

# Studying in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital

Bringing learning opportunities to mental health patients

# About the Royal Ed

- Mental health, dementia, learning disabilities and brain injuries
- National, regional and local services
- Stress and distress
- Long-term conditions, long-stay patients

# The Role of the Volunteering Hub

- Making life worth living during a dark time
- Any activity with a public or patient volunteer
- Planning, risk assessing, recruiting, supporting and reviewing volunteering in the hospital
- Creating and tailoring activities to suit individuals

# Common challenges for patients

- Exhaustion, lack of motivation, apathy and expectations of failure
- Distress, distraction, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, restlessness
- Historical school problems, poor literacy, institutionalisation, lack of learning opportunities

# Supporting learning

- Tailor everything to the individual
- Work with clinical team
- Learning for joy
- Celebrate interests

Jupiter and its  
moons

Philosophy of  
consciousness

Football: a  
social history

Ancient  
Civilisations

Animal  
Migration

Ukrainian

Skills for study

History of  
Rock

The American  
Revolution

Robert Owen  
and New  
Lanark

British trees

English  
literacy

# Supporting learning

- Tailor everything to the individual
- Work with clinical team
- Learning for joy
- Celebrate interests
- Regularity, focus, pleasant learning space
- Study buddies

# 1: Using intelligence

- Nurturing the identity of being someone who is interested and intelligent
- Taking pleasure in learning something new or getting absorbed in learning
- Feelings of achievement



## 2: Broadening the mind

- Opportunity to mentally escape the here and now of the hospital
- Opportunity to meet people and socialise
- Broadening conversation topics and world view

## 3: Future opportunities

- Building study skills and taking steps towards formal study opportunities in future
- Building up ability to focus and concentrate
- BUT avoid the stresses and pressures of formal study.

## 4: Identity

- Fostering interests, supporting people's individuality and passions
- Supporting aspects of identity that could otherwise be lost or neglected in hospital

# Study buddies

- Approach the sessions with the mind-set of learning alongside someone as an equal. Switch on your curiosity and sense of wonder, ask questions, learn things, and try not to miss any of the information yourself. Bring your energy and enthusiasm!

# Study buddies

- Acknowledge when topics are challenging, or when you are struggling to understand something yourself. The other person may feel shy to say when they don't understand so lead by example. Maybe they can explain to you – good for their confidence – or maybe you can do some internet research together – good for their skill development.

# Study buddies

- Think about your skills in motivating the person you are working with. How can you best build up their positive identity with this activity? Which ways do they like to learn? What types of activity do they get absorbed in? What gives them a sense of achievement? Your skills in thinking in a detailed and analytical way about these types of questions will be very useful in getting the best out of the people you support.

- I love my English class. Last week I got 9 and a half in my spellings! I like the plurals and everything. I've been learning the rules.