

Great Oaks Complementary Therapy

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 4

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“Walking is like
travelling.....you
talk to strangers
and meet new
people”

Lisa Pollock – Great Oaks Complementary Therapy
Team

An Update from the Team

With life opening up slowly now that further lockdown restrictions have been lifted, we are cautiously ‘dipping our toes’ at the hospice and have been welcoming back some face-to-face (small) group services such as Sound and Qi gong and how these have been missed by all! It is a joy to be able to see people other than via a computer screen. Who knew how much we would miss human contact?

Since February the CT team have provided 709 opportunities for relaxation through their various services and members of the CT team have taken part in lots of fundraising activities in the last few months in aid of the hospice. Fundraising is a crucial lifeline to the hospice and allows them to provide services such as our own. As ever, our services are offered freely, but we always welcome donations to Complementary Therapy to enable us to continue to bring relaxation and comfort to those in need.

This issue contains insights into some of the services offered and experienced by the CT team. Gill D’arcy gives us an introduction to Reiki and Karen Hopes reveals the effects and benefits of Sound therapy as she has experienced it.

A Treatment in the Spotlight – Reiki

By Gill D'arcy



Reiki can also be given to children, animals, plants, food or flowers and distant healing can be sent to an absent relative/friend if requested.

There are four levels of Reiki which we (practitioners) are attuned to be able to practice. The energy for reiki comes from the Universe which flows through the practitioner who will also benefit during a session.

My Reiki journey began in 1999 and within the hospice for the last 15/16 years. During this time, I have met some delightful and inspiring people.

Experiencing Sound Therapy – Karen Hopes

Therapists, like nurses and other medical professionals also need TLC sometimes but are often slow to seek it! “Always the Bridesmaid Never the Bride”, is a saying that springs to mind here. However, I have learnt from my time as a therapist, that to do my role properly, I need to be in tip-top condition mentally, emotionally, and physically – which is a tall order sometimes (as it is for us all no doubt!).

I do not find it easy to **really** relax, although it is one of my most oft’ chanted pieces of advice to others! But I have had the privilege of meeting some amazing therapists and sampling their treatments and I have concluded that the best ones for relaxing me are Aroma massage and Sound Therapy. I have attended a few of Donna Howell’s sessions and I am amazed at how deeply I am able to relax during them. The sound vibrations seem to carry me with them, and I can feel my whole body and mind relaxing. Throughout life, I have found that for me to really relax, I need ‘background’ noise (where others perhaps need complete silence). That ‘noise’ for me could be soothing classical or ethereal music, birdsong or the gentle sound of rain or water flowing. So, maybe this is why this therapy really speaks to me. I particularly love the singing bowls and the deep resonant vibration of the gong which Donna uses. I have recently started assisting Donna in some of the sessions and so get to ‘play’ and experiment with some of the instruments and I have to say I am like a child in a sweetshop on those days. Thank you, Donna, for introducing me to ‘Sound.’

Reiki was founded in Japan during the 1800s by Mikao Usui. It is an ancient form of healing/treatment. There are many benefits of Reiki such as calming the mind and body and assisting with sleeping problems. It is also very relaxing.

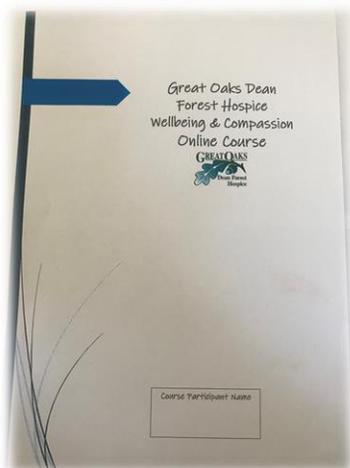
A treatment is given fully clothed lying on a couch or in a chair that is comfortable, covered with a blanket if desired and lasting for about an hour.

The practitioner places their hands gently in different positions around the head and body or hovering 1 or 2 inches above if the receiver is not comfortable with touch. Soft music may help you to relax as you drift off to sleep.

Your treatment can be stopped anytime you wish. On awakening from the session, memory recall, colours etc. are often commented upon. hot or cold feelings may occur, and this is quite normal.

Following a session, it is advisable to drink plenty of water during that day.

Wellbeing & Compassion Course Update



Throughout April – June the CT team piloted a seven-week online zoom course with five participants, consisting mainly of people who are either living with an illness, or those who are currently or have previously been a carer.

