

CHANGES



Community Health Project

**Supporting people in East Lothian
to find ways to better manage**

Stress

Worry

Panic

Feeling on Edge

Low self-esteem

Negative Thinking

CHANGES Community Health Project

CHANGES is a local charity which was established in 1996 to promote positive wellbeing and provide opportunities for people in East Lothian to find ways towards healthier and less stressful living.

*"I feel much more able to cope
with my life now"*

Who can use CHANGES

Anyone over the age of 16 who lives in East Lothian and feels they could benefit from our services can contact us directly. **Our services are free of charge.**

How to contact us

It is best to telephone us, we are here to help during weekdays. If no one is available to answer your call, you can leave a message and someone will call you back. Our website has further information about what we offer.

If you need help immediately

CHANGES is not a crisis service, so we are not able to support people at very short notice. **If you require urgent assistance please contact your GP or NHS 24 after your GP surgery is closed.**

NHS 24 - 111 (after your GP surgery is closed)

The Samaritans - 116 123 (24 hours). This number is free to call from landlines, mobiles and payphones.

Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87
(Mon-Thurs 6pm - 2am & Fri 6pm to Mon 6am)

Parentline Scotland - 08000 28 22 33
(Mon-Fri 9am to 10pm & Sat - Sun 12 noon to 8pm)

What happens when you contact us

We will arrange for you to talk to a worker who will help you identify ways forward either with CHANGES services or signposting to other organisations that can offer support.

Many people start with booking a place on our Stress Control or First Steps courses. Stress Control is a 6 week taught course and First Steps is a 7 week group course. Both courses aim to help you better understand how life situations can affect you and learn new ways to improve your mental wellbeing. Those interested in how healthy eating and being more physically active can help, can sign up for our Wellbeing Walks and other Healthy Living classes.

The worker you speak to will help you decide which of CHANGES services could help you move forward.

Our volunteers can help

Sometimes the issues you are coming to CHANGES for help with, can make it difficult for you to access our services or make the most of them.

Our team of trained volunteers, who help to run the groups & courses, can also offer one to one support before, during or after a course. The volunteers will have an understanding of what you are experiencing and can help you make the most of what CHANGES has to offer.



“Being matched with a volunteer helped me make a very anxious experience, namely attendance at my first group, far less stressful and much more manageable”

What you can expect from us

A safe, supportive space to talk.

Confidentiality: We do not share information about you outside of our team, except if there is risk of harm to yourself or to others. In such cases, we would try to discuss this with you first before contacting the relevant agency, for example your GP.

Comments and Complaints: If you wish to make a comment or complaint about the service, please contact the CHANGES office to request the relevant form.



Childcare and Transport:

CHANGES may be able to assist with childcare and/or transport, if this is a barrier to accessing our services. Please telephone us to discuss.

Resource Library



CHANGES can provide books, leaflets and self-help materials covering a wide range of mental health issues as well as information about other services.

Eastspace-East Lothian

Mental Health Information Online

Visit www.eastspace.org.uk for more information.



Groups and Courses

CHANGES runs a number of groups and courses. If you are interested in attending, please check our website or call us to find out when the next group or course will run.

Assertiveness

This course helps participants better understand the meaning of assertiveness and how it relates to more positive wellbeing. The aim is to support participants to explore, identify and practise strategies that help participants feel more confident in expressing themselves more assertively.

Branching Out

This 14 week outdoor activity programme has been developed by the Forestry Commission and offers a variety of activities including willow weaving, environmental art, photography and bushcraft. Previous participants have reported improvements in their confidence, self-esteem, motivation, sense of achievement and social skills from being part of this group programme.

Eat Well-Keep Active

This course looks at healthy eating and how we can all make small changes to improve our diet. We look at how eating well and being active can have a positive impact on our physical and mental health. We will look at the basics of healthy eating, food & mood and gentle exercises. Cookery demonstrations and tasting sessions are all part of this course.



First Steps Towards Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing

This introductory cognitive behaviour therapy based course helps us to become more aware of how stress affects us (for example depression, anxiety or panic). It helps us to understand the links between thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and actions. We learn ways to help ourselves feel better and have the chance to practise these. This course is a good starting point to find ways of moving forward.

Gentle Exercise To Music

Research shows that physical activity can boost self-esteem, improve your mood, quality of sleep and levels of energy. The exercises during these sessions can be carried out either seated or standing. You can work at your own pace and the sessions cater for people who are unable to take part in more strenuous classes. The exercises are to music and the classes are run in a relaxed manner where participants can enjoy improving their fitness in the company of others. The sessions are run in blocks of 10 weeks.

“If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented”

Dr Nick Cavill, Health Promotion Consultant.

Men's Groups

These are facilitated groups that provide a space for men to share their thoughts and feelings, in a safe and supportive way. The groups are encouraged to talk and listen to each other, supporting each other with what they may wish to discuss.

This course helps participants learn the skill of “being mindful” or “being present” and develop an attitude of openness, acceptance and compassion. By the end of this course it is hoped that people will have started to develop a new relationship with their thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations as well as a more compassionate way of being with themselves. This course involves the practice of mindfulness and compassion through simple meditations. The facilitator will meet with people individually to help them decide whether it is the right time for them to attend.

“It was an eye opener! I have gained acceptance, understanding and awareness... This course has helped me face and deal with issues positively which, before the course, I would have reacted to in an unhealthy way. It is an amazing course and I would recommend it for anyone.”

Chill With CHANGES (Relaxation)

This course is designed to help participants learn to relax as a way to increase their wellbeing and better manage their stress and anxiety. The course introduces relaxation as a skill and gives participants the opportunity to practice different techniques and find out which technique works best for them. The techniques participants are encouraged to practice include muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, visualisations, movements, self-massage and meditation. Learning tips and CD's are provided to help participants practice at home.

