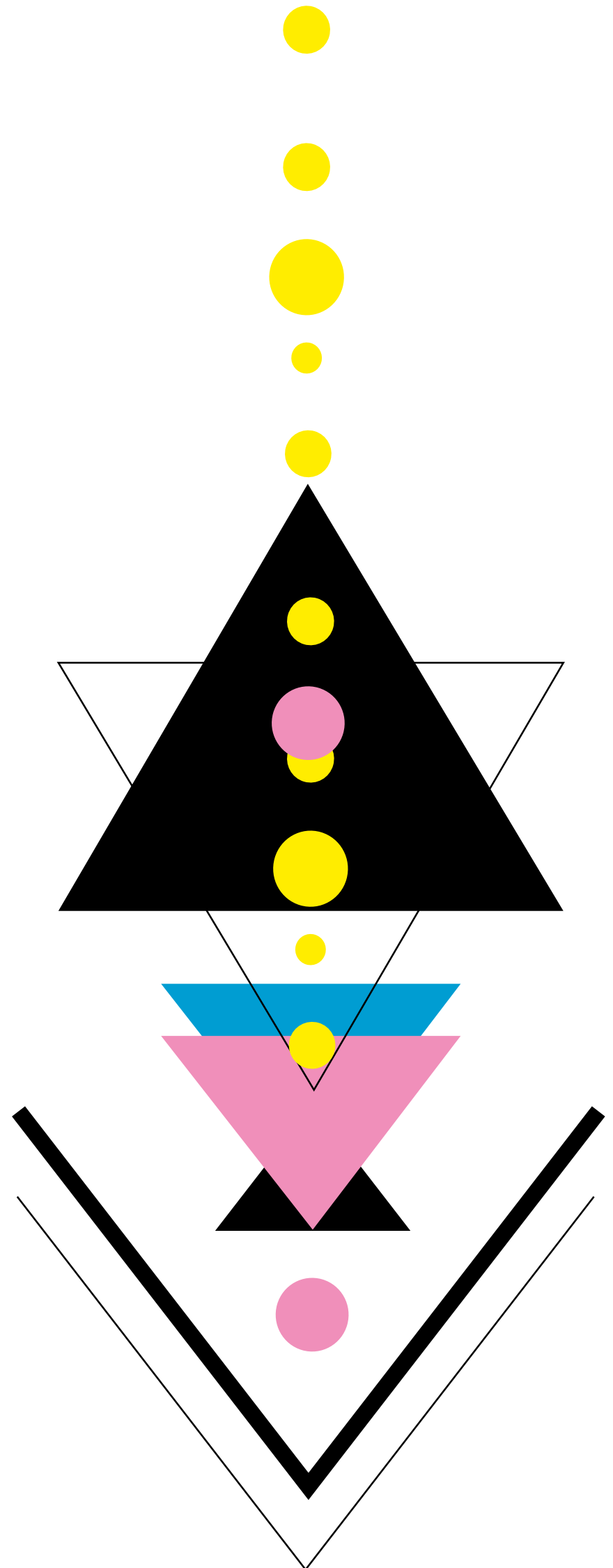
*The contemporary field of AI, however, has taken the theoretical possibility of explaining human cognition as a form of computation to imply the practical feasibility of realising human (-like or -level) cognition in factual computational systems; and, the field frames this realisation as a short-term inevitability. Yet, as we formally prove herein, creating systems with human (-like or -level) cognition is intrinsically computationally intractable.*

*This means that any factual AI systems created in the short-run are at best decoys. When we think these systems capture something deep about ourselves and our thinking, we induce distorted and impoverished images of ourselves and our cognition.*

van Rooij, I., Guest, O., Adolphi, F. G., de Haan, R., Kolokolova, A., & Rich, P. (2023, August 1). Reclaiming AI as a theoretical tool for cognitive science. PsyArXiv.

In other words, it's like the desire (driven in part by corporate greed) for AI to be actually intelligent to replace human labour, warrants downplaying the richness and complexity of human cognition and existence. Wanting humans to be like the tech instead of vice versa, and wilfully overlook those aspects of humanity that don't have affinities with the politico-technological model of management by spreadsheet, a dereliction of responsibility (and accountability) where decisions are outsourced to patchy datasets, with their inherent and inbuilt biases and lacunae (which is a whole other article in itself). Goodness knows, I love technology and my gadgets, quite probably more than the average person, but they must be tools to serve us, not shackles that constrain us, even of conceptions of ourselves.

**Trust in people, show compassion and see people in all of their contexts, their joy and sorrow, their glorious variability, and not as arid, denuded data points.**



# NEW FACES IN RECOCO



## Have you ever noticed how incredibly hard it is to write about yourself?

So, I apologise for here on out if this is just full of awkward babble! Some of you may know me, or have seen me around, but for those that haven't, I'm Emily, one of the new Project Coordinators here at ReCoCo. I first started out at ReCoCo as a student, it having taken me years to even walk through the doors. Well, I can honestly say that decision to enrol has changed my life. After a while, I became a volunteer, often helping out on reception. Being a volunteer then led to becoming a Therapeutic Enabler. All of this gave me the drive that I needed to apply to become a Project Co-ordinator, and I am so fortunate to be able to say that I work at ReCoCo. It's been a wild ride, with many ups and downs, but the thing about ReCoCo is, everyone was there to support me in my journey. That being said, I'm not only passionate about ReCoCo. I also love to bake (often the office will receive a box of treats when I've been trying something new), sew and read (I have a serious problem when it comes to buying books!). I love watching rugby; however, my playing days are long over! I am passionate about a lot of things, but mental health and neurodiversity are two things I would say I am most passionate about. Being neurodiverse myself, I like to keep myself up to date on any research, as well as helping others understand what it means to be neurodiverse and try to bust some of the myths out there.

So yeah, that's me in a nutshell! I am so honoured to be working at ReCoCo, never forgetting just how hard it was to walk through those doors and talk to others, but also remembering that this place can help to change your life (without being too dramatic)!



EMILY



A bit about me; when I first started work, I was away from home living in Sheffield, and I had jobs in various fields from the care sector, to teaching, finance and sales to name just a few.

None of the jobs I had fitted who I was and my struggles with anxiety and depression meant holding down positions was hard and at times impossible. This only enforced the darkness, and I ended up in periods of severe depression. A close friend, during this time, asked me what I wanted to do with my life and I said I never wanted anyone to feel the way I did at that time. Her response was why don't you do that then?! How the hell am I supposed to do that was my response!! (My memory may have edited my response to being a little more polite in the years of telling this story since!) I did however, with a lot of support, manage to get myself out of the dark depression into a better place! I started volunteering and training in mental health and fast forward several years of ups and downs later I am back living in Newcastle and find myself starting a new job where I can use my experiences of being in those dark places in a positive way. In finding ReCoCo I finally feel I've found where I should be in a positive space, being part of a team who are accepting of everyone no matter their mental health past or present. I am always eager to learn new anxiety reducing techniques and am passionate about ending the stigma around mental health, but when I'm not working or flying the flag for depression recovery, I can be found with my headphones on listening to a true crime podcast or sat crafting my next elaborate art project.



STEVE

ADDICTIONS AND MENTAL  
HEALTH COORDINATOR

JULIE



Alreet?! I'm genuinely made up to now be part of the ReCoCo team. I've previously worked as a Peer Support Worker in the community, working here one day a week, and loved it.

I believe there's nothing more empowering than using our experiences to help others. I have lived experience of both addiction and mental health issues, and I now use my past as fuel for a positive future. Recovery for me has been a time of purpose and discovery. This place encapsulates both those things and more. There is no correct path in recovery, it's a blank canvas and you can shape it as you wish. It's the most rock'n'roll thing I've ever done! I have learnt so much in a relatively short space of time, but there is still so much opportunity to carry on doing so and grow with others along the way. We should be proud of the recovery community we have, and it is only growing bigger, better and stronger. I see it every day. So, if you would like to chat about substance misuse or any other addictive behaviours, or indeed anything, just give me a shout. I've learnt that all was never lost, it's just the start. Keep the faith.

I have been involved with ReCoCo in various guises since I started working in the field of Peer Support with CNTW in late Autumn 2020 and am thrilled to be part of the ReCoCo team now.

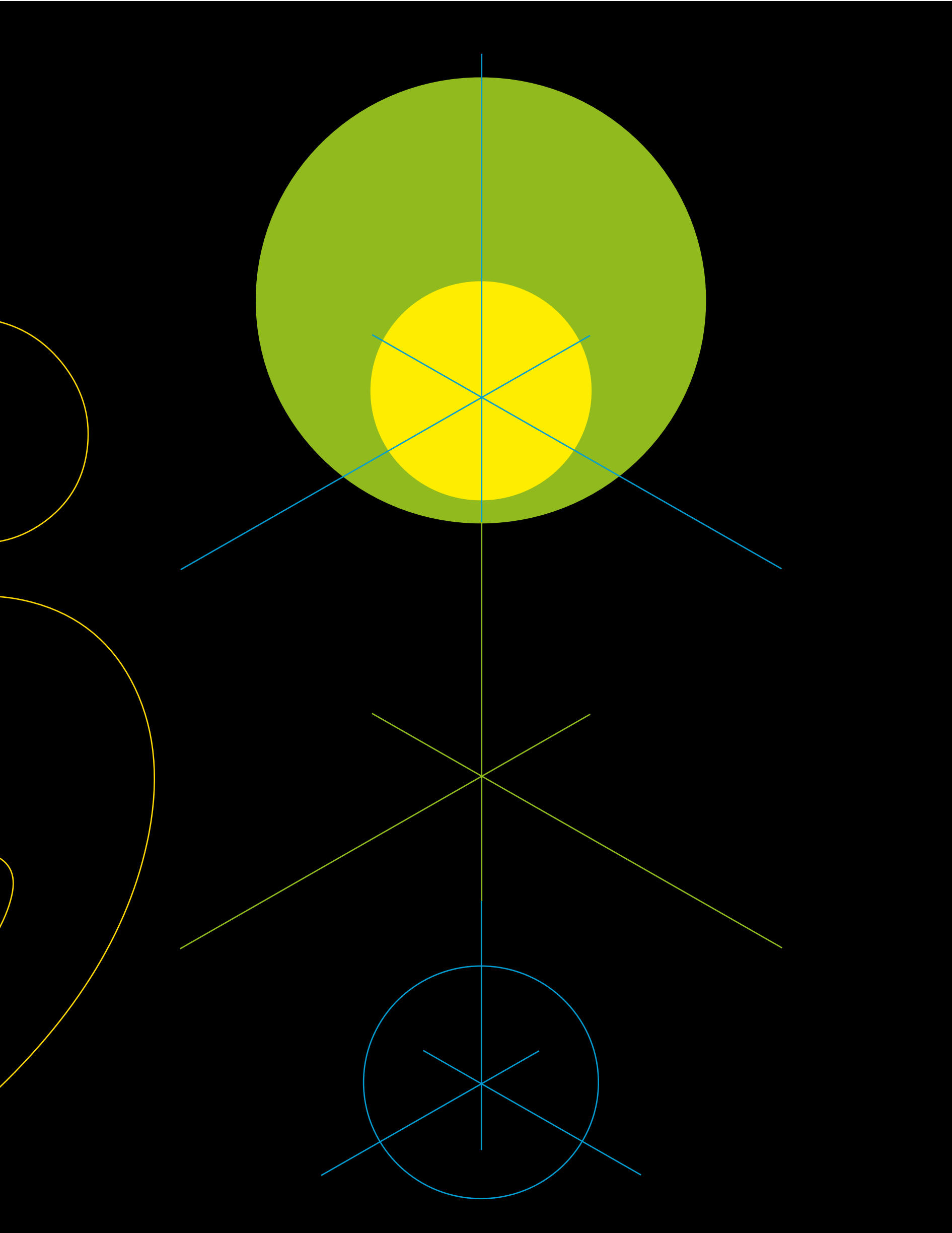
As a former teacher, I have a real passion for education and the value of learning, not just academic learning but learning in its broadest sense. I had to go on my own period of learning when, after various life experiences, coupled with being a carer for many years, I realised that I didn't have the skills, knowledge or understanding to look after or maintain my own mental health and wellbeing. Over the past few years, I have attended courses, read books and spoken to the people around me to learn about myself, to find out what helps me, what gives my life purpose and meaning, what makes me feel good and how to manage some of the complex relationships in my life.

I have learnt that a dip in the ice-bath, a peaceful meditation or a period of journaling helps me to keep life in balance. Whilst a quiet afternoon reading, a good pub quiz, a trip to the cinema or a walk in the countryside brings me joy. I have also learnt how to manage relationships and to ensure that I don't over-give of myself.

In working at ReCoCo, I hope to support others to learn about themselves and find the things that help them and bring them joy.



VALERIE

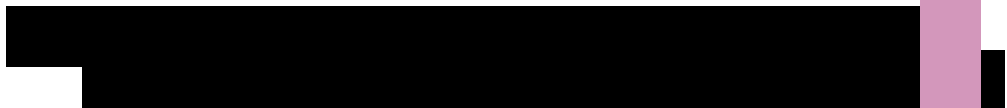
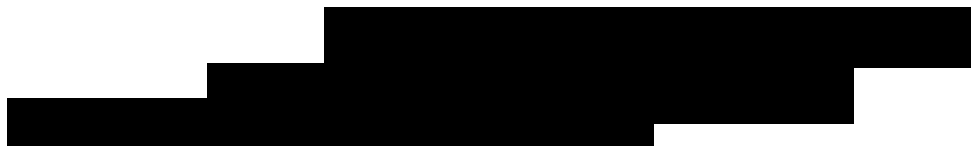


ACROSS

- 3. NICE IN A SOUP OR WITH CHEESE
- 5. BAGS OR LOOSE
- 8. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE
- 9. YELLOW, ORANGE OR GREEN
- 11. THANKFUL
- 14. PETALS AND STEMS
- 16. GREEN
- 17. FROM A BIRD
- 21. SKY
- 22. TINY PLANTS
- 23. HEALTHY FOOD
- 24. BUNNY

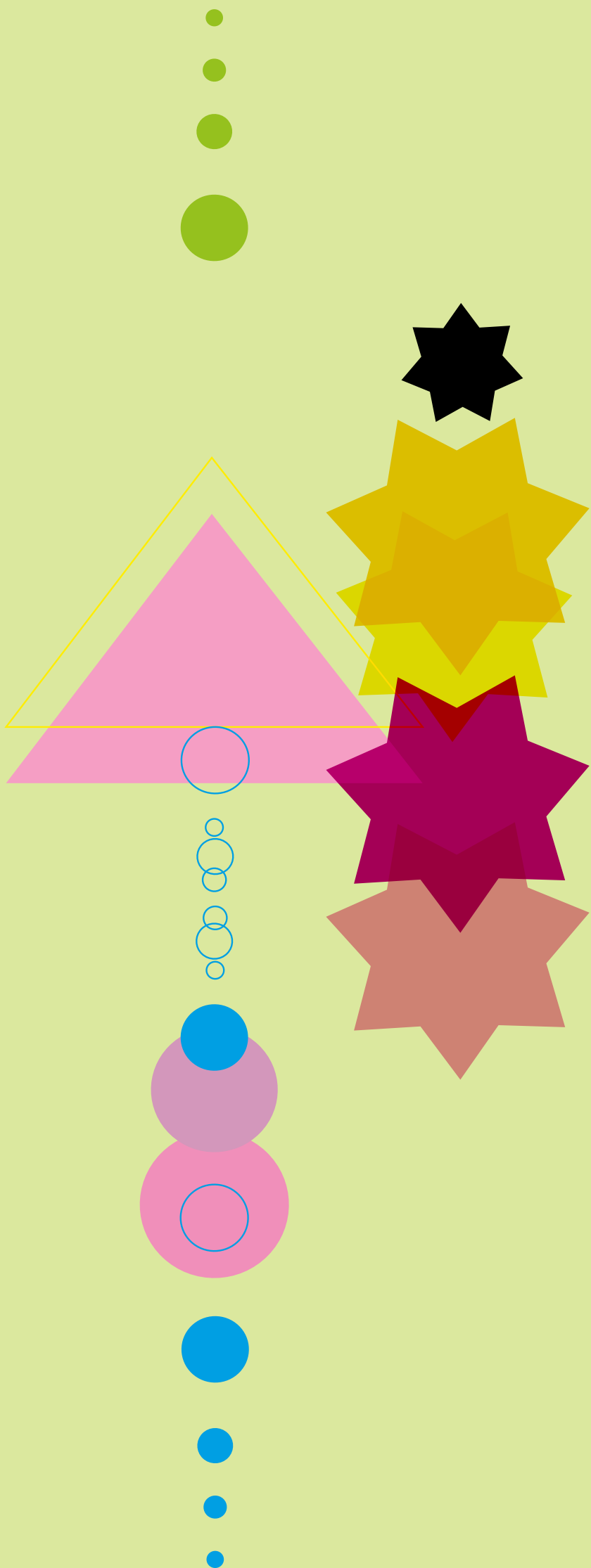
DOWN

- 1. A TASTY TREAT
- 2. NOT COLD
- 3. NOT DARK
- 4. MAKES A NICE CRUMBLE
- 6. SEASON
- 7. IN A POT OR ON THE GROUND
- 10. LIGHT RAIN
- 12. YELLOW
- 13. SUN
- 15. IN A MUG OR AS A BAR
- 18. TALL AND PROUD WITH MANY BRANCHES
- 19. HEALTHY LUNCH
- 20. REGROWTH



The crossword puzzle grid consists of 13 columns and 13 rows. The starting points for the clues are as follows:

- 1: Down, Row 1, Column 13
- 2: Down, Row 4, Column 10
- 3: Across, Row 4, Column 11
- 4: Down, Row 6, Column 10
- 5: Across, Row 6, Column 11
- 6: Down, Row 7, Column 1
- 7: Down, Row 7, Column 2
- 8: Across, Row 8, Column 4
- 9: Across, Row 8, Column 2
- 10: Across, Row 8, Column 6
- 11: Across, Row 9, Column 11
- 12: Across, Row 9, Column 13
- 13: Down, Row 9, Column 10
- 14: Across, Row 10, Column 3
- 15: Down, Row 10, Column 12
- 16: Across, Row 11, Column 1
- 17: Down, Row 11, Column 4
- 18: Across, Row 11, Column 5
- 19: Across, Row 12, Column 3
- 20: Down, Row 12, Column 11
- 21: Across, Row 12, Column 12
- 22: Across, Row 13, Column 2
- 23: Across, Row 13, Column 11
- 24: Across, Row 13, Column 12



# SPRING GRIS GRASS

# THOUGHTS ON THE SELF

## Practical experiences and definitions

In dictionaries "SELF" is given as a tell-word [noun] or as a part added at the front: self~...

The noun **Self** describes a person's or a thing's **own individuality and / or essence**.

It is possible to look into one's own Self with psychiatry, psychology or navel looking.

The combinations with self at the front, fill two and a half columns in the book and still have not all combinations listed.

The closer look will be on self-doubt, self-esteem, self-respect, self-harm, self-awareness and self-healing.

**Self-awareness** is about making yourself at home in a given surrounding, with or without other persons, and establishing the personal take of the different items around you. E.g. Is there a kettle? Can I find a chair? Where is the exit? Where are the serials? And so on.

**Self-doubt** is based on comparisons. **^**This person is so much better at . . . , I can never be THAT good. **^** **But**: "You can do nothing right, can you?" such comments are more often the source of self-doubt.

These sayings are the result of expectations, which the speaking person had about the listener's abilities. The speaker's disappointment, to be proven false with the expectation, is then directed at the person, who was never enabled to make this expectation come true. Because, that person had no idea about the full content of the other person's expectation.

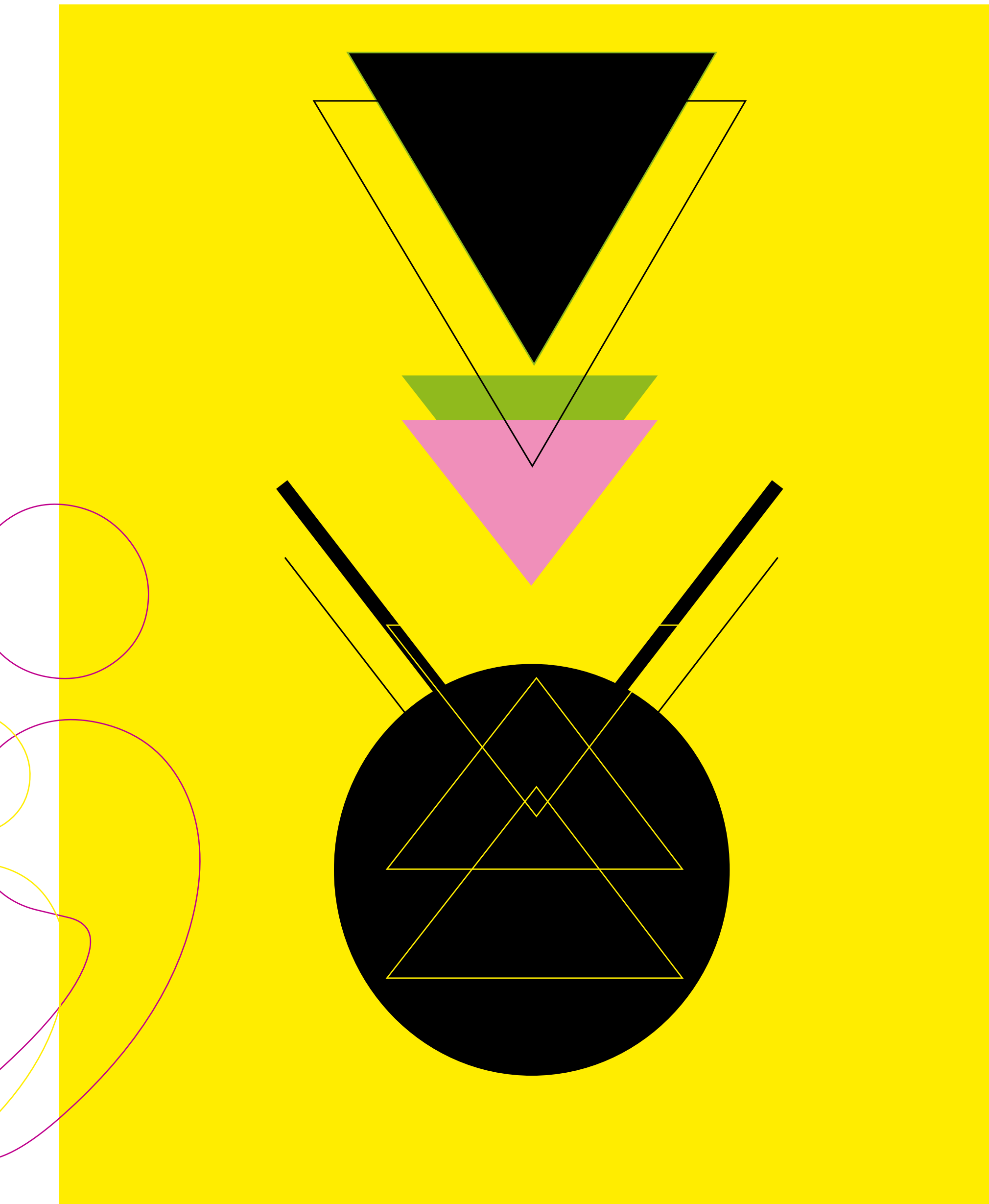
Self-doubt tends to foster **Self-harm**. The Difficulties of living up to unknown expectations, can give rise to one's own "expectations": I should be able to do, what I am asked. Then, why can I not do it? Am I really so dumb / bad / ignorant? Do I have no talents? Why are they asking me! And so on.

Self-harm can take many forms, but the only common thing is: "I am punishing me, because I should know better / be more able. It is MY fault. "But it is a result of being put under physical- and / or mental-pressure by other persons.

**Self-esteem** needs the admiration or praise of other persons to give me the feeling "of, I am good / accepted / better than they, . . . !". Often with a connection to one's pride. If this praise does not come, the road to self-doubt and self-harm is open. Also known as "EGO".

**Self-respect** needs hard work to build it up. It needs the acceptance of my intrinsic value as a human being. **^** I was endowed with it at birth **^**. It also needs the full acceptance of I am satisfied/happy with my body and my history. I accept it absolutely. **My experiences have made me, but I can still change. IF I really want.**

**Self-healing** has two parts: Healing of body and healing of the mind. Both parts use the same thinking: It is my body/ mind, so, **I can influence with my thoughts** the workings of my body and my mind.



# DO YOU WANT TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH?

## Come and join us at The WellSpring – a new collaboration between ReCoCo and Durham University

Lots of research in mental health typically starts in a university or hospital. An academic or clinician identifies a research question based on their area of interest or expertise and designs a research study or experiment. Participants (usually people living with mental distress) are then recruited to fill in surveys, take part in interviews, or complete other tasks related to the research problem. Research is often disconnected from people's lives and people with lived experience don't get to decide what research gets done.

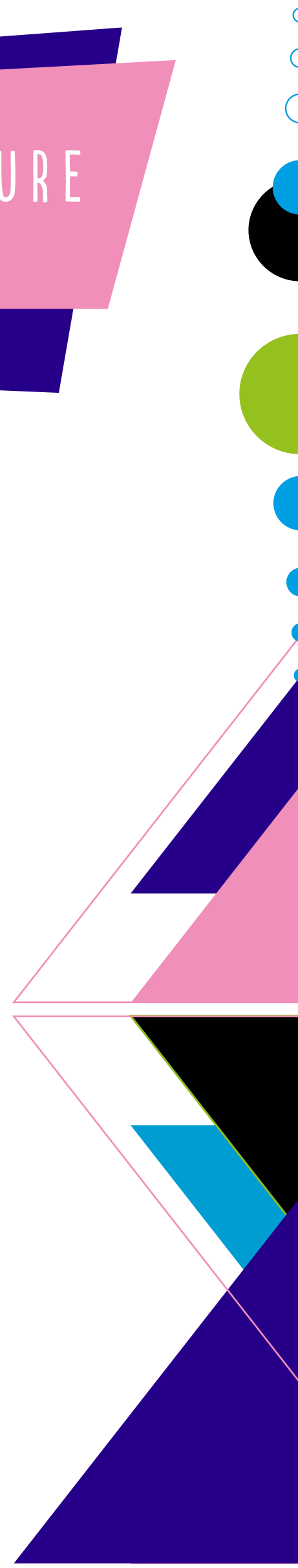
The WellSpring is an opportunity to do things differently!

Based in ReCoCo until 2030, The WellSpring will create a space for students and staff to get together with Durham University researchers and identify their priorities for mental health research and research into health problems linked to inequalities in society such as chronic pain, addiction, or lack of access to services. It's a place where we'll connect ideas, experiment creatively and scientifically and develop new ways of exploring the challenges of mental distress or health inequalities and how we can work together to improve health services.

## Who is involved in The WellSpring?

The WellSpring is part of Durham University's Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities – a new initiative funded by Wellcome that seeks to bring the stories and perspectives of people living with complex health conditions to the forefront of health research.

Our researchers use approaches from the arts, humanities and social sciences to improve understandings of health and human experience and change health policy and practice. We come from a wide range of disciplines including Literary Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, History, Sport and Exercise Sciences, Education and Sociology. We also work closely with people with lived experience and their families, health and voluntary sector professionals, activists, artists, film makers and writers.







The team involved in The WellSpring include:

**Evelyn Tehrani** – the Senior Manager for Research and Engagement at Durham's Institute for Medical Humanities. Evelyn previously worked for IPPR North (the dedicated think tank for the North of England) and Crisis (the UK homelessness charity).

**Veenu Gupta** – an Assistant Professor in Lived Experience Research, based in the Department of Psychology at Durham University. Veenu is a lived experience researcher with personal experience of psychosis and of using early intervention in psychosis services. She also supports the National Clinical Audit of Psychosis as a service user advisor.

**Georgia Corbett** – The WellSpring Co-ordinator. Since graduating from Newcastle University with a degree in Classics and Philosophy, Georgia has worked in healthcare and charities. She is passionate about peer-led support and connecting people.



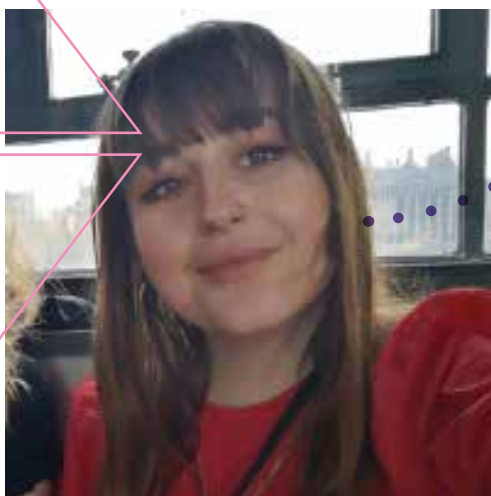
Over the next seven years there will be other Durham University researchers getting involved at ReCoCo: joining in classes and activities, chatting to students, and developing new questions, methods, or sessions with the ReCoCo community.