Lisa Pollock and Karen Hopes facilitated the sessions and were, on occasion, assisted by Gerry and Donna.

Our aim was to provide the participants with strategies and self-support systems to better manage their anxieties and stress and to reduce their sense of isolation. The aim was to induce a greater sense of mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing through a variety of mindfulness and positivity exercises. The course was delivered entirely on-line with additional telephone support as required.

We recognised that The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted upon patients and carers alike and had brought monumental personal and social changes and challenges, an emotional rollercoaster which had and will continue to have a detrimental effect on many lives into the future.

By the end of course, all five participants had noticed a positive change in their overall wellbeing, and their ability to manage stress and anxiety had improved.

Most of the participants were better able to accept and cope with change and experienced a reduced sense of isolation. Firm friendships were forged and remain still after the course ended.

Feedback from participants also indicated that there are additional benefits to attending the group, namely that the members enjoyed the social benefits as well as the physical element of the sessions. A crucial and important lesson that we as professionals must learn and remember is that when people get together and share their life situations, they learn and gain support from each other.

Here is what our participants said:

“The course has made a tremendous difference to me; I have used different activities throughout the course. I found that researching quotes rather than filling in the dump/diary was more useful for me. I would not have been able to cope if I hadn’t done this course! – please do keep zoom as a way to deliver as it is easier for me as a carer to attend rather than in person”

“I found zoom a little impersonal in the beginning, but I recognised that this was my problem and not down to the course. I found the dump/diary very helpful and at times opened it to read back what I had written, and I recognised problems and the best ways for me to get around them. I adapted the facial massage and decided to massage my feet and legs instead as that was more beneficial to me”

“I have found that I have been better able to get myself to sleep now using activities such as visualisation. The dump/diary made me sit & look at things. I think that putting the ‘Letter to Self’ last in the course would be better”

“I like that I can write things down and don’t have to carry them with me. My aim is to go to the seaside and collect a pebble that I have chosen for myself”

“To be able to give myself some time, that hour each week has been wonderful! the course is well organised, and the materials were really helpful when I missed a session”

It is our intention to run further courses in the future both online and in person, and we once again thank the **Barnwood Trust** for providing the funding which enabled us to develop and deliver this course.

Moonlight Walk Fundraiser

Friday 9th July saw the return of the annual moonlight walk organized by Debbie Hutchinson. Back with a vengeance after Covid-19 forced postponements last year, this year it was attended by around a 100 good folk, (including many friendly scarecrows). Donna and Lisa from the Complementary Therapy team completed the five miles from the hospice in a circular route through Coleford, Broadwell, Christchurch and five acres before returning to the hospice in 1.5 hours. The event raised much needed funding for the hospice.



Lisa Pollock's - May Challenge



The intrepid Lisa Pollock donned her trusty walking boots in May to commence her mammoth 100 miles in May challenge in aid of the hospice. Incredibly she surpassed her target by walking **212 miles** raising a fabulous sum of **£298.75**. Lisa enjoyed this challenge immensely, and it has revitalised her love of the outdoors and walking. She said, *"Walking is like travelling...you talk to strangers and meet new people."* As a result of this challenge, Lisa has met and made many new friends, and has experienced parts of our beautiful countryside that she had not previously visited.



Research – The Benefits of Aromatherapy & Massage

I am Sure we can all attest to how luxuriously indulgent and relaxing a foot massage can be, but did you know that there is research to back up the benefits? A study published in *'Cancer Nursing 23, 237-243'* ***'Foot massage a nursing intervention to modify the distressing symptoms of pain and nausea in patients hospitalized with cancer'*** . (Freakish, L, Lomasney,A, & Whitman, B. (2000)). Found that there was a measured significant immediate effect on the reduction of perception of pain, nausea, and increased relaxation after just ten minutes of foot massage (five minutes per foot). So kick those shoes off and offer up your pinkies for a session of utter bliss!!

We in the CT team can all confirm the beneficial effects of aromatherapy. Every time the therapy room doors are open when staff members are passing by, we hear exclamations of how wonderful the corridor smells! It is a fact that a lovely aroma can change the mood in a second and help to lift us emotionally.

Published in 2004 ***'A randomized controlled trial of aromatherapy massage in a hospice setting.*** (Soden, K., Vincent, K, Craske, S, Lucas, C, & Ashley, S.) 'and cited in ***'Palliative Medicine, 18, 87-92'*** a research paper stated that there is good evidence that aromatherapy and massage may be helpful for anxiety and depression reduction and improved sleep for short periods.

