

# Mental Health Carers Newsletter

We support people who care for family, partners or friends who struggle with their mental health. Our service is a partnership between Bromley Well and Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich Mind.

## Supporting you in March

Please register with Bromley Well to reserve your place on these free events, find our contact details on the following page

### Chat, Coffee and Create

Join us for a morning to chat to other carers over coffee and cake and get a little creative with us!  
More info inside...

27<sup>th</sup> March 11am – 1pm  
Anchor House, Orpington

### Gardening Afternoon

Join us for an afternoon of self care, gardening style! Heather joins us from Minds Recovery College Allotment group to guide us through basic gardening skills that range in physical effort from seed sewing (seated at a table) to digging compost!

13<sup>th</sup> March 2:30pm – 4:30pm  
Sandford Road Allotments  
Bromley South

### Coping with Caring

Our 6 week course for mental health carers, focusing on self care and different ways to cope.

The March course is full, contact us to book your place on the next course (dates announced soon)



### Peer Support Zoom

Every Wednesday  
at 3pm

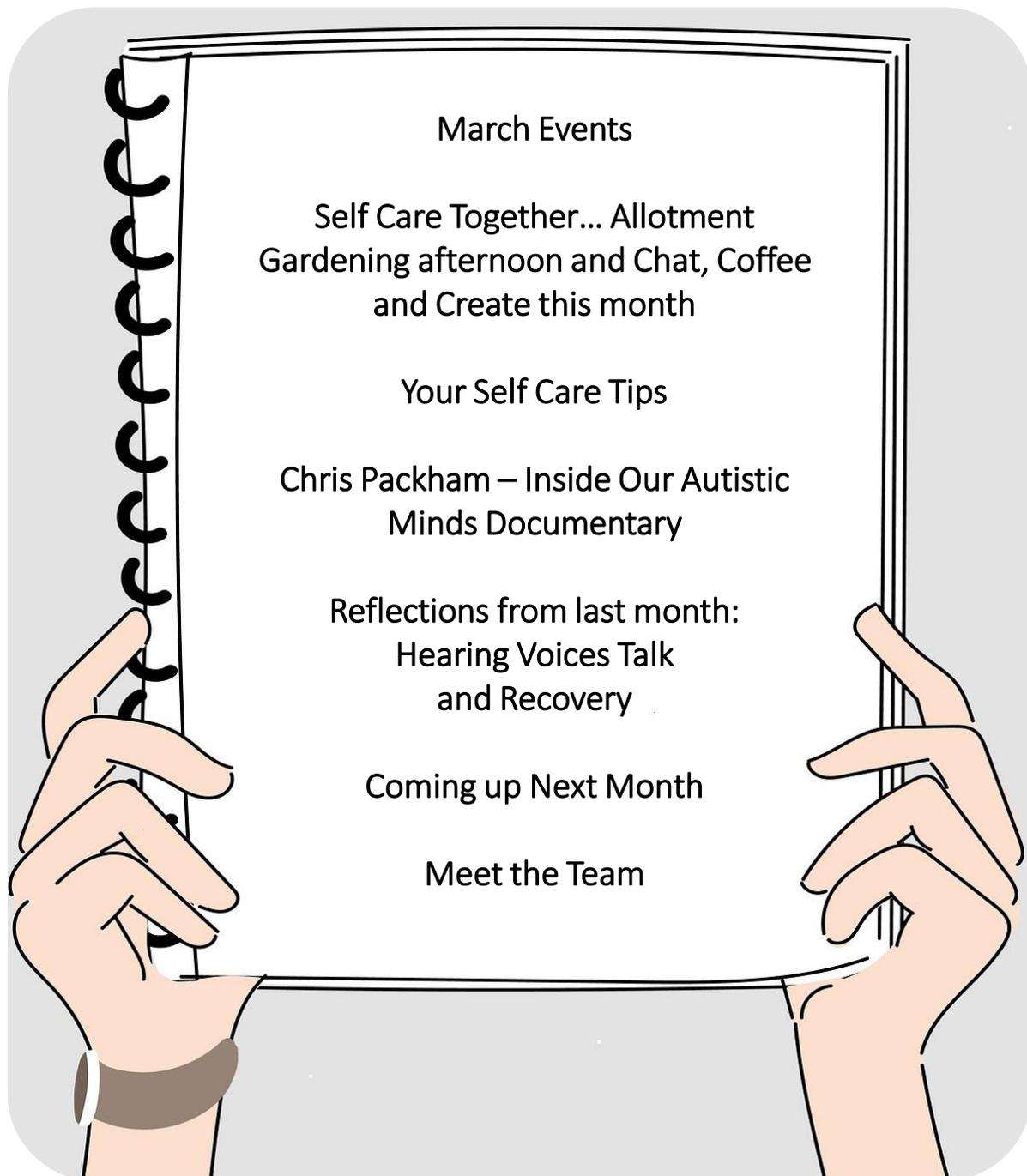
Email us for the  
zoom link to attend!

