

# Summer Term 2019 Course Descriptions

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# Understanding mental health difficulties and treatment

## Introduction to Psychological Therapies

### One-day workshop

What, exactly, are psychological or talking therapies? The morning session of this one-day workshop will explore how psychological therapies can help people, the potential risks and things to take into account when considering them. Students will get a general overview of how therapies can be accessed including referral and assessment processes.

During the afternoon session we will explore and explain the different types of psychological approaches that are available in secondary care, primary care and in the voluntary sector, and what you can expect from taking part in these types of therapies.

## Understanding Psychosis

### Half-day workshop

The experience of psychosis, for example hearing voices or experiencing altered perceptions, is surprisingly common.

Being diagnosed with psychosis can be a frightening and life changing event. There are a lot of misconceptions and stigma regarding psychosis which can make coming to terms with it even harder.

This workshop looks at a variety of treatment and self-help options and personal experiences of psychosis. It also focuses on the ways people have managed their experiences so that they can get on with living their lives.

# Taking Control of My Psychosis Medication

## Half-day workshop

People often find it hard to take medication regularly, particularly if there are side effects. The aim of this course is to share knowledge of antipsychotic medications prescribed for psychosis, along with their side effects. Topics covered include how to discuss medication with doctors, particularly when talking about the consequences of stopping or changing treatment.

# Hearing Voices

## Half-day workshop

Hearing voices is not always a sign of mental ill-health and the experience can differ greatly between people.

Our uniqueness as individuals is often reflected in the voices people experience. These voices can have distinct content, identities, meaning and impact on the person experiencing them.

The voices and experience can be distressing for the person who hears voices and for those offering care and support. Often those offering support (both as a carer and a worker) may feel unsure what to do to help someone who is hearing voices.

This workshop is for anyone who wants to learn about hearing voices.

# Understanding Bipolar Disorder

## Half-day workshop

Bipolar is a mood disorder characterised by extreme changes in mood.

Although we all have mood swings, in bipolar disorder these can become unmanageable and overwhelming - individuals can experience severe and/or rapid mood swings that can last several weeks or months, far beyond the normal ups and downs.

The aim of this course is to explore the facts and realities of bipolar disorder, how it is diagnosed and treated, how you can manage it, and how you can support someone that you care about.

## Understanding Depression

### Half-day workshop

Depression is a word which is often used to explain periods when we are feeling 'low', 'sad' or a bit 'blue'. 'Feeling low' is something most people experience from time to time and is a natural part of human experience.

However, when these feelings become more severe, begin to take hold of your life and just won't go away, it may be something more serious like 'depression'.

Depression is a common condition and as such we now know a lot about its effect physically and mentally and how you can manage it. Understanding the signs, symptoms, causes, and treatment of depression is the first step to overcoming the problem.

The workshop aims to explore the facts about depression, how it is diagnosed and what it might feel like to have depression. It also aims to provide you a safe and comfortable environment where speaking about your experiences could unburden you or possibly help others with their depression.

## Understanding Anxiety

### Half-day workshop

Anxiety is something we all experience from time to time. Most people can relate to those anxious, butterfly feelings when doing something which feels uncertain or feeling fearful about sitting exams, having a medical, going to the dentist.

It is a natural feeling and can be useful, as it warns us when we need to take action, when we may be in danger or can even help us to perform better.

However, anxiety can change from something everyone experiences in mild forms, to something which is persistent, excessive or over-whelming. It can begin to interfere with many aspects of your life – from confidence, to physical wellbeing and engagement in basic or complex activities of living.

The aim of this course is to explore the facts about anxiety, making a distinction between common anxiety and anxiety disorders, exploring the possible causes and considering how to face it head on.

## **Understanding Self Harm**

### **Half-day workshop**

Rates of self-harm in the UK have increased over the past decade and are amongst the highest in Europe. However, it still remains a much misunderstood issue.

This workshop will look at what comes under the umbrella of 'self-harm' and we will explore some of the many possible reasons why some people harm themselves.

