Title – Self Care, What’s Your Focus?

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We would be happy for our abstract to be considered as a short oral presentation as well as a poster.

The idea of our poster is that we wanted a really simple way for people to be able to identify what they would like to focus on for their own self-care. We hold introduction assessments with people to outline the support and services we offer; there is paperwork we go through that asks a variety of questions, but we didn’t feel there was anything that really allowed the person to think about what they wanted to get out of their work with us.

Self-care isn’t someone making the decision for you about what would enable you to improve your life; it’s about feeling empowered enough to make your own decision. This tool is used during motivational interviewing to ask that question – ‘What do you want to focus on? What is important to you?’

The lines at the bottom are cut through so that people are then able to tear off the strip to remind them of the choice they made and on the back of this they can note the date, the number of a service that could support them to follow on with what they have chosen or even a signature as an agreement to themselves that they are going to spend some time on themselves – as a service we don’t need a signature to contract into self-care, the responsibility lies with you as you are the one who will get the benefit or consequence of not taking that time for yourself.

At Thurrock Mind we work with people around their emotional wellbeing however are very aware that factors such as physical health and the environment in which you live are majorly intertwined.

Peers from the Thurrock Mind Peer Mentoring and Support Project decided on the options at the bottom by thinking of areas that they have previously chosen to address within their own lives and were very clear that there needed to be a real mix of options; one person may really need to address something to do with their physical health whereas someone else might want to consider how they can better engage with the community around them – neither more or less important.

We made a conscious decision to leave an empty box at the end as we know one size doesn’t fit all and if we want to offer people their own choice then they need to be able to add options we may not have thought of.

The quotes around the side are to encourage the idea that we can best be there for those around us when we have made sure that we are cared for ourselves and this isn’t selfish, it’s about knowing that we are also important and deserve to be cared for as anyone else.

We like the saying on the project ‘Tie your shoes, pack a good lunch and remember that we’re all in this together’ and with self-care it really is about making a personal decision to be as kind to yourself as you would to anyone else and then finding the support so you have relationships around you that can encourage this.