**I'd like to find out more.  
How can I get involved?**

Come and join us at our drop-in session at ReCoCo (2nd floor) on Thursday 18 April between 11am–3pm. Refreshments will be provided!

We hope you can make it and look forward to seeing you there!

Learn more about the Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities at [durham.ac.uk/drp-medhums](https://durham.ac.uk/drp-medhums)



# ALL FREQUENCIES SOUND COLLECTIVE – NEW YEAR, NEW BEATS

2023 was a massive year for All Frequencies Sound Collective. They have achieved registered charity status, welcomed a new Trustee in David Newberry and found a home within the Recovery College Collective.

"Looking back, it's hard to believe we've been making music for only nine months - given the progress we, All frequencies Sound Collective members have made! Listen for yourself to the vast array of great short pieces on Instagram ranging from Ambient to Techno & beyond!

It has been a journey, from our initial meeting with Ed & John, in a small room with only a few synths to now occupying a significant area of floor 2 to accommodate the growing additions of technology & membership - every other Sunday. The modules, circuits, wires and (simplistic) keyboards are our instruments and compositional tools. We are all members and motivated enthusiasts, and we can construct, compose & record great electronic music WE have created – this is borne largely out of only our 'ear' & 'feel' for what constitutes music itself.

It amazes me every time, without fail, just the range of equipment available to us and the hands-on knowledge and encouragement of collective founders Ed, John & assistant Riley.

I'm sure I'm not alone, he said, often looking around at the head bobbing, toe tapping students clearly enjoying & feeling THEIR music. There are zero requirements to either read music or have any formal training or ability - trust me 'the magic' just happens. Ed, John & Riley are always at hand to guide, support, encourage and coach us.

Enclosed in our own headphone sonic world for three hours we have the opportunity to explore, create, collaborate and be inspired or just 'noodle & tinker' wherever our mood takes us. It's given me even more focus, opportunity and a creative outlet - as I really begin to understand the role of creative music (& art) therapy in our collective route to wellbeing and recovery. I could even reference this in context of Positive Psychology - in that the AFSC sessions really put me in the moment and I've come to savour every second, that's real! (money can't buy that).

Take a listen/ look at our diverse range of AFSC recordings on Instagram & be amazed by what is possible & that potential it has to make us feel good. Never underestimate the power of music as a tool for wellbeing (says I)."

Paul – ReCoCo Student and AFSC Member.

Finally, here is a quote from another AFSC member that can sum it all up nicely.

"It has given me the freedom & opportunity to create (electronic) music, every session fills me with elation".

Do you fancy making some techno? Or maybe you want to lose a few hours in a droning soundscape? Perhaps you would like to nod your head along to some self-made hip hop?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, or if you're just curious about what making electronic music is all about, come and join us every second Sunday at ReCoCo Newcastle, 1.00pm - 5.00pm.

By Ed Warrington  
All Frequencies Sound Collective

# THE FIVE ELEMENTS AND CHINESE MEDICINE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

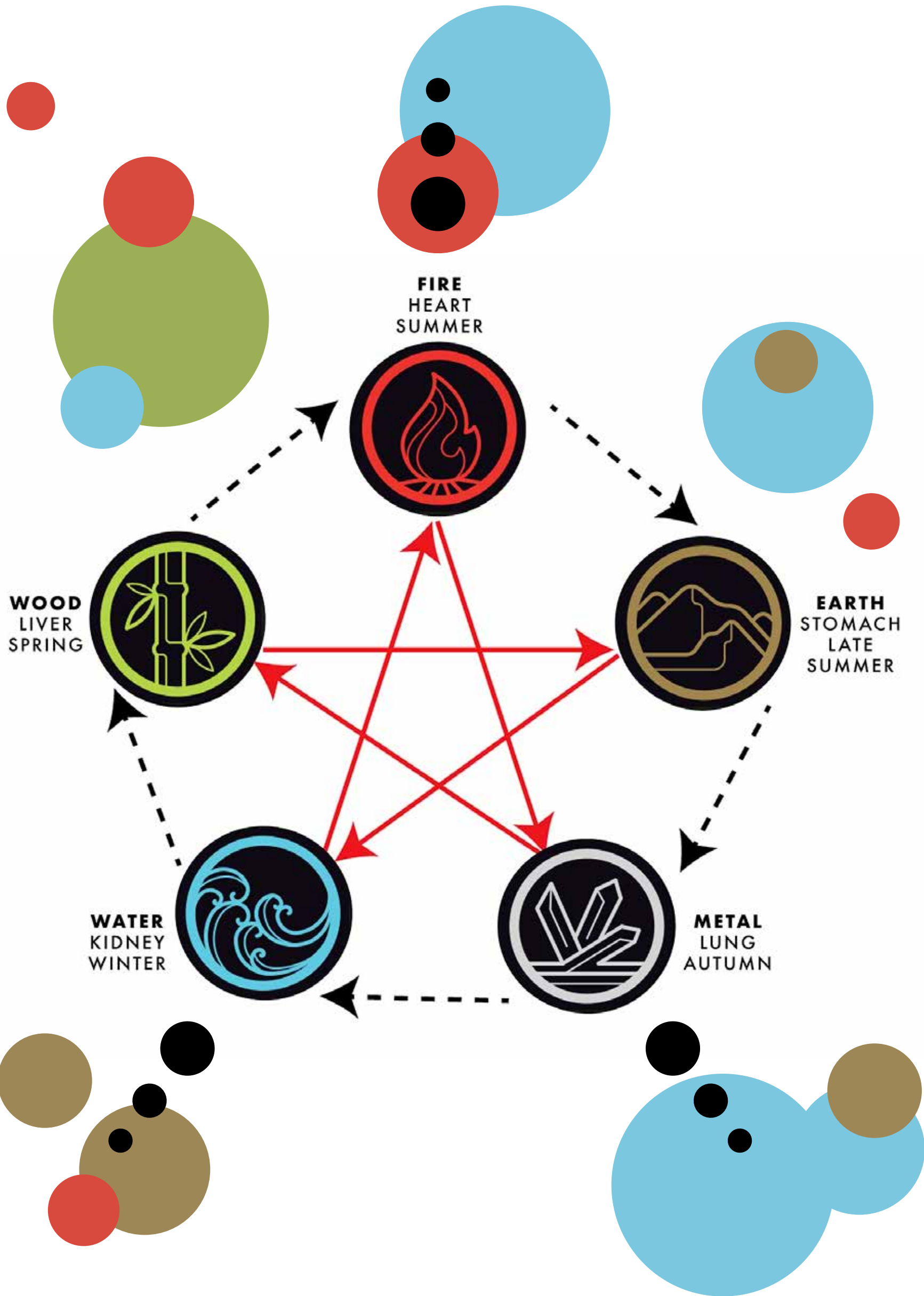
BY JANE EAGLESHAM

Central to all disciplines of Chinese healing is the universal energy known as Qi (pronounced chee). Qi animates life and growth, powers movement, effects change and when I refer to Qi in clinic, I am essentially talking about how much you have left in the tank. Do you have a lot of Qi? Or has your battery run itself down?

In the body, Qi is energy and movement and the activator of all bodily functions and transformations. It is like the electricity that runs through a lightbulb to make it work and the daily production and creation of Qi relies on the food we eat and the air that we breathe.

Over the centuries, observations of Qi and its movements gave rise to many different practices, whose aim was to enhance and regulate the flow of Qi. Some of these practices, like acupuncture and QiGong (or Tai Chi), focussed on the microcosmic Qi of the human body, while others like Feng Shui and astrology, emphasized the macrocosm and the world and universe outside of ourselves. The ancient Chinese perceived human beings as the universe in miniature and they imagined themselves as part of one unbroken wholeness, called the 'Tao'.

The Five Element cycle lies at the heart of Chinese medicine and is a simple concept in that it is a circle with the elements – Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water – like stations of that circle. As other circles since the beginning of time, the Five Element cycle symbolises the continuity of life without a beginning or an end. It is timeless and reflects the continuous renewals of night and day, the orbits of the planets, the phases of the moon and death and rebirth.



## Spring has sprung!!

**From its beginnings, the Five Element cycle connected various aspects of experience to its individual elements.** Seasons, body organs, emotions, colours, directions and climates were all distributed over the cycle of five. Each of us falls into one of the five elemental categories which may dictate our personality type, body shape, values and a pre-disposition towards certain strengths and weaknesses.

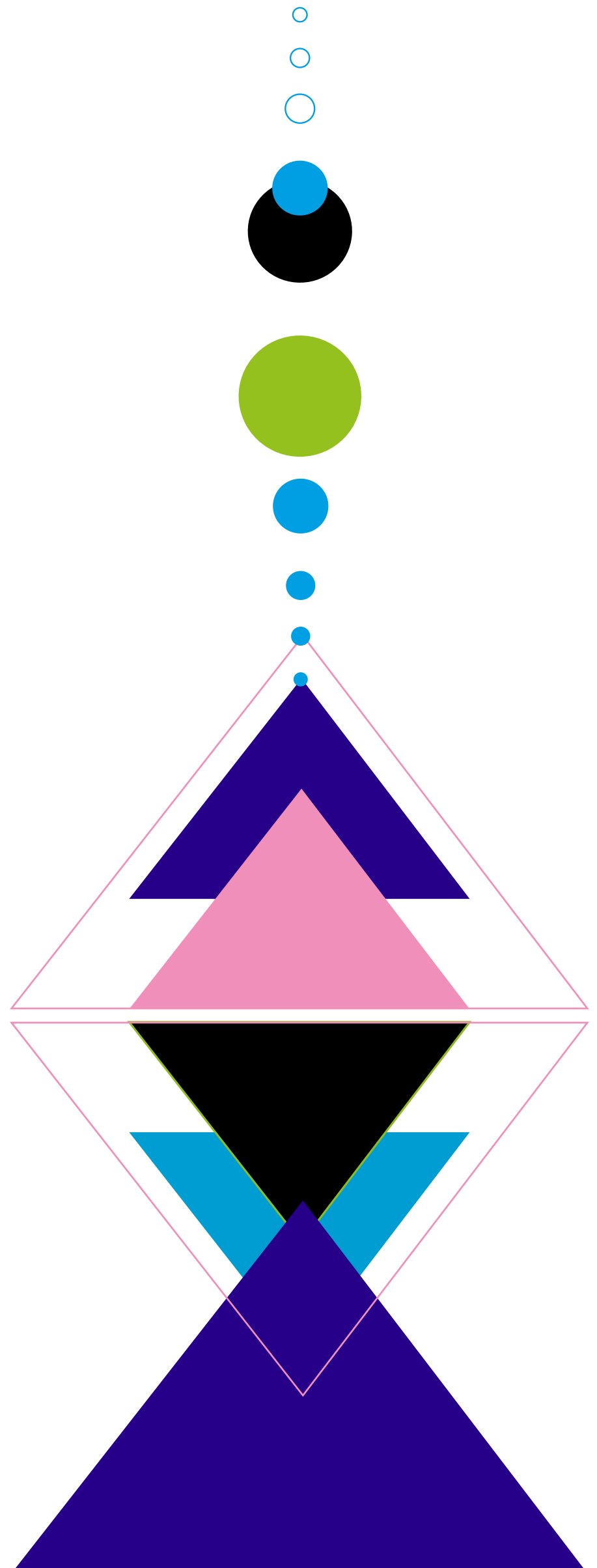
The Wood element corresponds with the season of Spring, the colour green, the climatic force of wind, the Liver and Gallbladder systems and meridians, the Wood emotion is anger, a sour taste and the direction east. Due to its Spring association, Wood is considered the first element of the Five Element cycle and the Wood-type person is often active and pioneering. At their best they are leaders and a force for driving positive change while at their worst, they can become rigid and intolerant.

The Wood element also represents the emergence of Yang. Yang represents all that is expanding, moving, growing, bright, hot, masculine, active, while Yin refers to the forces of dark, quiet, condensation, introversion, passiveness, feminine, cool and decaying. The Yin Yang symbol or Taiji represents the fluid interplay of Yin and Yang with the dots of each representing the Yin within Yang and vice versa.

**With the emergence of Spring Yang, Wood symbolises new beginnings such as birth,** growth and development. It is the phase in which new life takes form and becomes something like the newly emerging plants of spring that draw air (wind), water and light into a coherent stem. In terms of our own lifespans, the Wood element represents birth and childhood.

Seeds, bulbs and buds explode into individual stems and fronds, while trees and plots that were bare yesterday are suddenly transformed by shoots and leaves. This growth – rapid and exponential – epitomises Wood energy with Qi emerging and rising upwards.

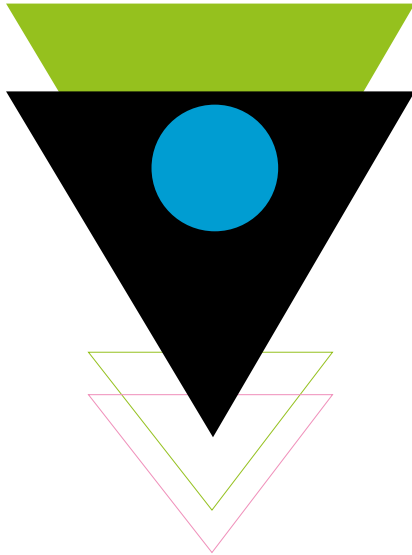
With this ascending of Qi, I start to see a frequent pattern of symptoms presenting in clinic. Following on from the Winter and Kidney/Water stage of the cycle, I begin to see more Wood and Liver type symptoms such as neck and shoulder pain, headaches and migraines, tinnitus and tendonitis starting to emerge. Irritability, anger, frustration and depression are also symptomatic of imbalances of the Liver system (and the Wood element) and people who have experienced any of these conditions may find that their symptoms get worse or re-emerge during the Spring.



**The Liver in Chinese medicine is said to govern the sinews and tendons so, when the Liver is in excess, pain and tension in these tissues occur.**

Internal 'Wind' is generated when the sinews and tendons become undernourished and dry leading them to 'shake' and causing tremors and twitches as well as pain that moves around the body.

In acupuncture, imbalances in the Wood element may be treated through the Liver and Gallbladder meridians and, by using needles



in the lower parts of the body, we can direct Qi down towards the feet as well as nourishing Liver Qi and Blood to alleviate any problematic symptoms.

The Wood element flavour is sour which cools the body, consolidates energy and astringes fluid (think what happens in your mouth when you eat a lemon!). Sour foods penetrate the Liver and Gallbladder systems, stimulating them and affecting their energy flow.

**Small amounts of sour food such as lemons, yoghurt, limes, pickles can be added to a diet** where the Liver and Gallbladder are excess or deficient and all green vegetables have a special affinity for the Wood element. Leafy green vegetables can be used to tonify deficiency and control excess although strongly deficient people should eat them well cooked and in combination with more warming foods such as ginger or red meat.

While people with Wood excesses may find themselves drawn to more active exercises like aerobics, sports or running, maximum benefit is achieved by combining these activities with slower, stretching exercises such as QiGong, Tai Chi or Yoga. A Hatha yoga style is particularly good at soothing an excess angry Liver although it can be difficult to do these exercises at first with all that excess Yang and Liver Qi! The movements of these more contemplative exercises are particularly well suited to Wood as they flow smoothly, continuously and regularly. These exercises stretch the muscle and connective tissue, bringing moisture, blood and vital nutrients to every part of the body and reducing stagnation of Qi and Blood which can cause both acute and chronic pain symptoms.

### Getting that Spring in your Step!

The language of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water is powerful not because it is scientific but because it is a symbolic language that evokes images more than single events or anatomical parts.

When it comes to Springtime, the sunshine, budding flowers and longer days can be uplifting and the perfect tonic to Winter darkness.

This season, however, can also bring about allergies, changes in digestion, skin issues and other imbalances we didn't anticipate. As the plants start to emerge upwards out of the ground, so does the energy of the body and headaches and neck tension might become more frequent.

### Chinese Medicine looks to live in harmony with nature, changing daily routines according to the seasons, and focussing on different aspects of the body and mind throughout the year.

According to Chinese Medicine, the Liver and Gallbladder are at their peak during Spring, so it's the perfect time to start decongesting sinuses, caring for the lungs, getting lymph and blood moving and releasing emotions like anger, resentment, frustration, and long-held grudges. This can be done with acupuncture and regular gentle movement such as Yoga and QiGong.

Weekly acupuncture clinics run at ReCoCo on Monday and Wednesday with a free auricular (ear) acupuncture drop-in each Wednesday between 1-2pm.

More information can be found at [www.janeeaglesham.com](http://www.janeeaglesham.com) or you can email any questions to [jane.eaglesham@hotmail.com](mailto:jane.eaglesham@hotmail.com)

ACUPRESSURE POINTS FOR  
SPRINGTIME WELLBEING

## Acupressure Point 'Shanzhong'

To find this point, run your fingers down your sternum until you find a small hollow 'dip' at the bottom. This is 'conception vessel 17' and plays a big role in the energy of the lungs. Pressing firmly here is helpful for clearing mucus from the lungs and opening the chest, and can really help enhance the feeling of being able to take full, deep breaths. This point is also good for anxiety that may be experienced in the chest, with or without palpitations.

### REN-17 Shānzhōng

Chest Centre 膻中

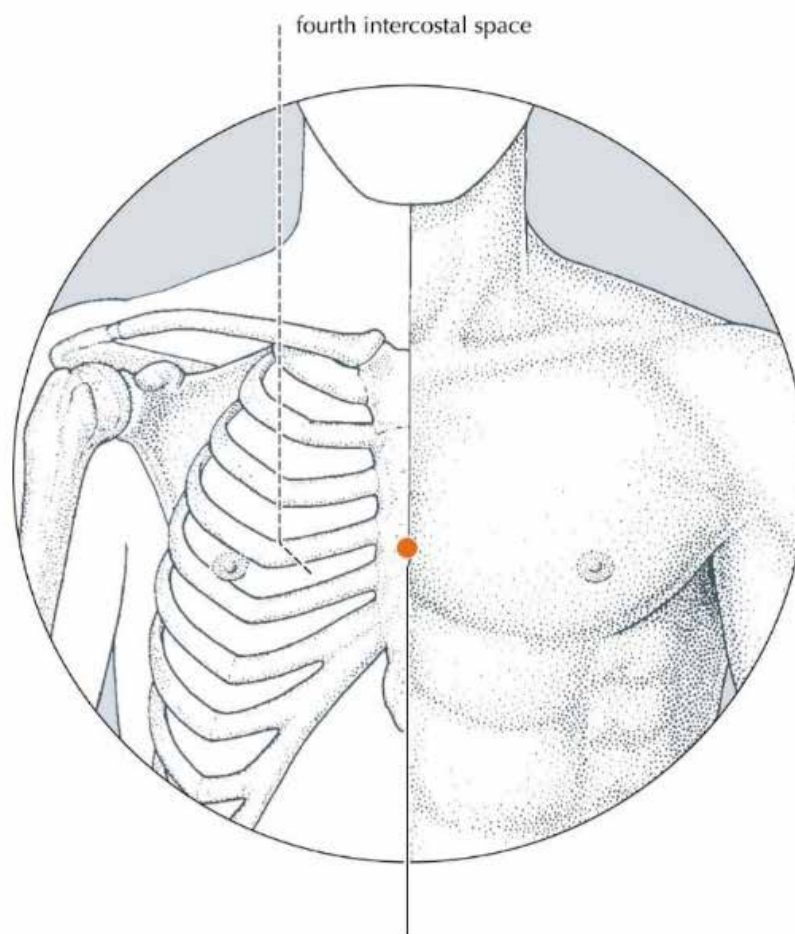
*Front-Mu point of the Pericardium*

*Hui-Meeting point of the Qi*

*Point of the Sea of Qi*

*Meeting point of the Conception vessel with the Spleen, Kidney, Small Intestine and Sanjiao channels*

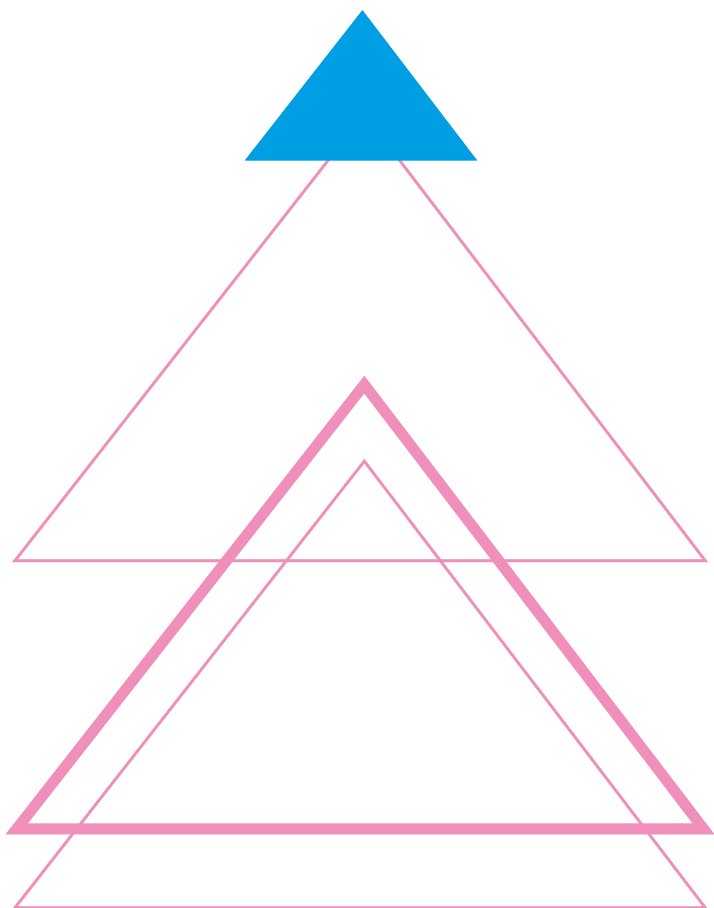
膻中



Shanzhong REN-17



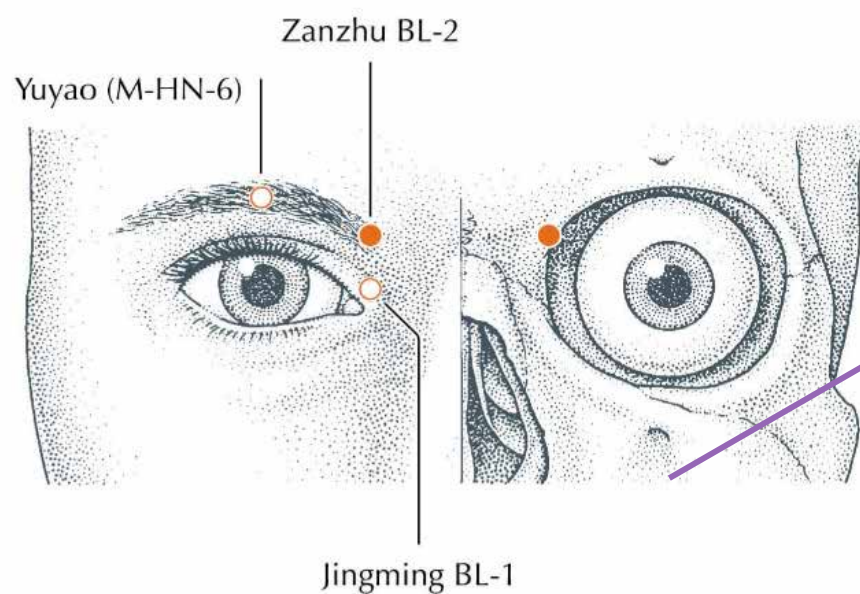




## BL-2 Zǎnzhú

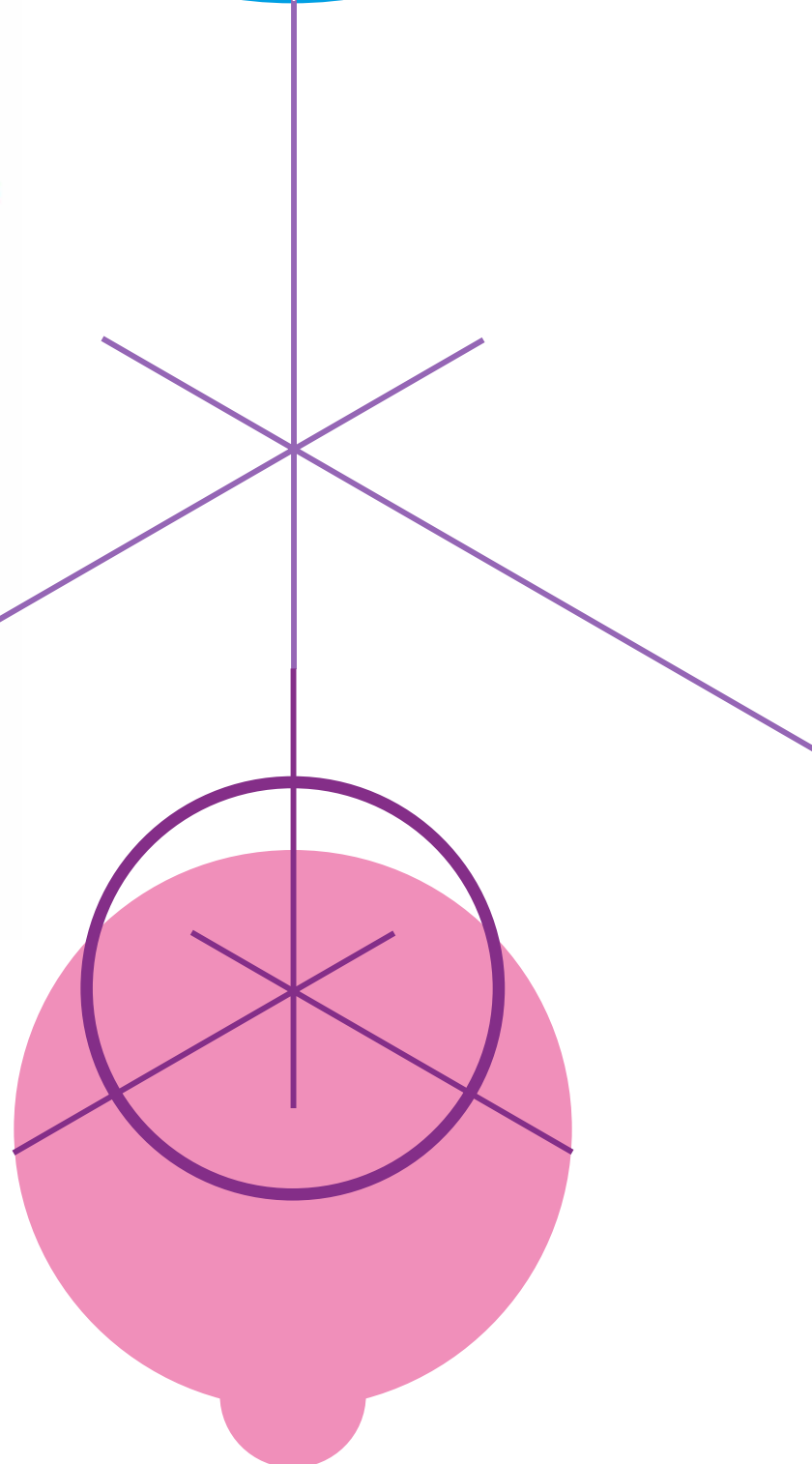
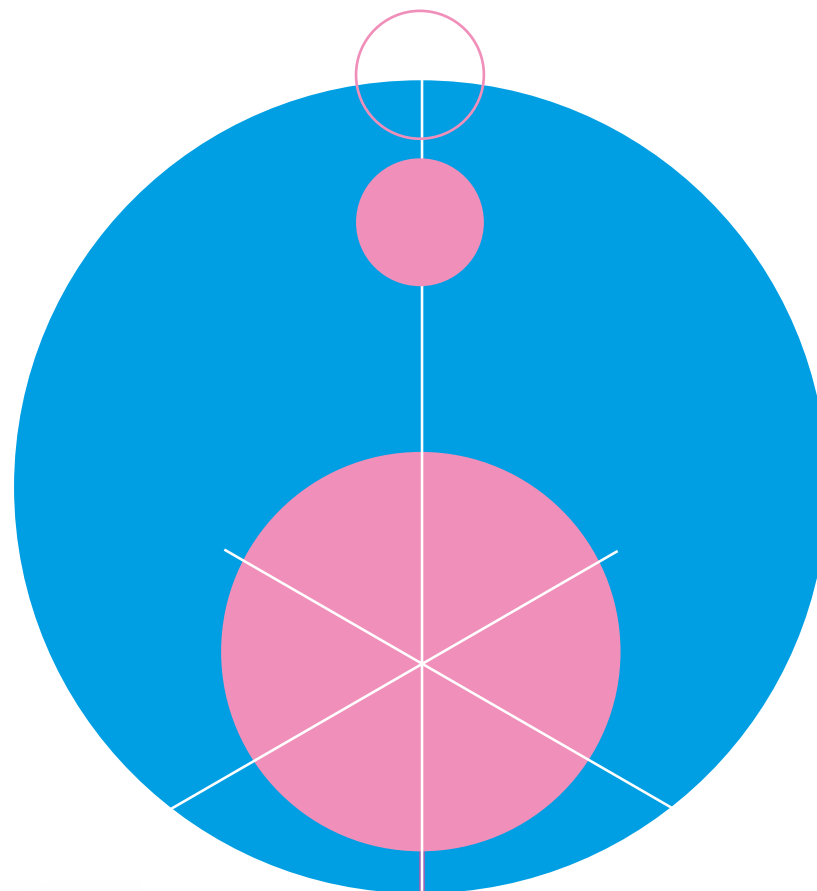
Gathered Bamboo 攢竹

攢竹



### Acupressure Point 'Zan Zhu'

You'll find these points of the inner edge of each eyebrow. Use these points to clear sinus issues or relieve headaches. Press your index fingers on the points and breathe slowly through your nose.



