

Natural health & living magazine

COMPANION MAGAZINE

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Being alone doesn't need to be
lonely



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The Power of a Good Book

A Sanctuary for the Mind: The Therapeutic Escape

For many, a good book serves as a sanctuary, a haven where the mind can wander, free from the constraints of immediate reality. This literary escapade is not merely about diversion but about finding a space where the self can breathe, heal, and grow. It's akin to a therapeutic session, where each page turned mirrors a step deeper into one's psyche, offering a reflective surface for our thoughts, fears, and aspirations. The NHS ELFT Befriending Service cherishes this aspect of reading, guiding individuals to find in books not just stories, but companions on their journey towards mental well-being.

Emotional Resonance: The Connection Beyond Words

Books uniquely evoke a spectrum of emotions, from the depths of sorrow to the peaks of joy. This emotional journey, experienced within the stillness of reading, fosters a profound sense of empathy and understanding. It allows readers to live a thousand lives and feel characters' heartbeats across time and space, nurturing an emotional intelligence that transcends the pages. The befriending service, in its essence, encourages this emotional resonance, using stories as a bridge to connect, to comfort, and to understand the myriad emotions that define the human experience.

The Social Tapestry: Weaving Connections Through Stories

While the act of reading may seem solitary, it is inherently social. Books create invisible threads that connect readers across divides, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Book clubs, literary discussions, and even casual conversations about a shared story can act as catalysts for forming meaningful relationships. The NHS ELFT Befriending Service harnesses this power, promoting shared reading experiences to combat loneliness, build networks, and cultivate a sense of communal well-being, reinforcing the notion that while we might get lost in a book alone, we emerge connected to a larger narrative.



Cognitive Enrichment: Strengthening the Mind

Engaging with a good book is a cognitive exercise, mental gymnastics that strengthens the brain. It challenges our perceptions, stimulates imagination, and enriches our vocabulary and knowledge. This intellectual engagement is critical for maintaining cognitive health, especially as we age. The befriending service values this aspect of reading, integrating it into their holistic approach to care, advocating for the role of continuous learning and mental stimulation in sustaining cognitive vitality and resilience.

A Path to Mindfulness: The Art of Being Present

In the whirlwind of modern life, the act of sitting down with a book is a form of mindfulness, a practice of being present. It requires us to slow down, to immerse ourselves fully in the moment, and to engage with the story with our full attention. This mindfulness, cultivated through reading, is a skill that transcends the activity itself, permeating other aspects of life, and enhancing overall well-being. The NHS ELFT Befriending Service embraces this mindful aspect of reading, advocating for its role in fostering a balanced, centred, and peaceful mind.

In Conclusion: A Journey of Discovery and Connection

The power of getting lost in a good book is a testament to the boundless potential of the human mind and spirit. It is a journey that encompasses healing, growth, connection, and discovery, reflecting the holistic vision of the NHS ELFT Befriending Service. As we turn each page, we are reminded that within the realm of stories lies the power to transform, empathize, and unite, offering a beacon of light in the pursuit of well-being.

In this shared narrative, let us cherish the moments spent in the company of books, for they are not mere escapades from reality but voyages towards a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Through the simple yet profound act of reading, we find a path to a more connected, resilient, and empathetic community, embodying the very essence of holistic well-being championed by the NHS ELFT Befriending Service.

Gourmet Hot Dogs – The Ultimate Upgrade for Your Weekend!

By Deanna



The Baguette Advantage

Why settle for the standard hot dog bun? Many traditional buns are packed with preservatives, aiming for an eternal shelf life but lacking that fresh taste. In contrast, a soft baguette gives you the best of both worlds: it's natural, healthy, and provides a satisfying chewiness that perfectly complements hearty ingredients like juicy frankfurters and creamy avocado. Plus, the baguette's flavour and texture elevate the dish to a whole new level.

This choice brings out the savoury notes of the sausage while offering an ideal base for creative toppings.

