

Mental health



As a local community group we are aware of how mental health impacts our families and how the pandemic made it even more challenging. We are a caring and resourceful group aware of our collective wisdom; we value the voices of residents and local organisations so we asked them for resources and tools to support and look after our mental health. We hope you find these ideas helpful and relevant.



I believe that nature is very important to a child as well as the mental health of adults. I have seen firsthand how much my children love going outdoors to explore. It helps them to be more creative and opens up their minds.
Shoma

We live in a flat so we take our bikes and cycle in the area we live. We also say hi to everyone we know from a distance just to know if everyone is OK or need any help.
Kanwel

One thing I have learnt is that the saying 'blow away the cobwebs' really does help. A slow stroll or a brisk walk out in the open air is so beneficial to our mental health and that of our children. It is great to get out into nature and appreciate the flowers are blooming, the animals around us are amazing to watch through the seasons.
Becky

I try to maintain an attitude of thankfulness - even on a bad day! As I write this I'm thankful for yesterday's walk with my daughter and her dog in a wood full of bluebells.
Sally Dixon - Community Resources

Visitors to our parks often tell me how much better they feel whenever they come for a walk in the local green spaces. Being surrounded by trees and blossom, seeing flowers and animals, hearing birdsong etc - it really is a great way to relieve stress and unwind.

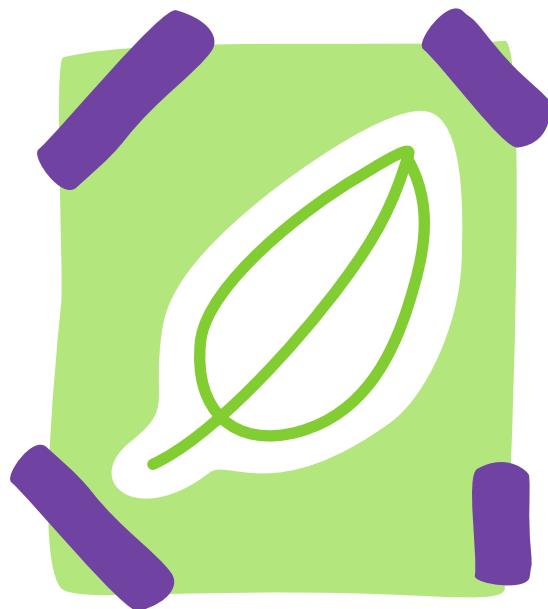
Carol Edwards | Community Ranger, LBBD.

The quickest way to go from being stressed to a state of calm, is to focus on your breathing. Notice the depth and tempo, then consciously breathe deeply and slowly, within a few minutes you will feel completely different.

Claire | www.clairemaggiebaker.com

Nature, more than ever, is and should be an important part of our lives where possible. Engaging with nature or going for a walk or staying in the garden if you have one is a lovely healthy way as an antidote for stress. It is also great for just taking a moment to disconnect from the busy world that we live in.

Sam Sawhney | Model City London (Barking Sports 4 Change)



Three things have been helping my mental stability: music (listening and playing), my wife and son (when I feel a bit under pressure or a bit depressed, I always look for a discussion with my wife or playing something with my son or hugging each other and play around foolishly) and having long walks or cycling (fresh air always helps me clear my mind and reorganise my thoughts).

Ioannis Mathioudakis | Barking and Dagenham CVS



Nature is a great healer, going for walks in the forest or to the local park with your family/friends or by yourself to help clear your mind and find clarity always helps me relax.

Lauren

Our mental health is very important, once we become parents, spouses we tend to put others first. But who will look after them if we don't look after ourselves first? Don't feel guilty for taking time out, talking about your feelings or doing something that makes YOU happy.
Sumayyah

I go walking. It's good for my health. But I mainly go for my mind. I walk to unfamiliar places. Where my mind is freed from the day to day pressures. Sometimes we are exhausted with life. We want to collapse on the sofa. But that just makes us more tired. I get out on my feet. See the world anew. Then I feel fully rested.

Michael Little | Ratio

Every day before work I go for a walk in my local open space. It's quite wild, with trees, wildlife and whatever the weather it's great to get out into the fresh air. Whatever the time of year there's always something to see, something which is changing, and I try and tune into this.

Wayne Trevor | Citizens' Alliance Network Manager

Using music can improve your emotional well-being. I am listening to music, or playing music, or being a part of a choir to enhance my own well-being. Music helps me process my emotions both positive and negative, gives me energy but also can provide support psychologically when I am feeling low.