# MENTAL HEALTH CHECKLIST

BY GARY MCBAIN

**Hi all. I'm Gary and I've been coming to ReCoCo on and off for about 4 years now.**

I thought I'd share with you some things I've found over the years to be beneficial for your mental health. Remember that everyone is different, and there is no one size fits all fix. This is only what worked for me.

**Hugs** - They're just so comforting. They can make you feel that everything is going to be OK, even for just a minute.

**Music** - Possibly the best thing in the universe. I stick my headphones in and blare the music at full volume. I then walk to a secluded area and sing along loudly. Nothing gives me more joy. I'd highly recommend it

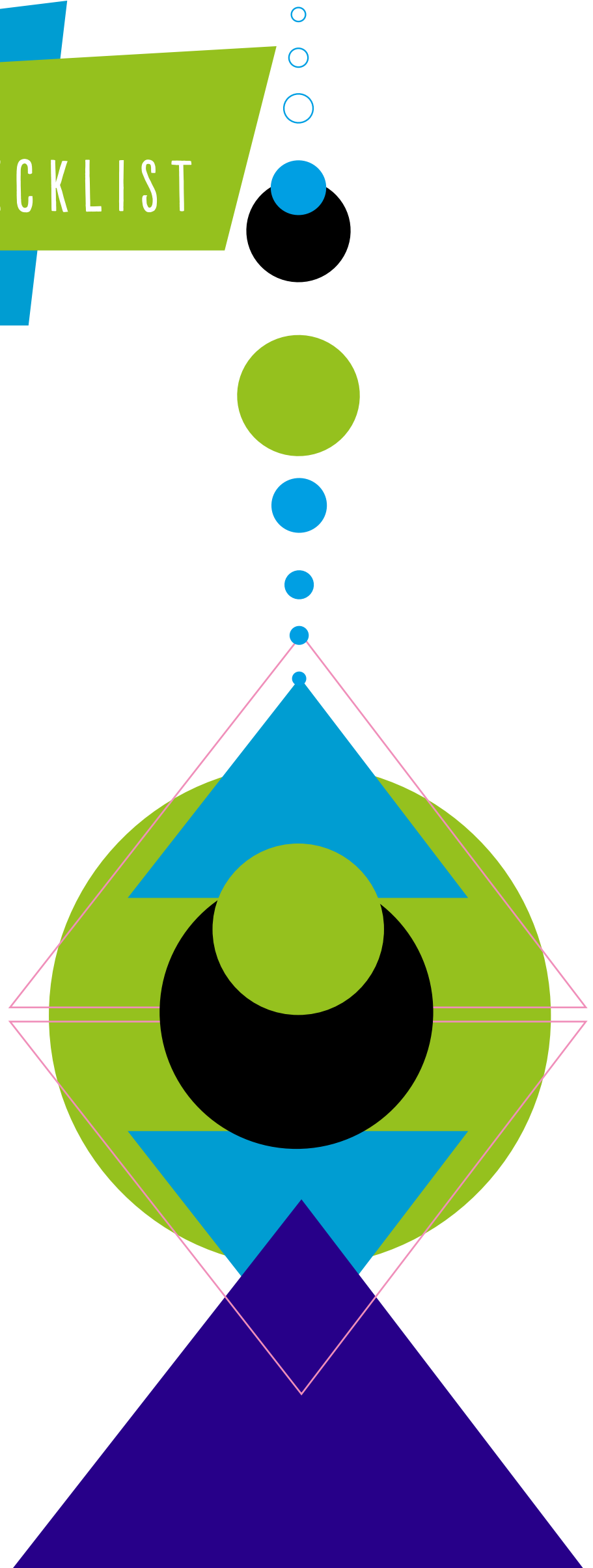
**Book a day off** - If you have work, college or whatever commitments that can stress you out or get you down, then every so often book a day off. You don't even need a reason for it, or any alternative plans. Just enjoy not having to do what you would normally be doing.

**Plan your day** - Sometimes the overwhelming feelings of pointlessness associated with mental health issues can make it difficult to even get out of bed. Having something planned for that day, regardless of how seemingly stupid or insignificant (for example, going into town) can give you a reason to get out of bed

**Healthy Diet** - As tempting as it may be, sitting around eating kebabs and pizzas will only make you feel worse. You may get a temporary boost, but that will wear off and you'll feel like shit. If you feel crap in body, you will feel crap in mind too. The flip side also applies. I generally feel better when I've been eating better.

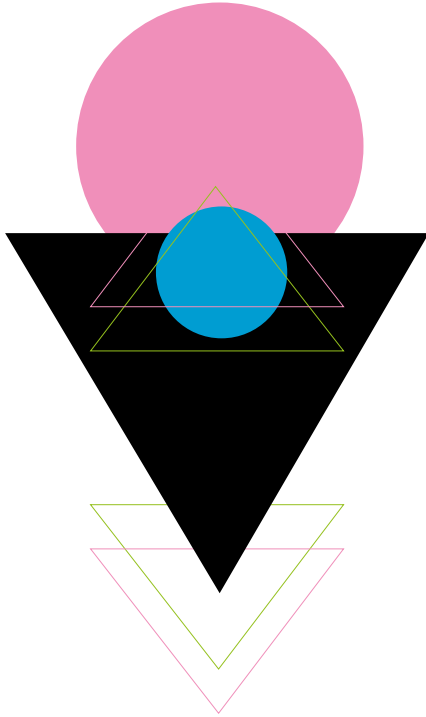
**Sleep** - Don't neglect it. It's much easier to have a good day if you are well rested.

**Hydrate** - It's the same principle as sleep. Drink plenty of water and you feel more alert. The rest of your day will be less of a struggle.



**Forgive yourself** – You have made mistakes. You will make more. Stop beating yourself up over these mistakes. You're only human. You don't need to be perfect (just to add that no one is perfect!).

**Feel your emotions** – Don't block your unpleasant emotions. It's the worst thing you could do. Your anger, grief, frustration, jealousy etc, won't go away on their own. You need to let them out.



**Therapy/Medication** – Trust me, they work. Don't be scared to ask for help. You're not weak, pathetic or stupid if you do. You are a person going through a hard time.

**Talking** – I may still have work to do in this area, but I have recognised that having someone understanding to talk to can make a huge difference. If you have no one you trust, there's always an impartial professional, like a doctor or therapist.

**Channel your emotions** – Be like Eminem. Use your pain and your rage to make a million dollars. Write songs. Start a charity. Paint a modern art masterpiece. Become a motivational speaker.

**Find a project** – Find something to occupy your time, and something to fall back on when everything else fails. Play an instrument. Build something. Write a book. The choice is yours. Just don't go puppy stomping.

**Use logic** – Remember that your thoughts can lie to you. And there is a difference between your thoughts and facts. Have someone spell out the facts for you if necessary.

**Let it go** – The resentment you are carrying for the people who have wronged you is poisoning your soul. Don't give them that power over you. Let it go. Can't hold it back anymore. I'm sorry, I had to.

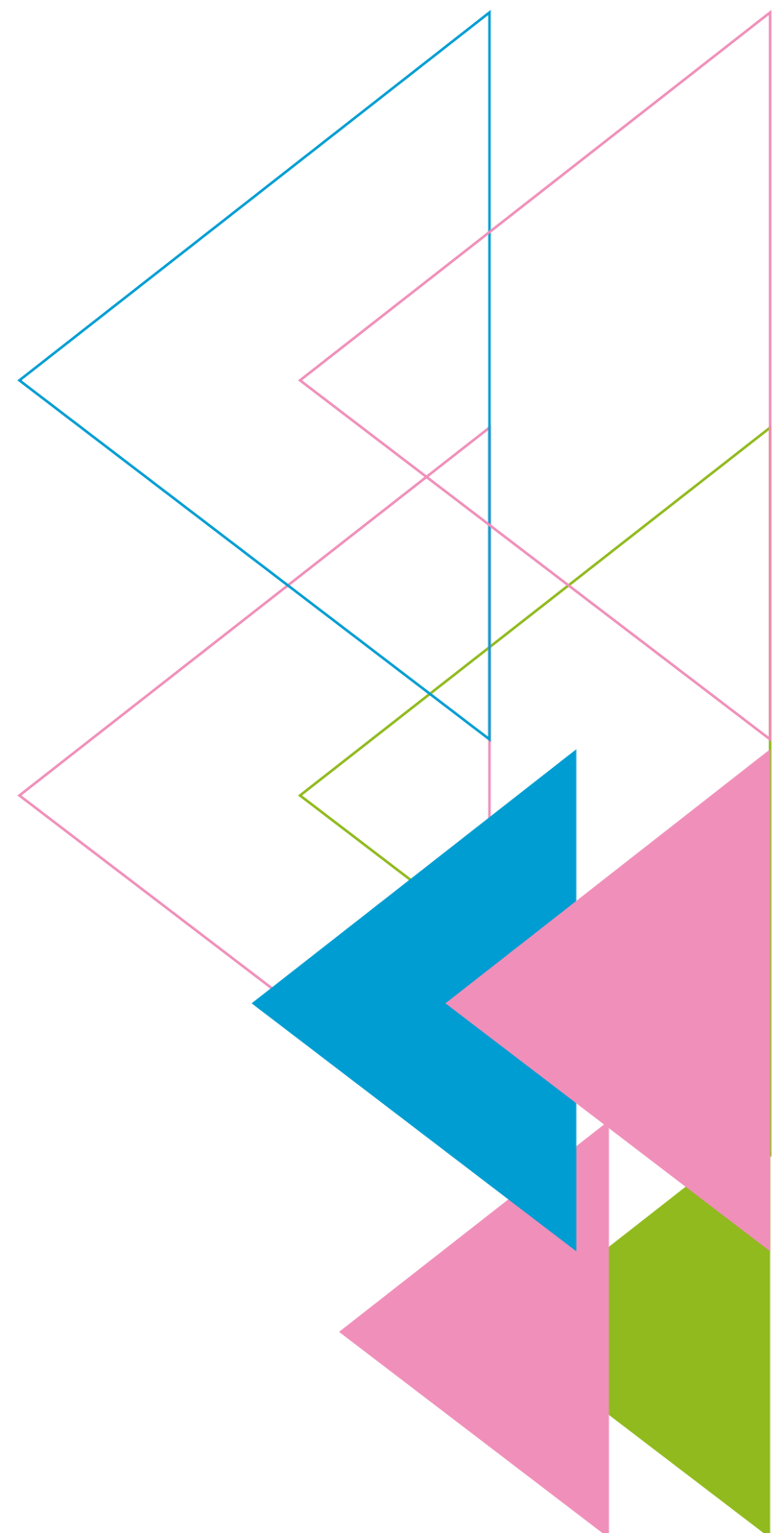
**Mindfulness** – Stop thinking about your failures in the past, or your worries about the future for a few minutes. Relax, breathe and meditate. Focus your mind on the here and the now.

**Get some order** – The old cliché tidy house tidy mind is true, unfortunately. Take back some control from the chaos.

**Find a balance** – Life is about working hard and responsibilities. But it is also about fun. Make sure you find time for both.

**Ask for help** – Possibly the most important one of all. Let go of your pride and admit you are struggling. You are a far braver person for asking for help, than someone who ignores the warning signs and stumbles on blindly.

That's all I have for you. So, in case I don't see you, good afternoon, good evening and good night.



# REALISING ALTERNATIVE ATTITUDES TO MENTAL HEALTH

BY ALEX

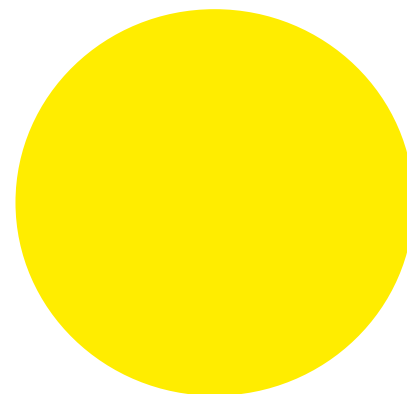
## Hello, my name is Alex, I am a designer and research student at Northumbria University.

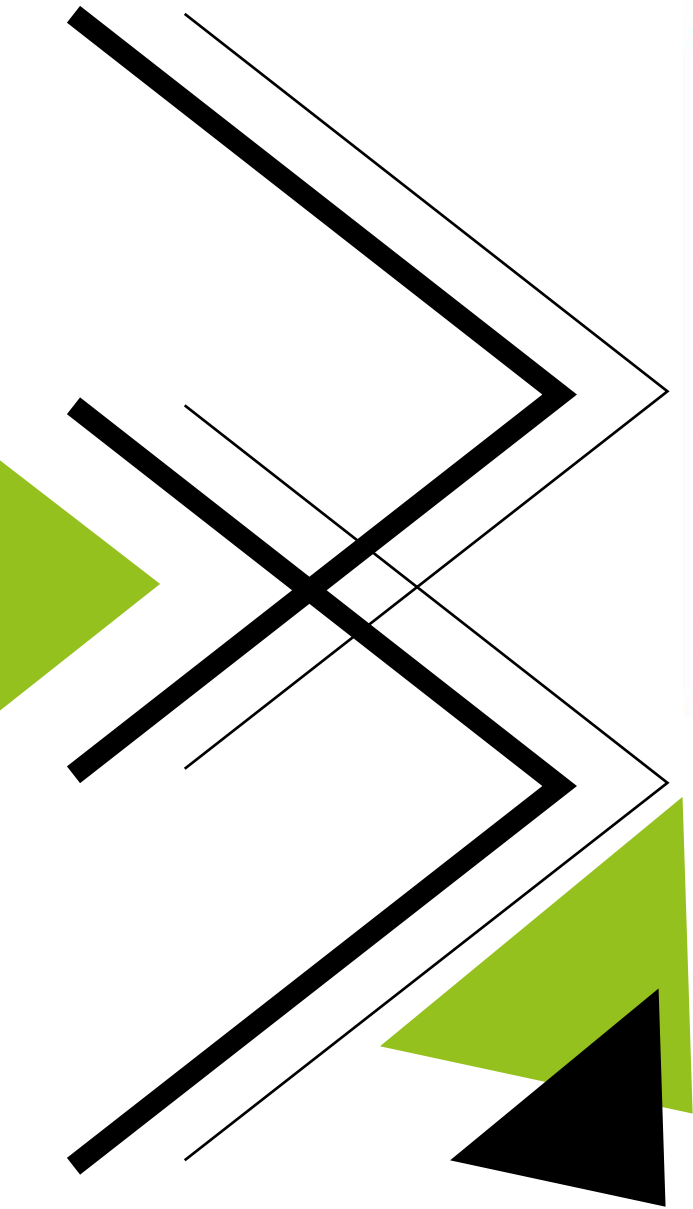
I have been collaborating with ReCoCo, in various design bits and pieces since 2017. I am interested in learning what design practice can learn from a Mental Health service like ReCoCo and what a service like ReCoCo can learn from design practice. It became clear as I started researching the fit between mental health services and design practices that ReCoCo embodies a different, alternative attitude towards mental health than I had experienced elsewhere and the deeply peer-led, politically savvy and relational ways of ReCoCo was something I felt was unique and worth exploring more.

**Understanding the ReCoCo approach**, led to the feeling that more people should be aware of this amazing place and its inspiring staff, students and volunteers. This then led to an idea to create a course which would support students in designing objects which would challenge the status quo around Mental Health attitudes, initially believing we would create objects that could go in an exhibition, and these objects would be able to provoke other people to think differently about Mental Health.

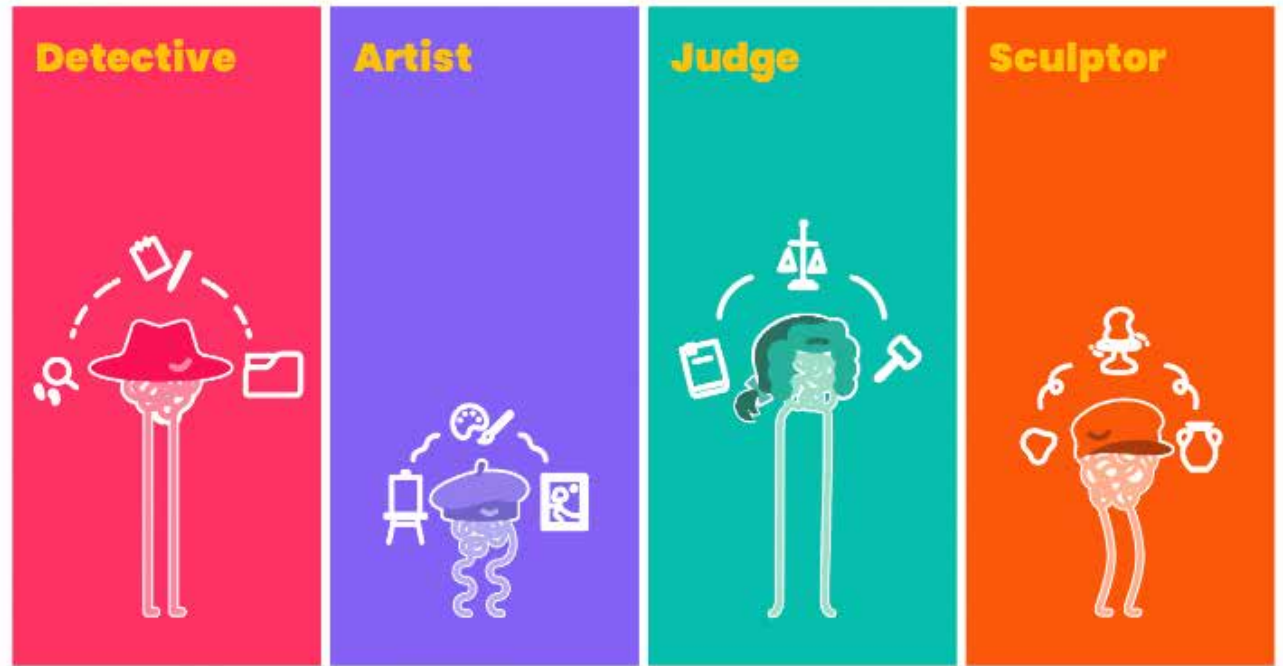
The initial "Mental Health, by Design" course supported students to creatively explore, express and provoke alternative Mental Health attitudes through design. We did this by playing different roles and looking at Mental Health through a different lens. Firstly we took on the role of a detective and went out looking for evidence about how other people talk about Mental Health, noting down what might be taken as fact. Secondly, we expressed how we feel about Mental Health when we are in ReCoCo, this task was named the Artist task as it aimed to help students draw from their personal experiences and bring the experiences to life in new ways, through different colours, words, images, shapes and sounds. Thirdly we discussed how the findings from the two tasks, detective and artist, were different and how the outside world perceives Mental Health compared to the ReCoCo world. Finally, we brought all of our conversations, insights and thoughts together to enable us to design an object that represented our own alternative attitude to Mental Health.

What was really interesting from a research perspective was that while the course started out with the intention of provoking other people's attitudes to Mental Health, what actually happened was that we ended up provoking our own. In the first week, before we started, we noted down our attitudes to Mental Health as things such as "struggles", "shame", "frustration", "not good enough" and "darkness" but after weeks of discussing and listening to each other with kind ears and finding different ways to express ourselves, we noted down a shift in our own attitudes. With the attitudes recorded at the end of the course as "More accepting", "I am good enough", "A sense of peace", "relaxed" "determined", "patience", and "hopeful". Seeing the usefulness of the course and making new friends, we decided it would be a shame to stop the course there. So John, Michael, Sarah and I revised the course to represent the wonderfulness of students and renamed the course "Wonderful You, by Design". We are nearly finished with this term's version of "Wonderful You, by Design" and again we have had some super sessions with amazing students. We are gearing up to go ahead next term, so come along and join us and add to the growing catalogue of alternative views about Mental Health.

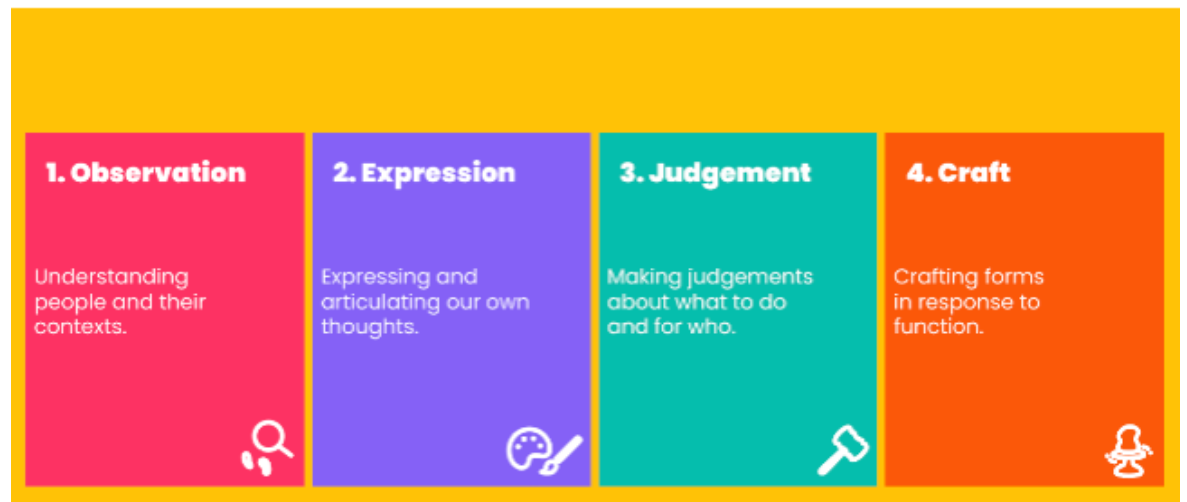




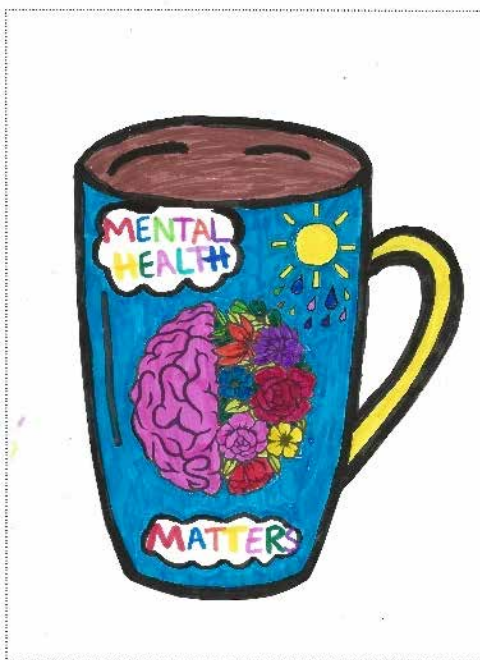
ROLES WE WILL BE PLAYING



DESIGN SKILLS WE WILL BE USING



T-SHIRT TEMPLATE

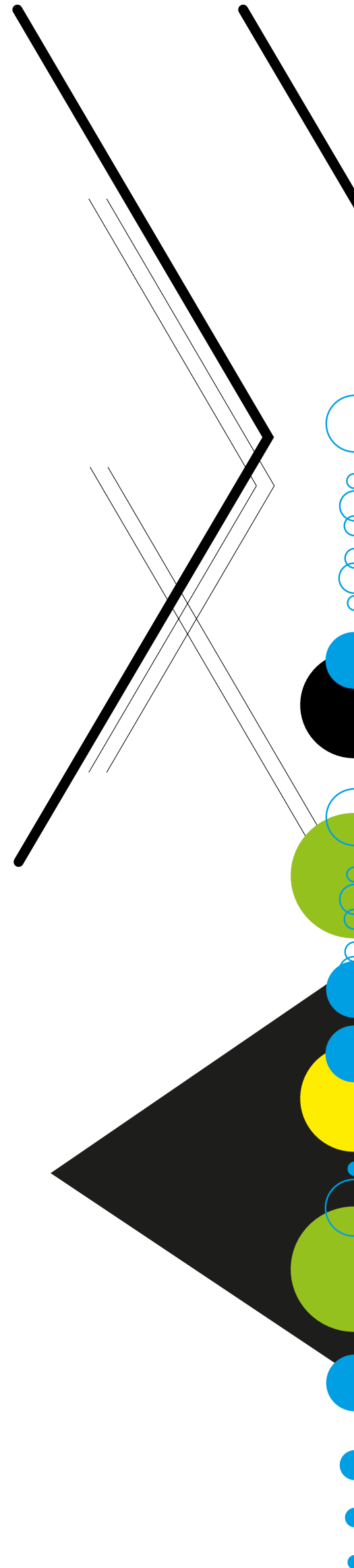


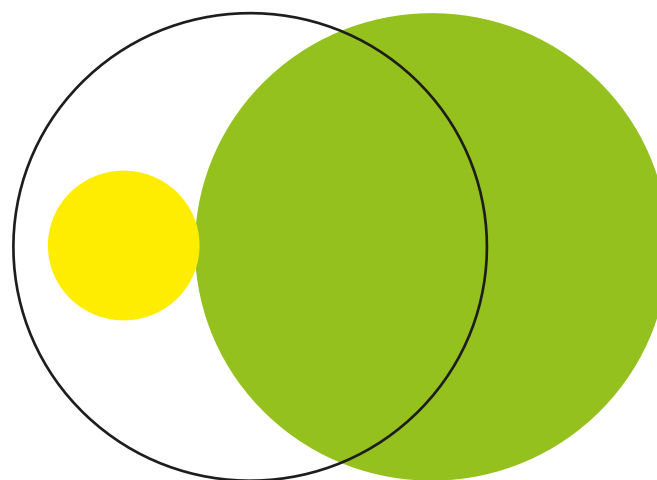
Mental health by design.

## OUR\* EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH ATTITUDES.




\*In a ReCoCo creative course, ReCoCo students identified different attitudes to mental health. The differences are described below.

a. dominant attitude.		b. ReCoCo attitude.			
feelings	behaviours	thoughts	feelings	behaviours	thoughts
1.	I try to fit in with labels. I feel <b>isolated, stigmatised, punished, discriminated, judged, ridiculed and ashamed</b> for who I am not.		We fit in without labels. We feel <b>understood and accepted</b> for who we are.		1.
2.	We know how <b>you</b> feel.		I know how I feel.		2.
3.	I learn to <b>cope</b> and develop behaviour to survive.		We learn to <b>hope</b> and develop behaviour to grow.		3.
4.	I talk about my feelings <b>when it goes wrong</b> . Relying on old words and ways which have baggage.		We talk about our feelings. <b>Creating new words and ways</b> to support each other.		4.
5.	I <b>close up</b> and hide my feelings, 'pull myself together' and suffer in silence.		We <b>open up</b> and show our feelings, pull together and find solace in silence.		5.
6.	I become <b>equipped</b> via "experts who know best".		We become <b>equipped</b> via <b>experts by experience</b> .		6.
7.	I recognised mental health as something to <b>fix</b> with <b>signs and symptoms</b> and start believing negative messages about myself.		We celebrate mental health as a <b>journey</b> and start believing we are <b>empowered to take control</b> .		7.
8.	There is <b>them and us</b> , and something some of us experience.		There is <b>only us</b> , and something we all experience.		8.