Mustard: The Perfect Pairing

Choosing the right mustard can make all the difference in creating a memorable hot dog. For this recipe, we suggest:

- Old-fashioned mustard: Whole grain with a slightly sweet taste, adding texture and a rustic charm.
- Dijon mustard: A bolder, spicier option with a smooth finish, enhancing each bite with a slight kick.
- Dijonnaise: For a creamier profile, this Dijon-mayo blend adds richness and complements the baguette and sausage nicely.

Feel free to experiment and find your favourite!

Recipe: Baguette-Style Gourmet Hot Dog

Servings: 1 Gourmet Hot Dog

Ingredients

- 2 jumbo Frankfurt sausages
- 1 soft, preservative-free baguette
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced or mashed
- A dollop of old-fashioned mustard (or Dijon for a kick)
- A handful of fresh onion sprouts

Instructions

1. Cook the Sausages: Heat the Frankfurt sausages on low, ensuring they're thoroughly warmed but not overcooked.
2. Prepare the Baguette: Slice the baguette lengthwise, creating a bed for the toppings. Warm it up in the pan alongside the sausages to give it a toasty touch.
3. Assemble the Hot Dog: Start with the sausages, nestle them into the baguette, and layer on the avocado slices. Add your mustard of choice and sprinkle with fresh onion sprouts for a bit of crunch and a mild onion flavor.
4. Enjoy: This gourmet hot dog is now ready to serve – dig in and enjoy the ultimate blend of flavors and textures.

Activities to do alone

Make it a habit to take care of you

- Take a walk & take photos of everything you like - relating to a theme of choice (e.g anything related to love or food etc)



- Cut out Magazines / or your favourite pictures and create a collage or vision board



- Write a letter to your future self on futureme.com, or on a paper :)



- Put on a YouTube video and learn how to paint or cook something new



- Tidy a zone in the home and donate things to charity or sell them online



- Create a Vision Board with all your favourite places things or create one to envision your future goals



A Little Time to Think: Navigating the Shadows of Mental Health to Find Light

By Dele Oladeji

It's not easy. It's never going to be easy. Life is so complicated. Living with a Mental Health Diagnosis is Complex. I'd rather die at the times of Heightened Psychosis. But, hey, recovery was possible. Glaring at the person. The person glaring at the symptoms, and working out on how to survive with Stigma. The dark voices; Oh yes, the voices were never easy to live with. "Jump, they'll say. No, don't Jump, they'll say. You're a Waste of Space, They'll say. I aren't going to Die, I'd say. It's me again, the Voices in the head. These dark feelings and thoughts kept on longing for me. It was as if life was not worth living. I was born from the Mother of mine, and a Father.

Searching for life on all platforms; in all Corners of the World. But, hey, bravery showed its face like looking through a Clean Cracked Mirror. Conquering smiled and sniggered at the voices en-route to hell! Empathy, Resilience and Compassion bloom, never in Denial. Never in Segregation. Never in Racism too... Not in Hopelessness and Suppression. Never in the Colours of Suicidal Thoughts, or in the Act to Harm Self or Others... Never in the Feelings of Death, or Grieving the Loss of the Darkly, Angry Voices that Loom within the Radar of Heaven or Hell; waiting Impatiently to Crush or Destroy the Mind.

Waiting in Vain to trash the Fragile Soul of the Person Seeking Joy, or Love or Bravery, or the Restoration from an Episode of Hopelessness, Madness, Trauma... or from a Disconnection from Society, or Communities, or the Fear of Severe Loneliness and Isolation. The Flesh of the Person being Reaped off the Bones like a well Carved Ram, or Sheep, or Cow, or Goat. Ready to be Sold and Eating by Human-Kind. Ready for the Plates of the Rich.