We will explore the role of professionals and services, discuss how someone who self-harms can reduce the risks, and look at the types of support which are useful.

## **Understanding and Overcoming Panic Disorder**

### **One-day workshop**

Most of us will have a panic attack at some point in our lives. It is a sudden rush of anxiety that seems to come out of the blue and is characterised by many body sensations, such as feeling dizzy, heart racing, feeling hot or feeling nauseous. Understandably people usually feel scared during a panic attack and fear that something terrible is going to happen, such as they might pass out, lose control or even have a heart attack and die.

Panic disorder is an anxiety disorder where people have recurrent panic attacks. Individuals with panic disorder typically change the things they do and

the places they go as their main fear is having further panic attacks. While people with other anxiety disorders may experience panic attacks, for example someone with social anxiety might have a panic attack when having to give a presentation, this is not the same as panic disorder because the individual is more likely to fear the social situation itself rather than the panic attack, although they will undoubtedly find it unpleasant.

This workshop aims to explore and understand what panic disorder is in more depth and the different forms it may take. We will then discuss a range of coping methods and strategies that people might find useful and what cognitive behavioural treatments are available and how they can help.

## **Understanding Personality Disorder**

### **One-day workshop**

Personality disorder is a phrase used to describe a group of common, long-lasting conditions that affect how people view and manage their emotions and how they relate to other people.

This course explores what is meant by personality disorder in general and how it can affect other aspects of a person's mental and physical health.

We will also discuss specific treatments and how people can help themselves to regain a measure of control in their lives.

## **Understanding Hoarding**

### **One-day workshop**

People with hoarding problems save and collect items to excess and also find it difficult to part with possessions. Over time this can lead to the build-up of clutter in the home, which can make it difficult for people to use rooms for their intended purpose (e.g. not enough space to sleep in a bedroom or to cook in a kitchen). Clutter may build up in people's home for different reasons (e.g. feeling low or worrying that something bad might happen if they were to let go of particular items). Hoarding becomes a problem when it affects the ability of a person to live comfortably and safely in their home.

Individuals with hoarding disorder find parting with possessions very distressing and usually avoid letting items go as a result of this distress. People with hoarding problems often find it difficult to make decisions which can also lead to avoiding sorting through possessions, or looking through one possession after another without making a decision about whether each item should stay or go. They may also buy or pick up more items than they need, which can also lead to the build-up of clutter.

This workshop aims to explore and understand what hoarding disorder is in more depth and the different forms it may take. We will then discuss a range of strategies that people might find useful and in particular what cognitive behavioural treatments are available and how they can help.

The course has been designed in collaboration with staff from the Centre for Anxiety Disorders and Trauma (CADAT) and people who have used their services.

## **Understanding the Impact of Substance Use on Mental Health**

### **One-day workshop**

People often experience problems with both mental health and substance use (alcohol and drugs). Each can cause difficulties and together they can have a big impact on the person themselves and their family and carers. Finding the right help and support can be difficult.

This workshop will:

- Identify commonly used substances and the effects they can have on mental health, physical health and the person's social circumstances.
- Explore people's reasons for using substances
- Provide information about some of the services that may be helpful.

## Alcohol: friend or foe

### One-day workshop

People who drink alcohol can have very different experiences. This workshop looks at why that is and some of the things you can do when you or someone you know is having issues managing their alcohol use. The workshop will include:

- interesting facts you might not know about alcohol
- sharing of tips
- an opportunity to talk to people with professional and lived experience about options to try when alcohol becomes a problem.

## Rebuilding your life

### Moving on From SLaM to Your GP: all you need to know

#### One-day workshop

This workshop will look at understanding and managing the transition from Secondary to Primary Care in partnership with all stakeholders.

It will include:

- What to expect from your Community Mental Health Team
- What to expect from your GP
- Discharge Planning, effective communication, and understanding notes
- Navigating services and benefits and how to make informed choices about your care

## Introduction to Recovery

### One-day workshop

Many people find being diagnosed with mental health difficulties devastating. Too often people feel that their life is over and that they will never be able to

fulfil their dreams and ambitions or lead a satisfying and valued life.