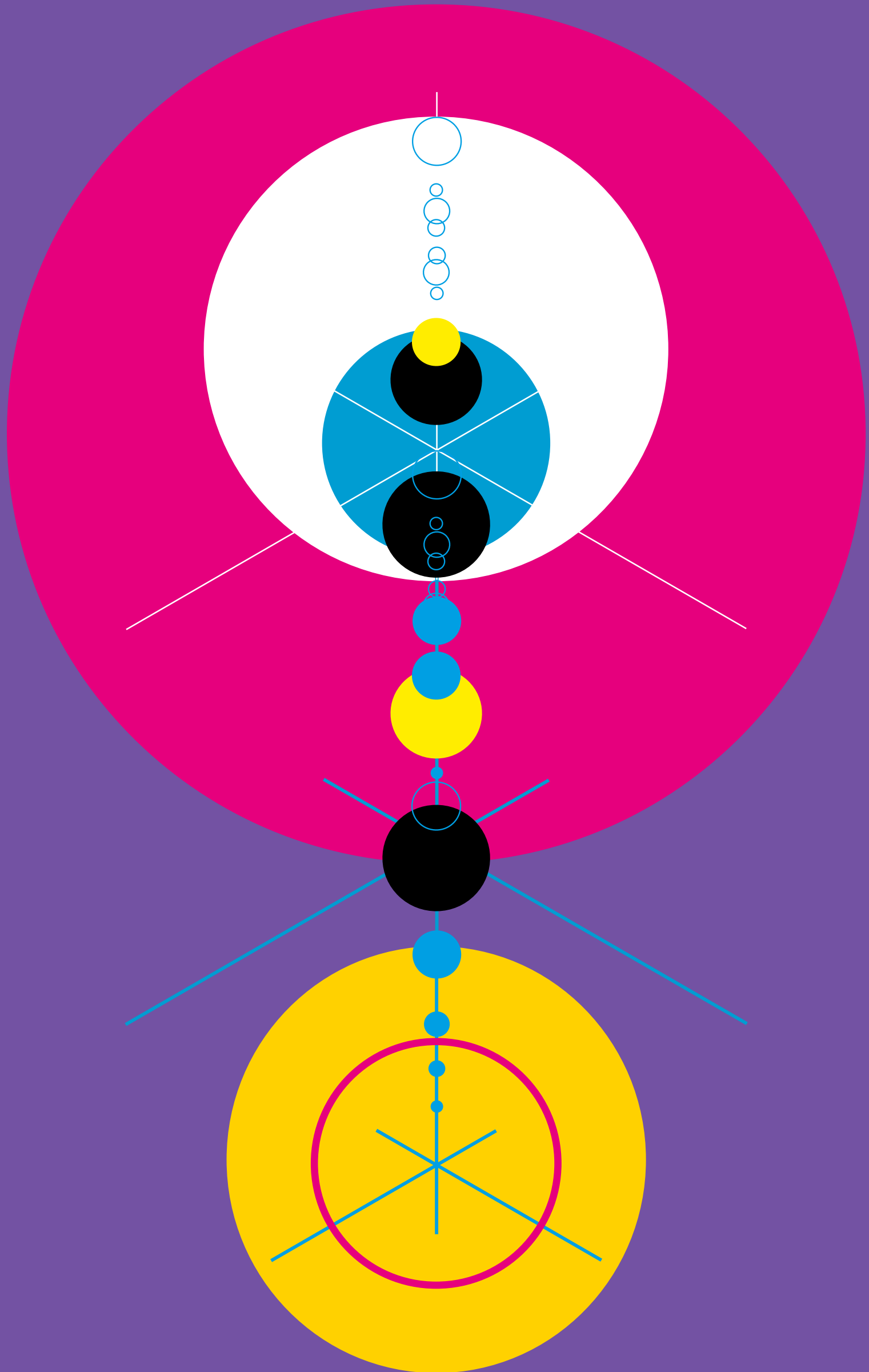




YOUR ATTITUDE TO MENTAL HEALTH (AFTER)

a. FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS	b. BEHAVIOUR OR ACTIONS	c. THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS
STRENGTH	A STEP A	HOPE IS
HOPE	DAY KEEPS	MORE THAN
	KEEPS THE DIAGNOSIS	DISPAIR
 <p>Image</p>	 <p>Image</p>	 <p>Image</p>







# GIVING PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA THE MIDDLE FINGER

BY GRAHAM

**It was around 2000 when I began to get my head around the fact that I had been diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia (yes, I said that!) and being a student with high aspirations and no funds, accepting that I had issues with my mental health was not so good.**

Thinking I might get something out of my life and something positive, my 20-year-old mind put my studies route on the backburner for a bit (good decision) and got the next airplane to Manila and give it the middle finger (even better decision). Justifying that I needed to sort myself out somehow from my prodromal stage and use the skills that I had learned in A level Psychology to better myself somehow and achieve something. I wish I could go back in time to tell myself to count my blessings, I say this all the time! But things eventually would snowball as it always did to where I am now. Anyhow I share my existence on this planet with others and would like to have a worthy existence on this awesome planet too; not as a person with mental health but as someone who has had to come to terms with things that happened when I was not at my best and inadvertently made some decisions in my life that wound me up in a hospital locked ward.

**Due to my diagnosis, I have a great unresolved loss, looking back, I suffer this but can now come to terms with it in a mindful acceptance.**

I don't own a time machine and I am certainly not a monster! If you think I am it's your problem, and if you think I purposely put myself in this position then you are certainly wrong, and if you think I have a chip on my shoulder you put it there! When I look at my life in hindsight and do this in a mindful accepting manner, and see the positives I didn't do so bad after all, thanks to opportunities knocking on my door and taking positive advantage of them, like I am now writing for our prospectus and having the opportunity to share my perspective. Thanks for giving me a chance on our awesome planet and if you are reading this right now we might be on the same page!

**I face great stigma every day as most of the people that have the same diagnosis as me do.**

I sometimes struggle with my diagnosis and ReCoCo has definitely been an inclusive and positive aspect of my life it's like me starting where I left off in college when I was a student! Even though I have some problems which will remain unresolved I am in a place of balance now and I feel better about myself, In the end of the day having a label that sticks with you for life is quite a daunting thing to overcome and accept.

**Through proper education and organisations like ReCoCo, smashing down the walls of stigma is possible!**

My goal as the facilitator of the 'Unusual Experience Group' at ReCoCo is to inform, discuss, help and educate people who have experienced mental health issues, involving voices, unusual beliefs, psychosis and all the other things that fall under the spectrum of unusual experiences to better their understanding, knowledge and skills of unusual experiences in an informal, fun and relaxed environment here at the Recovery College.

If you are interested the group is on every other fortnight, Thursday 1.00pm - 3.00pm.

# CONTACT // CATHARSIS

BY MARK

**Why do we write? Why do we record?**

**Why do we sculpt, paint, dance?**

**Why do we create?** Why, no matter how much we have already created, do we no sooner finish a project than begin all over again on something new? What is it that constantly keeps one returning to the Work of art, unable to look upon our most recent piece as anything more than another step towards the ultimate goal of realising our vision no matter however good it may be?

**I can honestly say that I have never finished a single piece of writing, music or sculpture without already having an eye on “the next thing”.** Nor do I believe that I have ever only had one project ongoing at a time. I rarely, if ever, engage with something I have created once it is finished. Books remain unread, music is silenced and sculptures hang unnoticed until it's time to display something new. Not that there's anything wrong with any of these pieces.

I remain proud of what I have made and for the most part do still enjoy them on the rare occasion I spend any time with them. No, it's something else that pulls me ever onward towards new projects, always returning to the beginning of creation and art.

We all know of the mental health benefits experienced by those that regularly engage with one kind of arts practice or another. The freedom to express ourselves, to address issues and events in a constructive way, the release of pent up emotions and the catharsis this brings. It is this catharsis that I want to begin with today.

**Catharsis can be defined as**

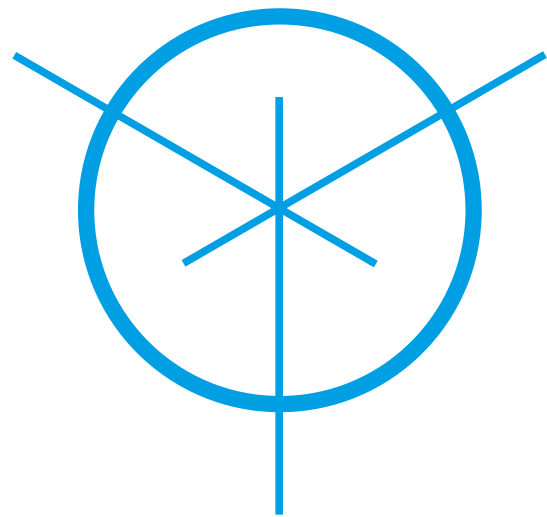
*“/kəˈθɑːrsɪz/ (specialist) the process of releasing strong feelings, for example through **plays or other artistic activities**, as a way of providing relief from anger, mental pain, etc.”*

and is undoubtedly one of the most important and effective benefits the arts can provide to a practitioner.

The arts are such a cathartic endeavour largely because the creative act of art, the Work of art, exists in a space apart from the real world wherein anything can and will be felt, thought, expressed. It is safe to explore in this space what we cannot in the world as our creations here are not yet of the world but rather they remain the unique form of the meeting point between ourselves and the world. In the same moment, our creations exist as a part of us; an expression of ourselves, a part of the world in- and of-themselves and also as the point where our Being, our I, comes into contact with the world outside our Self. It is where the I meets the Other.

**Let's explore this concept further by breaking down its individual elements.**

**Firstly, consider the I.** This is the self. You. Regardless of religious, spiritual or scientific beliefs we all experience the I as our awareness of our Self. No matter who we are, we have a unique perspective from which we approach the world. This perspective presents the world to us as something else, something external, something Other. It puts I in the prime position of the viewer, the sole being to occupy this particular point of view. It is the first person perspective that everything else presents itself before and is thus situated at the very core of our awareness and identity.

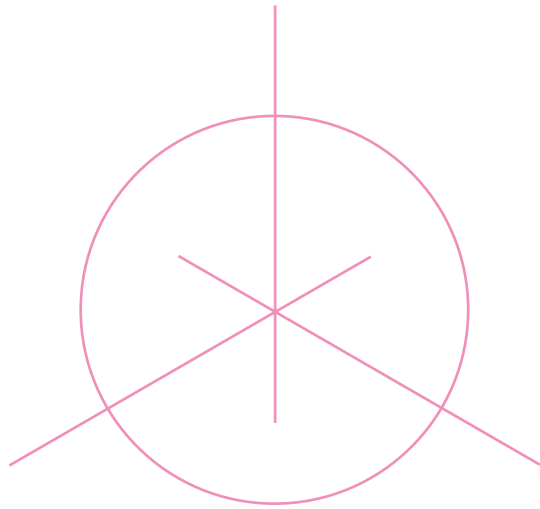


**Next we can move onto the Other.**

**The Other can be understood quite simply as “that which is everything which is not my Self”.**

It is in this sense the diametric opposite of the I. It is the world and everything in it. People, places, objects, animals and literally anything else that is not a part of our I all belong to the Other. It is clear then, that through an encounter with this Other we come to have knowledge and experience of our I as that which experiences the world as both a window through which to view the Other and as a mirror through which to view the Self. Seen in this light it would seem that our individuality finds its root in the separation of Being into the world (the Other) and our self (the I).

This separation, this infinitesimal gap between beings itself, is a unique form of being in that it isn't really anything at all. It exists solely as the meeting point of the Other and the I. It is the gossamer thin surface of a bubble, ever ready to burst into nothingness once the moment of connection is lost and it is at this precise moment that the act of creation, the Work of art is realised. While we are creating a piece of art we are simultaneously addressing the Other and the I. We Work to produce a tangible object in the real world, something Other; a book, a song, a painting. As we channel something from within, something that exists up until the point of its release as part of our unique I, we take a component of the I and through the Work of art we turn it into something Other.



As discussed in previous prospectus articles of mine, the ability to externalise and put into perspective deeply personal experiences is an incredibly powerful tool to use in the road to recovery. Essentially this is because we are othering the feelings and thoughts connected to these experiences, removing them from our conception of I, thus making them something apart from ourselves that is easier to approach, analyse and ultimately overcome. This in itself is reason enough to pursue a creative endeavour and is perhaps the most commonly understood explanation of catharsis. By considering the nature of the Work of art however, I believe we can find another valuable interpretation of catharsis that sheds light on the importance of not only the finished product of art but also the process that leads us to its completion.

**It is the Work of art that lies between us and the world. Between the I and the Other.** But rather

than creating a distance between the two, the separation created by the Work is experienced as a Contact, a connection that unites rather than divides. This union exists for but a moment, the very moment of creation itself. By introducing something entirely new and unique to the world we create a connection and a fleeting union with it. For this brief moment we are cemented both in ourselves and in the world simultaneously. For this brief moment we are at one with the Other and our differences, our alienation and

essential solitude are dismissed by our consciousness. We discover a purpose in the flash of inspiration that sees the Work realised as it delivers us into a space between spaces, a Being between Beings.

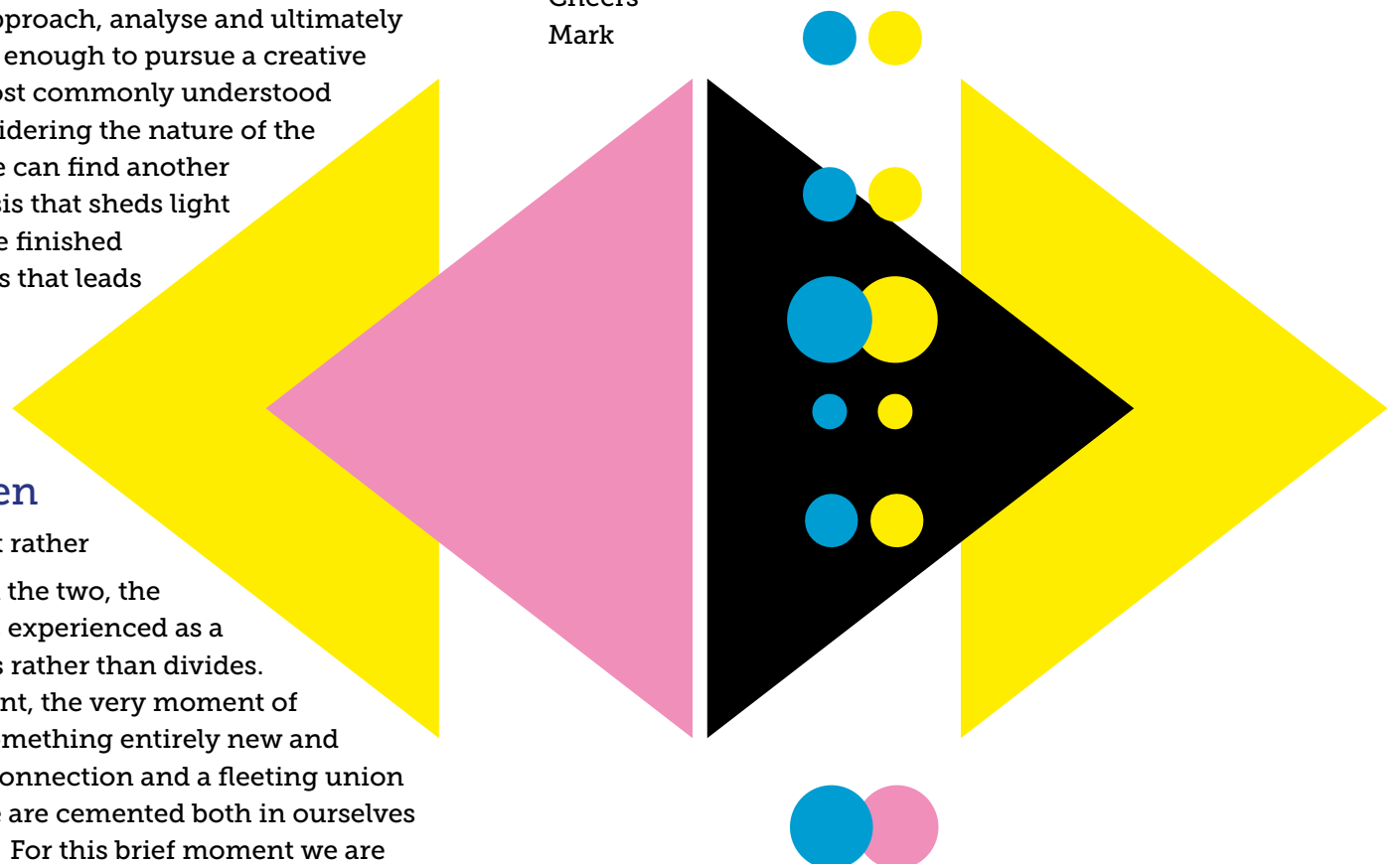
**In the moment of realisation time stands still.**

Our entire Being is focused on the Work. Nothing exists except the thorough connection of the I and the Other brought about by the weight of our fascination with the Work of art. Anyone that has ever created something knows this feeling. The all encompassing concentration that comes with becoming lost in the, well, moment. It is at times like these when the artist feels truly alive and that they are in the right place, comfortable and at home in the world and in themselves. Unfortunately this only lasts during the brief Contact made between the I and the Other. A miniscule amount of time that glitters with myriad colours before the bubble bursts as our focus and fascination moves away from the Work back towards either the I that creates or the Other that is created. Once the spell of the Work is broken the artist is brought back to themselves. Brought back into the I that remains on the outside of the world, looking in at the Other that lies once more just beyond their grasp.

**I believe that it is because of this; this Contact with- and unity of- Being,** this

glimpse of existence at the very moment of creation and the interconnectedness of everything there is that is wrenched away from us as soon as we become aware of it that we are led to eternally return to the Work. The urge, the need, to begin again over and over, to never be satisfied that the Work is done or finished, to always have one eye on the next thing... that is the artist's lot in life. To chase the Catharsis of Contact. Contact with ourselves. Contact with the world. And Contact with that ephemeral oneness that lies in the exact point where both meet.

Cheers  
Mark





**WinG Outdoor Activities**



email: [info@wingoutdooractivities.org](mailto:info@wingoutdooractivities.org)

Tel. 07506 176 888



# TAKING STEPS

This year WinG Outdoor Activities will be offering more Outdoor Well-Being Activities to students of ReCoCo.

Taking steps is important to help people overcome poor mental health. WinG Outdoor Activities encourages people to grow and benefit from experiencing nature and the great outdoors. It's important to plan and take positive forward steps no matter how small they may be at first. You may have already taken steps by engaging with ReCoCo and all their amazing courses. We all need to strive for making positive steps, especially when life can give us a challenging time. We can provide you with the outdoor experiences that can help with improving your well-being.

The journey of self-reinvention and personal growth is a commitment to becoming the person you aspire to be. It's a promise to yourself to evolve, learn, and thrive in life. Following these steps and adopting a proactive and open-minded approach can help unlock possibilities and personal fulfilment.

The next bookable sessions for ReCoCo students for the term April to July are:

Thursday 18th April - Bike Ride  
 Thursday 16th May - Simonside Walk  
 Thursday 13th June - Canoeing  
 Thursday 18th July - Coastal Walk

\* Please note that these sessions are released periodically.

**Go on, take a step** and sign up to one of ReCoCo's Outdoor Well-Being Sessions.



**Making learning an adventure**

WITH A SUMMER OUTING AND FURTHER  
SESSIONS SCHEDULED FOR THE SEPTEMBER  
TERM TO BE ADVERTISED – KEEP A LOOK OUT  
FOR THEM!

Could it be that your next  
step may be to join us  
for an enjoyable, social  
and therapeutic outdoor  
activity?

Would you like to take steps  
to improve your physical fitness?

Would you like to increase  
your social connections?

Would you like to overcome fear of water  
and try canoeing?

Would you like to conquer your fear  
of heights and try rock climbing?

Would you like to learn new skills by trying  
our bushcraft sessions?

Would you like to take steps  
and feel the beauty of nature?

'You  
keep putting  
one foot in front of  
the other, and then one  
day you look back and you've  
climbed a mountain'  
- Tom Hiddleston



# FROM SERVICE USER TO GROUP PRACTITIONER RUNNING PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA GROUPS

BY GAYL MCCAIN

**My first experience in a group was 6 years ago, when I was in an NHS Waiting for Treatment group.**

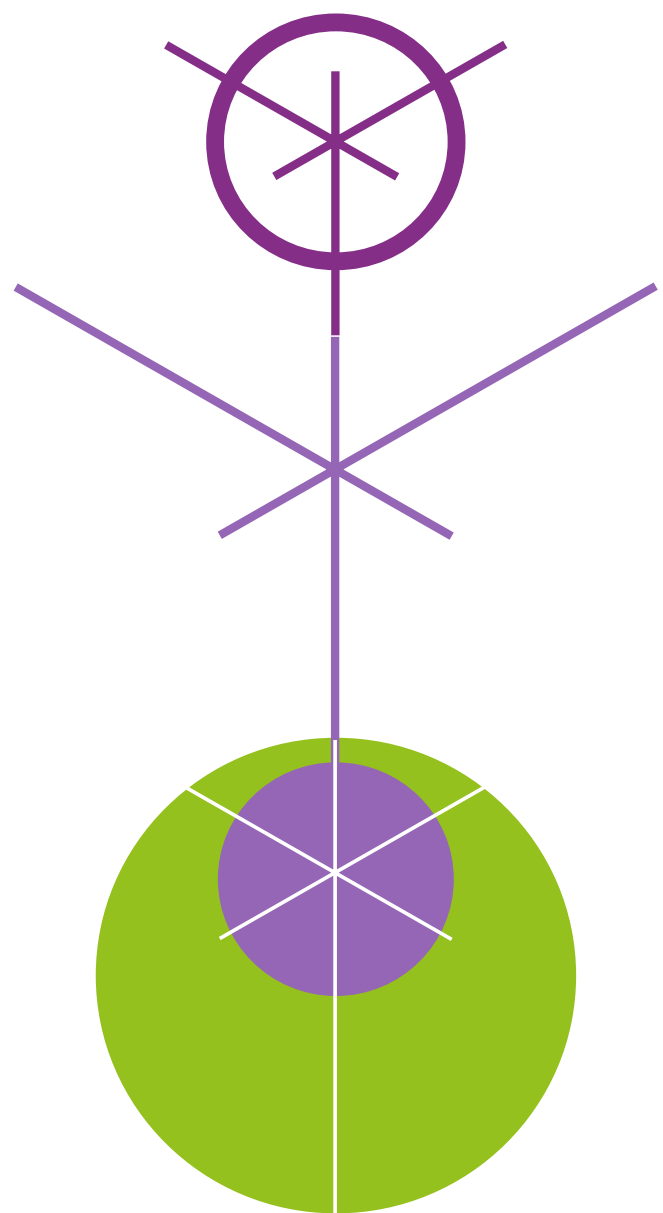
Like many others I found the group process difficult. I struggled with imposter syndrome. I felt I didn't belong. It was uncomfortable. Especially when others were over sharing. I went to get understanding for myself. I found others' stories unrelatable to me. Groups are tricky.

However, something in me wanted to know more. I joined a group at a local charity as a participant. One day the peer supporter running the group left and I became the group facilitator. It was at that point I decided I wanted to understand groups and to be able to give these people the best group experience possible. I had no training, my only qualification was being a peer.

I enrolled at York Group Work and completed the foundation course on group work. I really enjoyed the theory side of the training. However, half the training was sitting in an experiential group, which was scary as the course participants were a new set of peers. The imposter syndrome moved up a notch. But I stuck with it.

However, I decided I wanted to stay for the diploma. I wanted to run my own groups. Moreover, I wanted to be qualified in running groups. I also realised I wanted to run a group which I felt was needed but wasn't there. I enrolled at Chester University and studied for my Post Graduate certificate in psychological trauma.

Luckily for me I had the most amazing CPN who not only supported but encouraged me. If it wasn't for him, I seriously doubt I would have ended up on this track. I will always be grateful to Andy. He introduced me to the Sunderland Recovery College where I began facilitating groups which I felt I had the most knowledge and interest in. My first group was on chronic pain and I also facilitated a group that discussed music, a much lighter topic. I wanted more experience running groups before I moved onto trauma.



**I had struggled with psychological trauma at this point for decades. I felt that although I had gone through various treatments.** However, I didn't understand

psychological trauma. No one had gone past the basics in explaining the whys and how these things were happening to me. My goal was to make a course which would give people the understanding of trauma and the impact it has. Often without us knowing.

Initially, I really wasn't too sure what would work and what wouldn't. I now had a space for the course to evolve and grow. I also had the support of my work reflection group at York where I could take and present my group to peers running groups and a group supervisor. In September 2023 ReCoCo kindly offered me the opportunity to facilitate the psychological trauma group in Newcastle.

**In hindsight I created a group which I would have wanted 30 years ago.**

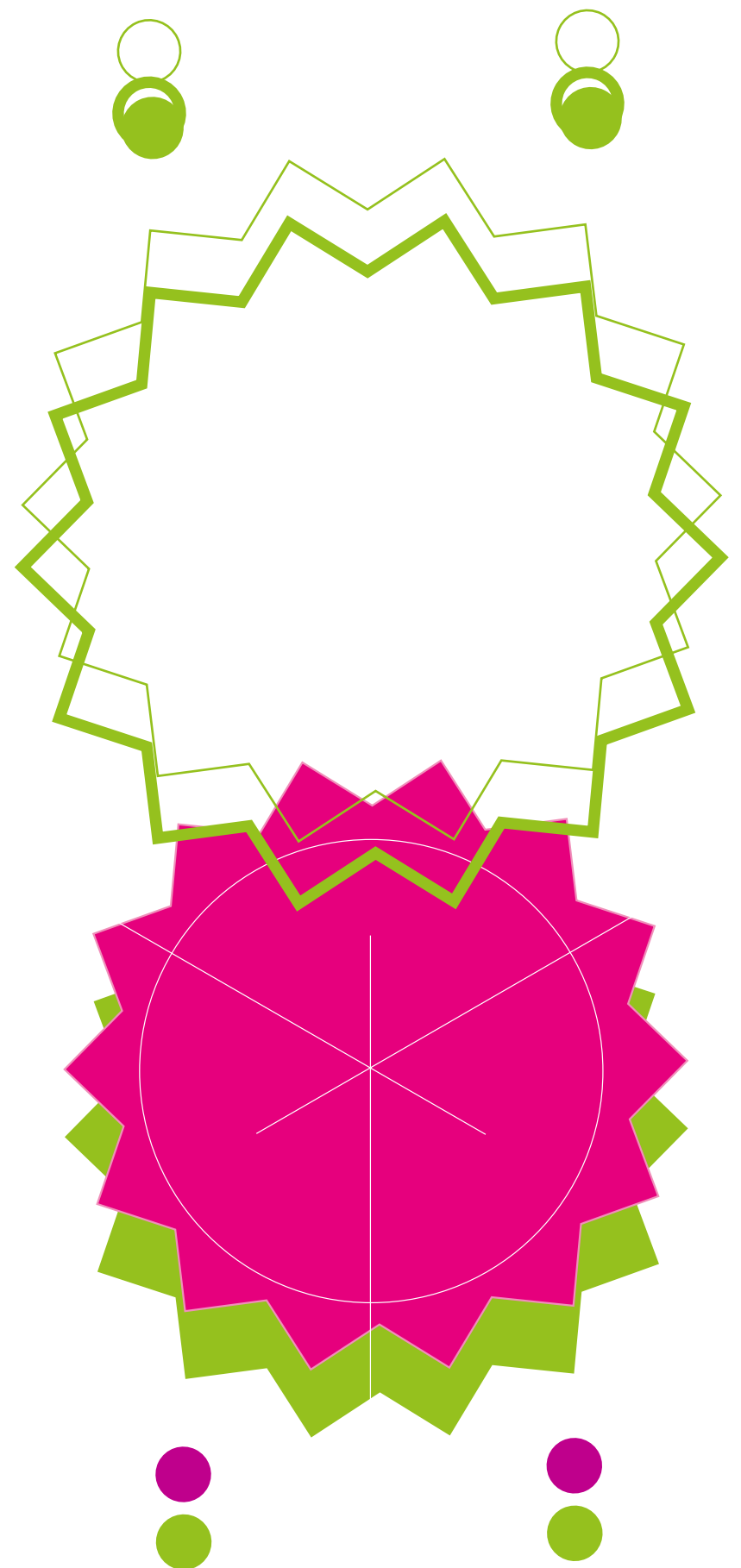
Which would have benefitted me. However, I didn't want a group which told my life story but a group where others could share their experiences. I learn a great deal facilitating these groups still.

The group is largely psycho educational. However, I wanted to incorporate my training in groups, so free floating discussion during each session is promoted throughout. Safety for me is a particularly important factor; no one discusses traumatic events.

In July 2023 I completed my supervision running the psychological trauma group and I was awarded Group Work Practitioner status and associated membership of the Institute of Group Analysis.

**I wish I had found groups a long time ago. Although, they can at times lead to various emotions.** They can

be fascinating and great place to learn. My learning about groups has not finished. I have recently completed the foundation course in reflective practice. I still sit in groups for various topics, I can still find them tricky but very worthwhile.









# FREEDOM FROM OUR ADDICTIONS

BY STEVE WOOD

"Addiction is manifested in any behaviour that a person craves, finds temporary relief or pleasure in but suffers negative consequences as a result of, and yet has difficulty giving up." – Gabor Maté

**Addiction doesn't discriminate. It can happen to any one of us, regardless of our background or social standing. What we once believed to be normal behaviours can manifest into what we deem to be an essential part of our being, that we cannot get by without it.**

From drugs and alcohol, to gambling, sex, gaming or the internet, the list is vast. What is always important to remember however, is that we have a choice. If we choose to engage in addictive behaviours, we can therefore choose to stop them. That is where the power lies.