A Little Time to Think: Navigating the Shadows of Mental Health to Find Light

By Dele Oladeji

The Oppressed, Begging for a Share of the Meat, and a Meal. A Fat, Plate of Cooked Beef... and Clean Water to Drink. "Fly, Big Brother, Fly away! "What?" Fly now, Big Brother, Scream! Scream! Scream! "What did you say?" Fly toward the Heavens, Big Brother, fly! Fly, Big Brother, Fly... Fly Big, Brother, Fly away! Fly, fly, fly! Fly Away, Big Brother! These words kept on ringing in the Head and in the Hearing.

The Hearing of Strange, yelling voices. The raging of Hallucinatory Voices. So I thought to myself. I needed a Little Time To Think. I surely do need time. We all do need to have the Solitary times, or moments to think. Then the Happy Clouds opened their Windows. Fly, Big Brother, Fly! Softly, softly I flew into the distant, Homely Skies. The voices were angry. There was no room for them anymore. The Moon beamed. Then it started to Rain heavily.

The Clouds were now angry. The Angels covered their Nakedness in the Blackness of the Sky. Then night turned into day. The days transformed into Nights. The Shape of the Heart was Artfully Crafted. I've had the time to thrive. I've had the time to Pray and ask for Forgiveness. I've deeply realised the importance of Forgiving myself first, and then finding the Inner Strength to Love Others. My conclusion was that Life in itself was Worth living, and I'll do all I could to keep on living. There's always "Hope' hiding somewhere, waiting to drive that vehicle of Recovery and Stability. There's always hope ready to fly toward the Heaven's, Holy Lands. Hope is waiting, ready to Empower. Ready to clear the rugged Routes toward Sanity and Recovery.



How Water Can Make Us Happier

We all know that getting out and about is great for our bodies and minds. It helps us stay healthy, clear our heads, and find creative inspiration. Walking boosts metabolism, cardiovascular health, and muscle tone, while natural light exposure during the day regulates sleep patterns, maintaining a healthy circadian rhythm.

Even better, being in nature lowers cortisol levels (the stress hormone) and increases endorphins (the body's natural mood-lifters).

Walking or simply sitting near water, in particular, has amazing benefits. Aquatic environments offer a soothing contrast to our hectic daily lives. Seasonal shifts and fleeting moments lift our spirits: the arch of a weeping willow reflected back at itself, a swan tending its cygnets, sunlight sparkling on water, even the gentle splash of raindrops on water can be uplifting.

Having lived and worked near a river or the sea for most of my life, I can't think of anything better for my own well-being than spending time on or by the water.

Perhaps the idea of adventure and freedom, or memories of holidays in the sun and days on the beach, have something to do with why even thinking about being by water can make us feel so good, but there's also a scientific side to it.

The calm, meditative state we experience when we're in, near, or on the water is known as 'blue mind'. Coined by the late marine biologist Dr Wallace Nichols in his book *Blue Mind: How Water Makes You Happier, More Connected, and Better at What You Do*, the term describes how spending time around water counteracts the stress of modern life.

A source of creative inspiration

A quiet spot by the water is perfect for reflection and mindfulness, helping us gain new perspectives and focus on the present. The magical light conditions near water have inspired iconic works of art over the centuries by artists such as Sandro Botticelli, Katsushika Hokusai, JMW Turner, and David Hockney, to name but a few.



For those of us who find it more difficult to go for long walks (or who don't fancy braving the UK's weather until the summer!), there are perhaps other ways to try to connect with the calming effect of the blue mind. There's a reason for the aquariums in some dentist's waiting rooms: it's been shown that they can help to calm patients before dental surgery. David Attenborough's Blue Planet series for the BBC is over twenty years old but still features some of the most ground-breaking, awe-inspiring underwater film footage ever captured which brings the world's aquarium into our living rooms.

Human history

Aquatic landscapes are rich in natural and social history. Oceans and rivers are the veins and arteries of our planet, supporting diverse ecosystems and human development. They've been crucial for food, settlement, trade, industrialisation, and even war. Today, we see this heritage in docks, harbours, wharfs, towpaths, locks, weirs, museums, and parks.

