

Great Oaks Complementary Therapy

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 3

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I needed that...

I feel relaxed”.

An Update from the Team

Hello again, time continues to fly and the hospice remains busy providing its wonderful services despite the lockdown restrictions still in place at the time of writing. Between August 2020 to January 2021, the Complementary Therapy team has provided online help and other support to ***343** people through its regular online ‘Qi Gong’ (Tuesdays at 10.00), ‘EFT & Mindfulness’ (Wednesday 12.00) hosted by Gerry. Additionally, the new and exciting ‘Sound for Health’ sessions with Donna (Fridays at 10.00) are also proving to be extremely popular (see more on this on page 3). Other ways in which we continue to support staff, carers and patients is in the provision of Bach flower essences and aromatherapy creams/lotions to help lift mood and improve relaxation. The Team Leader Lisa has provided a short ‘self-care and resilience’ session for hospice at home staff. Self-care is so important for us all and particularly those working on the ‘front line’ of supporting others at an incredibly challenging time in their lives and in history!.

**some people attend more than one session but are counted separately in each session.*

Supporting Hospice at Home - Lisa Pollock

Complementary Therapy (CT) have been supporting H@H staff as well as volunteers throughout this pandemic. As professionals in the caring field, we put the needs of our patients first and self-care last. CT has supported these services by hosting and attending zoom sessions and through promoting the practise of selfcare and self-wellbeing.

The aims of these sessions were to: Encourage participants to gain a personal insight into, and to take responsibility for, their own wellbeing, and to foster Improved ability to manage stress & anxiety through relaxation and wellbeing practices.

Participants were asked to reflect upon a number of important questions:

What is important to me? This question will make you redefine your values. Important things might change over time, so it is a useful idea to reflect on this.

Am I spending enough time on things that matter? This question will help you see if you pay enough attention to the essential things in your life. You will see if the constant flow of events did not carry you away.

Do I take enough care of my health and myself? Some people treat their bodies just like containers to transport their minds.

We had some excellent feedback from Volunteers supporting outreach such as, *“My heartbeat slowed and I felt calm. I needed that... I feel relaxed”*.



Integrated Working – an Introduction to Stephanie Morley – Physiotherapist

As part of working with breathless patients, I realise how much it is linked with anxiety, not only brought on by stressful symptoms but also in day-to-day life. I use mindfulness techniques, relaxation and breathing exercises to help people stay in control of both their anxiety and breathlessness and build confidence that they can self-manage their symptoms. Complementary therapy is so valuable and I have had lots of positive feedback from patients who have found aromatherapy helpful, as well as meditation and other therapies. Working together means that patients have the best tools to stay independent, active and in control.

Personally, COVID-19 has shown me the importance of my own wellbeing, and I use yoga to keep my mind and body connected, and relaxed.

A Treatment in the Spotlight – Sound for Health

Here at Great Oaks, we normally hold our sound relaxation group. This is a safe space for people to have some time out for themselves and enjoy deep relaxation and connection. Instruments like the gong and singing bowls are sounded. We are all adapting to the current restrictions in the way that we provide complementary therapy. This is where ‘Sound for Health’ comes in. We have introduced a weekly zoom session. The session has various elements to it, starting with some gentle exercises that help to prepare the body for the sound, we then move on to calm our minds with a gentle visualization. We generally go to the ocean, the country garden, or the forest. Once we are calm and relaxed, we start the vocal toning aspect of the session. We have been working with four different modalities; a heart meditation, vowel sounds, the ‘Sa Re Ga’ and intervals. The vibration of these sounds affects people physically, emotionally, and energetically which helps with people’s general well-being and emotional release. Everyone can hear me, but they can’t hear each other, nor I them. This helps people to express themselves without feeling self-conscious. We do a few more gentle excises to ground us, and then we have a short feedback session where everybody has an opportunity to speak.

