

12-WEEK HERBAL CRAFT COURSE

PROJECT REPORT

Project Description

A practical course that will show participants how to grow and use herbs for wellbeing. A hands-on course covering the history, properties and uses of herbs and how to make herbal products to take home.

Topics include

organic gardening, using herbs for skincare, making your own herbal tea, applying herbs for first aid, making herbal cleaning products, boosting health with seasonal herbs.

Course details

12 weeks on Wednesdays at 11-1pm

Start date: Wednesday 5th September 2018 End date: Wednesday 21st November 2018

The course takes place at Mind, 15A Homerton Row, London E9 6ED

Funding

£3998

Funded through the City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG]
Long Term Conditions Peer Support Programme

Grant Funding is available for local community groups and organisations who are working with people and communities that traditionally under use primary care (GP services) and other statutory support services to develop peer support courses for people who have Long Term Conditions.

The project was coordinated by Hackney CVS.

Report prepared by Project Co-ordinator Natalie Mady

12-WEEK COURSE OUTLINE

Wednesday mornings 11 - 1pm

Week 1 – 12th September Introductions + course overview

Registration for the course. Going over the course topics. Introduction to different herbs and how they can be used.

Week 2 – 19th September - Group Herb Study

Looking at one herb in detail as a group and learning about its properties. Introduction into how herbs work of different parts of the body.

Week 3 – 26th September - Growing herbs

Intro to growing herbs in urban spaces (small gardens, patios, balconies and windowsills). How to sow seeds.

Week 4 – 23rd October - Herbs for the skin

How to make a herb-infused oils. Combining herbs and natural ingredients to make your own skin and lip balm.

Week 5 – 10th October (World Mental Health Day) - Guest speaker

Guest workshop with Rasheeqa Ahmed from Hedge Herbs. Intro to practice of herbal medicine and discussing a range of nervine herbs for coping with stress.

Week 6 – 17th October - Herbal first aid

How to use herbs and plants to make simple remedies for first aid.

Week 7 – 24th October - Trip to Hackney Tree Nursery

Learning how to identify and make use of wild herbs. Immersing ourselves in nature.

Week 8 – 31st October - Autumn remedies

Looking at different herbs that we harvest the roots from and making a cough syrup.

Week 9 – 7th November - Herbs and sleep

How to use herbs to relax, unwind and help you to sleep. Making sleep sprays using essential oils.

Week 10 – 14th November - Incorporating herbs in diet

Trip to Made in Hackney. Looking at how to cook and make healthy food with herbs.
Made in Hackney, 3 Cazenove Rd, Cazenove, London N16 6PA (entrance via Food for All shop)

Week 11 – 21st November - Time for tea

Learning how to make different herbal infusions by mixing different herbs together.

Week 12 – 28th November - Celebration event

Surprise activity! Certificates and prize giving for course attendees.

PHOTOS

Some examples of the activities that participants engaged in each week. During each session participants were taught a new topic and completed a practical activity where they made something to take home.

<p>Learning how to make an infused oil with marigolds which are nourishing to the skin. Combining the strained oil with beeswax to make a lip and skin balm.</p>		
<p>Making herbal tea bags to learn about herbs that are good for concentration, digestions, colds and flus, relaxation and sleep.</p>		
<p>Making fire cider, a medicinal tonic made by infusing apple cider vinegar with a mix of spices, herbs and roots.</p>		
<p>Learning about herbs that are good for coughs and colds. How to combine herbs to make a cough syrup. We used a mixture of marshmallow, sage and ginger.</p>		

HACKNEY HERBAL //

Visit to Hackney Tree Nursery to explore wild herbs and their uses. It was an opportunity to be fully immersed in nature. We also learnt about the history of the garden and what goes on there.



Planting seeds and watching them grow throughout the course. We planted marigolds, basil and coriander. Some participants look after their seeds at home and others left them in the mini-greenhouse at Mind.



We had a guest speaker, local community herbalist Rasheeqa Ahmed who came and talked to the group about the practice of herbal medicine. We discussed herbs that are good for stress and anxiety and made this calming and relaxing tea blend, that the group named "The Knock Out Blend"



Discussing herbs that can be used for sleep. Learning about the properties of essential oils and how they can be used for relaxation. Blending different oils to make a sleep/relaxation spray.



HACKNEY HERBAL //

Cooking with herbs. We had a guest speaker come and run a session on cooking with herbs. We made a herby carrot soup and a herb pesto.



CELEBRATION DAY

Each participant received a certificate and a prize for completing the course and was commended on their achievements.



TESTIMONIALS

A selection of verbal testimonials from participants on the course during the final session.

"I found the teas quite helpful, they helped me quite bit, I've got loads of herbs in the cupboard and I make my own mixes of teas. I enjoyed making the balms, I'll try that when I go home. And the spray, I've been using that, that's been quite good for my anxiety, that helps quite a bit, I spray it before I come out."

"I've learn lot about native herbs"

"I've never really been a believer, to be honest with you, but I now believe because I've tried the cough mixture and it's helped, especially when I've been particularly feeling really ill, and its helped me to breathe. And also the sleep spray, I want some more, the potion I made it really worked for me. thank you very much"

"Thank you for the course, i appreciate you guys very much, the course brought back many memories for me, especially the trip to the garden, so much memories. And the tea last week mmm [skullcap] that was the icing on the cake. thank you very much you guys"

"I've really enjoyed this course, making stuff and learning how to make lip balm... this is great! I found the sticky weed in my garden so that was a great find and I would have put weed killer on it and killed it before, but I literally picked some, washed it and put it in the water, so thank you."

"I've learn about lot of herbs that I can use and had fun exploring different herbs so thats made me really happy"

"I want to learn more about the smells and make my own cosmetics. Sometimes I spend so much money on hand cream and this is so much nicer. I want to find out more about smells as I find the effect that they have is quite instant and so I'd like to continue with that."

"I've just really enjoyed making all the different things, it's been really nice having a little collection of all the things I've made. And also learning about herbs not just for taste because that is usually what my focus has been on. I love the teas that we made last week."

For further feedback and comments please refer to the post course questionnaires.

Key Outcomes

- Improved knowledge of how herbs can be used to improve health and wellbeing
- Increased skills relating to making your own products through hands on experience throughout the course
- Development of interpersonal skills and social networks allowing participants to connect with others, facilitating peer to peer support and sharing
- Increase independence, finding activities that contribute to their wellbeing (mechanisms of coping) and an increased feeling of wellbeing after completing the course
- Increased confidence in exploring new topics and studying in a supportive environment and taking steps toward fulfilling their goals

Key Observations

- Many of the participants bought some of the books that we used during the course and had gone to the shops we recommended to buy their own herbs
- Some participants told us how they had identified some of the herbs we had taught them about in their garden and were starting to use them themselves
- Many of the participants built friendships through the course and exchanged contact details

Long term impact

After running this course at Mind successfully for the last two years we are currently talking to the centre manager about the scope for making this a regular group. The majority of feedback from the participants was that they wanted the course to continue in some way, either as a part 2 or an ongoing session. We have found that some of the participants who we engaged through this course have shown interest in volunteering with Hackney Herbal and have stated connected by coming to our monthly meet-ups.