Matina Karastatira | www.music-healing.co.uk

To appreciate divine beauty in all its forms. Mother Nature brings it so close to us. It is there to be seen in the stars in the sky, to be heard in the chirping of the birds, to be smelt in the fragrance of the flowers, to be tasted in the sweetness of its waters and felt in the freshness of its wind. I find nature inspiring and beautiful, refreshing and nourishing my body, mind and soul.

Sumit



We love our children, but we need a space for ourselves to. We have to find the things we really like to do - for myself the seaside is best relaxing and calming place.

Jolanta

It's easy to think everyone else is ok, but actually we all just need someone to reach out with text or phone call - even a smile in the street - to know that we matter. Small acts of kindness can have a big impact - take a minute to be intentional during your day.

Avril | Community Resources

Let's normalise asking for help. Asking for, and accepting help isn't a sign of weakness - it's the opposite.

Liza | Studio 3 Arts

- My faith plays huge role in my day-to-day life, so I pray and meditate daily.
 - Eating healthy and exercising have contributed to me having a good mental health, making my moods and emotions stable.
 - I focus on positive things happening in my life and feel gratitude
 - I surround myself with positive people.
 - I give back to the community by volunteering
- Oluwaseun Odunubi | Healthy Lifestyle coach
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Mental health is a complex thing and it's not always clear to us why we feel the way we do - in those moments, it is important that we are kind and patient with ourselves. I think it's really important that we don't compare ourselves with others, even those with similar struggles or diagnoses - just like with physical injuries, some people will get back to how they were before while others will need to learn how to adapt to what's happened to them. However you're feeling, you always deserve to be treated with love and respect - especially from yourself.

Cameron | BDGiving

Three top tips for looking after your mental health, all of which I try to do myself each day/week:

- 1: Set aside 30 minutes each day to do something for yourself. My favourite is to download a podcast and go for a walk.
- 2: Connect with distant friends and family at least twice a week. This could be a WhatsApp, FaceTime or email.
- 3: Plan your meals for the week, I like to be organised and find this takes away the anxiety.

Claire Smith | Essex Cricket

We believe in 'people before programme' because top down interventions don't work. What that means is creating equal, open and welcoming spaces, caring about the people you are talking to, curious without being intrusive. Only in this way, together, we build community and change the world - one conversation at a time.

Matt Scott | Thames Ward Community Project



I'm lucky that I am able to keep two dogs and a cat - all of them are friendly and loving. Whenever I or my children feel down, a stroke or cuddle from any one of them makes you feel so much better - they instinctively know that you are unhappy and are non-judgemental. They are always there for you. Animal therapy is the best pick me up!

Alison

“...we build community and change the world - one conversation at a time”

Local mental health support services

www.lbbd.gov.uk/mental-health

www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-barking-dagenham

Talking Therapies, Barking and Dagenham IAPT
Church Elm Lane Health Centre,
Church Elm Lane, Dagenham, RM10 9RR

www.talkingtherapies.nelft.nhs.uk

Email: bdtalkingtherapies@nhs.net

Tel: 0300 300 1554 option 3

Mind in Havering, Barking & Dagenham

www.haveringmind.org.uk

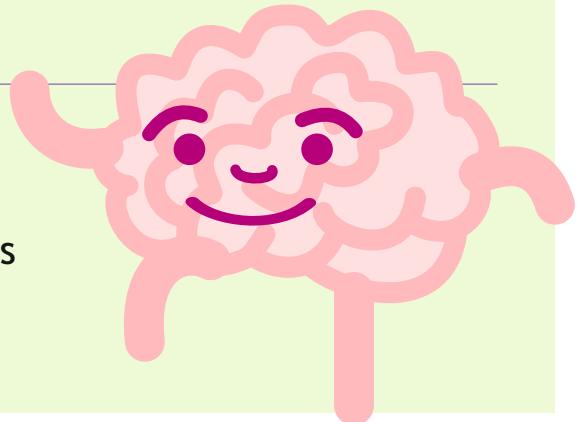
reach.us@haveringmind.org.uk

Tel: 01708 457040

Green Shoes Arts

Inspiring local people to make
positive changes through the arts

www.greenshoesarts.com



Cocoon
empowering our children

**Barking &
Dagenham**

Early Years Cocoon is a friendly, supportive and educational community group for families of young children (under 5s) based in Barking and Dagenham.

We like sharing resources, supporting each other, learning together and growing stronger.

Contact us at earlyyearscoocoon@gmail.com or find out what's on at

www.earlyyearscoocoon.co.uk