Even the relatively small area covered by the East London Trust is The ELFT area is intersected by a number of waterways – from the rivers Thames, Lea, and Great Ouse to the Regent's and Hertford Union Canals.

In upcoming issues, we'd like to explore further the fascinating waterways in the ELFT area, but for now, here are a few ideas to inspire us to connect with our blue minds.

SEE & DO

Mile End to Old Ford Lock | London canal walk The Museum of London Docklands | Free entry Trinity Buoy Wharf | London's only remaining lighthouse, free entry Guided Walks | The local Wildlife Trust's river walks around Luton and Bedford Wardown Park & Museum | Luton, free entry Priory Country Park | Bedford, free entry

WATCH (all available online in October 2024)

Britain's Beautiful Rivers: Richard Hammond | Channel 4 Sacred Rivers with Simon Reeve | BBC iPlayer Earth's Great Rivers | BBC iPlayer The Blue Planet II | BBC iPlayer Britain's Great Rivers, Then & Now | Channel 5

READ

The Canal & River Trust has lots of information and ideas, including events, wildlife, waterways history, and downloadable walking routes.

The Great Ouse River Trust and the Lee Valley Trust both work to protect, restore, and promote the rivers, their ecosystems and surrounding areas.

By Karen



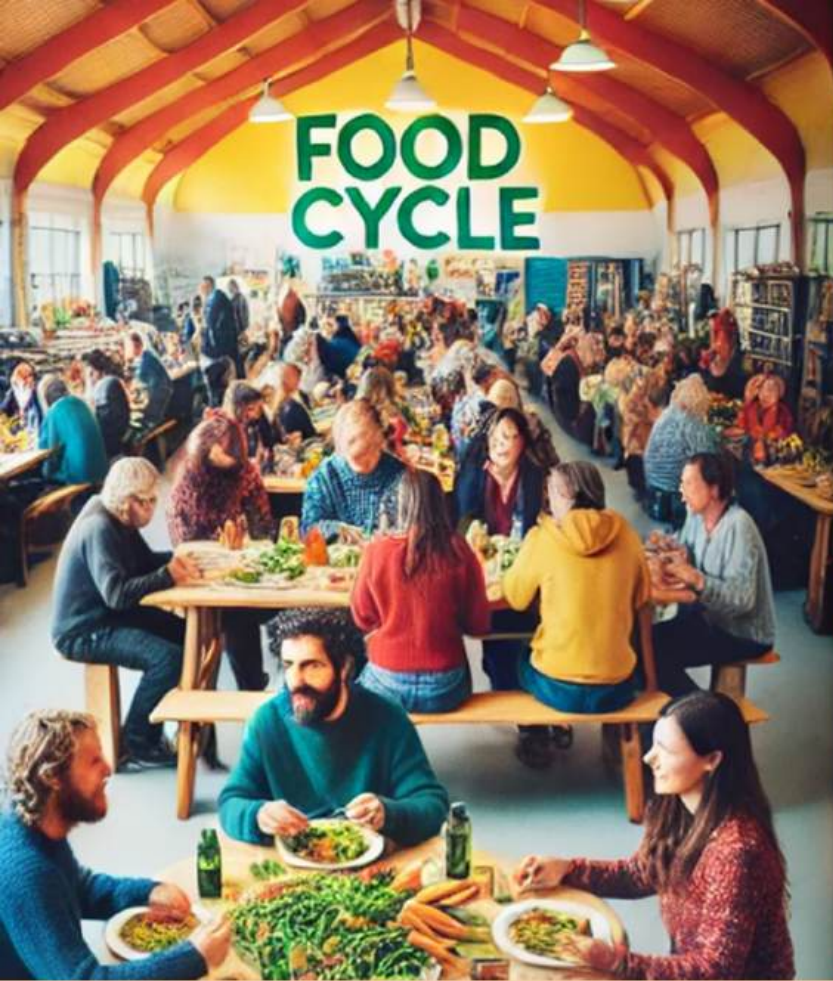
DIY Seasonal Potpourri or Scent Jar



Make it a habit to take care of yourself.

