What is Bracken?

Bracken is a wellbeing resource based in East Belfast; providing a wide range of progressive, tailored support and experiential learning opportunities to our members throughout East & North Belfast.

We listen to what you want, but also support you to look beneath the surface and understand what you need; matching your needs to the right group or course for you.

We accept you for who and where you are now; providing unique opportunities for personal development and success in reaching your goals.

We value partnership working with community groups. We have provided and continue to provide; a wide range of tailored groups; designed and delivered to meet your specific needs and delivered at your location.

IMPORTANT SPRING DATES!

Enrolment for this program starts on 1st April 2015 all courses/groups begin the week beginning Monday 13th April.

As our courses are exclusive to members, non-members will need to complete a membership application form - see “Membership Process”

Our next season will be:

Sizzling Summer Program - July to August 2015

Full Membership Process

Step 1 - Call us or drop by to pick up an application

Step 2 - Call us to arrange a visit for you and your support agent (see below for details). You can bring your application with you or post ahead of time.

Applications can be completed by a member of the Community Mental Health Team; e.g. Social Workers, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Occupational Therapists etc.

To be considered for membership you must be:

⇒ Aged 18 to 65 years old.
⇒ Experiencing Mental Ill Health

If you are considering applying, please contact Lynn McCullough to arrange an introductory visit on (028) 90459878

The application process is to help establish your needs in relation to your emotional health and wellbeing and whether the scheme can meet those needs with the current support/program on offer. As part of this process, you will also be assigned a recovery mentor referred to as your “Key Worker”. This person will walk alongside you in your journey within the scheme to support you and offer a second person perspective on challenges as you meet them.
**Individual Course Enrolment**

**Benefits:**
- A Short Term Approach
- Outcome & Results Focused
- Initial coaching conversation to prioritise your needs
- Focusing on Key Areas:
  - Promotes Positive Short Term Results
  - Builds momentum, confidence & self esteem
  - Lays the foundation for future success

**How:**
Meet with your mentor to identify your needs & set 1-2 short term goals to work on.
Choose the courses you need to support your goal.
Apply for the course(s) through the short-term application form.

**Full Membership**

**Benefits:**
- The complete package in reaching your goals and making a lasting change.
- One to one coaching and mentoring to identify your needs and prioritise and plan multiple goals over short, medium & long term to improve your quality of life.
- Mapping of your own person-centred recovery journey.
- Exclusive access to a wide range of relevant and meaningful courses, support groups and social opportunities.
- Sign posting and transitional support to other non-mental health and community services.

**How:**
See “Full Membership” Process
This Season in Bracken...
creative Art

Sketch... Paint.... Make.....It doesn’t matter... What matters is that you zone out the world just for that moment of time.

Don’t make a masterpiece... don’t be precise... throw it all out on to paper, card or canvas because it feels good... then see what happens!

This group is not about skill or technique, no one will ever judge what you do... this is about the feeling you get in creating something that is purely original and your own.

We will give you the support, the space and the time you need.

A “drop in” art group is also available!

self management

Self--management is about helping people to realise that they are the experts on themselves. It aims to capture hope and strengthen belief.

The topics have to be useful to the group participants and therefore the group decides what they would like to cover each week.

Previous groups have chosen sessions which have included: Learning from the past, Stress management, Perfectionism, Decision-making, Inspirational thinking, Grief and grief management, Personality, Relationships, Medication and treatments, Conflict resolution kills
Bracken are proud to be celebrating 40 years of providing wellbeing services to this community this year.

As part of a year of celebrations, a number of members are going to collaborate with staff to produce a short film representing all aspects of this 40-year journey.

This is a great opportunity for equally current and new members to build skills in: Drama, production, storytelling and creative writing.

This will also help build confidence through the project itself and the celebration at its launch later this year.

We are especially keen for new and fresh perspectives which new members can bring to our story!

- You want to try drama/acting for the first time.
- You want to learn about expressing emotions and presenting a story in different ways.
- You want to be part of a celebratory project and help others tell their story.

Take back control of your life by understanding the sources of your anxiety, anger, and phobias.

- Fear, anxiety or anger have stolen relationships or opportunities from you.
- You want to be in a group with people who understand the impact of anxiety on your day.
- You want to understand fear from a fresh perspective and find new ways to cope with it.

Look at how your body and mind react to anxiety and anger.

Learn what is really behind your anxiety, and understanding what fuels your fear.

- Get support from others who are experiencing the same emotions as you daily.
- Take back your daily routine, your relationships, take back your identity, open your self to the new opportunities which fear hides from you every day.

- You want to be in a group with people who understand the impact of anxiety on your day.
- You want to understand fear from a fresh perspective and find new ways to cope with it.

