

Summer Catch-up 2024



Lazing on a sunny afternoon...

We're at that point in the year when we're well and truly looking forward to summer holidays. We're not going away this year, instead we've decided to stay home and be tourists in North Wales where we live. We did the same thing two years ago and the only rule that we set for ourselves was that we could travel up to 90 minutes and no more. We ended up snorkelling at Anglesey, paddle boarding in Snowdonia and visiting Denbigh Castle amongst other places. It was a great two weeks and we're looking forward to doing something similar this year. Whatever you do taking time off to recharge is so important. So, whether or not you go away please switch off work messages and give yourself a good break.



MHFA England
INSTRUCTOR
MEMBER



Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

I train mental health first aiders (MHFA) for England and Wales. Did you know that to train in both countries you need a separate licence? As well as being an instructor for my own courses in Wales I'm also a national trainer for MHFA Wales; to get the Welsh training participants must either live or work, in Wales and vice versa for England.

If you are thinking that you would like trained mental health first aiders in the workplace my advice would be to ensure that you have an opportunity to speak to every applicant. Sometimes it just isn't the best time for people. What do I mean? I mean that people usually put themselves forward for the training because they want to support other people but sometimes, they themselves need support. The training is very intensive. For this reason, I always encourage employers to have an application and interview process to make sure that they get the right people at the right time. If

you would like some advice about selecting your trainees, please get in touch and I will happily give you some pointers.



LinkedIn

I'm trying to get more consistent with my LinkedIn posts. The truth is when I post I really do enjoy the interaction but I'm not always reliable when it comes to posting regularly. Trying to improve is really just about building habits and I really like the concept that you just have to be 1% better every day. In my book *The Resilience Template – 7 Steps to Improve Your Mental Health* I've dedicated a whole chapter to embedding new habits. I believe that it's easier to create a new habit by building it onto an existing habit for example, I have no trouble commenting on other peoples LinkedIn posts, the issue for me is that I don't do it at the same time every day. Step one of building my new daily posting habit is to go online every day at 9 AM and comment on my connection's posts. I'll let you know if I manage to do that consistently before I add my own daily posts.

If you are on LinkedIn I'd be grateful if you would please connect with me, even tag me, so that you keep me honest! The link to my profile is:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/carol-hickson>



Lipoedema

Lipoedema, have you heard of it? I hadn't until my daughter was diagnosed at stage III back in February this year. Lipoedema is a chronic connective tissue disease that occurs mostly in females. Following my daughter's diagnosis I too was diagnosed; I can't tell you how odd it feels to learn that your child is affected by a condition carried in your DNA but which you had no idea was present. Looking back, I think my own mum and grandma had the condition too.

Lipoedema isn't treated on the NHS currently, and so we are having to navigate a whole new world of medical care. My daughter is at an advanced stage and will have to go abroad for treatment and her first surgery is scheduled in Berlin in January 2025. I can't tell you the stress from diagnosis and, even prior to diagnosis, that my daughter has experienced. She is not alone because it is estimated that one in 10 women will have this condition but only 5% of GPs actually know about it. The thing is when you find yourself with such a diagnosis and such an awful prognosis if left untreated then everything comes into perspective. How do you even begin to process such life changing news? Firstly, we have joined several Lipoedema communities on FaceBook, and online. We both have found this to be essential because the women on these groups have lived experience of the condition and the surgeries. We have set up a Go Fund Me to help raise funds for a possible 11 surgeries and we have started to educate other women to raise awareness primarily via TikTok. So far fifty women have discovered that they have the condition having seen my daughter's posts which is an amazing achievement for Rebecca.

I haven't put up any pictures here because it feels a bit intrusive to be honest but there are images on the internet. The prognosis for my daughter, and many other women, is loss of mobility which is why we have chosen to go down the surgical route now.

If you would like to understand more about this condition, please follow my daughter at the_chronic_connection on TikTok. If you would like to donate to the Go Fund Me the link is

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/rebecca-hickson_donate-to-support-becca-save-her-mobility-activity-7201887010276401152-cn5T?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

Thank you for raising awareness.

With my daughter I'm raising awareness in Manchester tomorrow evening at a Lipoedema event. Fingers crossed we get a good turn out!



Finally

Cozumel, one of our dogs featured in my recent children's book, Beeston the Anxious Pup, and I won a dog class in our local village show recently. I can't tell you how proud we felt of her which sounds daft I know! The thing is she isn't the prettiest dog, everybody always mistakes her for a boy and she was not in the running at all for handsomest dog although Beeston did come fourth! Cozumel has fabulous recall and we won the Best Dog to Master class I was elated and she enjoyed even more attention so winners all round. I guess sometimes it's worth remembering that we are all good at something.

Carol Hickson Therapy and Training

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