Only you will know yourself when enough is enough. That your life is becoming/ has become unmanageable due to your addiction. It's time to stop. It's that decision that is key. A lightbulb moment.

So, is recovery from substance addiction hard? A new way of life, not being able to socialise the way you used to? Having to deal with thoughts and feelings without that coping mechanism? Boredom? All relevant questions and points I suppose. I mean, there must be a reason why we engaged in the behaviours in the first place? Well, if you look at all those questions posed, there is a completely rational way of looking at things that may start to make sense. I mean, there must be a reason why we want to stop?

**A new way of life. Well, was the old way working?** Chaos, anxiety, repeating harmful daily habits just to stay above water. Then having to repeat the cycle all over again tomorrow. Wake up with feelings of guilt and shame. Then do it again... and again. Seemingly no end to the cycle. Losing so much that is close to you and that you value about yourself. **THAT'S HARD.**

Creating 'a new way of life' way seems daunting, but it gives us a chance to carve out a future and shape it in whichever way we see fit. To reconnect with the world and to those that are important to us. Options and opportunities become available that were previously unattainable due to our behaviours.

Dealing with thoughts and feelings without turning to your chosen addictive behaviours is initially a challenge for many. The reason being is that we have auto tuned ourselves into believing that we can't. Without recognising that we are only exacerbating situations by masking, avoiding or temporarily numbing our true thoughts and feelings. **THAT'S HARD.**

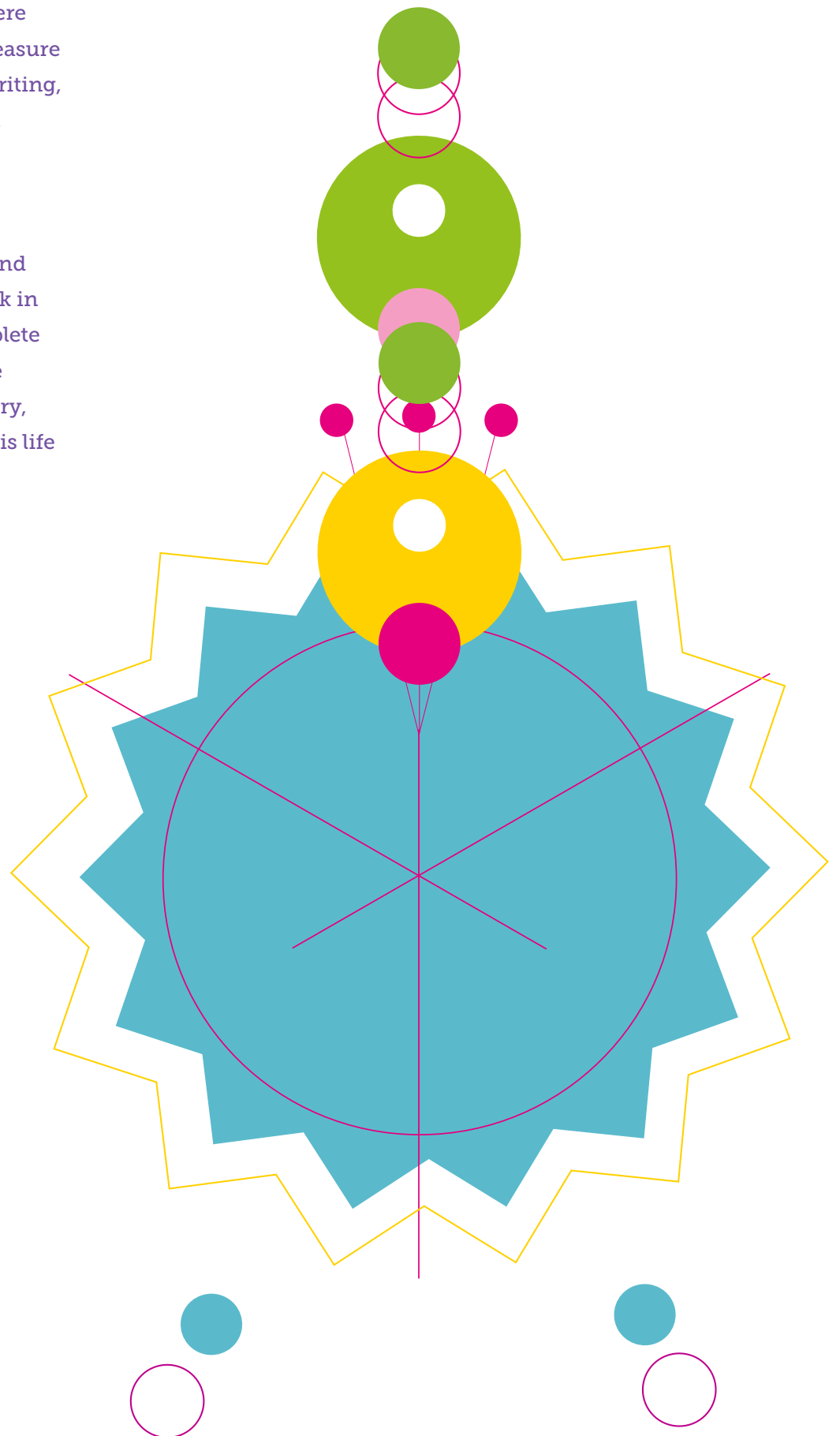
It's ok to feel. It's a part of life. Not everything will go our way but being able to deal with it rationally and with reason and acceptance, becomes a huge weight off our shoulders. We are moving on. We cannot change the past, but we can show it what it has been missing.

**Removing your addiction from your social life doesn't mean you become boring or characterless.** It just means you can be true to yourself.

Indeed, it is often the case that social contact becomes more engaging and meaningful. Those that care will share your relief and pride that you can finally be yourself and they can do likewise. Those that don't? Well, you don't and never did need them.

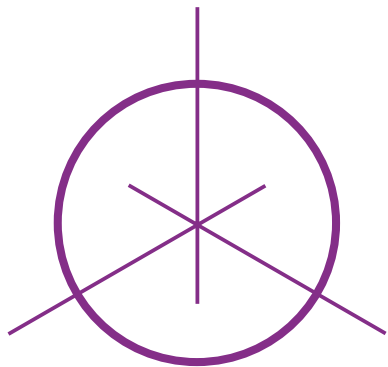
**I can honestly say that I have never experienced boredom in recovery.** Again, we reconnect. What is it that you actually enjoy? Things that were once part of yourself that addiction has taken away. Find pleasure in those activities again. Be it listening to music, reading, writing, cooking. Whatever you used to find pleasure in is ready and waiting.

**Me? Well, it was drugs and alcohol. I was suppressed. I was isolated.** I was hurting myself and others and I was deeply unhappy. **WAS.** I haven't looked back in the 2 years I have been in recovery, and I can say with complete clarity that this has been the most empowering and positive time of my life. If it's time to change, then go for it. If it's scary, then good! Feel it. It's new, it's exciting and it's yours. There is life beyond addiction.



# THE THRIFT MOVEMENT: NAVIGATING MODERN FINANCIAL REALITIES WITH CREDIT UNIONS

BY GRAHAM BREWIS  
FOUNDER AND TRANSITION ADVISOR



In today's economic landscape, the concept of saving money has experienced a renaissance. More than ever, individuals are adopting thrifty habits, carefully considering their purchases, and exploring alternative avenues to fulfil their needs. This shift is not merely a trend but a pragmatic response to the escalating cost of living. As people strive to stretch their budgets further, they are embracing a range of strategies, from borrowing and renting to purchasing second-hand items. In this article, we delve into the dynamics of this evolving financial ethos, comparing various options for acquiring essential items, such as a washing machine, and examining the associated costs and implications.

## The Thrift Movement:

In recent years, there has been a notable resurgence in the culture of thrift. This shift can be attributed to several factors, including economic uncertainty, rising inflation, and changing consumer attitudes. With wages often failing to keep pace with the soaring costs of housing, utilities, and other essentials, individuals are increasingly inclined to adopt a more prudent approach to their finances.

## The Economics of Buying New:

Consider the scenario of purchasing a new washing machine, a household staple that is indispensable for many. While a brand-new appliance offers the allure of reliability and longevity, it comes with a significant price tag. On average, a mid-range washing machine may cost around £300. However, the financial outlay does not end there. Buyers must also factor in additional expenses, such as delivery charges, installation fees, and potential maintenance costs.

## A quick word about Interest Rates:

Often would be savers and borrowers are put off by interest rates and numbers stated as AER, APR etc that you see on leaflets. Ironically these published figures are meant to help us to compare different savings and borrowing options. AER stands Annual Equivalent Rate, and you can use it to choose from different savings products, 5.65% is a good rate at the moment. APR for instance stands for Annual Percentage Rate and the general idea is the lower the better. As an example, if I borrowed £100 over 12 Months at 10% interest rate, I would pay back £110, simple as that. As another example the best APR I could find for a personal loan from a bank is 7.9%, the average rate for a credit card is 22%, a payday loan is 1200% and don't even want to guess about loan shark. These figures supplied by [www.moneysupermarket.com](http://www.moneysupermarket.com) and if you follow the business news you will see that they change on a regular basis and this is happening now in a downward direction for reasons beyond the scope of this article.

## Exploring Savings Options:

For those committed to saving money, building a financial cushion is paramount. However, the effectiveness of traditional savings accounts is contingent upon prevailing interest rates. In today's low-interest-rate environment, the returns on savings accounts are often modest, failing to outpace inflation. Consequently, individuals may need to explore alternative avenues to maximize their savings potential.

## Credit Unions: A Missing Piece in the Puzzle

Despite being popular in many parts of the world, credit unions have yet to gain significant traction in some regions. These community-based financial cooperatives offer a unique blend of savings and spending opportunities, often providing members with competitive interest rates on savings accounts while offering affordable loan options. By pooling resources and fostering a sense of community ownership, credit unions empower individuals to take control of their financial futures while reinvesting profits back into the community.

## Interest Rates and Borrowing:

When it comes to borrowing money, the landscape is diverse, with various financial institutions and lending platforms offering an array of products. It's essential to understand the associated interest rates, as they can significantly impact the overall cost of borrowing. Here's a breakdown of some common borrowing options and their typical APRs:

- **Banks and Building Societies:** These conventional lenders typically offer lower APRs compared to alternative lending options, making them a relatively affordable choice for those with good credit scores.
- **Payday Loans:** Known for their high-interest rates and short repayment terms, payday loans should be approached with caution, as they can lead to a cycle of debt if not managed responsibly.
- **Credit Cards:** While credit cards offer convenience and flexibility, they often carry higher APRs, especially for those who carry a balance from month to month.
- **Catalogues and Buy Now Pay Later Schemes:** These purchasing options may seem attractive due to their deferred payment terms, but consumers should be mindful of the potentially steep interest rates and hidden fees.
- **Pawnbrokers and Loan Sharks:** These are often considered last-resort options due to their exorbitant interest rates and predatory lending practices, which can trap borrowers in a cycle of debt.



## Embracing Alternatives:

In light of the diverse borrowing landscape, individuals are increasingly exploring alternative avenues to meet their needs without resorting to traditional loans. Renting items, buying second-hand, or participating in collaborative consumption platforms offer cost-effective alternatives that align with the ethos of thrift.

## Conclusion:

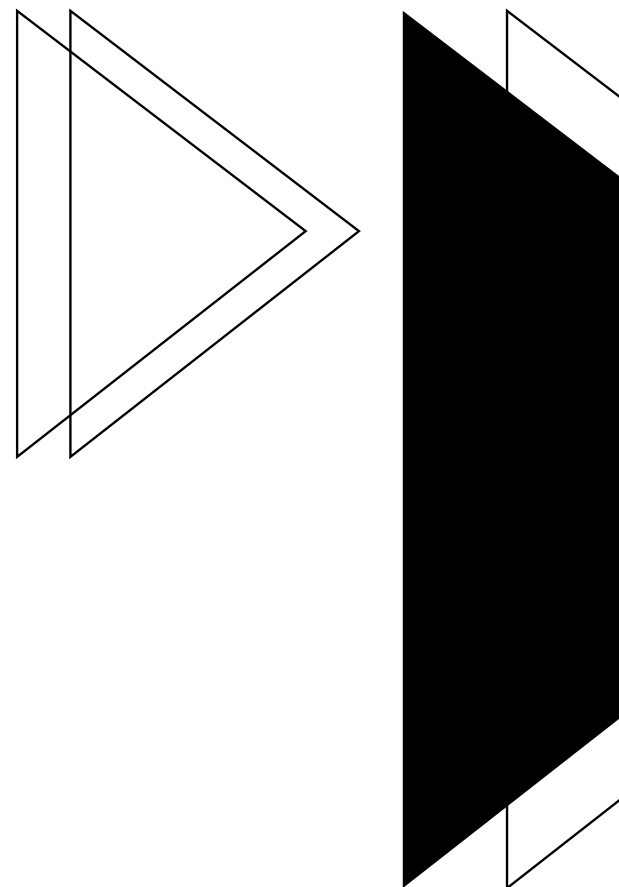
The resurgence of thrift reflects a shift in consumer behaviour driven by economic realities and changing attitudes towards spending and saving. While purchasing new items may offer convenience and peace of mind, it often comes at a significant financial cost. By exploring alternative options and considering the benefits of credit unions, individuals can navigate the economic landscape more effectively, stretching their budgets further and achieving greater financial resilience in the process. Ultimately, the embrace of thrift represents a prudent approach to managing finances in an uncertain world, with credit unions serving as a promising avenue for community-based financial empowerment.

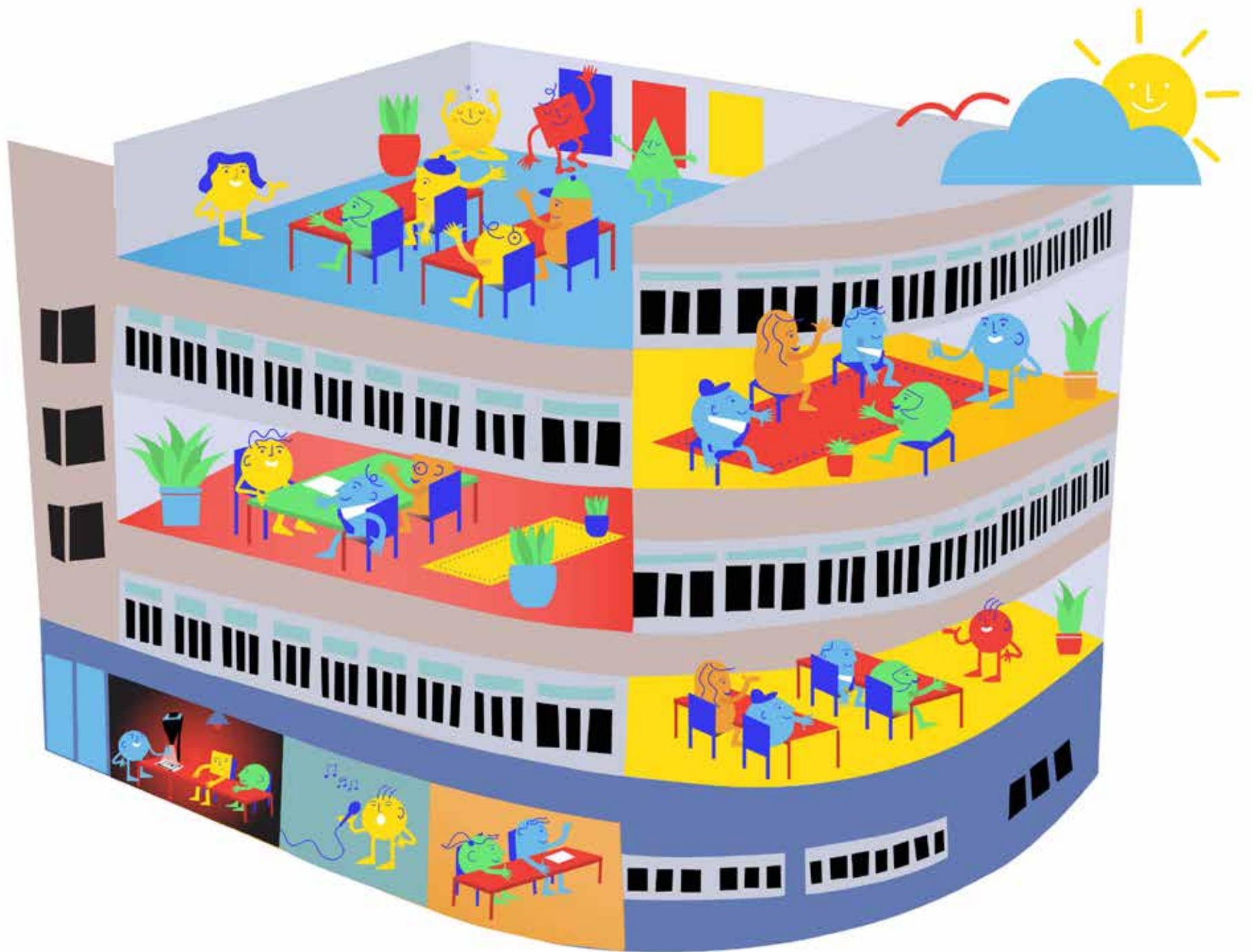
COURSES / WORKSHOPS  
 COURSES / WORKSHOPS

@ CARLIOL

(Booking required)

- 48 Body Wise
- 48 Cultivating Meaningful Connection
- 49 Introduction to DBT Skills
- 51 Loving Me
- 51 Low Impact Exercise
- 52 Moves and Grooves
- 52 Open Minds
- 53 Psychological Trauma
- 53 Reducing the Rage
- 54 Spirituality and Recovery
- 55 Building Your Self Respect
- 56 Understanding Medication - Workshop
- 56 Understanding the Experiences of Depression
- 56 Understanding Psychiatry - Workshop
- 57 Wonderful You by Design
- 58 WRAP Awareness







## BODY WISE

1

This course is for anyone who struggles with their body image. Over 4 sessions we look at what can be the cause of body image problems, the effect low body confidence has, and ways to feel more positively about our bodies. Each session will last 2 hours and the course will run over 4 weeks. Look forward to seeing you!

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly for 4 weeks

Cohort 1 – 23rd April

Cohort 2 – 25th June

2

## CULTIVATING MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

(based on Atlas of the Heart from the research of Brené Brown)

“Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship”

This course explores Brené Brown’s three skill sets for Cultivating Meaningful Connection and will help you develop an actionable framework to integrate these skills into your own life and relationships.

Skill set 1 - Developing Grounded Confidence

Skill set 2 - Practicing the Courage to Walk Alongside

Skill set 3 - Practicing Story Stewardship

Time: 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly for 8 weeks from 17th April - 12th June (except May half term)

Course Facilitator: Claire Robinson

### A LESSON FROM MY MOM:

Don't look away. Don't look down.

Don't pretend not to see hurt.

Look people in the eye.

Even when their pain is overwhelming.

And when you're hurting and in pain, find the people who can look you in the eye.

Brené Brown | ATLAS OF THE HEART





3

## INTRODUCTION TO DBT SKILLS

This is not Dialectical Behavioural Therapy! At ReCoCo we run weekly skills based groups, giving an overview of what DBT is. During each session we will explore and discuss skills that people find helpful in managing their emotions and dealing with distress. Each week we will explore a specific group of DBT skills;

Week 1 – Distress Tolerance Skills

Week 2 – Emotional Regulation Skills

Week 3 – Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

The 3 weeks will repeat continuously to provide as many people as possible with these skills. Mindfulness will also be incorporated into each session.

Time: 10.00am - 12.30pm

Day: Thursday

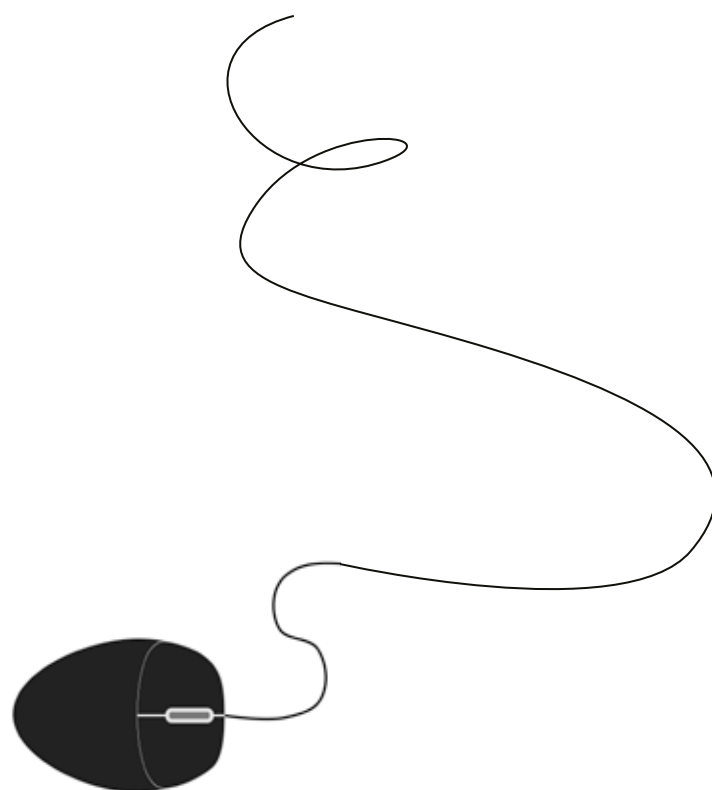
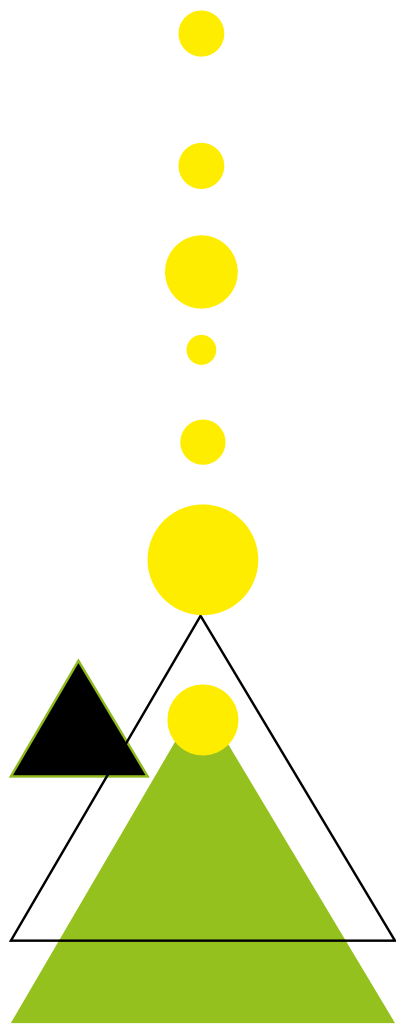
Date: Weekly for 3 weeks

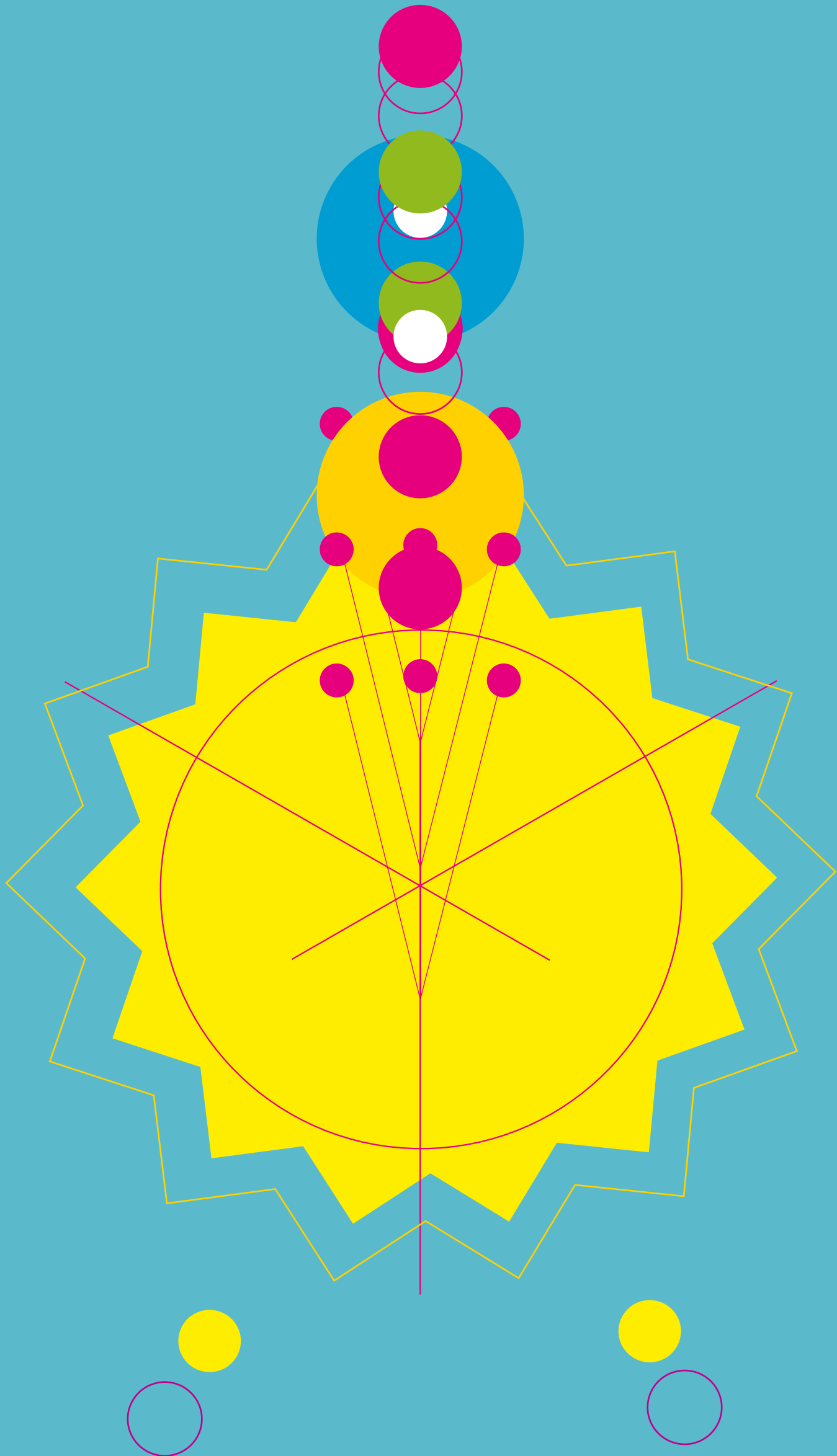
Cohort 1 – 25th April

Cohort 2 – 6th June

Cohort 3 – 27th June

NB: Each cohort will be released intermittently for booking





4

## LOVING ME

"Loving me" - loving ourselves is exactly what it sounds like.

By accepting our own flaws and limitations, our weaknesses and things we don't like about ourselves, learning to love ourselves in all aspects of our being. Recognising our strengths and achievements and celebrating them!

We will cover "Loving me"  
 "Accepting me"  
 "Self Confidence"  
 "Assertive me"

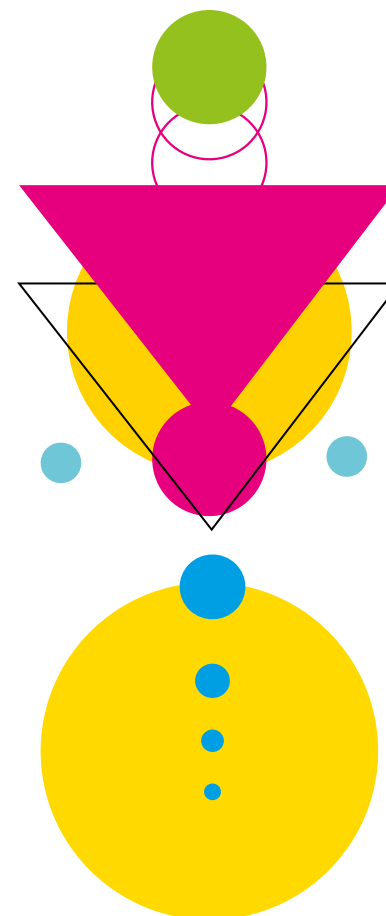
We'll be bringing you scheduled dates and times for this 4 week course soon. So keep an eye out for an update.

Time: 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly for 4 weeks

Course Leader: Gemma Muldowney



5

## LOW IMPACT EXERCISE

You don't need to be fit to attend this class, it's for anyone that wants to improve their fitness.

Natalie starts with a gentle warm up and some of the class is delivered seated. It's at a steady pace with clear instructions. The pace picks up in the second half but Natalie adapts her exercises to accommodate each person's level of fitness so that everyone can join in.... how perfect!

So, get fit, have fun and enjoy Natalie's wicked choice of music!