Here is some feedback from the zoom ‘Sound for Health’ participants:

“I would like to say how much I enjoy the sound therapy. As an 81-year-old lady living alone with family living far away, I find it very good for my mental wellbeing in these



Therapist Donna Howell with her 32” Chau gong

difficult times....I especially enjoyed today about the heart. I found it very emotional and cried a lot but also found that the tears became tears of joy and the remembrance of happy times”. (Gwen)

“thank you for your sound therapy sessions, I am finding life a little different at the moment being the sole carer for my very sick husband, it’s not always easy to remember, or find the time to take care of myself and I realise it’s important that I do....The mindfulness section takes me away from all my troubles for a few moments, the sound element is more valuable than I expected but not the same as being in the room with the gongs and tinkling bells etc.”. (Dorothy).

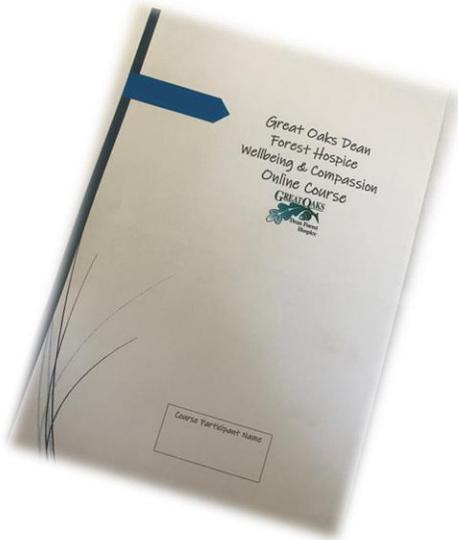
“....the exercises are enjoyable. Visualization is more relaxed and cozy being in the comfort of my own home. I really love Donna’s visualizations. The heart meditation was very emotional taking me to the past, thinking of my loved one, causing me to miss them but the opportunity to focus on that love brought it into the present and made me smile even after the tears which surprised me...” (Linda).

“Sound for Health helps by taking some time for me to relax and concentrate on my emotions. Visualization’s very calming” (Geraldine)



A Sneak peek at.....

A New 'Wellbeing & Compassion' Online Course



We are excited to announce a new online 'Wellbeing & Compassion' course which due to start very soon. This course will be delivered (initially) to a small number of carers and patients. Through delivering this course, it is our mission at Great Oaks to provide participants with the strategies and support to better manage anxiety and stress, to reduce their sense of isolation and to hopefully lead them towards a greater sense of mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, all of which we know are much needed now and into the future. As I write, (drum roll please.....!) we have just had some wonderful news that 'Barnwood Trust' have agreed to provide funding for us to run this course after a bid for funding was submitted on behalf of the hospice Complementary Therapy team. In response to Covid-19, The Barnwood Trust are offering grants to support people and their families, community spaces and voluntary organisations across Gloucestershire to feel connected and to keep strong during this difficult time. So, a massive **THANK YOU!** to The Barnwood Trust. Watch this space for further information!

Fundraising

On Thursday 10th December, a further shopping experience day was held in support of Great Oaks Hospice. Organised once again by Debbie Hutchinson and in collaboration with Teri Chance Boutiques and Fundraising. Once again, the 'Guess the number' raffle proved to be popular and included more therapy vouchers donated by very generous local therapists which helped to raise a further fabulous **£200**.

On this occasion, we would like to thank the following therapists for their wonderful voucher contributions:

- Donna Howell – Reflexology
- Karen Hopes – Aroma Massage/Facial
- Debby James – Breath Work
- Claire Hoare – Nutritional Advice/Allergies Therapy
- Brooke Belson – Beauty & Massage

The total raised for the hospice to date from these two fabulous shopping experience days is **£1269** which is amazing, and the hospice would like to thank everyone who donated, helped out or attended on those days.



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

Barnwood Trust - providing grant funding and resources to help support individuals, families, voluntary organisations and community spaces across Gloucestershire to feel connected & to keep strong.'

https://www.barnwoodtrust.org/org_grants/