

FOR SECOND STEP STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICES.

HOPE ISSUE 4  
MAY 2021

hope

It's the  
creativity  
that saved  
me.

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Online art exhibition

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Conference hears Steve's story

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**SECOND  
STEP**

PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST

COVER ARTWORK: STUART / CREATE & RECOVER EXHIBITION

Share your #HopeandCourage stories [prandcomms@second-step.co.uk](mailto:prandcomms@second-step.co.uk) Follow us [@wearesecondstep](https://www.instagram.com/wearesecondstep)



## Editor's note

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Second Step newsletter, Hope. This issue's theme is creativity in recovery, celebrating in particular the creativity of our clients from our Step Together service in Somerset.

We're delighted to be working towards expanding our face to face support in all our services as lockdown rules continue to ease. We're especially excited about opening up our classrooms again for our wellbeing sessions in Bristol and North Somerset.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter, and if you've got a story you'd like to share, please get in touch: [jane.edmonds@second-step.co.uk](mailto:jane.edmonds@second-step.co.uk) or call Jane on 07841 777401

## Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our clients, volunteers and staff continue to be of the utmost importance to us as lockdown rules ease. We're following Government guidelines and are slowly opening up our services in a careful and planned way.

We continue to do our best to offer our clients the support they need as we move out of restrictions, recognising this transition can be difficult for many.

To find out more, go to [second-step.co.uk](http://second-step.co.uk) and our Instagram and Twitter: [@wearesecondstep](https://www.instagram.com/wearesecondstep).

# A picture paints a thousand words

A HUGE THANK YOU TO BEN, DAVID AND STUART FOR SHARING THEIR AMAZING ART IN OUR NEW AND EXCITING ONLINE EXHIBITION.

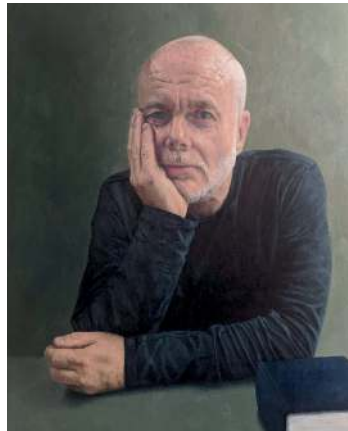
WORDS: JANE EDMONDS  
ARTWORK: BEN, DAVID & STUART



'SHIFTING IDENTITIES' BY DAVID



'BOAT' BY BEN



'LEE' BY STUART



'PEOPLE' BY BEN

**Create & Recover is the name of our online exhibition hosted on our website and featuring clients from and involved with our Step Together service in Somerset.**

All three create very different art from each other, but all share a passion and talent for creativity and art. Do go online to see and find out more.

As we look at Ben, David and Stuart's art, a thousand things will come to mind and there will be a thousand different interpretations and understandings. That's part of the power of art and something which helps all three of our artists shape and define their story.

**"It's the creativity that saved me, and it can be a way to help others too."** says Stuart.

Of course, story-telling isn't the only way creativity can help someone's

recovery but telling one's story is certainly an important part of it. For Stuart, art helped him understand, accept and finally stop his drinking.

For Ben, it was more about escapism and helping him express difficult feelings. He says: **"I am particularly inspired by things that upset me as a way of expressing how I am feeling. I am currently working on a portrait of my mum, who passed away last year."**

For David, he says: **"Through art I find compassion and the ability to regain control so that I can thrive in the present."**

To see more of these wonderful artworks, please go to the **Step Together page of our website.**

## Sharing stories

A recent webinar on men's mental health arranged by Public Health England South East was attended by more than 400 people - mostly men. Entitled 'Developing a Collaborative Approach for Men's Mental Health', the group heard testimonies and stories from all kinds of organisations including Marina O'Brien, team manager for our suicide prevention project, Hope.

Marina shared Hope's approach and gave details about its life-saving and life-changing work with middle-aged men in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. She also shared a poignant video from Steve who has received specialist counselling to support him after he lost his wife to suicide. The group were unanimously moved by his testimony sharing their appreciation and gratitude including:

**"Thank you, Steve, for sharing your reality. So powerful. Wishing you all the best in the future for you and your son."**

**"So so beautiful and powerful, -thank you so much for sharing your story."**

**"What an absolutely captivating, wonderful video."**

**"Amazing video, thank you Steve for sharing your story."**



## New fund helps connect people

Second Step clients will benefit from a new grant-making fund to help build connections after Covid. The Covid Connections Fund, which has a minimum grant size of £50 and a maximum of £300, can support clients in a number of ways from helping purchase laptops or tablets, paying to attend online classes or providing training on using the equipment.

**Andy Warren, Deputy Chief Executive, said:**

**"The last year has been really hard for everyone but I have been delighted with how our business has continued to support our clients using digital innovations - from virtual support sessions through to Zoom wellbeing groups. This fund will enable us to continue to move forward, enabling our clients and groups to access even more support whether that be physical IT kit or access to groups or projects"**

The Covid Connections Fund is open to current clients only. Applications need to be made through support staff. For more information please email: [covidconnections@second-step.co.uk](mailto:covidconnections@second-step.co.uk)

## Return to face to face classes

Our Wellbeing Colleges are delighted to be able to offer the return of face to face sessions in our classrooms from May. Both the teams in Bristol and North Somerset have been working really hard to make sure the spaces are safe, secure and Covid friendly. The teams can't wait to welcome you back.