Booked in 4 week blocks – book 1 week or all 4. (NB advertised on a monthly basis with limited spaces)

Time: 11.00am – 11.45am

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly from 16th April

Course Facilitator: Natalie Bell

## MOVES AND GROOVES — EXERCISE

6

Have you been thinking about upping the ante with your fitness regime? Then Moves and Grooves, a 45 minute, high intensity, aerobic class, is the place for you. You'll need plenty of stamina to attend. As the title suggests you'll be moving and grooving to Natalie's iconic choice of music along with her enthusiastic instruction. The sessions will use handheld weights in parts (Please note if you have any back or knee issues then it won't be suitable for you).

Booked in 4 week blocks – book 1 week or all 4. (NB advertised on a monthly basis with limited spaces)

Time: 12.00pm – 12.45pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly from 16th April

Course Facilitator: Natalie Bell

## OPEN MINDS: LET'S GET TOGETHER AND TALK

7

Open Minds consists of group sessions in which you will be able to discuss your experiences and talk about your journey. This in turn offers a way of understanding long standing issues that are troubling for you in the presence of and with the support of those who have faced similar situations.

You will also hear the issues that others in the group have had to face and how they have been able to keep going. And there will of course be opportunities to share tips and ideas that could help.

In this way you may come to assess the place of negative experiences in your current life. Using this realisation and with the support of the group, you may decide to live life in a way free from these previous difficulties.

While safeguarding and confidentiality is a must, these sessions will be run by those attending for those attending and I will be suggesting a light touch to meeting rules.

And for those that are so inclined, I can think of no better book than:

*Irvin Yalom – The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*

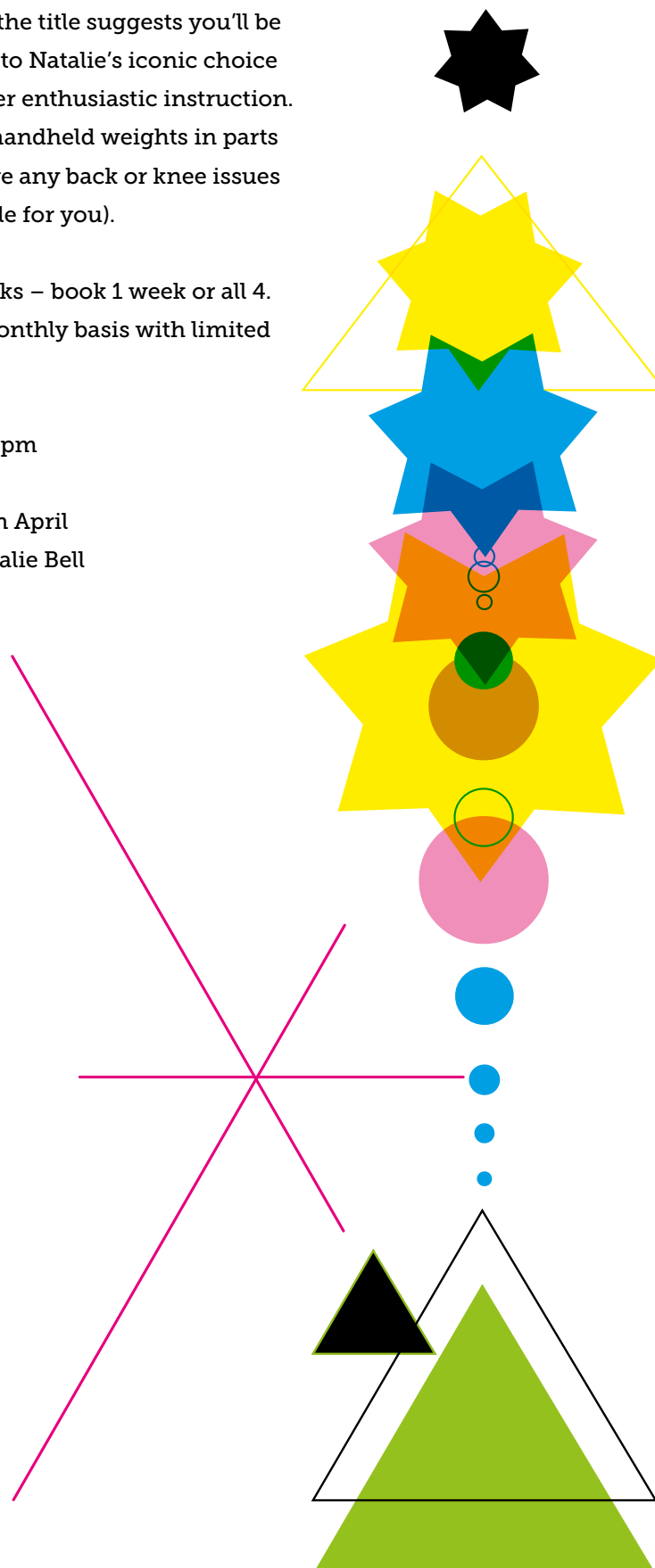
Getting it out there is often half the battle and sharing with others may allow you to see your own situation in a new light. So, let's talk.

Time: 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Day: Monday

Date: Weekly starting 15th April to 8th July (except for Bank Holidays)

Course Facilitator: David Large



## PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

8

Hi, my name is Gayl McCain I have lived experience of psychological trauma. I studied psychological trauma at Chester University and trained to be a group work practitioner. My goal was to work with groups to help them understand trauma and the impact it may have.

This course is Psycho-Educational. Debunking myths using neuroscience: beginning to consider what belongs where and to whom; recognising unhelpful positions and patterns with regards to Trauma.

- Reduce isolation, feelings of alienation and shame
- Encourage free flowing discussion amongst students
- Increase understanding of how trauma affects the brain, body and behaviours
- Recognise unconscious positions they take up in relationships that may perpetuate unhelpful behaviour
- Learn techniques that may relieve or help manage the symptoms of psychological trauma, such as anxiety, flashbacks/ nightmares, anger, depression, guilt and shame

Over the 8 week duration of the course:

We will define what psychological trauma is as well as exploring neuroscience looking at impact trauma has on the working of the brain.

- Traumatic memory: How the brain processes traumatic memories
- How emotions can impact trauma. Overview of good and bad emotions
- Anger, Shame and Guilt
- Depression and low mood
- Post-Traumatic Growth and Resilience:
- Addiction and Coping skills

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: Weekly for 8 weeks from 16th April (excluding May bank holiday week)

Course Facilitator: Gayl McCain



## REDUCING THE RAGE

9

Everyone gets angry or frustrated. It is a totally normal and healthy emotion, particularly in times like this.

Sometimes though, our anger can get away from us and begin to take over. If anger plays a larger role in your life than you want it to, this course may be for you. Whether you get angry at the smallest things, your rage is an uncontrollable monster, or find it difficult to express your anger in a healthy way, this course may help in getting your anger back under control.

Everyone is welcome to this course, however, please be mindful that this course can be emotionally challenging and triggering. We will discuss issues around trauma and shame which can be difficult if you are currently earlier on in your recovery journey. This class may be a process of self-discovery through skills and knowledge. Let's get 'a'had a'the rage.

Participants must have already completed a WRAP Awareness or Introduction to DBT Skills course within ReCoCo before signing up for Reducing the Rage.

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly for 5 weeks

Cohort 1 – 18th April

Cohort 2 – 6th June

Course Leader: Megan Shaftoe

# SPIRITUALITY AND RECOVERY

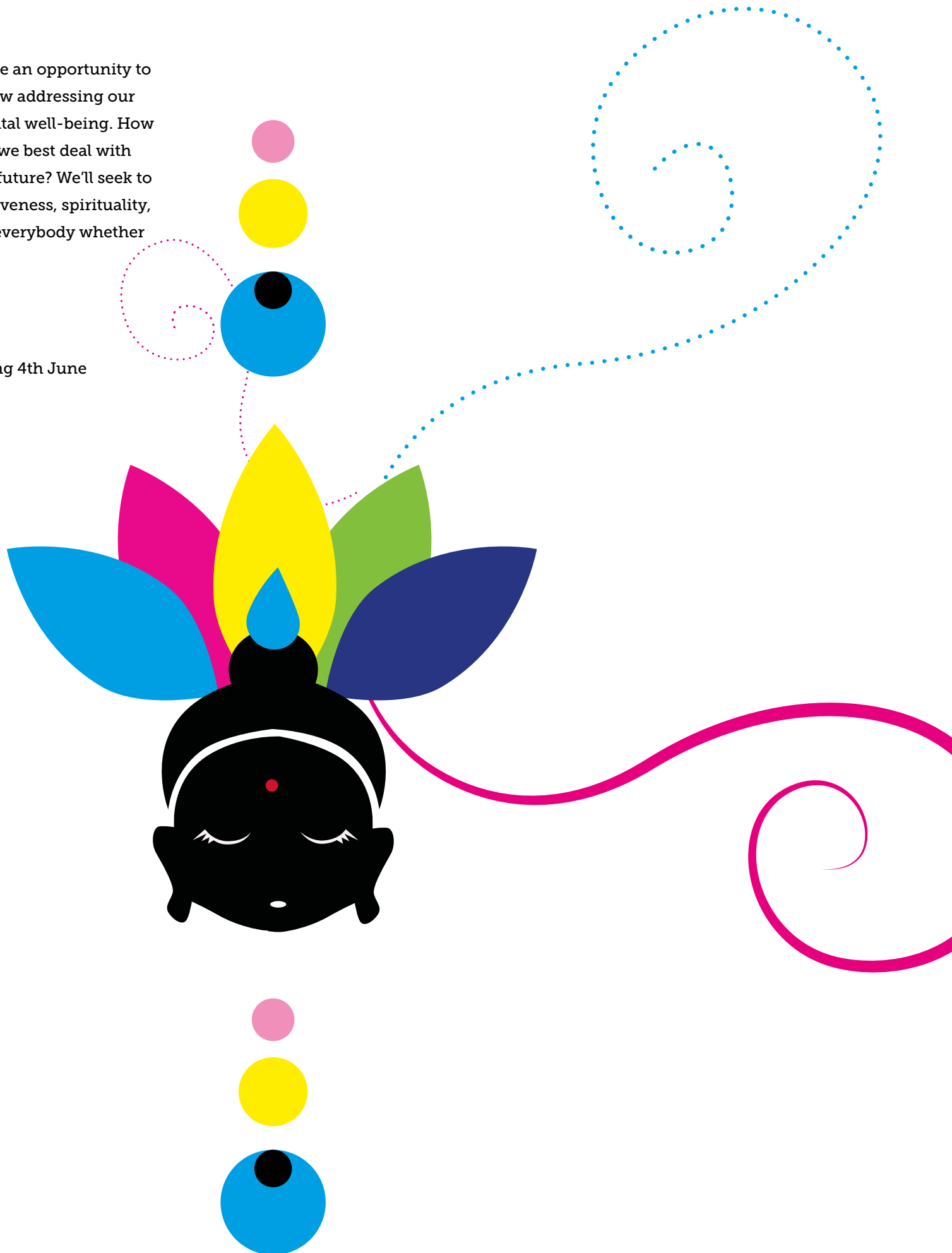
This five week course will provide an opportunity to explore in a supportive group how addressing our spiritual needs can help our mental well-being. How do we feed our spirits? How can we best deal with the past and look forward to the future? We'll seek to explore the concepts of joy, forgiveness, spirituality, faith, hope, and love. This is for everybody whether religious or not ...

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Dates: Weekly for 5 weeks starting 4th June

Course Facilitator: Neil Cockling



11

## BUILDING YOUR SELF RESPECT

Self respect is about loving yourself and giving yourself the respect that every one of us deserves.

Come along and gain insight into the following topics:

- a) New meanings of usually used words;
- b) Identify your values;
- c) Keep the focus on internal qualities;
- d) Work on accepting yourself;
- e) Challenge negative thoughts;
- f) Don't give in to self-doubt;
- g) How to ask yourself about yourself;
- h) Facts about your body, which few are aware of

Scheduled for groups of students really prepared and willing to change:

**YOU WILL HAVE TO LOOK VERY DEEP INTO YOURSELF:**

This is emotionally challenging.

It is advised to be in good shape for the whole course.

The presentation is in discussion/Q & A style from both sides.

In some sessions you are asked to answer a few questions in writing (to break the ice or get started).

'Human: In Centre' is the provider of this course. Walter Morauf has over 40 years of experience in dealing with emotional problems of others. The heart is the centre of body and SOUL! This is the core of value of the human.

Previous participants of "Tools to" and "Take Hold of Your Emotions" are welcome to join and refresh, as the content is the same at heart.

Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm

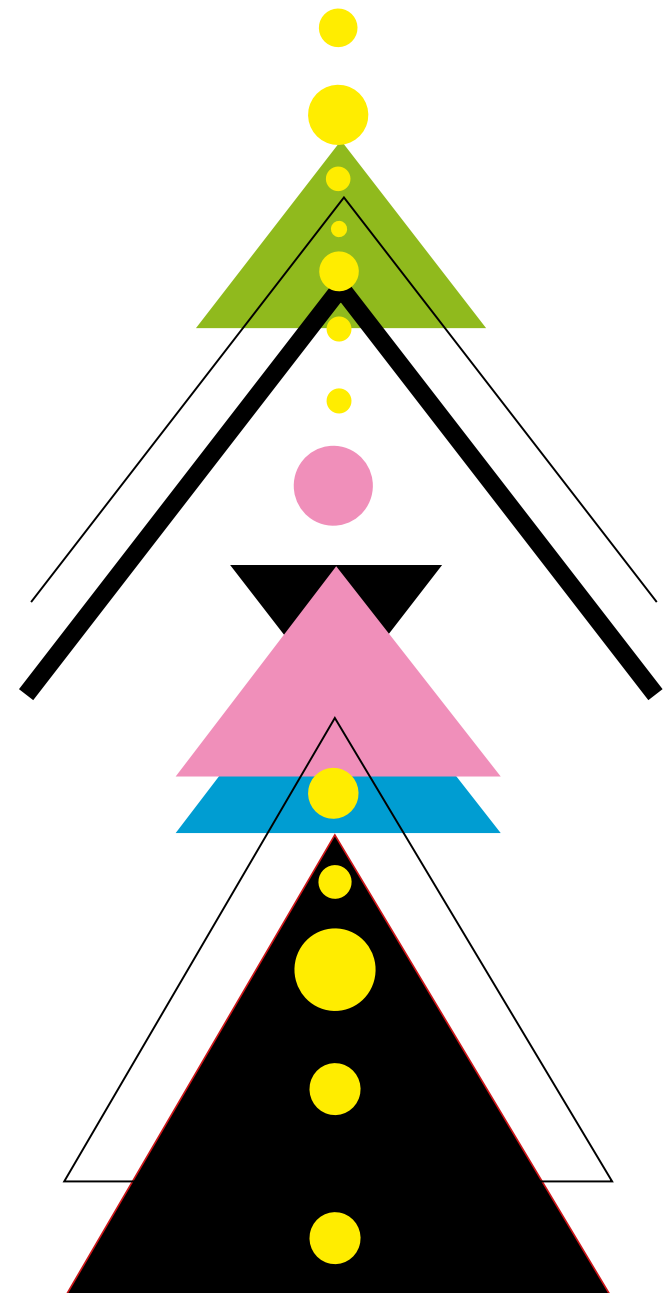
Day: Wednesday

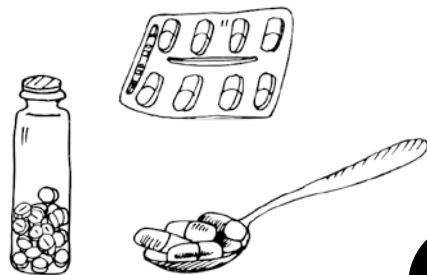
Date: Weekly for 5 Weeks

Cohort 1 – 17th April

Cohort 2 – 5th June

Course Facilitator: Walter Morauf





12

## UNDERSTANDING MEDICATION

This two hour workshop explores the various facets of taking medication that are important to you. It's an informal discussion group with a senior pharmacist that explores issues through shared experience. This workshop is suitable for anyone who wants to learn more about medication.

Time: 1.00pm – 2.30pm

Day: Tuesday

Date: 14th May

Workshop Facilitator: Sanjay Gohil

## UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF DEPRESSION

13

This course explores the various dimensions to the experience of depression. Topics will include changes to emotions and moods, the bodily aspects of depression, changes to interpersonal relations and difficulties performing everyday tasks. Our focus will be on lived experience exploring the experiences of depression through engaging with first person testimony.

The course will provide a range of ways to understand experiences of depression and give you opportunities over a number of weeks to discuss and reflect on forms of recovery.

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly for 4 weeks starting 18th April

Course Facilitator: Ben Smith



14

## UNDERSTANDING PSYCHIATRY

The session will initially describe the approach taken by psychiatrists in assessing, understanding and treating mental disorders. It will briefly include the development of psychiatry as a branch of medicine, looking at similarities and differences from the rest of medicine and will also describe the areas of information that are considered important in the history and investigation and consider the concepts of diagnosis and formulation as used by psychiatrists. It will set out the approach taken to consider the many different influences on a person's health and how these are taken into account, by psychiatrists, in reaching a conclusion and planning care and treatment. We will then look forward to an interactive discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

Like all approaches there are limitations, some of which psychiatrists are aware of, and others less so. Others still, are better understood by those who use psychiatric services.

Date and time tbc

Workshop Facilitator: Dr Isobel Cane



15

## WONDERFUL YOU BY DESIGN

This is a collaboration with Northumbria University, ReCoCo and Chilli-Studios.

Wonderful You by Design offers students the opportunity to amalgamate a new understanding of their mental health lived experiences with their Recovery Journey.

Alongside this, students will learn all about design methods and mindsets. This will enable students to design a sweatshirt that encompasses their own recovery.

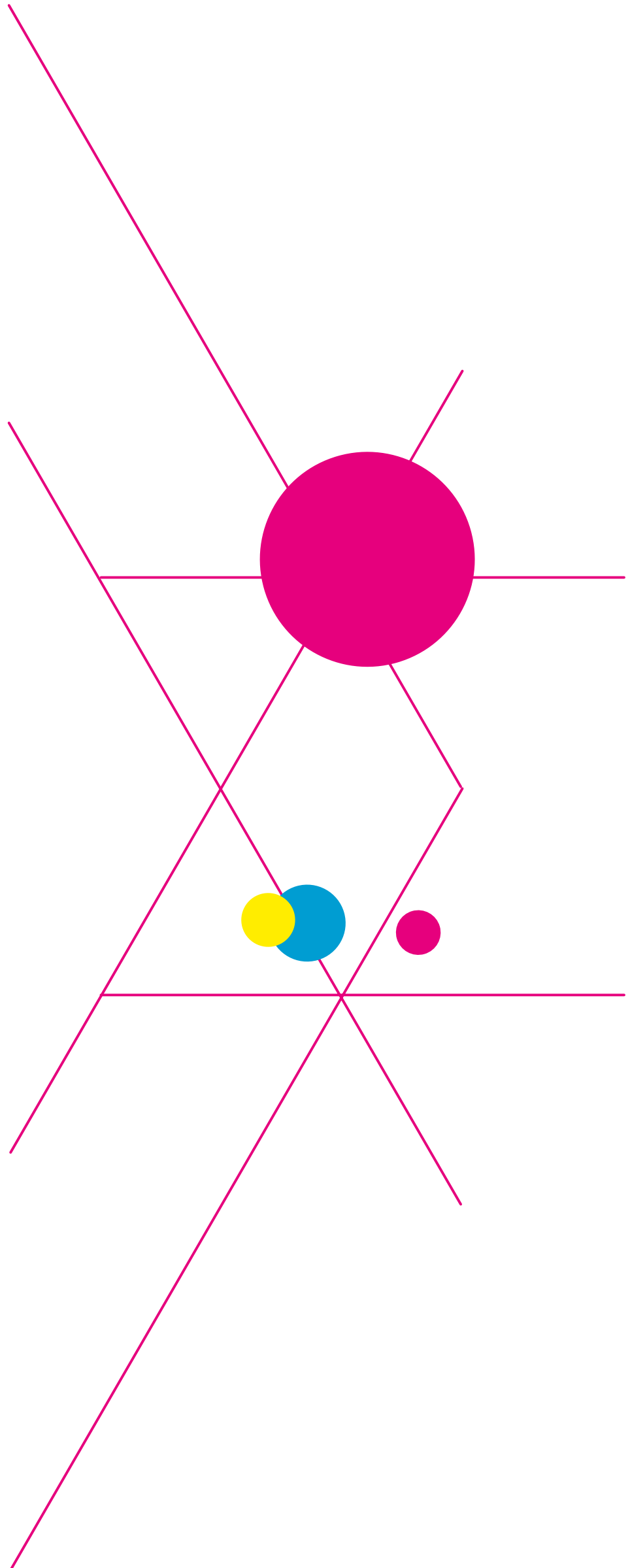
During the course we will explore what mental health means to you, help build confidence, self-esteem and offer new learning opportunities. This all culminates in students creating their own sweatshirt which represents their own recovery journey. This will include some screen printing tutorials from Chilli-Studios and your personalised sweatshirt to take home at no cost to students.

Time: 1.30pm – 3.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Dates: Weekly for 6 weeks starting 11th June

Course Facilitator: Alex Tinning



## WRAP AWARENESS

A workshop for people who experience mental health challenges and for those who care about them. It promotes a structured approach to developing a range of strategies to support self- management in recovery from distress.

WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is a plan designed and managed by you and is designed to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist you in achieving your own life goals and dreams

People find that doing WRAP with peers can give lots of ideas as to how you can increase your wellbeing and plenty of opportunities to bounce ideas off like-minded people.

We recommend WRAP for all of our students.