Take back control of your life by understanding the sources of your anxiety, anger, and phobias.

Learn what is really behind your anxiety, and understanding what fuels your fear.

- Get support from others who are experiencing the same emotions as you daily.
- Take back your daily routine, your relationships, take back your identity, open your self to the new opportunities which fear hides from you every day.

- You want to try drama/acting for the first time.
- You want to learn about expressing emotions and presenting a story in different ways.
- You want to be part of a celebratory project and help others tell their story.
We are looking for expressions of interest for this peer led photography group (following a suggestion from current members). The group is aimed at beginner and experienced photographers who are open to learning from each other.

Alternating weeks will involve:
1. Looking at and discussing photographs taken by group members (enlarged on a projector!)
2. Arranging and going out to new locations of interest to take photographs.

The group will be confirmed dependant on the level of interest - please contact *Dee at Bracken* if you would like to be kept updated on this group.

- You are interested in taking up a new hobby with a friendly group of people.
- You have an interest in photography whether recent or from the past.
- You would like to support others in their interest.

Reflexology & Indian Head Massage

Exclusive to members of Bracken, our resident (fully qualified) Reflexologist Tracey will assess your needs with you, and help you to identify problem area(s). You will then attend 6 weekly sessions focused on this area.

You will then receive another “Top-Up” appointment in 6 months. Dependant on individual circumstances further one-off “top up” sessions may be available to you.

Due to the unprecedented demand there is now (approx.) 10 week waiting list.

- You would like try an alternative therapy to ease stress, tension or specific area.
- You find it difficult to relax in group relaxation situations.
- You are going through a particularly difficult time at the moment and would like some additional therapeutic interventions.
Bracken Film Club

Latest movies and golden oldies displayed and appreciated through projector, with FREE ENTRY and FREE POPCORN to complete the experience.

We take requests re: new releases and hold special themed film days around Halloween and Christmas.

We go out to the local cinema on the last week of each month to see a new movie. (Members will be expected to pay for their own ticket on these occasions)

- A bargain afternoon out.
- Company and entertainment
- A chance to meet and make new friends in the scheme.

Reading & Writing
(For Beginners & Improvers)

Claim back your right to write! When you struggle with reading and writing you miss out on opportunities to access information on your mental health and wellbeing and to have your voice heard. This group is for like minded adults in the same position.

This is not a classroom, it is relaxed informal and welcoming to everyone. It is also very flexible and caters to all levels of literacy, you begin where you are now, not where you think you should be!

- You struggle with reading & writing.
- You want to be able to access more information.
- You want to learn with others in the same position as you.
- Maybe you had a negative learning experience and

This is an accredited essential skills course
Have I Got News For You

Members have the opportunity to read through and discuss the news stories featuring in the weekly newspapers.

Whether you come for the lively discussions or the company, everyone is welcomed by the group.

If you’re lacking in confidence, there are members of the group who prefer to listen; so there is no pressure to speak in the group.

- You want to stay in touch with the world around you.
- You want to understand and challenge news stories and learn how they affect you.
- You want to build your social skills through debate and constructing arguments in a team.

Fake Bake

Cheat your way to baking success!

This relaxed and social group will teach you skills and techniques which will “Shortcut” past the usual laborious baking tasks.

The approach used means you will be able to use your imagination in combining ideas in the future. With a different and new recipe cheat each week, you’ll be inspired to pick up the whisk at home for sure!

Max: 6 People for 6 Weeks (running 3 times consecutively so add your name to the waiting list!)
My Space

Make our space YOUR space!
In the most informal part of our weekly program, you can utilise the bright and airy space to meet up with other members and socialise or work on joint projects. You also have exclusive access to the games equipment such as Air Hockey, Ping Pong or Board Games.

Or maybe you want to strengthen the learning of groups you attend. E.g. If you attend the creative writing group—you might want to come in and work on a writing project in some quiet space.

A great time to do a “status update” and journal your weekly journey, by typing or writing about both your challenges and achievements of the week. This can help your recovery mentor tailor your support and identify groups/ create new groups which may be of interest to you.

(computer & relaxation facilities also available)

Basic Everyday Maths

Have you been scared away from maths by bad experiences either at school or in life?

Has someone or something made you believe that memorising your times tables tells you if you are a “maths person” or not? In actual fact there is no such thing, as everyone can learn the basic maths skills needed for every day life, and without the headache!

Numeracy is essential to balancing your budget and building your independence.

Make numbers easy & you don’t need to go back to school to do it!

