

Great Oaks Complementary Therapy

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2

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“It was not until I started working at Great Oaks and with the Complementary Therapy team that I really understood and appreciated the importance of wellbeing”

Ann Hurcomb – Senior Clinical Lead


An update from the team

Doesn't time fly! - so much has happened since our last newsletter. In the last few months, we have said goodbye to one of our lovely volunteer Bach flower therapists Jill Stern who has moved on to pastures new. We all wish her every happiness in the future and thank her for her time with us.

As part of our drive to progress and improve our online services, we have now introduced an 'EFT & Mind fullness' group. EFT (Emotional Freedom Tapping) will take place online each Wednesday at 12.00 with the complementary therapy team. We have also added an extra Qi gong session with Gerry on Wednesdays at 10.00 to supplement the very popular existing one on Tuesdays at 10.00. If you wish to join in these on-line sessions, you can self-refer by ringing the hospice on **01594 811 910** or your GP/health professional can complete the referral process for you.



A Day in the Life of a Therapist – Donna Howell

During the height of Covid-19, our ‘Hospice at Home’ service used all available Great Oaks staff to enable as many patients as possible to access our care. Donna kindly joined the team in visiting patients at home and provided a very valued approach. As Donna has previous experience and qualifications in care, she had many valuable skills to offer. Working as a health care assistant, she was able to provide extra insight, making the service more holistic.



How Do Nurses Relax? – Ann Hurcomb

Nurses find it very difficult to unwind and switch off, often when they finish a shift they are still thinking about work and what happened or what they did. The responsibility of caring for people, staff volunteers and patients is huge, and Nurses often put others wellbeing before their own.

Personally, it was not until I started working at Great Oaks and with the Complementary Therapy team that I really understood and appreciated the importance of wellbeing. Now I have a greater understanding of the importance of taking time and relaxing, it is so important for our wellbeing!

I now relax and unwind by reading a book, doing a Mindfulness session (which my children enjoy as well because they are doing it at school), walking or having a massage. There is also a great power in talking with our colleagues to debrief and understand situations better. Effective team working is essential to have a healthy and happy work force.

“ As a Consultant in Palliative Medicine, I have observed the very real benefits of complementary therapies. Whether addressing specific symptoms such as improving Constipation through reflexology or more globally aiding people with relaxation and mindfulness techniques which can help those living with the uncertainties of life-limiting illness – there is a real place for these approaches alongside more traditional medicine. I have been incredibly impressed by the efforts of the Great Oaks team to translate a normally very hands on and individual treatment session into virtual sessions that allow aspects to still be accessed during the Covid-19 pandemic ”

Dr. Emma Husbands
Consultant Palliative Medicine



A Treatment in the Spotlight - Aromatherapy

This is the first of a series of a complementary therapies in the spotlight.



Aromatherapy is just one of the therapies we offer here at Great Oaks, and it is the practice of using plant essential oils to help to restore harmony of the mind, body, and spirit. The use of plant essences in the form of essential oils has been around since ancient times and evidence for the use of aromatic oils for perfume dates back thousands of years. In the fourth century BC,

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, said that, ***“The way to health is to have an aromatic bath and a scented massage every day.”*** Essential oils can help to improve mood and a general sense of well-being, relieve anxiety and tension, promote deep relaxation, improve sleep, and skin condition. In my practise at the hospice, I often blend oils for use in ‘aroma sticks’ which are small, lidded tubes containing a cotton wick infused with the oils. This can be carried discretely in the pocket and used when needed to uplift mood or induce feelings of calm during an anxiety attack. A simple way to diffuse oils at home is to use just one drop of essential oil on a cotton wool ball or place in a saucer of water on top of the radiator.

Essential oils can also be blended with carrier oils for massage as well as in lotions and creams to be self-applied at home by our patients and carers. An example in practise is the use of Mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*) or Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) essential oils which, when combined with clockwise massage of the tummy, can bring relief from constipation.

One of the lovely patients on my list at the hospice has Parkinson's disease with often quite severe tremors of his whole body and particularly his legs. From the very first aromatherapy treatment, I noticed that within minutes of commencing a relaxing foot and lower leg massage, his tremors would decrease significantly as he relaxed into the session. I found that the anti-spasmodic properties of Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and the ultra-relaxing Roman chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) were beneficial in achieving relaxation for this patient.

As ever, with essential oils they need to be used correctly and safely always seek the advice of a qualified aromatherapist if using essential oils at home.



Aroma Sticks

Aroma sticks can be a great alternative means of delivering a blend of essential oils. The sticks are easy to assemble and may be personalised for the individual patient/client when required. Perforations in the top of the tube allow the aroma to be inhaled as and when needed. The outer protective cover enables the stick to be carried around and limits evaporation of the oils.





Fundraising Shopping Experience Day

On Saturday 17th October, a shopping experience day was held in support of Great Oaks Hospice. Organised by the vivacious Debbie Hutchinson and in collaboration with Teri Chance Boutiques and Fundraising which opened the doors of their new premises (14/15 Marina Business Park, Harbour Road, GL15 5ET) to welcome eager shoppers.

We were incredibly grateful to receive 11 pledges of 'holistic pampering' for our 'Guess the number' raffle prizes from local therapists including Nutritional Advice, Mindfulness with Horses, Bowen, Indian Head Massage, Manicures/Pedicures and more! The raffle raised a fabulous **£319**:

We would like to thank the following therapists for their wonderful contributions:

- El Adams – Bowen Therapy
- Maxine Smith – Mindfulness with Horses
- Joanne Dodsworth – Hand/Foot Gel Polish
- Caeredwen Gregson -Barnes - Indian head Massage
- Deborah Iles – Reflexology
- Helen Snowden - Reflexology

In total the very enjoyable day raised **£769** ! - a fantastic sum which will greatly assist the hospice in providing services to those who most need it, especially in these challenging times.

The next Teri Chance Boutiques Unique shopping experience day is eagerly awaited and is set for the **10th December 10am – 6pm** at the same venue where once again we have pampering therapy vouchers to raffle. Contact Debbie Hutchinson at the hospice if you would like further information on how to enter the raffle.



Self - Help Links to Resources

Diet & Nutrition Advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Anxiety Advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/self-help/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/>

Great Oaks - Mindful Meditation with Gerry:

https://www.great-oaks.org.uk/complementary_therapy.html

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/>

GHC/NHS Covid-19 Advice/information

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/coronavirus/>

Hospice UK's Just 'B' Counselling & Trauma helpline. The service is a free confidential national helpline available 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm providing bereavement, trauma and emotional support for all NHS, care sector staff and emergency service workers.

Tel: 0300 030 4434

Great Oaks Bereavement

www.greatoaks.org.uk