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Dates: Weekly for 3 weeks

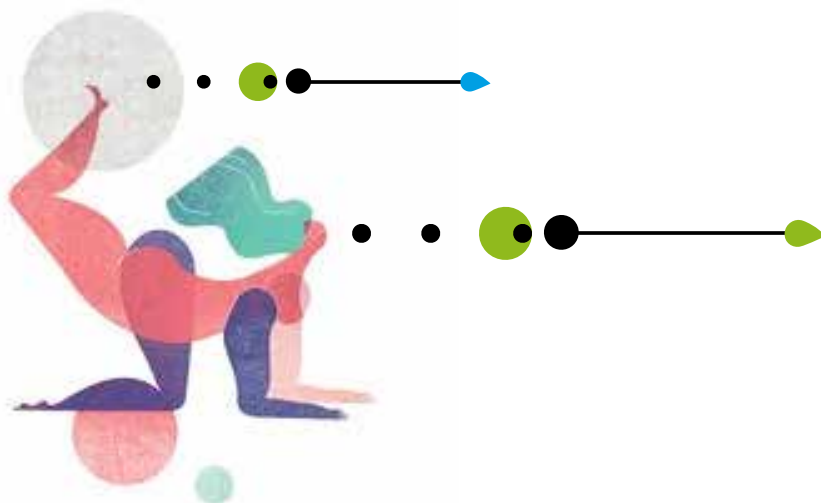
Cohort 1 – 17th April

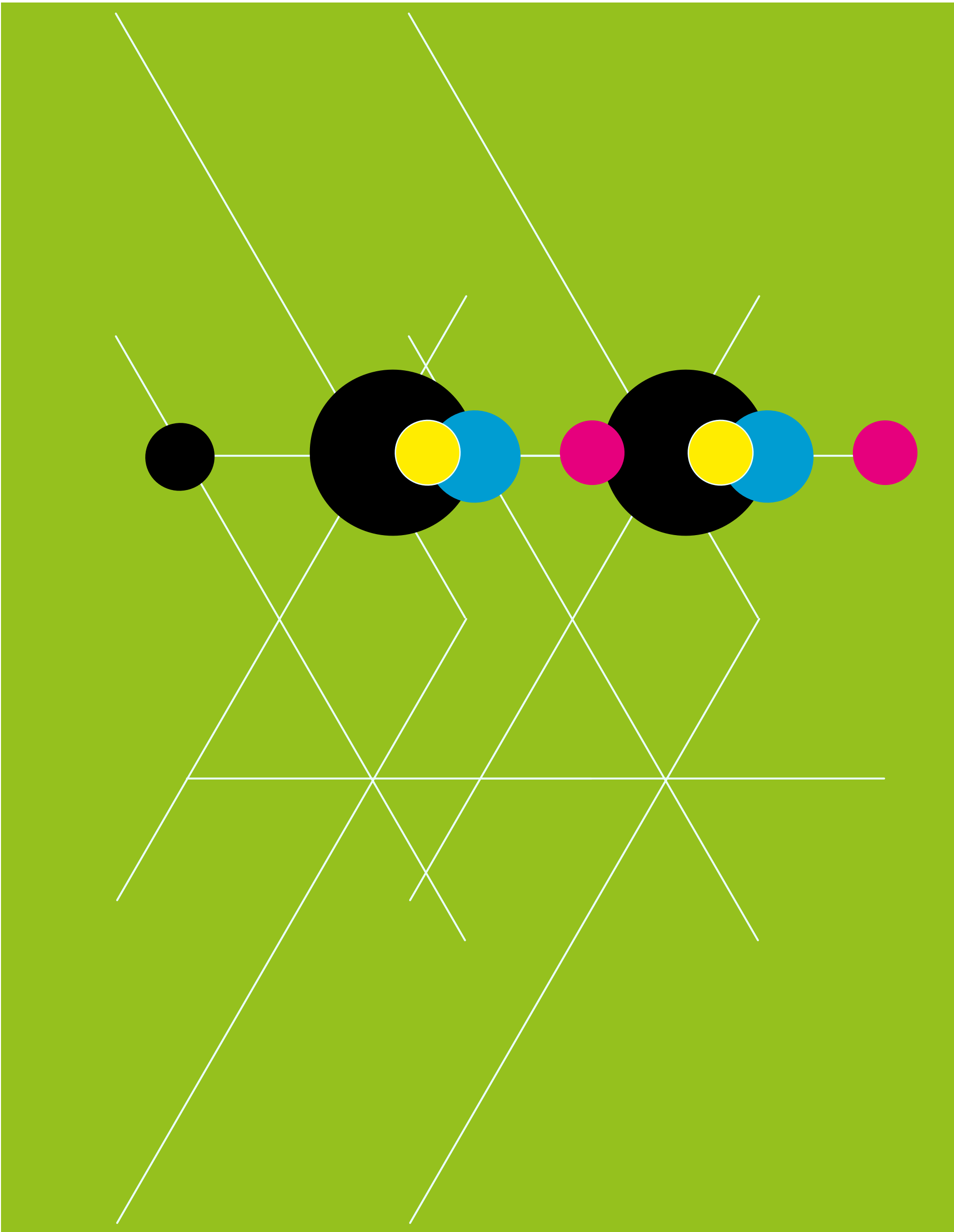
Cohort 2 – 8th May

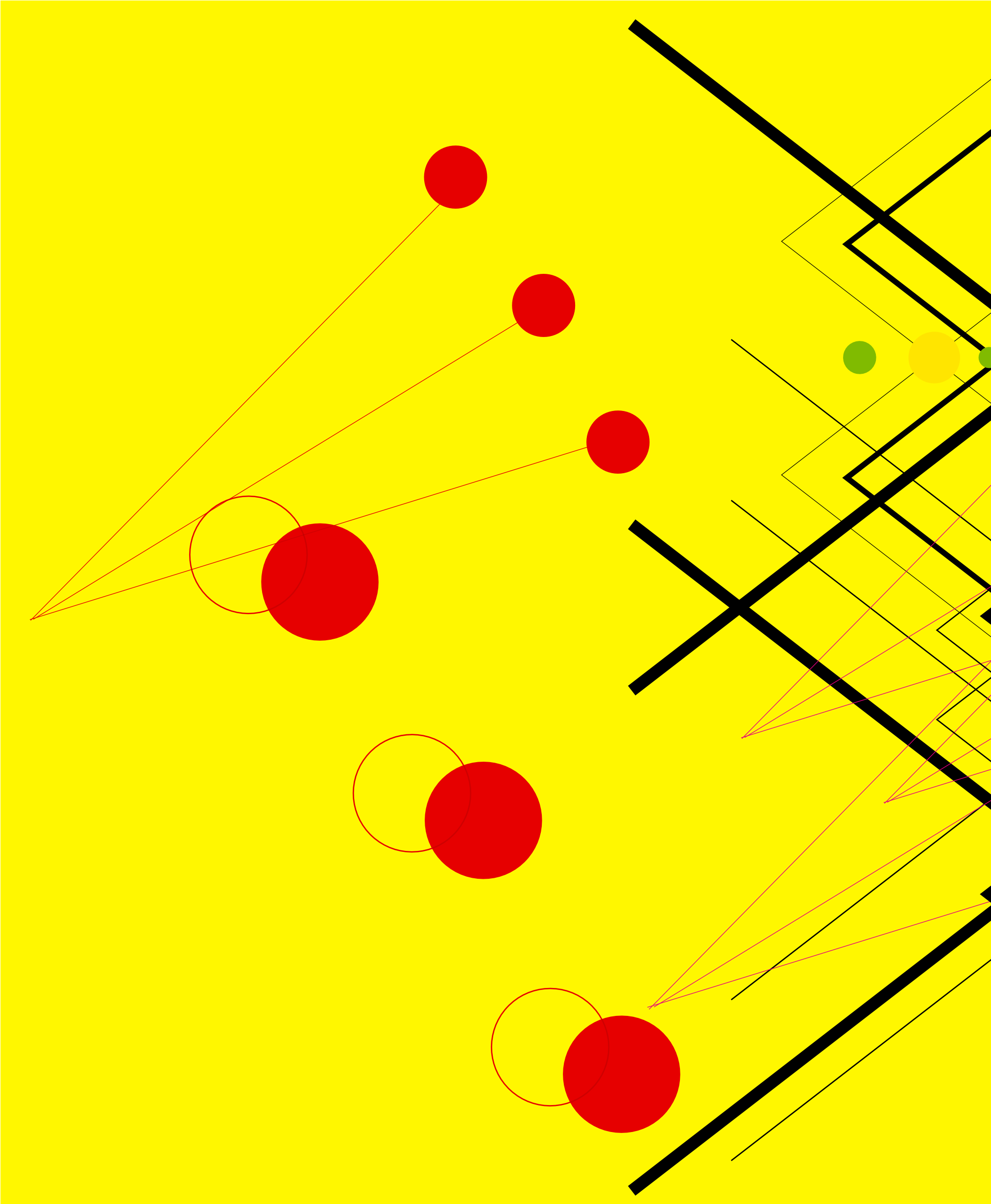
Cohort 3 – 5th June

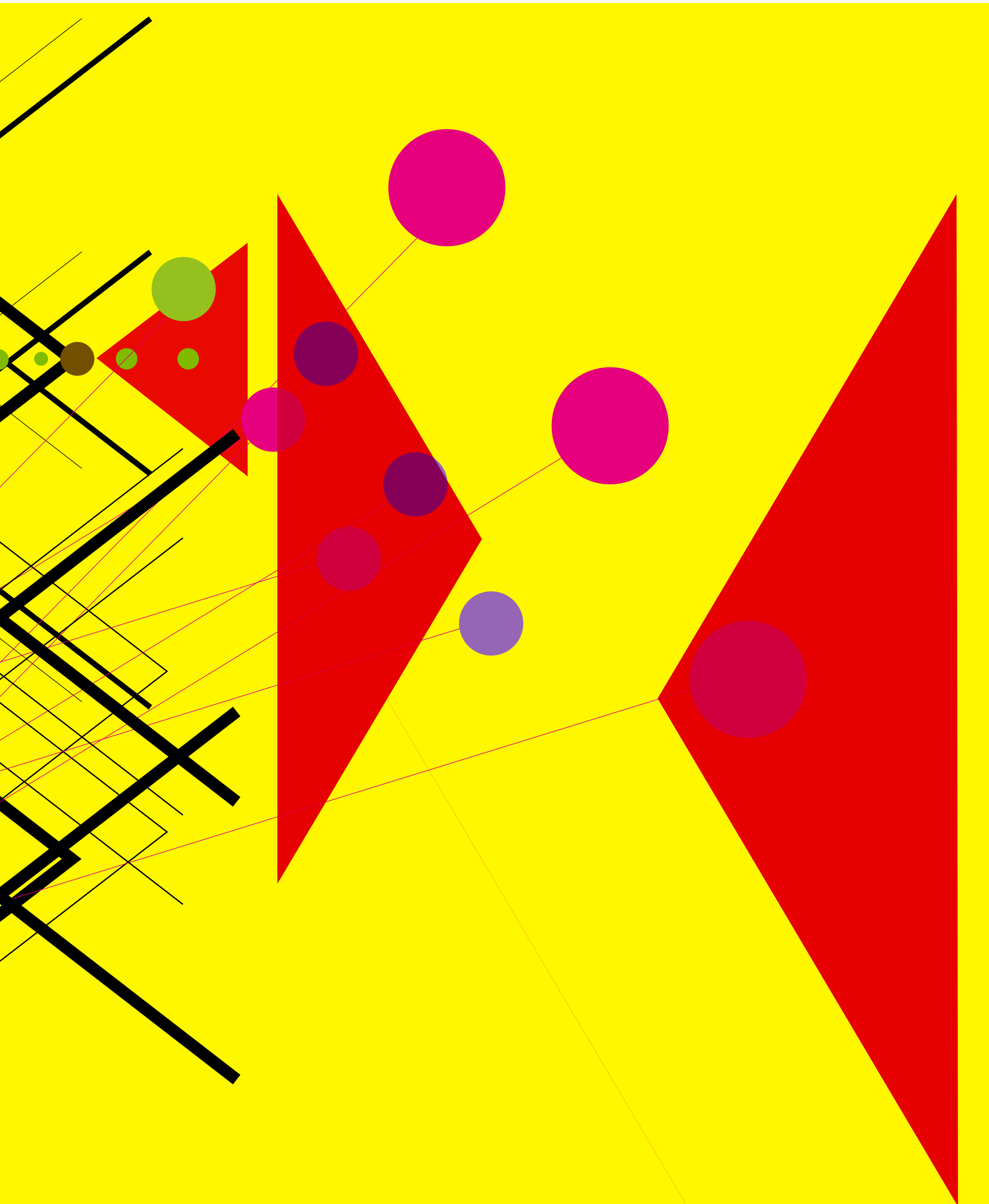
Cohort 4 – 3rd July

NB: Each cohort will be released intermittently for booking





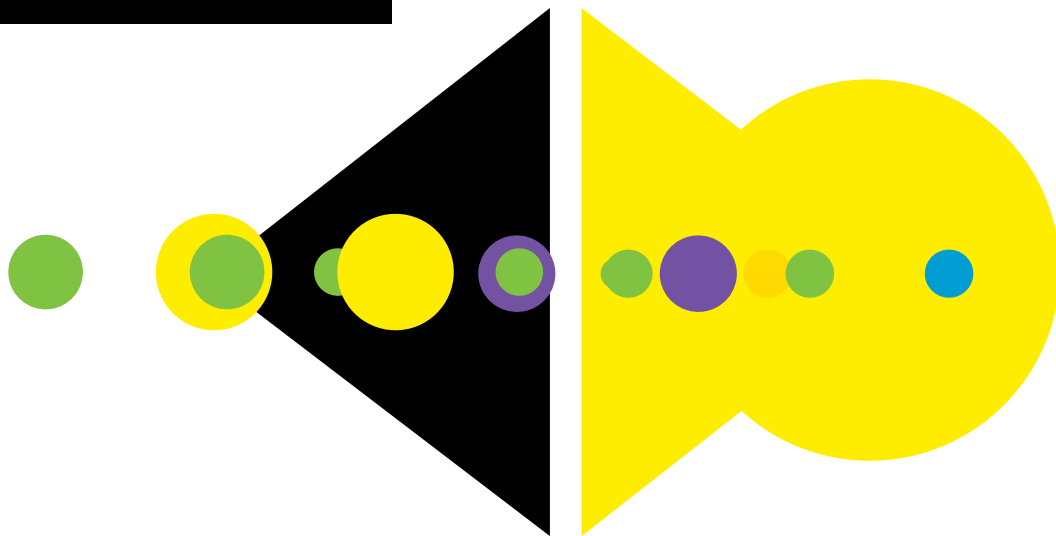




# DROP-INS AND GROUPS

@ CARLIOL

(No booking required - just turn up)



- 63 Acupuncture
- 64 A Walk in the Park
- 64 Carers Support Group
- 64 Creative Wellness & Mindful Modelling
- 65 Creative Writing
- 66 Dinnertime Donk
- 66 Drop-by
- 66 New Students' Drop-by
- 67 Geek Group
- 67 Just Jamming
- 68 LGBT Group
- 68 Mindful Therapies Bitesize
- 69 Music Appreciation Society
- 69 Music Therapy
- 70 She Sings Well
- 70 Smart Recovery
- 70 Tai Chi
- 71 Unusual Experiences Group
- 71 Women's Group

1

# ACUPUNCTURE

## NADA Social – Weekly Acupuncture Sessions for Trauma, Anxiety, Depression and Addiction

The NADA protocol is a 5-point acupuncture treatment that uses acupuncture points on the ears to treat a wide range of conditions including trauma, anxiety and depression. It was developed in the 1970s at the Lincoln Memorial Hospital in New York to help people with addiction issues to manage trauma, anxiety, depression, irritability and cravings during recovery. It is also a treatment for general relaxation and wellness.

Since its development, the NADA protocol has been used to treat trauma and PTSD with NADA clinics set up in the wake of the 9/11 Twin Towers attack and more recently following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. Reports showed that the acupuncture helped with sleep, anxiety, grief and generally enabled people to feel a sense of calm and wellbeing. It also brought communities together as people sat quietly in a group all having acupuncture treatment for a common cause.

The NADA protocol is a non-verbal approach to healing and an effective method of resetting the nervous system that works best in group settings. There is no appointment necessary, no intake and no need to talk of past experiences.

The process involves five sterile, single-use needles that are gently inserted into the ears and left for approximately 30-45 minutes. The outer ear acts like a switchboard that sends impulses to the brain and stimulates the release of endorphins, lowers stress and induces relaxation. During this time, people may fall asleep, experience a meditative state or just feel calm, relaxed and more grounded.



The five ear points used:

- (1) **Sympathetic Point** – calms the nervous system and helps with overall relaxation.
- (2) **Shen Men / "Spirit Gate"** – reduces anxiety and nervousness.
- (3) **Kidney Point** – for calming fears and healing internal organs.
- (4) **Liver Point** – for detoxification, blood purification, and to quell aggression.
- (5) **Lung Point** – promotes deeper breathing and helps clients let go of grief.

Jane will also be offering reduced cost acupuncture at ReCoCo on Monday and Wednesday. Treatments are priced at £20 for students and £30 for non-students. Booking required. Please visit [janeeglesham.com](http://janeeglesham.com) for more info.

## NADA Social - Free drop in sessions:

Time: 1.00pm – 2.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly from 17th April

Facilitator: Jane Eaglesham

2

## A WALK IN THE PARKS

### Newcastle

Gentle, friendly walks take place every Monday morning at Leazes Park. The walks end with a cuppa and a chat. We meet at the hut at the top of the lake. Make sure you wrap up warm.

Time: 12.00pm - 2.00pm  
Day: Monday  
Date: Weekly from 15th April

### Gateshead

We mirror these walks in Saltwell Park, Gateshead but run them a little earlier. Sean ends the walks with a cuppa and a chat. Meet at ReCoCo Retreat near the boating lake.

Time: 11.00am - 1.00pm  
Day: Monday  
Date: Weekly from 15th April

Facilitator: Sean Curtin

3

## CARERS SUPPORT GROUP

An informal friendly get together where you can chat about what it's like to look after someone and give support to each other. Have your own needs recognised and understood. Get information about local services and support. Share ideas on looking after yourself and managing your caring role. A safe, supportive and non-judgmental group for carers.

Time: 1.00pm-2.00pm  
Day: First Tuesday of the month (term time only)  
Starting 7th May  
Facilitators: Diane Sandford and Wendy Ritchie

4

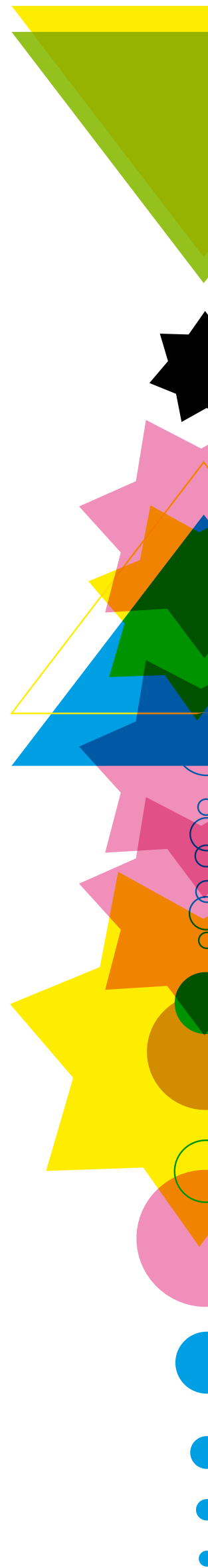
## CREATIVE WELLNESS & MINDFUL MODELLING

Ever wanted to try your hand at drawing, painting or sculpture? Come and give it a go at our weekly art group. We have a variety of materials and ideas to get your creative juices flowing - no prior experience needed! Our sessions are flexible and very much user led, which means you are welcome to try anything that inspires you.

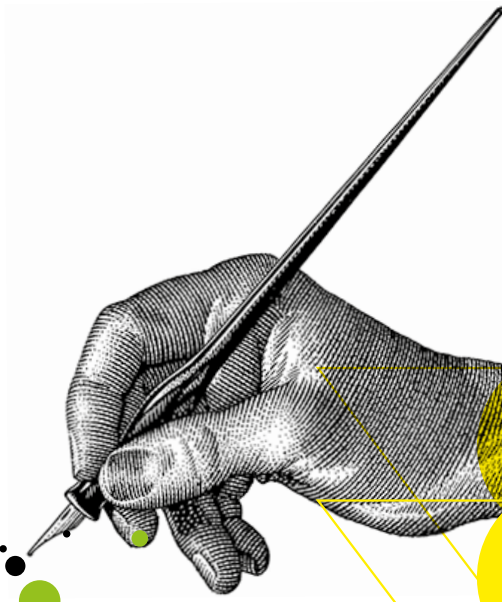
Developing creative skills can really boost your emotional wellbeing and can often become a valuable step on your journey to recovery. This group offers students a relaxed environment in which to try out new things, share ideas and just enjoy the process of creating something beautiful. The focus is on having fun, increasing self-confidence, and making a mess!

If making modelling kits is more your thing, we have a mindful modelling table set up. You'll need to bring your own kits but we will provide tea or coffee and friendship. Mark will be there to offer help and encouragement on your model making journey.

Time: 10.00am-12.00pm  
Day: Thursday  
Date: Weekly from 18th April  
Facilitators: ReCoCo Therapeutic Enablers and Volunteers







5

## CREATIVE WRITING

Are you yearning to bring your imagination to life through the power of words? Do you dream of crafting compelling stories, poems, and narratives that captivate and inspire? Then come and unleash your creative mind at our weekly drop-in session.

Whether you're a budding writer or a seasoned wordsmith seeking to refine your craft, our sessions offer an immersive journey into the world of creativity, expression, and storytelling.

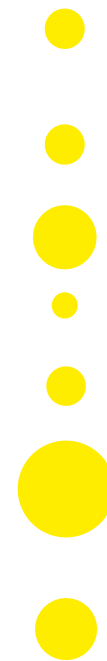
Don't just imagine the stories – write them!

Time: 11.00am - 1.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly from 17th April

Lead by: David Kipping



6

## DINNERTIME DONK

Oi Oi! Fancy a bit of BOUNCE to liven up your lunchtime?

Feel the physicality to a good old Charva jump about. Raving is good for the soul. 3 songs to lose your head to, as energetically or sedately as you like, with some breathing exercise before and after.

Dancing is known to have multiple health benefits; Boosts brain activity, improves flexibility, reduces stress, improves heart health and increases energy, as well as fosters connection between you and your fellow ravers.

It's OK if you find dancing embarrassing. Most of us do. Embarrassment is just fear of being judged. If you can overcome embarrassment, you can overcome FEAR.

[www.everydayhealth.com/fitness-pictures/health-benefits-of-dance.aspx](http://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness-pictures/health-benefits-of-dance.aspx)

Time: 12.15pm – 12.30pm  
Day: Thursday  
Date: Weekly from 18th April

7

## DROP-BY

We have an informal, facilitated, drop-by each week where people can come along and have a chat with other students. Get to know each other, connect and learn more about ReCoCo. This is a good opportunity for students to meet each other as well as finding out from other students what opportunities might be right for you.

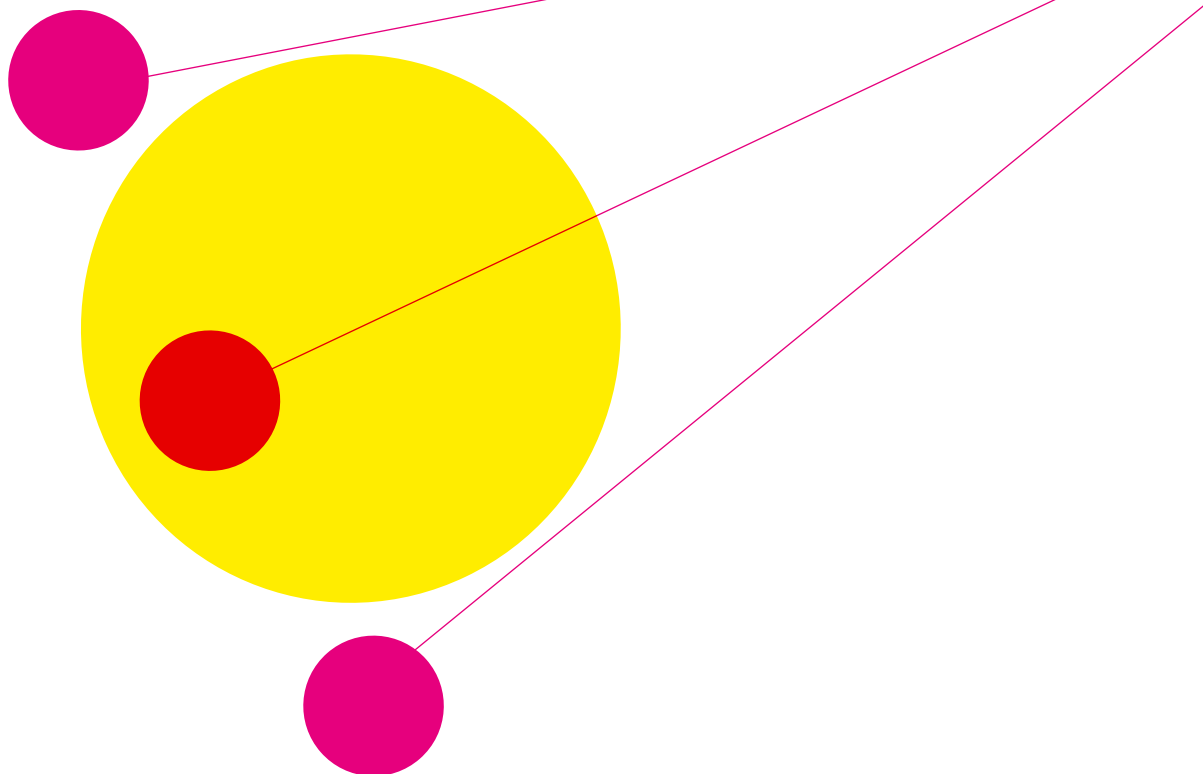
Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm  
Day: Thursday  
Dates: Weekly starting 18th April

8

## (NEW STUDENTS') DROP-BY

We also have an informal, facilitated, drop-by each week for new students that have just enrolled with us. This is the perfect opportunity to meet and connect with other 'newbies'. It's a chance to chat to folk and share the experience of coming along to ReCoCo.

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm  
Day: Wednesday  
Dates: Weekly starting 17th April



9

## GEEK GROUP

Safe space to get ya geek on!!

A group for like-minded people to explore all things wonderful and geeky.

Board games, console gaming, movies, quizzes, trivia, comic books, sci-fi and more.

Open to new ideas, we all speak geek here. Friendly competitions full of fun, we're all winners here.

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly starting 17th April

Facilitator: Sean Curtin

10

## JUST JAMMING

Informal music session with guitar, vocal and percussion lessons. Feel free to bring along your own instruments. All genres of music are welcome. Music is a fabulous wellness tool and performing with others can be a great opportunity to develop this tool.

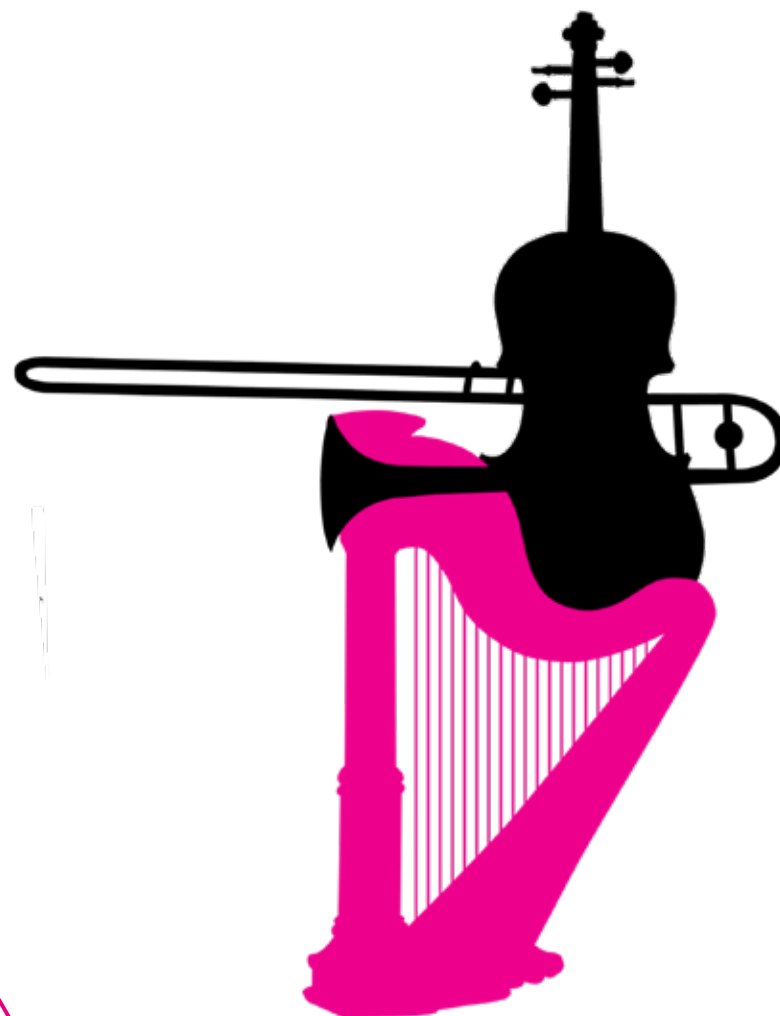
Limited one to one sessions available upon request.  
..... it might get loud!!

Time 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly from 18th April

Facilitator: Paddy Villiers-Stewart and Phil Guthrie



## LGBT GROUP

11

Come and meet up in a safe space giving LGBT folk the opportunity to share experiences, issues and help support one another.

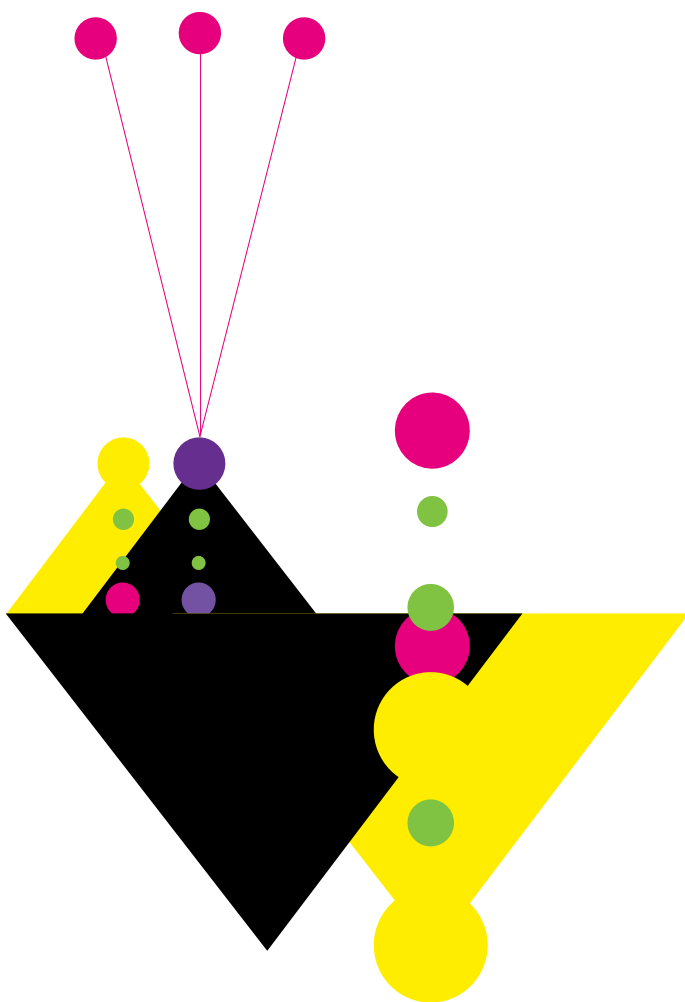
The group's aims will be discussed and identified by the facilitator and students.

Time 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Monthly on 2nd Thursday of the month starting 9th May

Facilitator: Wendy Ritchie



12

## MINDFUL THERAPIES' MINDFULNESS WITH ATTITUDE: BITESIZE

We will be exploring the attitudes of mindfulness and how we can bring them into our meditation practice and our everyday lives.

Two half hour sessions per week; Tuesday and Thursday

### April

16th and 18th non-striving

23rd and 25th - let it go

30th - generosity

### May

2nd May - generosity

7th and 9th - patience

14th and 16th - trust

21st intention setting

\*May half term - closed

\*23rd, 28th, and 30th May, running at Mindful Therapies premises - beginners mind

### June

4th and 6th - non-judgement

11th and 13th - gratitude

18th and 20th - acceptance

25th and 27th - summary and questions

### July

2nd and 4th

9th and 11th

16th

\*18th closed for summer break

Time: 12.30pm - 1.00pm

Day: Tuesday & Thursday

Dates: Starting from 16th April

Facilitators: Victoria Backhouse and Mark Sidney from Mindful Therapies.

**\*23rd, 28th, and 30th May and 18th July, sessions will be available at Mindful Therapies, located just up the street at 15 Carloli Square, on the 1st floor. These will be at the same times and with the same format, but with additional information.**

## MUSIC APPRECIATION SOCIETY

13

Music can represent many emotions and have many different moods. It is for the old and young and it is timeless.

The facilitators' of the music appreciation society share a love of music. It has been there through the good times and the bad times. It can also represent social changes and a whole gamut of different emotions.

We come together at these sessions to listen to our favourite songs, artist or genre and discuss what a particular song means to us. We hope to have a ReCoCo playlist at the end of each term. We also ask people to announce what the track is before playing, as we are aware that music can be a trigger for people. The group will listen to anything - all we ask is come along and enjoy.....

Be there or be square.....  
Hope to see you there

Time: 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Date: We have 6 sessions running this term:  
18th April  
2nd and 16th May  
6th and 20th June  
11th July

## MUSIC THERAPY

14

Sometimes the words are not enough to express what's inside us – music offers a unique way to explore feelings and creativity and experience a sense of connection with ourselves and others. Every one of us is musical - with the beating of our heartbeat, melody of our speech and rhythm of our walking. Whilst an individual session can help to experience your individual musicality, group sessions can be helpful as a means of exploring relationships and be a source of mutual support, reducing isolation and leading to greater self-understanding. For drop-in sessions there is no need to book. Just turn up and enjoy!