### Carers Forum

Our partners at Age UK are holding a Carers Forum on the topic of London Borough of Bromley (LBB)'s Carers Strategy. Booking details to follow, check website for details.

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2pm – 4pm  
Verrall Hall, Bromley United Reform Church, 20 Widmore Road, BR1 1RY

# Inside this issue



## March Events

Self Care Together... Allotment  
Gardening afternoon and Chat, Coffee  
and Create this month

## Your Self Care Tips

Chris Packham – Inside Our Autistic  
Minds Documentary

Reflections from last month:  
Hearing Voices Talk  
and Recovery

## Coming up Next Month

Meet the Team

If you are seeking support, wish to sign up to one our events  
or have any questions please refer to us by emailing

[MHcarers@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:MHcarers@bromleywell.org.uk)

or by calling Bromley Well Freephone

0808 278 7898 and asking for mental health carers

[www.bromleywell.org.uk/our-services/carers/mental-health-carers](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk/our-services/carers/mental-health-carers)

## Self Care Together

Last month we ran a self care afternoon where we practiced some relaxation techniques together, such as progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness.

This month we hope you will join us for two events focused on self care and peer support.

### Chat, Coffee and Create



Join us for a morning to chat to other carers over coffee and cake and get a little creative with us!

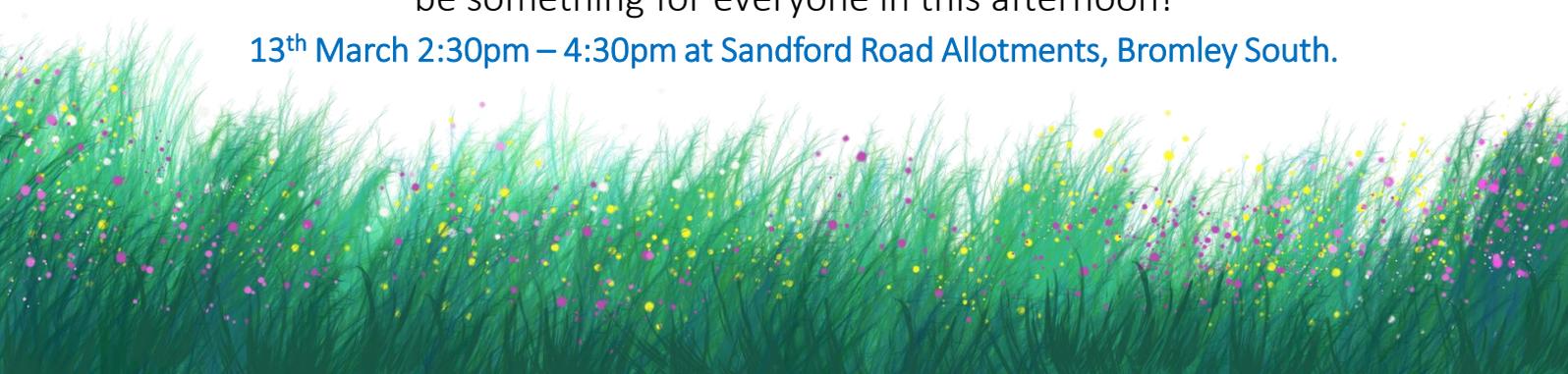
No skill level required, we'll just be exploring some creative outlets together, so even if art isn't your thing, join us for a morning of dabbling with some materials and chatting to other carers!

**27th March 11am – 1pm at Anchor House, Orpington**

### Allotment Gardening Afternoon

Working with our hands can be so therapeutic. We hope you will join us for an allotment gardening afternoon where we are joined by Heather from BLG Minds Recovery college Allotment Group for some basic gardening skills. There should be something for everyone in this afternoon!

