

Wellbeing Pack 15

Assert

Boxing Training Course

From July 9th, Anton, the boxing instructor who taught a class for January's Active Club, will be leading a weekly online boxing training course. The session will be via Zoom and do-able from your home. We will work on some of the foundation steps and moves. You will be able to just try the first session, or to experience improved fitness, we recommend doing the whole 4-week course! Each session will be £5. If you have any questions, please email jenna@assertbh.org.uk

Budgeting Advice Service

As well as the usual benefit casework, Alex is now offering 1-to-1 budgeting advice and support sessions. Please contact her by email with any benefits questions or to arrange a remote appointment or if you would like to get on to the waiting list for this service: benefits@assertbh.org.uk

Peer Discussion Group

Debbie is organising a weekly Peer Discussion Group to take place on a Friday evening from 5:30pm to 7pm. This week's topic is "Film: Come and share information about your favourite film, a film that changed how you think, different genres, film soundtrack etc or just come and perhaps get some ideas for future viewing". Each week there will be a different topic for the conversation. Please email Debbie on debstar0205@yahoo.com

Workbook: Movement

The word emotion is derived from the Latin word: "emovere" meaning to move, move out or move through. I like to think of emotions as moving from one state of feeling to another. It is often when we are processing an event or a new emotion that an emotion is evoked. For some, there can be delay in the processing, or feeling, time, which can be very confusing. Alternatively, some people may feel & express emotions very deeply at the time. It appears that everyone has a different relationship to their emotions.

Some emotions are taught to us to be either 'good' or 'bad' and these may have been rewarded or discouraged from a young age. Therefore, we can maybe feel unable to move through or feel 'stuck' in one emotion, and simultaneously feel disconnected from another. I heard an author say recently in a podcast that "all emotions are for feeling" and I thought that this was extremely powerful. But unlearning to avoid some emotions is difficult.

Emotions are complicated as sometimes it is hard to understand what they mean or where they are coming from. Sometimes there aren't even the right words to describe what we are

feeling. And sometimes they can feel too big to even speak. But movement is a tool we can use to investigate and help 'pass through' different emotions.

The next four sections will explore some of the ways that movement helps us and our wellbeing.

Interoceptive, proprioception & awareness

This section is about how our senses and our body are linked to how we feel. Emotions are not just an idea in your head, they are physically embodied. So, the way you feel affects the way you hold your body. For example, if you're anxious you'll probably get tension in your muscles, if you're confident you'll stand tall and at ease, if you're depressed and lethargic you'll slump. But because our brains are so powerful, we can change how we feel by changing how we move our body! By doing things different sensory activities we can send new signals to our brains that cause emotional changes. Movement such as aerobic exercise cause changes in our brains that reduce stress & depression. Even doing a really big grin can trick our brains into thinking we are happy!

Emotions & our body

In yoga and other movement practices, emotions can be referred to as being 'trapped' in certain areas of our body. This is due to unconscious tension that can build through stress or from one event. It is commonly thought that sadness and fear are stored in our hip region. This related to the evolutionary stress reaction 'fight or flight' that would tell our bodies to run or freeze when in danger. There are movements that do release these emotions from our bodies. Movement helps us to move energy & emotions through & flow out of our body. Our body can take any fear, anxiety or joy within our bodies, transform it into motion and release it.

Breathing & blood flow

The reason doing exercise increases our heart rate and gets us breathing deeply is so that our body can pump more oxygen around our body. Using breathing techniques when we are doing more calming types of movement, such as yoga, has the same effect. Increasing the blood flow around our body also increases the amount of oxygen going to our brains. Have you ever noticed how you are breathing when you are experiencing different emotional states? Controlling our breathing can therefore be a tool for observing and checking in our emotions. This can be an especially useful when we are feeling some big emotions – and therefore something to remember that we are in control of how we breathe while we move through and process these emotions.

Endorphins & mental health

Physical exercise can lift your mood, reduce stress & anxiety by encouraging the release of endorphins. Endorphins are your bodies' happy chemicals which can improve our self-esteem. And having positive self-esteem can improve our wellbeing. Movement can be used for emotion regulation; for reducing inappropriate fear, anger, sadness and other negative emotions or increasing happiness, pride and other positive feelings.

Ideas for movement & emotion release:

- An at-home solo dance party – play your favourite music and move your body however you feel
- Yoga class – either free via YouTube or you can pay for a class
- Assert's Active Club – every Friday (except July) I send out a different NHS exercise video
- July's Active Club – Boxing training course (really good for any restless anxieties or anger)
- Breathing workshops – again available via YouTube or Headspace app
- Havening Techniques – soothing self-comforting techniques – Robin Youngson
- Hoovering, cleaning etc
- Walking & running – also get some fresh air & alone time