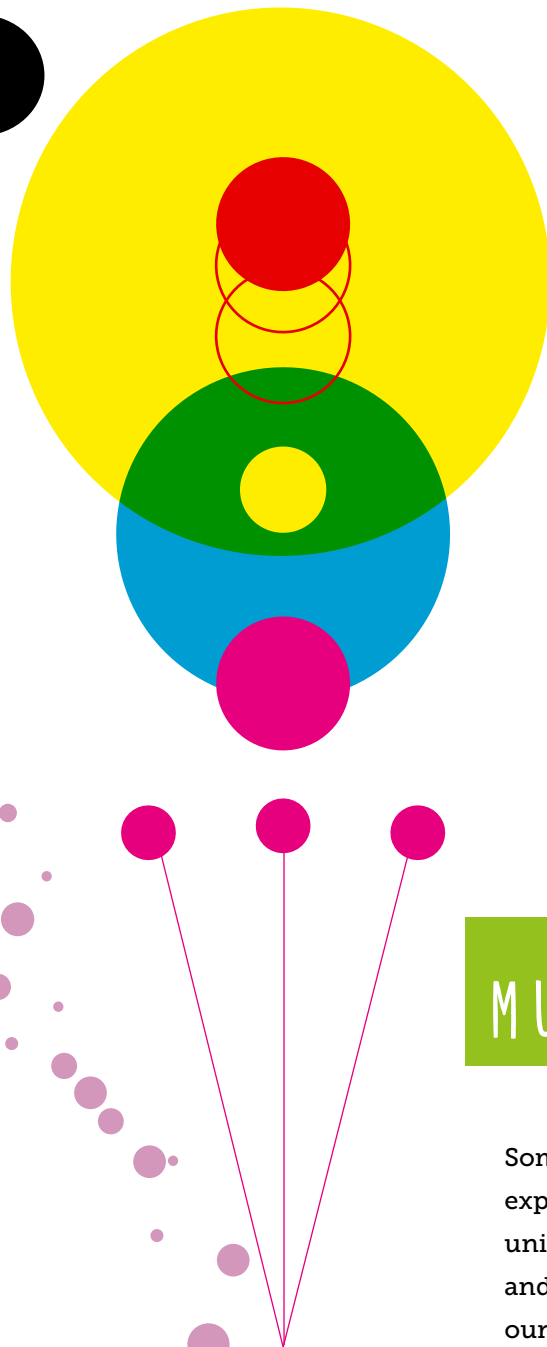
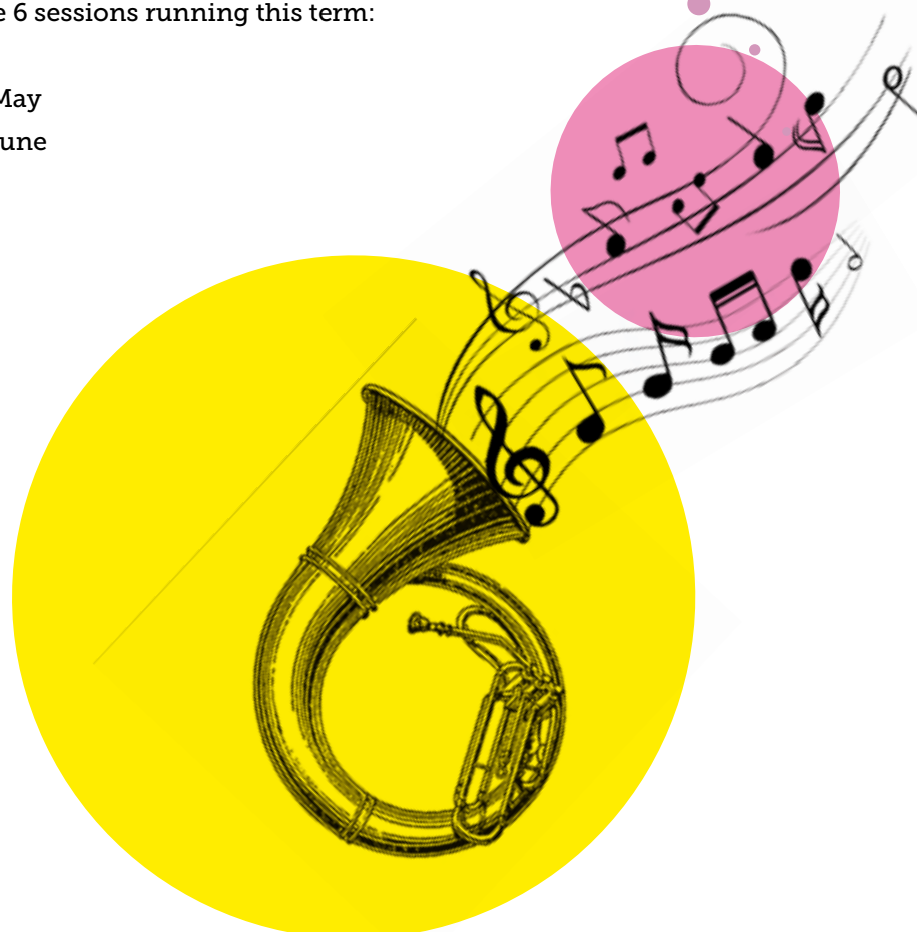
One to one sessions are also available but these are limited and only available by appointment. Please email [karen@recoverycoco.com](mailto:karen@recoverycoco.com) to book.

Time: 11.00am - 12.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: Weekly from 18th April

Course Therapist: Paddy Villiers-Stewart,  
a Nordoff Robbins Music Therapist



15

## SHE SINGS WELL

This is a weekly singing group for women. We start the sessions off with some coaching from Keren, who is a trained singing instructor. Come along and learn how to sing or just improve on the singing skills you already have.

Singing together can be a powerful experience. Feel the difference a song can make to your body, emotions and memory. Bond with a song. The more you sing the better it gets, something to sing about!

Time: 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Dates: Weekly, from 16th April

Facilitator: Keren Banning



16

## SMART RECOVERY

SMART Recovery is a peer support group that helps people recover from addictive and problematic behaviours, using a self-empowering and evidence-informed programme. SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. SMART Recovery is effective with a range of addictive and problematic behaviours (alcohol, drugs, gambling, eating habits, internet use etc.) You are not alone, so come along to one of our open and honest meetings and discover a powerful tool in your recovery journey.

Time: 1.00pm - 2.30pm

Day: Wednesday

Date: Weekly from 17th April

Facilitator: Steve Wood

17

## TAI CHI

Open your mind, open your heart, be curious!

Tai Chi is a way of life that has been practiced by the Chinese for thousands of years. It focuses on mindful, slow and flowing movements and correct, natural breathing techniques. Promoting physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The key virtues to practice are patience and to enjoy the journey.

Tai Chi is accessible to people of all ages and abilities and is easy to follow, so come and embark on the journey with us.

Time: 2.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Tuesday

Dates: Weekly from 16th April

Facilitator: Sandra Hutton

18

## UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES GROUP

Hi, Graham here, I facilitate the Unusual Experience Group, I have extensive lived experience and have been running the group for quite a while now as a Therapeutic Enabler for ReCoCo. I come across people from all walks of life and backgrounds attending. Most of us have the shared experience of psychosis, hear voices or have unusual beliefs and thoughts. I try to make the group as informal as I can to put people at ease and to be as informative as possible. There is a lot of stigma in society today with people who have experienced these symptoms, but whatever society or other people throw at us we are all the same human beings who have encountered something that one in a hundred face every day.

There is no bias, discrimination or judgement in the group. If you are interested, as long as you are enrolled as a student at ReCoCo, just pop in for a taster. Come along and be yourself, everyone is an individual and embracing diversity is respected, regardless of what label society gives. After the group, there is a chance to socialise and have a cuppa outside! If you are interested see you there!!

Time: 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Thursday

Date: We have 6 sessions running this term:

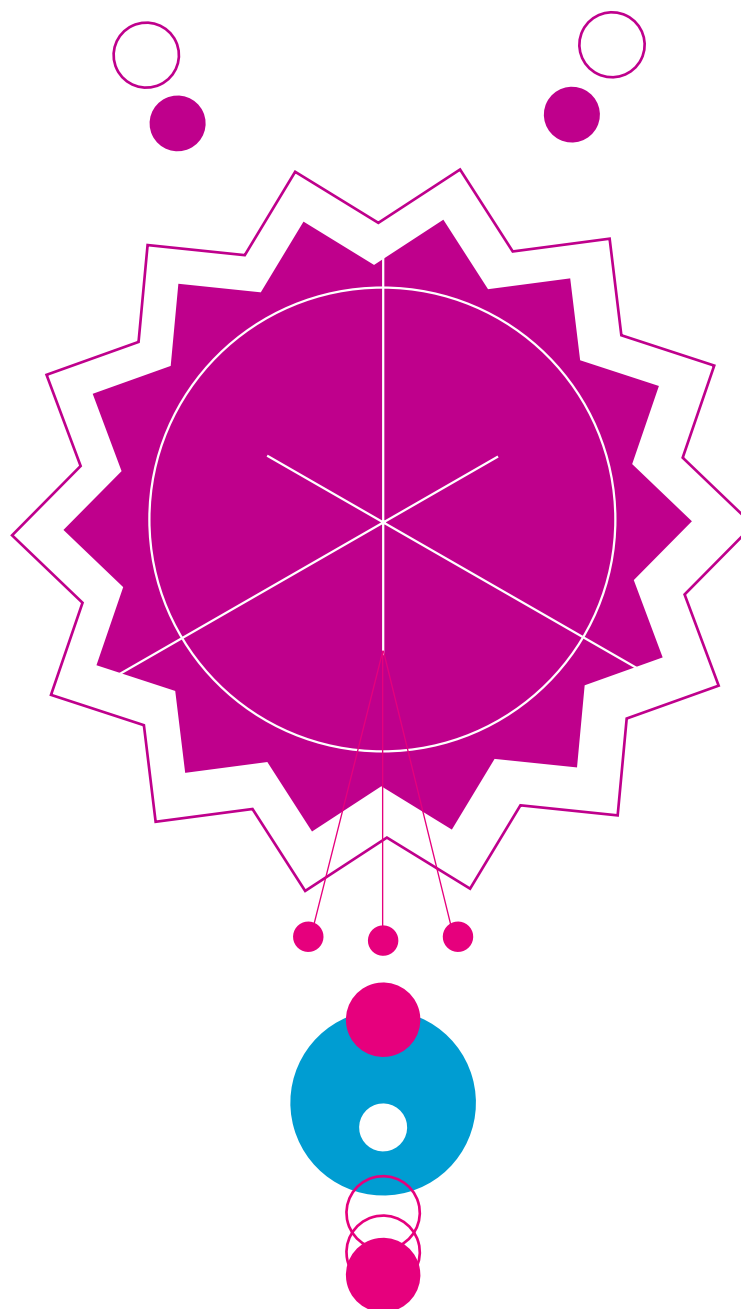
18th April

2nd and 16th May

6th and 20th June

11th July

Facilitator: Graham Errington



19

## WOMEN'S GROUP

Our women's group runs on a weekly basis and is a welcoming gathering where women can come together and have a chat about anything and get the support of each other. What could be nicer than a cuppa and a friendly ear?

Time: 2.00pm - 3.00pm

Day: Thursday

Dates: Weekly from 18th April

Facilitator: Sandra Adams



## NEW TO RECOCO!!

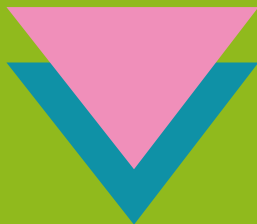
When trapped in an addictive behaviour it is possible to become isolated and you may be thinking that no one else understands what you are going through. At a SMART meeting you will find people who will understand and have experience and success in dealing with these difficulties.

SMART advocates personal choice. People make a choice to engage in problematic and addictive behaviours. They can also make a choice to stop. Everyone has the power of choice and can choose to change unhelpful or harmful behaviours.

People are not their behaviours so language like 'addict' and 'alcoholic' is not used. People seeking recovery are empowered to choose what works best for them.

Participants are free to engage with other services or mutual-aid groups which they find helpful; there is no single pathway to recovery.

Why not come to one of our open, honest and confidential meetings. It may just be what you need in your recovery journey.







# WinG



## Outdoor Activities

Offering a range of low cost outdoor activities to adults, families and groups. Improve your health and well-being. Learn new skills, meet new people. Enjoy and connect with nature in wonderful natural settings.



To book contact WinG Outdoor Activities:

Website: [www.wingoutdooractivities.org](http://www.wingoutdooractivities.org)

Email: [info@wingoutdooractivities.org](mailto:info@wingoutdooractivities.org)



Telephone: 07506 176 888

Facebook: WinG Outdoor Activities



Making learning an adventure

# STUDIO 13

@



//RECORDING//EDITING//MIXING//MASTERING//  
//REHEARSALS//STUDIO TUITION//

## Recording Studio Hire

£12 per hour for All ReCoCo Students  
(£15 per hour for non-students)

includes use of all equipment and Sound Engineer

## Rehearsal Room Hire

£8 per hour for All ReCoCo Students  
(£10 per hour for non-students)

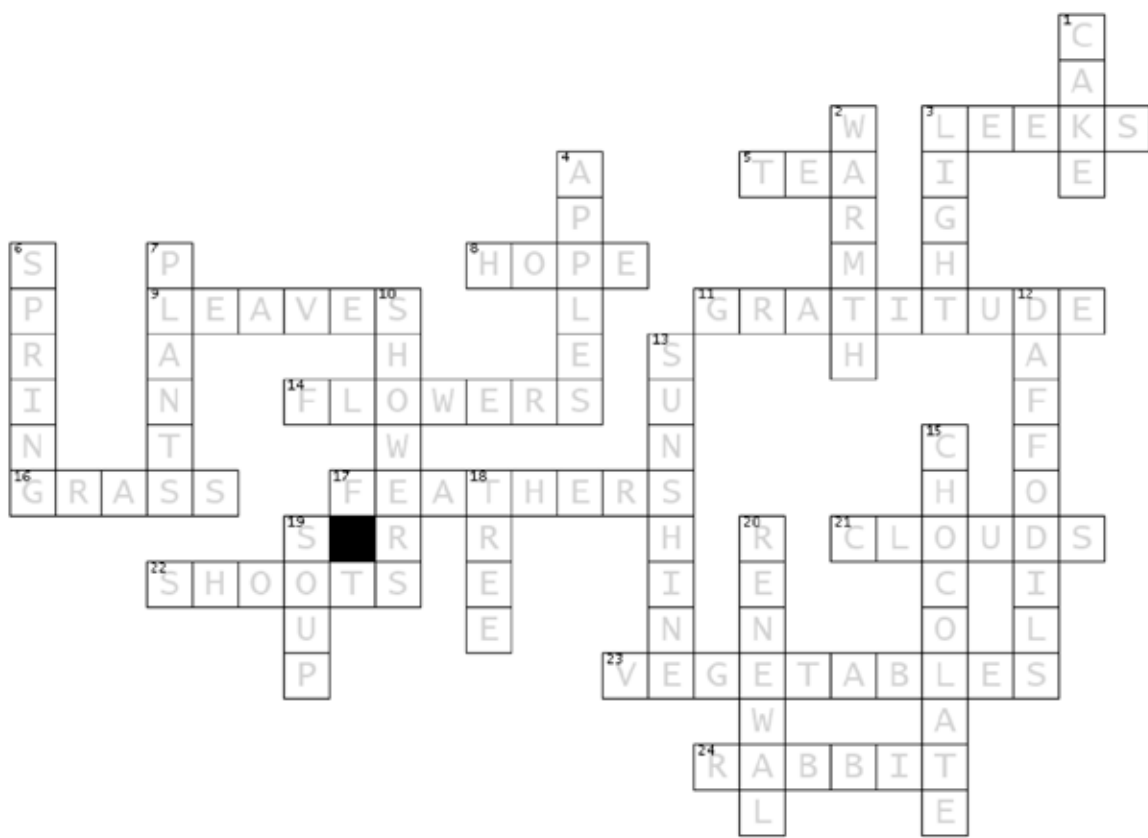
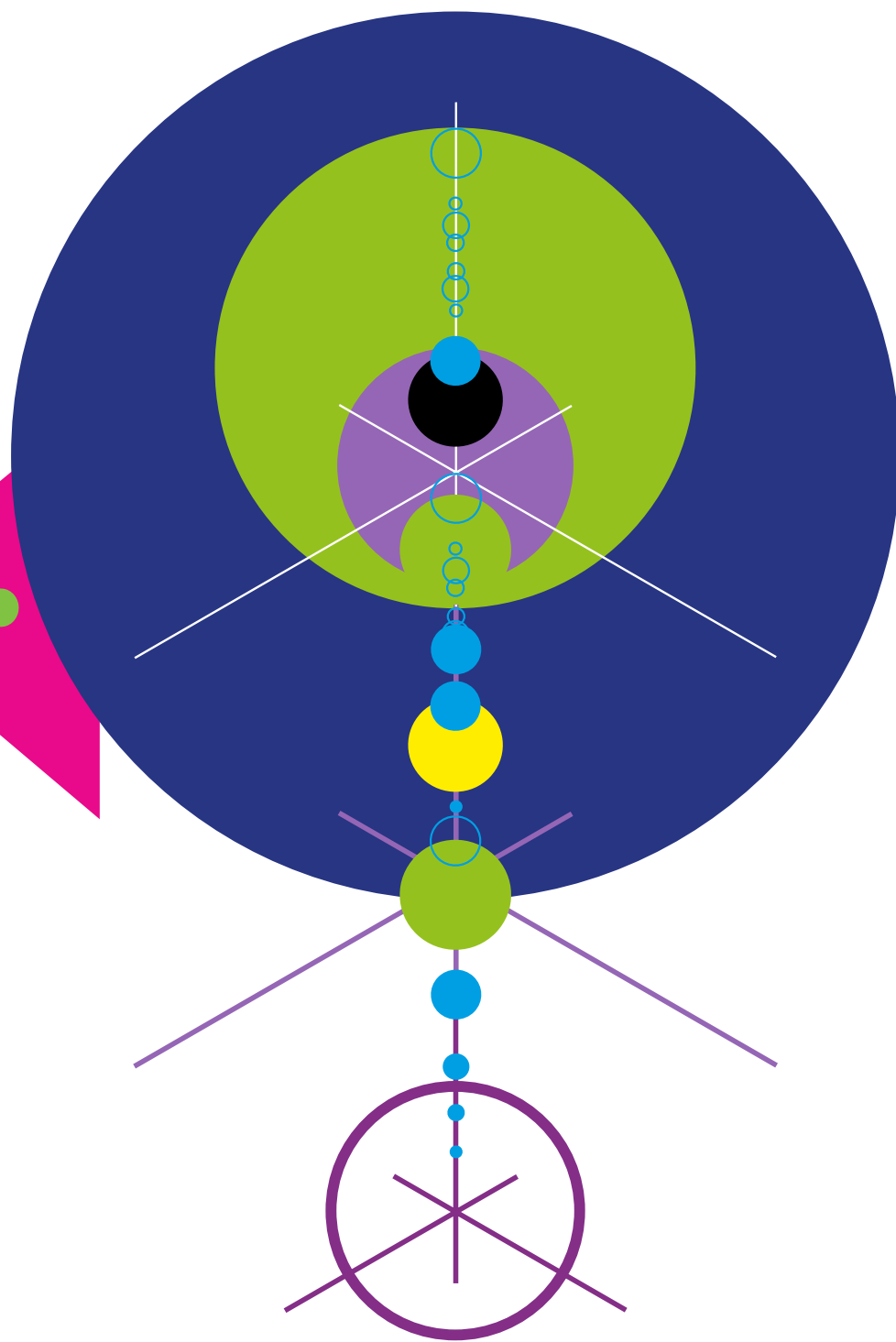
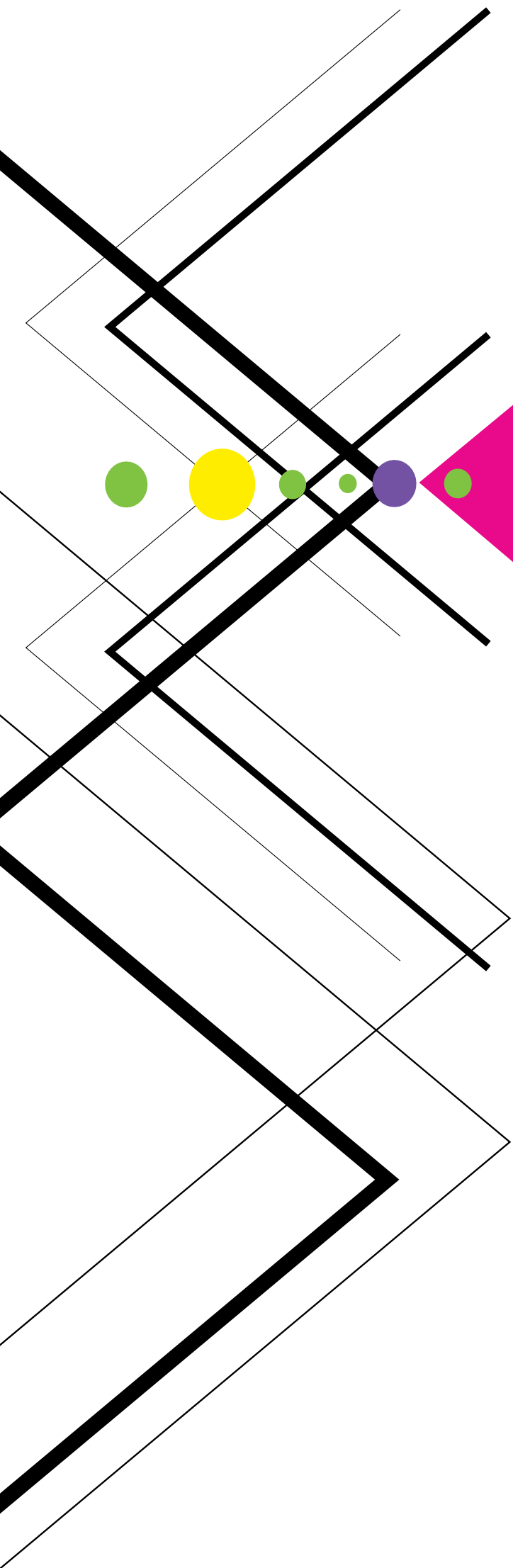
includes use of all equipment

all projects welcome

for bookings contact:

[whitenoisewords@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:whitenoisewords@yahoo.co.uk)

Ground Floor//ReCoCo//No 1. Carlol Sq//NE1 6UF



## Gay Men Tyneside (GMT)

Founded in 1992, we're the North East's longest serving social group for Gay / Bisexual men.

GMT meet up every Wednesday evening in Newcastle City Centre, from 7pm.

The group offers a variety of activities & entertainment:

Quizzes | Film nights | Parties | Guest speakers  
Drop-ins | Day trips etc.

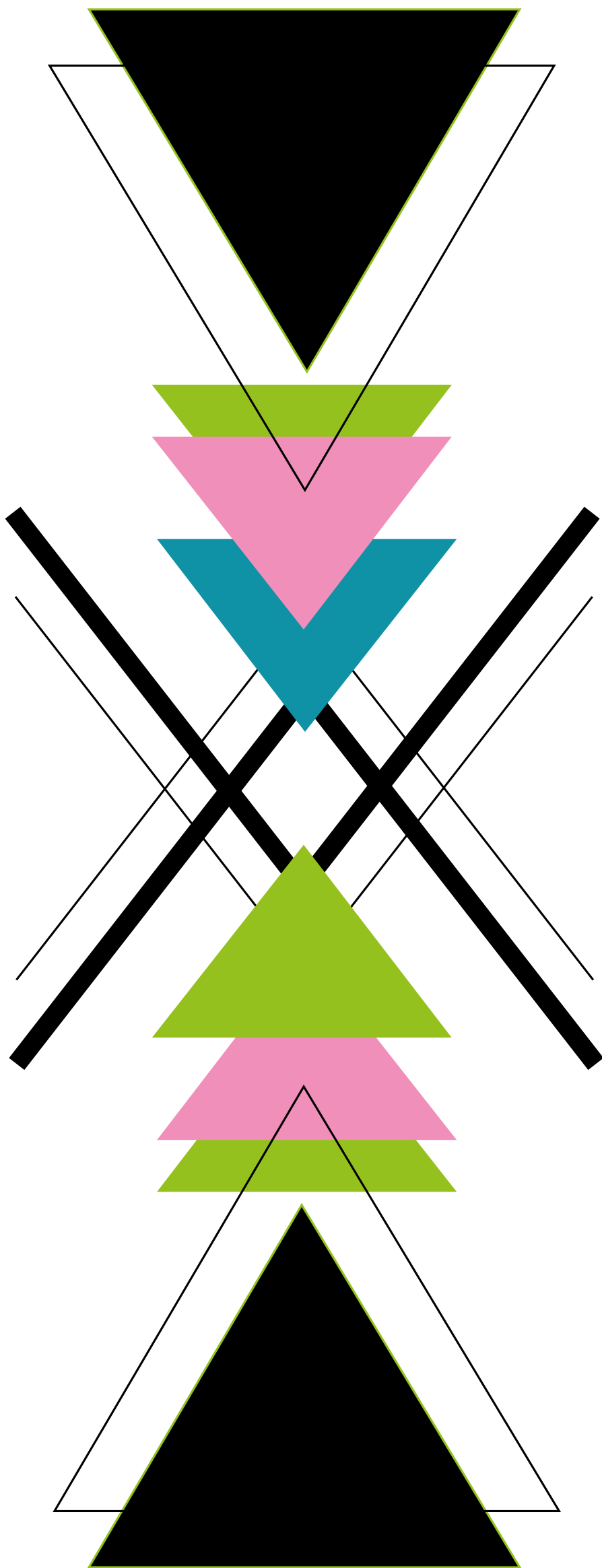
For more details visit our website:

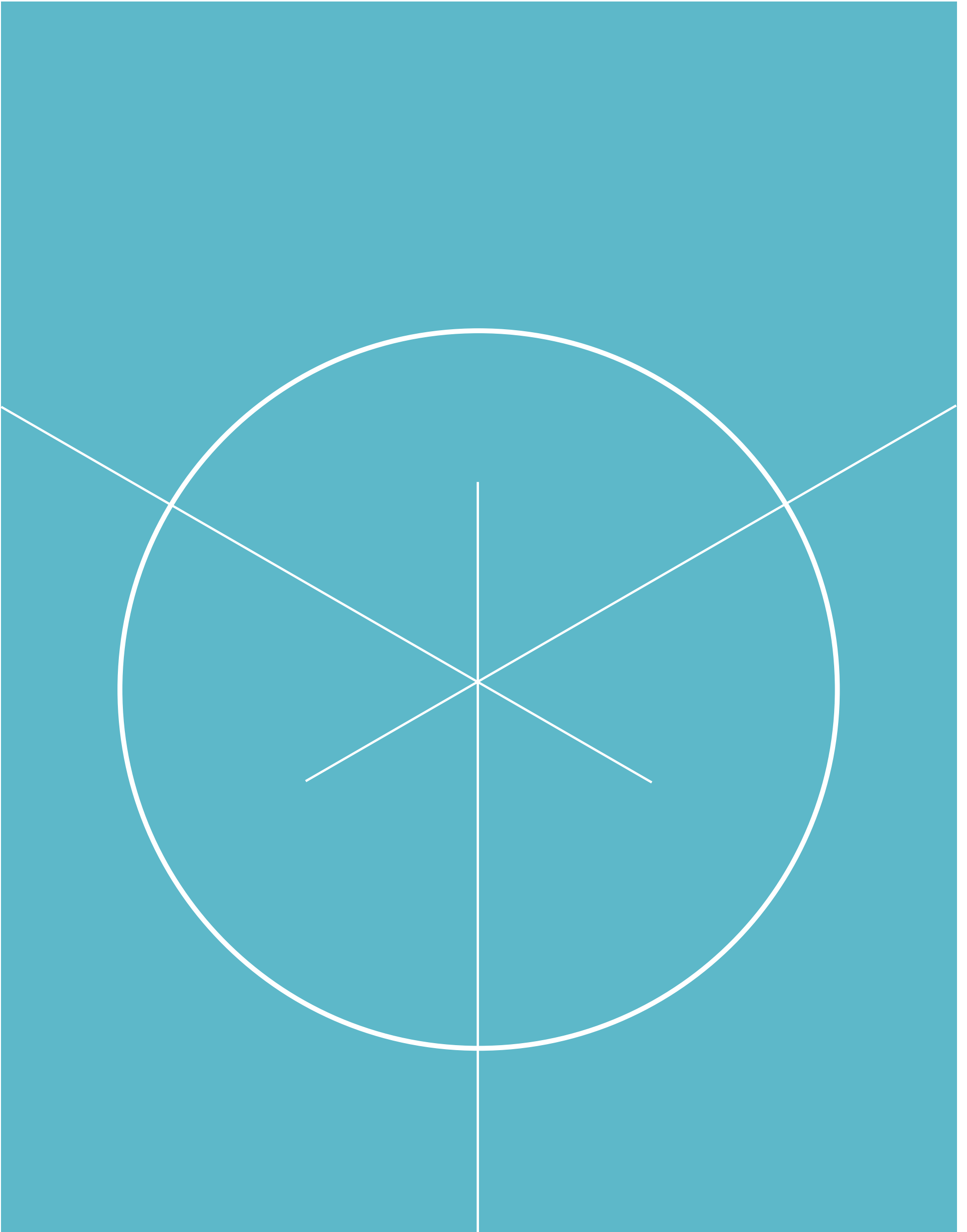
[gaymentyneside.com](http://gaymentyneside.com)



GAY  
MEN  
TYNESIDE

Designed by John Mosley, [lgbtcomputergeek.co.uk](http://lgbtcomputergeek.co.uk)





# RE-CO-CO

## RECOVERY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE

IS A JOINT ENTERPRISE WITH THE BACKING AND INPUT OF THE FOLLOWING:



# HOW TO FIND US

**RE-CO-CO** 1, Carloli Square  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE1 6UF



## BY BUS:

The bus stops on MARKET ST, BLACKETT ST and JOHN DOBSON ST are less than a 5 minute walk.  
Bus services include 1, 10, 12, 22, 38, 39, 49, 58, 62, 63, 100.

## BY METRO:

MONUMENT or MANORS; 5 minute walk

## BY BIKE:

There is public bike parking at the City Library

## BY CAR:

There are public car parks nearby.



[www.recoverycoco.com](http://www.recoverycoco.com) |  0191 261 0948  [info@recoverycoco.com](mailto:info@recoverycoco.com)

Designed by  **rootsandwings.design**