WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2023

The Event: Lantern Parade

Preparation: Lantern Making

On the 3rd of October Richmond Fellowship Kirklees Employment Service's Peer Champions, and customers came together to prepare for World Mental Health Day.

The Annual Lantern Parade was going to be taking place in Dewsbury Town Centre, hosted by the Working Together Better Partnership we are involved in, and we needed to make sure we were ready to light up the night!

Peer Champions came together for an evening of decorating lanterns, chatting about promoting mental health, and generally spending time with each other. There may have been some snacks to keep us going as well. Kaz, one of our Champions, said the session 'was good fun and I had a laugh'.

Employment Advisers, the Peer Support Coordinator, and the Service Manager all joined in, and Andrew from the IT Department came to have a go as well!

It was really nice to be involved in preparing for an event to make sure we could promote the service, but most importantly mental health wellbeing, especially knowing we would be following this through by attending the event as well. We were all excited to be involved in the discussion about mental health in the local community.

The 10th October saw World Mental Health Day celebrated across the country, and the Kirklees area was no exception to this.

Richmond Fellowship Kirklees Employment Service is constantly promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, trying to increase accessibility, and support people in looking after themselves and moving towards their goals. World Mental Health Day helps us with this as it is such a big platform for us to use.

Kirklees Employment Service is part of The Working Together Better Partnership, a network of mental health services in the local area. The WTB Partnership hosts, what is now, an annual lantern parade event for World Mental Health Day to bring people together, get people talking, and let them know the fantastic support that is on offer to anyone who needs it. This year was no exception.

Our Peer Champions had supported in preparing for the event by making some beautiful lanterns, and then joined us for the event in Dewsbury Town Centre. Stalls included our local Women's Centre, Support to Recovery Creative Service, CLEAR Recovery Service, Carers Count, and of course our Employment Service, including Peer Support.

It was really important to us that our Peer Champions were there. They are people who use the service and want to increase accessibility by giving us ideas on how the service would work best for those we support

The Champions did an amazing job! They were interacting with the public to encourage discussion around mental health, they supported attendees to create their own lanterns, and did an amazing job at letting people know what support is available to them.

Peer Champion Hailey said: ''The lantern festival was an excellent opportunity to meet the other partners and talk to them about Peer Champions and our role in the community.'

After all their hard work they were able to enjoy the lantern show display, before heading home.

Although World Mental Health Day is once per year, all the Champions are enthusiastically working together to ensure that Mental Health and support is promoted every day of the year. The Champions are looking forward to their next Steering Group Meeting to plan their next actions!