**13th March 2:30pm – 4:30pm at Sandford Road Allotments, Bromley South.**



# Your Self Care Tips

Last month we asked for your self care tips to share with fellow carers. Self care is often those small moments in a day that take your mind somewhere else or where you can absorb yourself in something to get a little peace from an often chaotic feeling world.



Carer Len shares that he likes to listen to Classical Music. This puts him in a good frame of mind.

He also suggests a walk!

Carer Catherine shares that she practices self care by indulging in her hobbies, such as photography.

In April we will be hosting a mindful photography walk – stay tuned...



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Carer Advisor Lucy shares that she like to listen to music, enjoys cooking and is starting to get back to working out at the gym along with working on breathing exercises.

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# Your Self Care Tips



Carer Sue shares that she loves going to shows in London, especially ballet. She feels immersing herself in theatre and ballet really helps her as it takes her away from her outside troubles.

Carer Advisor Aimée shares that she has recently got into Lego and would highly recommend it as self care. She echoes Sue's feeling about being able to immerse yourself fully in the moment when building a Lego project.

The Guardian recently shared an article titled 12 ways to meditate without meditating... 'Lego is the new colouring-in for grownups. John Lewis has reported that sets for adults, such as posies of flowers, are having a sales boost. Joy Rains, a mindfulness practitioner and author of *Meditation Illuminated: Simple Ways to Manage Your Busy Mind*, can see why.'

"Feel the bumpy bricks, look at the colours, listen to them clunking together," she says. "Maybe you have a vision of how it's going to be when it's finished – so I'm saying something a little different here, because you're taking your mind to the future. But you're looking at the whole of the project, and seeing what you're doing as a piece of a larger picture. I would consider that being mindful."



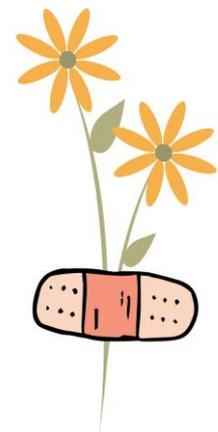
# Hearing Voices Talk

In February we were joined by guest speakers Stewart Tight and Sue Wild from the hearing voices network for a talk about psychosis, hearing voices and medications from their lived experiences. It was a very emotional talk, and we thank them for sharing so vulnerably with us.

Both spoke about their recovery and Stewart spoke of the phases of recovery. One powerful takeaway was that they're both leading lives where they help others and they've learnt ways to cope, even when their mental health fluctuates and they still hear voices.



**Recovery isn't  
linear**



Their stories show that recovery isn't linear. They can become unwell at times and be able to cope themselves as they've learnt their own coping mechanisms, or they may become unwell and occasionally not be able to cope and need more help or intervention, but their stories show that each time their mental health fluctuates to various degrees, they still continue on and there is always hope.



In February BBC two aired a documentary by Chris Packham called inside our autistic minds. Several carers have commented on how interesting the programme was and gave them new perspectives in understanding, especially when it comes to the issue of sensory overload.

Sensory overload is something experienced by many autistic people and other neurodivergent folk. We all have sensory needs and as humans, we all sense the world in this way and it's a part of human life. For some people however, it's hard to block out sensory noise of everyday life that others find it easy to tune out, and this leads to sensory overwhelm and finding it hard to cope in certain environments.

You can still watch the documentary on BBC I player if you missed it!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p0bbnh47/inside-our-autistic-minds>

# Coming up next month...

Stay tuned next month for more events and talks!

In April we will be holding a mindful photography walk and we will also be hosting a talk about understand personality disorders, depression and anxiety where we will be joined by guest speaker Consultant Clinical Psychologist Kim Griffiths from Oxleas NHS.

## Meet the team

We're a team of two mental health carers advisors and we're passionate about the support that carers deserve.



Lucy Blake



Aimée Roberts

## Our Service Provides...

Emotional support and a listening ear on the phone

Wellbeing advice and relaxation tips

Coping techniques for stressful situations

Peer support groups in person and online

Information and Skills Workshops and Talks

Wellbeing Events

General mental health information

Information on further support services for support for yourself and the person you care for