But it does not have to be this way. Whatever age a person is, whether they have only recently been diagnosed, or whether they have had a diagnosis for some time, recovery is possible, no matter how serious the person's difficulties. It is possible for people to rebuild a meaningful, valued and satisfying life.

This introductory workshop explores the impact of mental health difficulties on people's lives, what helps people to grow within and beyond what has happened, and how they can rebuild their lives.

## **Making Changes: where to start and how to maintain**

**Two-week course | One-day workshop each week**

The aim of this workshop is to enable participants to explore, embrace and prepare for the challenges involved when embarking on a change of lifestyle.

We will look at decision making and managing and maintaining the process of recovery as it applies, for example, to relapse prevention.

## **Staying Well & Making Plans: managing the ups and downs**

**Two Week Course | One-day workshop each week**

For many people it can feel as if their mental health difficulties are completely beyond their control. Treatment and support from mental health professionals can be helpful but every person with mental health problems can become an expert in their own self-management.

Along with mental health difficulties, things like divorce, death of a loved one, losing your job and serious physical illness can affect anyone. Whatever challenges you face, recovery involves finding the personal resourcefulness and resilience to take back control over your life and what happens to you.

This two-week course aims to support people to develop and use personal recovery plans that focus on what keeps you well, how to manage the ups and downs, how to cope in a crisis and what gets you back on track.

This course is for anyone who wishes to learn about planning for a life beyond services.

## **Confidence in Social Situations**

**Two-week Course | One-day workshop followed by a half-day workshop**

This course will offer you the opportunity to identify situations in your own life where you would like to be more confident. You will then be able to explore and consider ways of managing challenging social situations in a warm and supportive environment.

Topics covered will include understanding confidence, how our behaviour and thinking can affect confidence, the role of body language, and practical strategies to be confident in social situations. This course doesn't involve role play unless students want it to. It instead focuses on self-awareness and group discussion to build up confidence and share experiences to feel less isolated. By the end of the first session, students will be able to set a personal goal around increasing their confidence.

The second workshop will conclude with a group visit to the Dragon Cafe.

## **Creativity and Wellbeing**

**Two-hour workshop**

Creativity and Wellbeing has been developed by the Education department of Dulwich Picture Gallery in collaboration with SLAM Recovery College.

This course helps students to explore and use their own creativity to support their health and wellbeing. Taking inspiration from the Permanent Collection of Baroque masterpiece paintings on display at Dulwich Picture Gallery, students

will explore a range of practical creative approaches which support and promote mindfulness, relaxation and creative problem solving.

This course will help students to feel curious, to relax and to enjoy the moment, students will be encouraged to make connections and find meaning in new and unexpected places. No previous experience of art or creativity is required.

## **Writing for Wellbeing**

**Six-week course | Two-hour workshop each week**

This course is designed to help you develop the writing skills that can increase your overall wellbeing and resilience as part of your recovery.

By the end of the course, you will have the gained knowledge and experience to practice writing for wellbeing, safely and effectively, leaving the course equipped with a toolkit of techniques and exercises you can take away and apply in your daily life.

## **Using the Tree of Life for the Storms in Life**

**One-day workshop**

The Tree of Life is a recovery approach based on narrative theory that focuses on culture, heritage, spirituality, strength and hopes. It introduces psychological ideas of strength, resilience and relationship.

The Tree of Life uses a tree as a metaphor for someone's life; different parts of the tree represent different aspects of an individual's life. For example, the roots are about where we come from both physically and in terms of the values and commitments that influence us. The trunk represents our skills and resources, the branches our hopes and dreams. Leaves are those people who are important and influential in our lives. The fruits are the gifts we have received from others – not necessarily material; these could simply be gifts of love and tolerance.

The Tree of Life invites us to tell a different or preferred story of ourselves, outside of the influence of problems. This can be a difficult story to tell especially in problem-focused mental health services. In this workshop day we will explore different stories of ourselves by creating our own trees and sharing our trees to make a forest built on our collective strengths and resources.