- You want space & time outside the house weekly.
- You have a project you want to work on, or skills you want to practice.
- You want to journal your weekly journey for personal development.
- You struggle with day to day sums and calculations.
- You want to take charge of your own budgeting.
- You want to learn some clear and simple methods to learn everyday maths that you will use, not of a textbook full of Information you won’t!
Knit & Natter

This social group is the perfect place to sit back, relax and get the ball (of yarn) rolling!
You will be joined by other beginner and experienced knitters who love a “yarn” and are happy to welcome new people and support you with your knitting nags and snags.
Some people in the group have reported this activity to help with; quitting/reducing smoking, biting nails and other nervous habits - as your hand will always be kept busy and there’s no pressure to complete a project.

2 Groups available - 1 in Bracken & 1 in the local community!

- You want to learning knitting from scratch.
- You want to “pick up” knitting again after a long time.
- You love knitting and would enjoy the company.
- You want to meet new people.

Creative Writing Group

Do you love to write creatively or have you ever wanted to try it but are not sure how and where to start?
Sometimes thoughts and emotions are difficult to understand and express, and writing these down can often be easier than speaking about them.
Creative writing gives you the power to unleash thoughts, ideas and feelings onto the page and explore the world as you experience it.
YOU have the power to make words come alive!

2 Groups available - 1 in Bracken & 1 in the local community!

- You want to try creative writing for the first time.
- You write at home & want to share your writing with others or just to listen.
- You can’t raise your voice but have much to say.
In The Community...
The Good Natured Gardeners

An opportunity to “Branch Out” into community green spaces.

Participants need have no prior knowledge of gardening, as they will be guided by the group facilitator.

- You would like to learn new skills
- You would like to meet new people in a relaxed space.
- You want to get out in the fresh air, but prefer some company or support.

Solutions Clinic

This service is for members who have tried attending a group and experienced difficulties...

You will have one assessment session to identify an area you’d like to work on or improve. During this session we will develop an action plan together. This will be followed by 6 weekly coaching and mentoring sessions to support you in working through the plan.

The purpose of this support is to identify the source of a specific problem which would benefit from a second person perspective. The action plan will always involve some things for you to work on in-between sessions—this to enable you to develop independent problem solving skills.

- You have specific problem you’d like to work on or address.
- You need to work on a particular life or community living skill to be able to attend groups.
- You need a second person perspective on a situation.
- You want to know about other services available in the local community.

Part of this process may include signposting to appropriate specialist services in the community.

This service is by appointment only.
Are you afraid to turn on a computer, or of deleting the contents by pushing a single button?

A lot of people are afraid to try computers for the first time because they are an unknown - you are not alone!

Come and learn computers skills at your own pace with the support you need.

- You feel like you’re being left behind by the computer generation
- You want to make like easier using computers
- You’d like to enjoy using computers instead of stressing.

Due to popularity, places on this course are greatly limited so please contact us asap to register.

This intermediate group is for people who know how to use the basics of computers and would like to build skills or update on the latest Windows, Microsoft Word and email software.

- Understand how to use a computer and how it operates.
- Learn how to type and print out simple documents.
- Practical advice on overcoming problems with
This group includes pool, monthly bus trips, taster volunteering sessions with other organisations and sessions on men’s health and issues.

- You want to join a group with other men.
- You would help or support with men’s issues from other men.
- You want access to new opportunities and experiences.

The ever popular Bracken walking group is a great way to begin your Monday morning and week ahead.

The group chooses a different route each week, with opportunities to travel to other locations in greater Belfast and beyond—as agreed by the group in advance.

Get some fresh air into your lungs, a skip in your stride and spend time with a lovely group of people who are just trying to take simple steps to improve their health.

It is up to you to dress in comfortable and weather suitable clothes - including raincoats! (If we only went out in sunshine we’d never be out!)
Our youth group creates connections and opportunities for young people using wellbeing services. This group is perfect for anyone aged 18-30 years old and:

- New to services
- Leaving CAMHS (Child & Adult Mental Health Services) team and wanting support in moving on to adult services.
- Stuck in a negative “revolving door” cycle of services and wanting to break habits and negative thought patterns.
- Dealing with a life change of any kind which is causing you distress or anxiety.
- Building or rebuilding your identity and resilience following a period of illness.

The group is led by the needs of current members and sessions in the past have included: 10 Pin Bowling, kayaking, personal development workshops, cinema, local trips to areas of interest, indoor/outdoor sports, group/peer support projects, film projects and various other social opportunities.

The exciting new re-launch of this group with new members will be in April 2015!

We also sometimes work in partnership with our neighbouring youth group Connect based in South & West Belfast. This provides opportunities for joint projects and

Cooking a different hearty meal each week, this group proves that you can fill up without piling on the pounds or breaking the bank. Members can contribute to the ideas and cooking preparation each week, or just enjoy some relaxing social time and enjoy their meal.