More recently, a research paper ***'The Effect of aromatherapy on sleep quality of adults and elderly people: A systematic literature review and meta-analysis'*** Published in ***Complementary Therapies in Medicine Volume 60, August 2021, 102739'*** concluded that aromatherapy improves sleep quality and reduces stress, pain, anxiety, depression, and fatigue in adults and elderly people.

Aromatherapists often use blends of the essential oils of *Lavandula angustifolia* (Lavender) and *Chamaemelum nobile* (Roman chamomile) which are popular and effective in reducing anxiety, improving relaxation and to aid sleep. However, it is important to note that too much of a good thing is not always the best and can be counter-productive – having the opposite to the desired effect and this includes lavender! Over-use of any essential oil can lead to a reduction in effectiveness, so we always aim to use the lowest possible dosages we can for greatest impact and switch the oils around as just like with conventional medicines we can become immune to the effects with overuse.

As ever, always consult a qualified aromatherapist or ensure that you are aware of the potential risks before using essential oils at home.

Self-help Resources

Diet & Nutrition Advice	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/
Anxiety	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
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/

Bereavement Support and Guidance - Local Organisations

Great Oaks Hospice	www.great-oaks.org.uk 01594 811 910 clerical@great-oaks.org.uk
Sue Ryder Hospice (Leckhampton)	www.sueryder.org 01242 230199
Longfield Hospice (Minchinhampton)	www.longfield.org.uk 01453 886868 info@longfield.org.uk
Charlies - cancer support	www.charlies.org.uk 07786 547 439
Maggie's (Cheltenham) cancer support	www.maggies.org 01242 250611
Gloucester Royal Hospital Bereavement Services	www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk 0300 422 6742 or 0300 422 6982 Ghn-tr.bereavement.services@nhs.net
Cheltenham General Hospital Bereavement Services	www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk 0300 422 4753 or 0300 4224235 Ghn-tr.bereavement.services@nhs.net
Cruse Bereavement care	www.cruse.org.uk 01242 252518 between 10am-12.30pm for a local response, or 0808 808 1677 (National helpline)
Sunflower suicide support offering support to those bereaved by suspected suicide	www.sunflowerssuicidesupport.org.uk Phone Main Office: 01453 826990 Office Mobile: 07542 527 888
Footsteps – dedicated to support anyone affected by a pregnancy related issue, loss of a baby or infertility.	www.footstepscandc.org.uk 01452308618 office@footstepscandc.org.uk
Gloucestershire Carers Hub	www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk 03001119000
Gloucestershire Young Carers	www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk 01452 733060
TIC+ (Teens in crisis) For young people aged 9-21 living in Gloucestershire.	www.ticplus.org.uk 01594 372777

Bereavement Support and Guidance - National Organisations

National Bereavement Alliance	nationalbereavementalliance.org.uk
At a Loss - Directory of services and resources	www.ataloss.org
Marie Curie	www.mariecurie.org.uk 08000902309
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	www.uksoobs.org National Helpline 9am-9pm Monday to Sunday 0300115065
Carers UK	www.carersuk.org 020 7378 4999 -
WAY - Widowed and Young, support network across the UK to those who are bereaved through losing their partner/spouse when aged 50 or under.	www.widowedandyoung.org.uk
WAY UP The organisation that has grown out of WAY for people in their 50's and 60's	www.way-up.co.uk
Child death	www.childdeathhelpline.org 0800282986 (Mon-Fri 10am to 1pm, Wed only 1pm to 4pm, Everyday 7pm to 10pm)
Winston's Wish provides emotional and practical bereavement support to children, young people and those who care for them	www.winstonswish.org Helpline: 08088 020 021
LGBT Bereavement Helpline (London friend) Support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people expecting or experiencing bereavement	www.londonfriend.org.uk 0300 3300630
Grief Chat a safe on-line space supported by a qualified bereavement counsellor. Free of charge and is open to grieving or bereaved people.	www.griefchat.co.uk Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm
Death of a pet, The Blue Cross	www.bluecross.org.uk 0800 0966606 (8.30am-8.30pm)
Bamestream Bereavement Support service for Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Offering therapeutic support in over 20 different languages.	www.bamestream.org.uk
Benefit Advice – Bereavement support payments links to check your entitlements.	www.gov.uk/bereavement-supportpayment