“I found the course beneficial in many ways: it opened my eyes and mind to the many various ways of relaxing, to exactly what relaxation means and to what exactly works for me.”

“I have learned to make time for myself.”

Stress Control

This class is open to anyone wanting to learn new ways to manage stress in their lives. Techniques are introduced to help manage difficult thoughts, feelings, behaviours, panic attacks and sleep problems.

- It is taught class with no group discussions
- There is no need to explain why you are there
- You can bring someone else along if you would feel more comfortable
- Self help workbooks are given out each week to read at home

"Very helpful and informative"

"I realise I'm not the only one"

Six Steps

As we grow older there are many changes which can be hard to adapt to. The associated stresses can easily lead us to feel low, worried or even physically ill. Sadly, people often believe that feeling that way is normal; there is however much that we can do to help ourselves feel better. This course helps people to develop existing coping skills and learn new ones. Each week we work on a new step to beat stress, with handouts to keep. The word 'stress' can sound scary but the course is straightforward and we usually have a laugh or three!

"For me it was wonderful ... and I feel happy even though life around me is not and is just as it was before CHANGES. I am different."

"I came because my wife insisted, next week I will come because I want to".

This new cognitive behavioural therapy based course builds on learning from First Steps and Stress Control courses (or other similar experience). It helps us understand more about how stress, low mood, anxiety and/or panic are affecting us in our lives. Each week we will cover a different topic, with exercises to practise at home. The aim is that learning these skills will help us to feel better and manage well for the future.

Healthy Living Project

Through taking part in the Healthy Living Project, participants have experienced the many benefits that being active can bring. Being active can boost your self-esteem, help you concentrate, reduce tension and help you sleep. The activities offered included:-

Wellbeing Walks in **Musselburgh** on a Saturday morning and Wednesday morning. Also Wednesday evening over the summer. **Haddington** on a Monday morning, **Prestonpans** on a Tuesday morning and **Dunbar** on a Friday morning.

Cycling in **Musselburgh** on a Wednesday morning, Thursday morning and evening over the summer plus Sunday morning.

Also **Gentle Exercise**, **Tai Chi**, **Singing for Fun**, **Eat Well-Keep Active** and **Branching Out** (Outdoor Activity Programme).

“The walks have been fun with great companionship and a way to keep healthy.”

Talking Therapies Service

CHANGES offer counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) talking therapies, where people work one-to-one with a therapist. If you would like one of these services, please ask for a Talking Therapies request form to be posted to you. Once we receive the completed form, your name will be added to our waiting list for counselling or CBT. You are welcome to access our other courses too. Our project workers are happy to discuss any queries with you, and help to complete the form if you wish. Please ask when we call you initially, or call us to find out more.

Counselling Service - Counselling offers a safe environment for you to explore your life and talk through what is upsetting for you. Counselling can be beneficial if you are experiencing:-

- Relationship difficulties
- Stress or depression
- Bereavement or loss
- Dealing with change
- Coping with a life crisis
- Loss of confidence

Counselling is for people over the age of 16.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - CBT focuses on the relationship between our thinking, emotions, physical feelings and actions. This helps us to understand more about why we feel like we do, and practise ways to help ourselves to feel better and manage well in the future. It can be applied to a wide range of common mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, panic, obsessive compulsive disorder or health anxiety. Most of our courses are CBT based with a small service offering CBT for people over the age of 18.

CHANGES is a local charity covering the whole of East Lothian. We receive funding from a variety of sources to support our work. Donations from people who use the service helps us develop our work further but we understand that depending on a person's circumstances, not everyone is in a position to donate. That is why our services are free to anyone over 16 years old living in East Lothian.

However, many people who have come to CHANGES have asked us how they can contribute to our work and this can be done in the following ways:-

Donating your time. All aspects of our work is supported by our dedicated team of volunteers. If you would be interested in finding out about volunteering, please contact CHANGES on 0131 653 3977 and speak to a member of staff.

Cash/Cheque donations. If you are at one of our groups or in the office we can give you a form and envelope for cash donations. You can also send a cheque payable to CHANGES Community Health Project to the address on the back of this leaflet.

MyDonate page. If you would like to raise funds on our behalf, or make a donation you can use MyDonate charity page - details overleaf.



Contacting CHANGES

To contact CHANGES or find out how to book a place on a group/course

Tel 0131 653 3977 or visit our website at www.changeschp.org.uk for more info

Access to Groups/Courses and CHANGES office

There are three steps up to the office front door, with a handrail. If you have mobility problems, we will endeavour to meet your needs, as one to one appointments and groups and courses can be held in wheelchair accessible premises. Please telephone CHANGES to discuss.



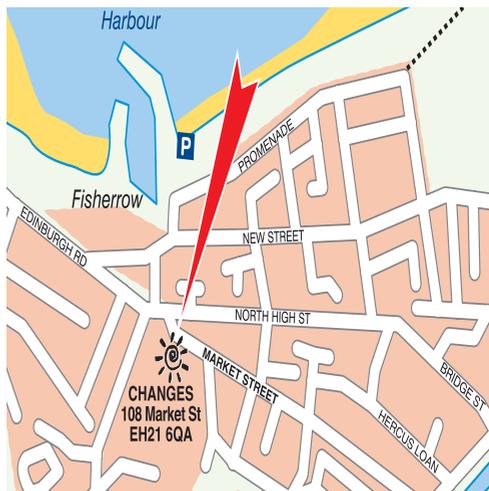
Tel 0131 653 3977

Email

info@changeschp.org.uk

Website

www.changeschp.org.uk



[Visit our charity page now on MyDonate](#)



www.mydonate.bt.com