

## SUMMER 2016

### Yoga for Grief support – Written by Karen Truman, Yoga Teacher, Counsellor and Therapist

The Drop in Bereavement Centre was very fortunate to receive funding from “**Awards for All**” for a 16 week yoga support programme. The aim was to approach grief from a yogic perspective by using the body, breath relaxation and meditation as an alternative method to manage and cope with Grief.

At the beginning of each week we would share & reflect with one another. How did our week go? Was it rewarding, encouraging or insightful. Did anyone make any changes as a result of their yoga practice? Had perceptions or attitudes shifted?

From sharing we then would tune into our breath and carry out breathing exercises sometimes using the sound of our own voices, this was challenging for some participants though each week, it got a little easier.

We would warm up the joints of our body – linking breath with movement and then move into the yoga postures, such as Child pose, Tree pose, and Warrior Pose. In this particular course, we focused on **Yoga Back Bends and Yoga Mantra /Sound** as these open up the heart and throat area which help to release held emotions and fears around grief and stress. As a by-product of the yoga exercises, participants that suffer with depression and sleep deprivation also benefited.

Towards the end of the yoga session we would do relaxation. Sitting on a chair or Lying down sometimes with music relaxing each individual part of the body as we focused on the breath. This was to enable participants to cultivate an awareness about the body being free of tension and stress. Developing a trust to just surrender to the moment and know that we are ok despite whatever feelings we carry inside ourselves.

To close the yoga session we would give feedback about our experiences, though there was never any pressure to do so. Sometimes just absorbing individual feedback and listening to others was enough.

Participants also completed homework sheets and recorded their experiences in their personal journals to monitor their individual progress. Sometimes discovering something new about themselves and developing a healthy mindfulness about how they can help improve or manage their own well being on every level, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, A great tool not just in managing grief, but in general everyday stresses of life.

What was beautiful to witness was the laughter, the openness, the honesty and the compassion shown to one another with true authenticity of self, this was both touching and inspiring. I also witnessed the progressive movement of each participant returning home to themselves.

### “Their Hearts”



THE DROP - IN  
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