The sharing of our trees is an important part of the workshop based on the idea in Narrative Therapy that 'stories told are stories lived ' and that our stories will develop more richly when shared and responded to by others. After we have created our forest of trees we will look at the storms of life and how the forest can respond to these storms as hazards that we all face together.

When the storms pass we will end the day with a celebration to appreciate how we have all contributed to each other's' stories.

## Telling Your Story

**Eight-week course | Two-hour workshop each week**

Mental health challenges may affect a person's confidence and even their sense of identity. This course helps students start to take back ownership of experiences and recover a sense of self alongside, or even despite, the difficulties faced.

Students will use a range of creative approaches, methods, and media to help explore aspects of life that are important to them, express themselves on their own terms, and celebrate their unique experiences and qualities.

No previous formal experience of writing or creativity is required, as students will be encouraged to find their voice and have it heard. Students will have the opportunity to share their stories at the end of the course.

## Mind and Body

### Introduction to Mindfulness

Two-hour workshop

*Please note: attending this course is strongly recommended for students considering enrolling for the following term's five-week **'The Mindful Way to Wellbeing'** course.*

The aim of this interactive session is to provide an introduction to the principles and practice of mindfulness. The session includes three short, seated meditations.

### The Mindful Way to Wellbeing

Five-week course | Two-hour workshop each week

*Please note: this is a highly popular course and priority will be given to students who have previously attended the introductory **'Introduction to Mindfulness'** workshop.*

This interactive 5 week course gives students an opportunity to learn about mindfulness and begin to develop a personal practice aimed at enhancing wellbeing. Practicing mindfulness enables us to be in the present moment more of the time which can help us notice unhelpful habits of thinking and behaviour and, with practice, respond to difficulty with greater skill.

During each session students learn through taking part in guided meditations and exploring together the experience of doing so through group discussion. Students are encouraged to use guided meditations to practice at home between classes. Students must be able to attend each of the five sessions.

# Walking and Wellbeing

## Half-day workshop

The aim of the workshop is build confidence by exploring some of London's outdoor environments on foot and consider the impact of walking on our wellbeing. During our walk we will be passing through Crystal Palace Park, Rookery Gardens and Streatham Common where our walk will end

This workshop is a chance to notice the architecture of our city, participate in moderate physical activity (walking) and to have an opportunity to notice and discuss how walking effects our wellbeing:

- Spend time outside in a social group.
- Learn about some of the benefits of walking and where to find out more.
- Have a chance to use pedometers and walking apps to support your walking for wellbeing.
- Have a chance to think about the more long-term opportunities to get out walking in groups around the capital

# Outdoor Sanctuaries and Wellbeing

## Half-day workshop

We aim to explore the difference in mood and wellbeing that being outside in a quiet sheltered place makes. We will be noticing the plants, sounds and light.

Based at the Horniman Museum Gardens this workshop is a chance to try different activities outside, and learn about the history of the garden.

We will be sharing our feelings about the environment and how changes of location make us feel.

We will be talking about the stimulation and sensory experiences we can experience outside and linking this to mood.

We will offer the opportunity to try a mindfulness exercise outside.

There'll be an option to try outside sketching for group members who are interested.

The focus is on relaxation and peace and the part they play in recovery. During the group we plan to share some ideas of other outdoor sanctuary locations for people to visit.

## **Nature and Wellbeing**

### **Half Day Workshop**

The aim of this workshop is to explore and learn about our connection with urban wildlife and consider its impact on our wellbeing. We will walk in Sydenham Woods, learning about the plants and animals and sharing our experiences.

This workshop is a chance to connect with wildlife while walking in the woods, noticing the trees, birds and habitats and visiting the pond area.

We will learn about wildlife following the nature trail and listening to London Wildlife Trust talking about urban wildlife interactions.

It will be a chance to share our interactions with wildlife with the group and talk about how it makes us feel.

It's a chance to think about the more long-term opportunities to get involved with local organisations or find wildlife in the city.