Due to popular demand, there is a waiting list for this group—please register your interest with staff in your application.
Creative Writing

Submerged in the tranquil haven and steeped in the history of the Belfast Central Library—one of Ireland’s first public libraries (opened in 1888).

Here you can allow your words to wander in wonderment and whimsy on a fresh spring afternoon.

Guided by the facilitator you will be prompted to use the resources right on your doorstep, including familiar or old texts, music and art from the library, to inspire you breathe words onto paper and relieve the tensions of your day.

- You want to try creative writing for the first time.
- You write at home & want to share your writing with others or just to listen.
- You want to relax with and enjoy writing as a pastime.

Anxiety Management & Relaxation

Escape for moment in your day...

Allow us to paint pictures of beautiful places and images which are peaceful and tranquil; where you can breathe slow relaxing breaths and create an inner sense of calmness.

Take time out for yourself with some guided relaxation, and practical anxiety management techniques which change and grow each week, led by your needs.

Bracken staff specialise at original and tailored guided relaxation scripts, which can be adapted to the needs and preferences of any group.

This group will be held in North Belfast

- You never take time out or can’t at home.
- Stress overwhelms you regularly & it feels hard to keep your head above water.
- You don’t know how to relax or you do and need to schedule it to make sure it happens!
- You want to calm racing thoughts.
With early booking these can be delivered at your location...
Positive Steps is a mental health promotion programme which brings many other benefits in addition to improving our mental health & emotional well-being. The programme provides many exciting opportunities for people to experience, for example trying something new and learning new skills; taking risks; making new connections and relationships; socialising; being creative; learning relaxation techniques; figuring out how to value yourself and how to contribute in valuable ways; improving health; knowing when and how to get help; learning all this in a fun way.

- Raise your self esteem & confidence.
- Try a new approach led by you
- Practical solutions to learn how to manage emotions & learn how to

Are you at a stage in your life where there are lots of changes outside your control?
Do you know which changes in your life so far have caused you the most stress or anxiety and why?

- You become unwell or low around the time of a change.
- You constantly feel out of control of your situation.
- You can’t understand why you keep repeating the same patterns

Would you like to improve how youcope with change and reduce your stress levels day to day?
If the answer to any of these questions is yes – this is the course for you! Being able to cope with change in your life builds your emotional resilience; building steady ground to stand on and weather life storms.
The Bracken life skills group, covering a wide range of areas; from citizenship, to social skills, to physical health and much more. This is particularly helpful to members aspiring to more independent living, but provides such a diverse range of skills it is an invaluable resource to anyone.

The first session is an assessment with group to identify areas needed specific to that group.

- You would like help with specific daily living skills.
- You have been in hospital or are just now entering independent living for the first time.
- You want to re-claim skills you lost or lost confidence in - through illness.

Remember!

In addition to these groups we can also deliver the following at your location:

- Creative Writing
- Anxiety Management
- Relaxation
- Understanding Fear
- Have I Got News For You!

We can also design a specific group around your needs - speak to staff about any ideas you have.
About Us

Our peer support group began one year ago as a closed group, who met each week and supported each other with their wellbeing.

What We Do

• We meet once a week
• We have a cuppa & a chat
• We go out and about to a wide range of different places
• We provide a listening ear
• We arrange training days

About You

We are now looking for males and females aged 30-65 years old, who are mentally well or recovering from mental illness to join us for our group discussions and/or days out.

We believe all members have a positive contribution to make, and we welcome all who would help improve the dynamics of the group by adding their own contribution.

A sense of humor is essential. Join like-minded people and improve your social skills by networking.

Join our group and partake in those important steps that lead to wellness and recovery of the mind.

What You Get

• Improved Self Esteem
• Improved Self Confidence
• Get out of the house
• Broaden your horizons
• Time with like-minded people
• Exclusive access to new courses & opportunities in Beacon

Places we’ve visited so far:

Belfast City Hall
BBC
Belfast Barge
Malone House
10 Pin Bowling
Ulster Museum
Starbucks

Places We Plan To Go:

Ulster Hall
Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
Any Ideas?

“I enjoy going to the group because it gives me a sense of achievement, fulfillment and support, but with a sense of humor and the opportunity to share these things with like minded people.”

- Judith
For further information on Bracken contact the scheme manager or staff at:

**Bracken Beacon Day Support,**
Niamh, 2nd Floor
241 Newtownards Road
Belfast, BT4 1AF

**Telephone:** 028 90459878

**Email:** bracken@beaconwellbeing.org