Make your own seasonal potpourri using dried orange slices, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and pine needles. It's a sensory experience that fills your home with cozy scents and adds to the seasonal ambiance. You can keep the potpourri simmering on the stove for an added warm, inviting atmosphere.





Enjoy Free Community Meals with Food Cycle

Food Cycle is a committed charity that turns surplus food donated by supermarkets, shops, and food banks into creative and delicious vegetarian meals, served for free at community projects across England and Wales. Every week, a team of volunteers gets creative, using surplus ingredients to whip up tasty, three-course meals for their guests.

- Everyone is welcome – come as you are!
- Meals are always free – no referral or voucher needed.
- Take home extra food – when there is, you're invited to bring some home.

You can check whether there is a Food Cycle need you by visiting <https://foodcycle.org.uk>. For those who love cooking and looking to get more involved, the website also offers various volunteer opportunities to explore.

By Craig



You're beginning to understand, aren't you?

That the whole world is inside you: in your perspectives and in your heart. That to be able to find peace, you must be at peace with yourself first; and to truly enjoy life, you must enjoy who you are; and once you learn how to master this, you will be protected from everything that makes you feel like you can not go on, that with this gift of recognizing yourself, even when you are alone, you will never be lonely.

Happy Diwali

Unscramble these words to solve the puzzle!

1. ESLTVIAF _____

2. GLISTH _____

3. TOCRBIELAEN _____

4. WROREFISK _____

5. IAGORNL _____

6. IADYS _____

7. SSWETE _____

8. IYLFMA _____

9. RTATOINID _____

10. AMHLIKS _____

11. SURAITL _____

12. FGITS _____

13. YJO _____

14. IYRTRPOESP _____

15. NWE IGGNINSNBE _____

16. ROTOINDCESA _____

17. RYERSPA _____

18. IYUTN _____

19. ISEPHASPN _____

20. TEPELM _____

Very Hard Sudoku

	2	3	9		7		6	
		6	3	2		8	9	
7		9	6		4	2		
8	9				3		4	
				1	2		7	8
2		4	7	9		6		
	3		8		9			6
	4	2						9
	7		2	4				5

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Easy Sudoku

6	7		5					
2	5						3	4
3			1	6				5
7	8	9						6
					6			
5	1	6		2		7	4	8
9	3		6		5			
8	4	7		1		5	6	3
1		5	3	4		2		

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Colour Me In



Remembrance Day



Can you spot the 12 differences in these pictures?



Solutions Page

Very Hard

1	2	3	9	8	7	5	6	4
4	5	6	3	2	1	8	9	7
7	8	9	6	5	4	2	3	1
8	9	7	5	6	3	1	4	2
3	6	5	4	1	2	9	7	8
2	1	4	7	9	8	6	5	3
5	3	1	8	7	9	4	2	6
6	4	2	1	3	5	7	8	9
9	7	8	2	4	6	3	1	5

Easy

6	7	8	5	3	4	9	1	2
2	5	1	8	9	7	6	3	4
3	9	4	1	6	2	8	7	5
7	8	9	4	5	1	3	2	6
4	2	3	7	8	6	1	5	9
5	1	6	9	2	3	7	4	8
9	3	2	6	7	5	4	8	1
8	4	7	2	1	9	5	6	3
1	6	5	3	4	8	2	9	7



Solution

Unscramble these words to solve the puzzle!

1. ESLTVIAF FESTIVAL
2. GLISTH LIGHTS
3. TOCRBIELAEN CELEBRATION
4. WROREFISK FIREWORKS
5. IAGORNL RANGOLI
6. IADYS DIYAS
7. SSWETE SWEETS
8. IYLFMA FAMILY
9. RTATOINID TRADITION
10. AMHLIKS LAKSHMI
11. SURAITL RITUALS
12. FGITS GIFTS
13. YJO JOY
14. IYRTRPOESP PROSPERITY
15. NWE IGGNINSNBE NEW BEGINNINGS
16. ROTOINDCESA DECORATIONS
17. RYERSPA PRAYERS
18. IYUTN UNITY
19. ISEPHASPN HAPPINESS
20. TPELM TEMPLE

EMBERS OF REMEMBRANCE

In fields of red where poppies grow,
We gather close, in soft fire's glow.
The night sky blooms with sparks so bright,
As fireworks dance in the cool twilight.

