FOCUSING on the portrait above, you will see one of two images, either the colour grey which shows two persons facing each other, or, the white image that shows a vase icon. The focus of this image can tell us how we view the world around us, this is better known as a ‘Paradigm’.

You may ask what this has to do with the concept of mindfulness? The answer may be buried in our own individual thoughts and decision-making processes, that impact on the paths that we take throughout our lives.

My story starts with my grandparents who gave me the moral grounding needed to distinguish between right and wrong, left and right, ride a bike, play marbles, you get the message. But, in contrast my parents gave me love, yes, but also the drive to be the best, as well as perfection in all that I do through my life. This may sound like the ideal upbringing, but, three severe nervous breakdowns later, there could be a link somewhere along the line?

I have always had a hard working ethic in all my career choices ranging from warehouse and retail management to a business degree at Oxford Brookes university.

Whilst understanding that to do ones’ best at any given task or situation is the right thing to do, to put added pressure on yourself to be the best can run the risk of ‘burn-out’ or for want of a better word mental / physical ‘fatigue’.

The point of this article is not to dwell on the causes of ‘fatigue’, but the potential answers to a balanced lifestyle that allows me to contribute within limits, and also enjoy life to the full through hobbies, sport, and recreation, as well as interaction with family and friends.

Mental / Physical Fatigue is in my book a ‘slow-burner’. It creeps up on you unawares, compounding stress upon stress. Our minds need diversification in order to stay healthy, but, to put one’s self in a repetitively stressful situation, however enjoyable that situation, can compound fatigue without knowing the consequences until potentially it is too late.

My situation unfortunately got me to that exact point. To such an extent I had to retire early and rely heavily on the fantastic resources that became available to me within the Flintshire area, in order to, for want of a better term ‘re-boot’ my brain functionality. This situation with a lot of help and guidance allowed me to return to the things I love such as family, stamp collecting, reading, and incredibly gardening. I like to think that the world around me is rosy - forgiving the pun - but, I must also be fully aware that even in recreation I must balance the task in hand with enjoyment of that task. It must not be seen as a chore, but, as a satisfying experience.

The term ‘paradigm’ can be used to identify my own perception of the world I live in, to such an extent that it may be termed as a ‘paradigm shift’ in other words a revolutionary turn in the way I perceive the world I live in.

Depression is not gained by choice, but, we as individuals may have choices dealing with that depression to better the world we live in. Thank you..........
The benefits of Sunlight – Get out and about!

“The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world’s joy.”

Henry Ward Beecher

As the longer and hopefully warmer days are upon us it seems appropriate for us to think about getting outside a bit more, especially given that the effects of sunlight are known to have a very positive effect on our wellbeing.

When natural sunlight hits our skin, it triggers the production of Vitamin D in our body, otherwise known as “the sunshine vitamin”. This vitamin is known to be crucial to our overall health and wellbeing. It protects against inflammation, lowers high blood pressure, improves brain function, contributes to bone health and regulates the immune system. Furthermore, Vitamin D activates the release of neurotransmitters such as serotonin, known as the “happiness hormone”. In the winter months, the lack of natural light can lower our serotonin levels and thus can affect our mood, as is commonly seen in people experiencing SAD (Seasonal Effective Disorder) for example.

Exposure to light during the day is also known to improve the quality and duration of our sleep. A recent study has shown that people with insomnia reduced the time it took them to fall asleep by as much as 83% following exposure to sunlight.

Getting out into the sunshine can bring other benefits too – being more active outdoors whether it be working in the garden, taking a stroll or (if you’re feeling particularly energetic) going for a run or a bike ride, can promote our overall physical fitness.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), getting anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes of sunlight on your arms, hands, and face two or three times a week is enough to reap the vitamin D-boosting benefits of the sun.

However most of us are aware of the harmful effect that UV rays from the sun can have on our skin. Therefore it is advised that if you plan on being in the sun for longer than 15 minutes, you should apply a sunscreen of at least Sun Protection Factor 15 and/or cover up with suitable clothing and a hat. Now what are you waiting for? Get out and about, but take an umbrella just in case!
Mental Health Workshops at Theatr Clwyd

I have been working at Theatr Clwyd for almost a year now as Creative Engagement Assistant. I have had lots of lovely opportunities to meet and work with members of the community; primarily through creative play and having fun in workshops. Of all those projects, one that stands out to me as being especially rewarding, was our collaboration with Flintshire’s Wellbeing Education and Recovery Programme. Prior to working at the theatre, I used to go to Next Steps to get me out of the house and try to build up my confidence when I was struggling. It is therefore a great privilege to take part in these workshops from another perspective as part of Theatr Clwyd.

In January we trialled a 6-week bespoke creative workshop exploring Drama and Theatre Making. I am immensely grateful to all those who attended the taster sessions. It can be daunting for anyone to try new activities (especially drama activities) with people you’ve never met before; to do so whilst also grappling with your own mental health issues, and are likely dealing with anxiety, is immeasurably brave and a real testament to how invested they were in taking agency over their own wellbeing.

We now are offering a full 12-week programme at the theatre. It’s important for us to provide a consistent and safe environment for everyone to feel comfortable, free to explore their creativity and be able to express themselves without judgement. Theatr Clwyd create a judgement free environment where you can wholly be yourself. I’ve even found a measurable improvement in my own confidence since being in these environments for the past year, and it’s notably clear to all of my friends and family who often tell me that I act like a different person. When I attended Wellbeing workshops a couple of years ago, it would be the only time in the week where I’d leave the house and see anybody other than my parents. We believed that other people may be in a similar situation and that it would be imperative that we made people feel valued; especially when they may be struggling with their self-esteem.