## **How to Get a Good Night's Sleep**

### **Half-day workshop**

Do you have difficulty getting to sleep at night? Do you wake up early in the morning? Do you spend most of the night tossing and turning?

This workshop looks at how much sleep we actually need; the different types of sleep, the common causes of sleep problems and ways of overcoming sleeping difficulties.

It will aim to help you to understand the nature of sleep and provide ways of dealing with your sleep problems.

## Vaping Workshop

Two-hour workshop

*An interactive workshop providing practical support for smokers who are interested in learning more about using e-cigarettes or vaping.*

*N.B. Unlike the Let's Talk About Tobacco drop-in sessions, you need to book a place on this workshop.*

## Let's Talk About Tobacco

A two hour drop-in session

An opportunity to meet with staff in an informal setting to learn more about tobacco and hear about the range of treatments and support services that are available to assist smokers who have an interest in cutting down or quitting smoking. And if you wanted, you'll also have a chance to have your own carbon monoxide level checked. We are also offering short workshops on this topic at the River House Recovery College Forensic Hub.

## The Comedy School

### Seven-Week Improvisation Course

Two taster sessions followed by a seven-week course | Two and a half-hour workshop each week

This course has two taster sessions with 16 places on each. From the 32 students, 16 will go forward onto the full seven-week course.

The Comedy School's expert tutors will guide you through the fundamentals of

improv all the way to basic performance readiness. No previous experience of improvisation or performing is required. Topics covered include:

- Unblocking the imagination
- Making offers
- Positivity
- Listening
- Collaborating

The course culminates with an informal sharing, where the group performs an improv show together to a warm and friendly audience.

## Seven-Week Stand-Up Comedy Course

Over seven weeks, this course will guide you through the process of becoming a stand-up comedian - from writing your first piece of material to your debut performance! Topics covered include:

- Generating Material
- Developing Performance Skills
- Discovering Your Comic Attitude
- Examining Stage Persona
- Exploring Joke Structure

Sessions are run by sensitive professionals from the comedy circuit.

## Developing knowledge and skills

### Mental Health Awareness

#### One-day workshop

This course aims to increase understanding of what influences our mental health, including the causes of, and the impact of stigma on, mental distress.

The session will explore the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication skills and how we can use these skills to support one another.

## **Mental Health: disclosure and your rights at work**

### **One-day workshop**

The aim of this workshop is to help participants gain a better understanding of their rights with regards to disclosure of their mental health condition to employers.

This is an area that people often feel very confused about and it is hoped by the end of the workshop participants will feel more equipped to make an informed choice as to whether to disclose their condition or not.

The workshop will cover the advantages and the disadvantages of disclosure, how to disclose, and the role of the Equality Act (2010) and how it can protect the individual if they choose to disclose.

## **Understanding and Challenging Stigma**

### **One-day workshop**

For people with mental health difficulties, stigma can be a huge barrier to recovery. It can also affect those around them, particularly carers, family members, friends and mental health practitioners.

During this workshop we will explore:

- The many ways that stigma can impact on our lives
- When it is safe to disclose and to whom
- Why many people feel compelled to keep their mental health problems a secret
- How we can be empowered to challenge the negative impact of stigma and feel more hopeful about the future

# Communication Skills for Resilient Relationships

## Half-day workshop

*Please note: this workshop focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on relationships between couples.*

Communicating is more than just what we say. It is how we say things and what we understand from what is said to us.

Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to communicate with the people around us, especially when you need to discuss something unpleasant, or there is a power imbalance in the relationship, or you are from different social backgrounds, or the language and terms being used are not familiar to us.

This workshop will explore active listening skills and the barriers which impact on the way we communicate with the aim of reducing misunderstanding & conflict.

## Introduction to Coaching Skills

### Two-week course | One-day workshop each week

Coaching is a way of opening up spaces for personal reflection, helping people become aware of their strengths and resourcefulness and supporting them to achieve their goals. Coaching is a series of conversations between a coach and another person aimed at bringing out the best in the person being coached.