Hand in hand, in quiet grace,
We honour those no time can erase.
Their memories rise, like embers high,
Mingling with stars in the November sky.

In warmth and light, we stand as one,
Bound by the stories of those gone.
A gentle cheer, a soft refrain—
In shared remembrance, love remains.

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USEFUL CONTACTS

NHS SUPPORT

NHS	WWW.NHS.UK
ELFT	WWW.ELFT.NHS.UK
Befriending Service	ELFT.BEFRIENDINGSERVICE@NHS.NET
People Participation	ELFT.PEOPLEPARTICIPATION@NHS.NET

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINES

Newham	0207 771 5888
Tower Hamlets	0207 771 5807
Hackney	0208 432 8020
Luton	01582 556971
Bedford and Mid-Bedfordshire	01234 315691

SUPPORT FOR ADDICTION

Talk To Frank	WWW.TALKTOFRANK.COM
Alcoholics Anonymous	WWW.ALCOHOLICS-ANONYMOUS.ORG.UK
Cocaine Anonymous	COCAINEANONYMOUS.ORG.UK
GamCare	WWW.GAMCARE.ORG.UK

SUPPORT FOR BEREAVEMENT

Cruse	WWW.CRUSE.ORG.UK
Bereavement Partnership	NATIONALBEREAVEMENTPARTNERSHIP.ORG
The Good Grief Trust	WWW.THEGOODGRIEFTRUST.ORG
At A Loss	WWW.ATALOSS.ORG

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Carers UK	WWW.CARERSUK.ORG
Family Action	WWW.FAMILY-ACTION.ORG.UK

SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
For men experiencing domestic abuse	0808 801 0327
Refuge	WWW.REFUGE.ORG.UK

USEFUL CONTACTS

SUPPORT FOR FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The UK Government	WWW.GOV.UK/OPTIONS-FOR-PAYING-OFF-YOUR-DEBTS
Step Change	WWW.STEPCHANGE.ORG
Citizens Advice	WWW.CITIZENSADVICE.ORG.UK
National Debtline	WWW.NATIONALDEBTLINE.ORG

SUPPORT FOR HOUSING PROBLEMS

Your local council	WWW.GOV.UK/FIND-LOCAL-COUNCIL
Citizens Advice	WWW.CITIZENSADVICE.ORG.UK
Crisis	WWW.CRISIS.ORG.UK/GET-HELP
Shelter	ENGLAND.SHELTER.ORG.UK
StreetLink	WWW.HOMELESS.ORG.UK

SUPPORT FOR LONG TERM CONDITIONS

The Patients Association	WWW.PATIENTS-ASSOCIATION.ORG.UK
Age UK	WWW.AGEUK.ORG.UK

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Hub of Hope	HUBOFHOPE.CO.UK
MIND	WWW.MIND.ORG.UK
Samaritans	TELEPHONE: 116 123
Young Minds	YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK
LGBT+ Helpline	SWITCHBOARD.LGBT

SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Survivors Trust	WWW.THESURVIVORSTRUST.ORG
Rape Crisis	WWW.RASASC.ORG.UK
Survivors UK	WWW.SURVIVORSUK.ORG

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Papyrus	WWW.PAPYRUS-UK.ORG
Ripple Suicide Prevention	WWW.RIPPLESUICIDEPREVENTION.COM
Shout	GIVEUSASHOUT.ORG
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	UKSOBS.ORG
Campaign Against Living Miserably	WWW.THECALMZONE.NET