I have really come to appreciate the value of being presented with the freedom to create and be silly in workshops and in life in general. We all have the capacity to be creative and to play and explore, but these things are often forgotten and left behind as we transition into adulthood. Such activities can be perceived as “childish” and “trivial”, but I have witnessed first-hand that nurturing this aspect of ourselves has significant effects on our emotional wellbeing and it has a ripple effect on those we surround ourselves with. After a workshop I find myself significantly chirpier for the rest of the day. Even as an introverted person I become energised and bubbly after workshops. It’s an opportunity to escape the serious, self-conscious, grown up world for a couple of hours and make connections with wonderful people I probably would have never had the chance to interact with before.

Article by Serena Etchells
Creative Engagement Assistant at Theatr Clwyd
When summer rolls around and the sun is finally shining again, we think of sand between our toes, donkey rides across the beach, shells and sandcastles and sunshine… and of course, sitting in the refreshing sea air in a deck chair with an ice cream cone in one hand and a good book in the other.

You may think that decent ice cream is only available at the seaside, but this recipe proves that you can make your own that is just as delicious… or even more so! Strawberry is a flavour that is pretty much loved by all, and the strawberry ice cream you can produce by following this simple recipe is guaranteed to put a smile on everybody’s faces this summer.

You will need:

1 cup Heavy whipping cream
1 cup Whole milk
4 cups Strawberries
1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1 1/4 cups Sugar
squeeze of Lemon juice
Honey to taste

1. Firstly, chop your strawberries into small pieces. These pieces can be as big or small as you like, depending on your own preference. If you do prefer your strawberry ice cream to be chunky, cut the strawberries into bigger pieces.

2. Mix the chopped strawberries with the lemon juice, honey and sugar in a large bowl and let the mixture to soak for around 15-20 minutes. The strawberries will become softer when exposed to the sugars and acid from the lemon juice.

3. Mash the strawberry mixture with a fork or a potato masher until the mixture is smooth with no large pieces. For a smoother strawberry ice cream, make use of a food processor or a blender. Skip the use of a blender or food processor for bigger strawberry chunks.

4. Add the heavy whipping cream, whole milk, and vanilla extract to the strawberry mixture. Place in a freezer-safe container, cover with a plastic lid, and freeze for approximately 8 hours. Before serving, allow the ice cream to sit out to soften.

5. Get your spoons out and enjoy!

And there you have it - a strawberry ice cream recipe with minimal fuss and maximum flavour! Easier than chasing the ice cream van down the road or queueing for what seems like hours at the sweltering supermarket, the whole family will love this recipe and there will be fights over the spoons when you serve this dreamy strawberry delight.

Article by Danielle Dudley
BIG WHITE WALL

Big White Wall is an online community for people who are stressed, anxious or feeling low. The service has an active forum with round-the-clock support from trained professionals. You can talk anonymously to other members and take part in group or one-to-one therapy with therapists.

FREE

CHILL PANDA

Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing with Chill Panda. The app measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind. Tasks include simple breathing techniques and light exercises to take your mind off your worries.

FREE

HOOP

The Hoop app helps you keep your children active by providing information on nearby activities, thousands of which are completely free.

It also has recommended ages for each activity, so you only see things that are right for your family.

FREE

Growing Places
Open Day

Wednesday 17th July 2019
Drop in anytime between 10am and 3pm
KIM INSPIRE  
Mental Health Support to Women.  
Contact: 01352 872189  
www.kim-inspire.org.uk  
KIM4HIM  men-only service

C.A.L.L  
Community Advice and Listening Line  
Free and confidential mental health help line covering the whole of Wales.  
Contact: 0800132737  
www.callhelpline.org.uk

Advocacy Service North East Wales  
Provides an independent, confidential and free advocacy service for people experiencing mental health problems living in Flintshire and Wrexham.  
Contact: 01352 759332  
www.asnew.org.uk

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www.asnew.org.uk

Hafal  
Hafal supports the carers of people with a serious mental illness and also provides more intensive support to carers and families at times of crisis.  
Contact:  
Karen Jones or Janet Fletcher  
01244 834923  
www.hafal.org

CAB (Citizens’ Advice Bureau)  
Provides free, confidential advice and information on social welfare and law.  
08444 772020  
www.flintshirecab.org.uk

North East Wales Mind  
Information and support for mental wellbeing  
Contact: 01352974430  
enquiries@newmind.org.uk  
www.newmind.org.uk

Speaking Out Flintshire  
Contact: 01745 827903  
www.unllais.co.uk

Round the Clock Support  
116123 From any phone

www.Dewis.Cymru  
www.Dewis.Wales

The Dewis Cymru website is THE place to go if you want information or advice about your well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else.  www.dewis.wales

Drop-in information

MONDAY  
Hope Church Hall  
1:30pm to 3:30pm  
CLOSED 26th August

TUESDAY  
Mold, Chapel Art Centre, Tyddyn Street  
10:30am to 12:30pm

WEDNESDAY  
Rivertown United Reformed Church  
Chester Road West, Shotton  
10:30am to 12:30pm

FRIDAY  
St Mary’s Church Hall, Flint.  
10:30am to 12:30pm

SATURDAY  
C.A.B Offices in Connah’s Quay  
10:30am to 12:30pm

Mold Mind Drop-in at Wellbeing Centre,  
23b Chester Street Mold  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

All Welcome

Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT)  
Primary Care Tiers 1 & 2  
Mold and Flintshire: Pwll-Glas: 01352 750252  
Deeside: Aston House: 01244 834921

Mindful Newsletter is available on request  
please contact:  
Double Click Design on  
01244 846411  
email: doubleclick.design@yahoo.com

The Dewis Cymru website is THE place to go if you want information or advice about your well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else.  www.dewis.wales