Full details on how to book can be found by visiting [www.second-step.co.uk](http://www.second-step.co.uk) and follow the link for Wellbeing Colleges.



# Wonderful Wellbeing Walks

GETTING OUTSIDE WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS

WORDS: JANE MURCH

**The Second Step volunteering team are delighted to be introducing regular wellbeing walks for our amazing volunteers, to be able to connect with one another and the natural environment.**

Our volunteers come to us for a wide variety of reasons but all recognise the value of sharing experiences and learning from and supporting one another. This has been restricted by lockdown but as this eases and we can meet outdoors in groups of six, the volunteer team will be arranging weekly walks in some easily accessible natural spots across the region.

In addition to connecting with others, the recognition that green spaces have a positive impact on mental wellbeing has been well documented. Walking and talking link naturally together and walking in a group can make us feel more connected to one another, reducing loneliness and isolation. Walking can also improve mood and sleep-quality and reduce stress and anxiety. This is especially pertinent for our volunteers as the majority come to us having expressed a lived experience of mental health issues.

**STOP PRESS:** This year's Mental Health Awareness Week took place between 10-16 May and focused on nature. Go and check out the stories about nature and reconnection on our social media channels [@wearesecondstep](https://www.instagram.com/wearesecondstep).

## Two new services for Somerset

Crisis Safe Spaces has been co-designed by local people with lived experience who want more support in the community for when they're feeling overwhelmed. The service, which opened in November, has been really well received. It offers face to face, telephone and Zoom support on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings from 5.30 - 11.30pm. It also offers telephone and Zoom support only on Saturdays and Sundays from 11am-4pm. To find out more, please visit our website [www.second-step.co.uk](http://www.second-step.co.uk) and follow the link for Somerset under Our Services.

Next Steps supports people to move back into the community after a stay in hospital. The newly formed team is currently getting to know clients and understanding what it is they need. Rachel Edgecombe, Community Partnerships Manager, said: "Next Steps is a service that aims to bridge the gap from hospital to home by walking alongside people to help them make this transition." For an introduction to the team, please email [nextsteps.team@nhs.net](mailto:nextsteps.team@nhs.net).

Both services are part of Open Mental Health, a voluntary alliance with the NHS in Somerset.

## Stress Awareness Month

Throughout April, we looked at stress and the impact it is having on society. We spoke to Rose, one of our North Somerset Wellbeing clients who spoke candidly about stress and how she copes, day to day, with it. Rose attends the Creative Writing group and shares her recent poem;

### Stress Gone Bad - by Rose

I stress if I do, I stress if I don't  
My thoughts are here and now they are there  
By the end of the day I am depleted  
And yet what have I done nothing at all  
I stress some more and now can't sleep  
I plan the morrow maybe a different approach  
Full of ideas and packed full of hope  
I wake exhausted too tired to move  
My plans were big but now I am failing  
I feel despair how do I cope  
So much to do but where to start  
The tasks feel too big and I feel too small  
Oh where have I gone what has happened to me?

Thank you for sharing your wonderful work with us, Rose.

# Safe Haven opens its doors to clients

## CRISIS CENTRE PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR PEOPLE IN ACUTE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS.

The centre, which launched in May 2020 as a phone support service, is the first of its kind for North Somerset and was co-designed with local service users and clinicians. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the centre had to adapt from operating a face to face service and was quickly repurposed to provide remote support. The team at the Safe Haven will continue to provide a telephone support service for some of the most vulnerable people in the region, and will now also be offering face to face support in a Covid-safe environment.

For one of our North Somerset clients, Vicky, just knowing that the centre is close to home and there to support her has been a blessing. Vicky, who has bi-polar disorder and has lived with mental health problems since her teenage years, explains how vital this support has been to her recovery.

**"I am so pleased about the Safe Haven crisis centre opening in Weston-super-Mare, it's fantastic news!"**



**"Knowing the hospital and other mental health services in Weston close overnight just added to my anxiety. When you suffer with mental distress it tends to be in the evening or at night, a time when your usual ports of call are closed, or your family might be asleep. If you don't have any help locally you think you might not be able to get any help at all - it just makes it even harder to reach out when you're going through a crisis."**

**"Knowing that the Safe Haven centre is there, and that staff are there ready to help you is such a relief. Just having the knowledge that it's open in the evenings if I need support makes me feel better already."**



## Carry on cooking

**COMMUNITY REHABILITATION'S VERY SUCCESSFUL COOKERY GROUP WITH COEXIST COMMUNITY KITCHEN WENT ONLINE IN JANUARY.**

The weekly group has between six and nine people taking part along with one of our volunteers. Coexist Community Kitchen provides the ingredients (including vegan and gluten free) already weighed out with a printed recipe and Recovery Navigators have been delivering these to clients, the day before each session.

You can find out more about Community Rehabilitation on our website.

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