Whether we are mental health professionals, people who use services, or carers and supporters, we all know that the quality of the relationships and the conversations we have are very important. Coaching tools and techniques can support people's recovery by helping them tackle the challenges and everyday stresses of life.

# Coaching Skills Masterclass

## One-day workshop

This half day workshop is designed for anyone who has previously attended the 2- day Coaching Skills programme.

It will enable you to refresh skills that were covered during the programme and give you a further opportunity to put them into practice.

# Personal Independence Payment Explained

## Half-day workshop

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is the replacement for Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

This session explores both the similarities and the differences between the two benefit schemes and how these might affect you. We will look at when you will need to migrate to PIP if you are already on DLA, take you through the claim process in detail, and explain how to tell your story.

We will also look at the decision-making and dispute process and signpost you to the help and guidance you will need.

# Employment Support Allowance Explained

## Half-day workshop

To qualify for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) the DWP have to decide that you are too unwell to work. They do this by asking you to complete a Work Capability Assessment (WCA).

You will be sent an ESA50 questionnaire which asks you questions about how you manage everyday tasks and it is obviously of crucial importance that you fill this in with correct information.

This workshop looks at:

- The overall conditions for claiming ESA
- When an ESA50 will be issued and why it must be completed, whether you are a new claimant or an Income Support/Incapacity Benefit claimant who is being migrated
- How to complete the questionnaire
- How to obtain supporting evidence
- What happens at the DWP assessment centre (medical)
- What to do if you are found fit for work

By the end of the session, you should feel confident completing an ESA50.

## Universal Credit

### Half-day workshop

Universal Credit is a new benefit that is being rolled out across the country and will affect most people in receipt of benefits.

This workshop looks at:

- What is Universal Credit
- How you make a claim
- What happens at the job centre/housing benefit office
- The commitment interview & what preparation you should do before you attend
- Places where you can go for assistance with navigating the system

By the end of the session, you should understand what you need to do on you have been put onto Universal Credit and where to get further assistance.

## Getting involved

### Working Together: co-production in action

Half-day workshop

Co-production is a way of working together which is gaining momentum in many health and social care settings.

This new workshop will explore the role of collaborative working between people who have used mental health services and people who have experience by profession and the values that underpin the approach.

### Introduction to Quality Improvement: what it is and how to get involved

Two-week course | Half-day workshop each week

This course will introduce students to the concept of 'Quality Improvement', how it can change and enhance mental health services, and how to get involved.

Quality Improvement is about making services safe, effective, efficient, inclusive and centred on the service user. SLAM aims to become an organisation with a culture of improvement based on service users, carers, staff, and key partners working together to improve outcomes, experiences and the value of the care the trust provides.

The course will signpost students to the various ways to become involved in QI projects across the trust.

# Research: do I want to get involved and what do I need to know?

## Half-day workshop

You may have been asked before about getting involved in research. This course explains why mental health research is conducted, information about your data and what is involved in signing up to a research register. We will also be exploring how research has changed services and some starting points if you would like to conduct your own research.

You may well have been asked before about getting involved in research and wondered if it was right for you. This course will explore why mental health research is conducted, look at what is involved in signing up to a research register, and explain how your data is handled. We will also be exploring the ways in which research has changed services. And, if you think you might like to conduct your own research, we'll be offering some pointers on how to start.

# Getting Involved in Peer Support

## Half day workshop

What is peer support? Who are our peers? What is going on in our area? What is meant by lived experience? How can we use our lived experience as an asset to support someone else? How does sharing ideas about recovery support both parties?

This workshop is aimed at anyone interested in becoming involved as a peer supporter or as a member of a team implementing recovery through peer support.

# Volunteering and Recovery

## Half-day workshop

This workshop looks at how volunteering can be an important part of recovery – by boosting confidence, by offering a valued role within the community and

by opening up possibilities for the future. We'll hear volunteers' stories and we'll explore the different opportunities to volunteer that are available.

The workshop will also explore the benefits to be gained by volunteering, how and why people volunteer, the barriers that can exist and what your rights as a volunteer are.

