

Providence Row GAZETTE

• COMMUNITY MAGAZINE •

COMPASSION

In this new January, the Providence Row Gazette team wish kindness and compassion to all our readers. Free of charge, kindness is appreciated by everyone and cures many an ill.

Providence Row continues to adapt in the face of the new lockdown. Hannah takes us through the many services the charity is still able to offer albeit on an appointment or online basis.

Our resident philosophers have been hard at work on their thoughts. Liam is a fan of practical wisdom and shows how five philosophical steps can help to resolve difficult problems and calm our thoughts. We're signing up for Liam's fan club today.

Meanwhile Jo has been looking around her diligently during her lockdown walks and is captivated by nature's goings-on in the town where she lives. Exercise is much more than pounding the streets.

Frances' occasional columns on staying healthy during lockdowns continue with some suggestions for organising your medicine regime.

One of our readers report her experiences of overcoming lockdown disappointments with some surprising benefits. We always love to hear readers' stories and experiences so do please get in touch via the contacts on the right.

Leo is dropping big hints for his share of compassion too. In cat world, rewards must be earned so he has more puzzles to crack before his ears are tickled. He's brought his pals along for a share of the action too.



Contact Providence Row Gazette at:

volunteering@providencerow.org.uk

CONTENTS

2. Community Post Box

3 - 4. Providence Row:
We are always here for you

5. Manage your medicines

6 - 7. Practical Philosophy

8 - 9. Watching the world outdoors

10. Art & Fun

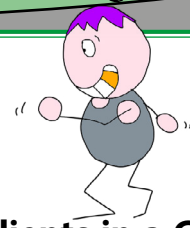
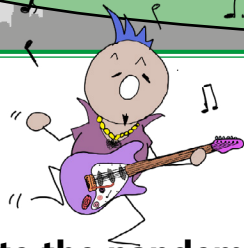
COMMUNITY Post Box

Hello :) I'm Ebun! I just finished university and i'm home now! Something I've loved in lockdown is baking. My Mum and I have loved making cupcakes and I love making banana oat pancakes! I also love going for walks outside and seeing the green trees and leaves! I hope that you are well ❤️ you are not alone. You are loved and deeply valued. John 14:27- Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.



Providence Row:

We are always here for you



Despite the pandemic, Providence Row continues to support clients in a Covid-secure way. As we embark on 2021 in challenging times, we wanted to update you on how we have adapted to continue offering specialist support, to meet our client's needs.



Advice and Support

AST are on hand to offer advice on housing, benefits and safeguarding. The team offers walk-in appointments for rough sleepers to address their housing needs, as well as pre-bookable slots. In-person meetings are socially distanced with a protective screen, and face masks are worn. Covid health screening for rough sleepers is also available.

Reset

Reset is an integrated service providing drug and alcohol support to Tower Hamlets residents. You can contact reset on reset@providencerow.org.uk or 0800 802 1860.

'Routes to Routes' project

We continue to work with the Royal London Hospital to prevent patients at risk of homelessness being discharged onto the streets, making sure they find a safe place to stay.

Psychotherapy

Nora, one of our outreach psychotherapists meets clients where they feel comfortable - be it socially distanced in a park, or remotely on the phone or online.

In Nora's own words, she offers clients a way to *"look at their crises... in a different light.... to help clients in their journey to self-discovery"*

Peer Mentoring

Our next online Peer Mentor programme training begins January 20th. Four students will attend 14 online sessions, with a chance to gain an accredited E3 and L2 qualification. Find out more on peermentoring@providencerow.org.uk



Face masks are worn at all times on site

Training and Employment

T&E continue to support clients into work, volunteering or training, via telephone or socially distanced in-person. Our first online 6 week "Working On It" employability skills programme launches January 18th.

What's happening in our kitchen?

Craig, Hannah and the team are busy cooking up a storm, providing lunch to rough sleepers in our courtyard Monday – Fridays. The team makes the most of home-grown ingredients from our roof garden, as well as generous food donations.



The kitchen has provided thousands of meals to local hostels, including Christmas dinners with roast turkey and all the trimmings!

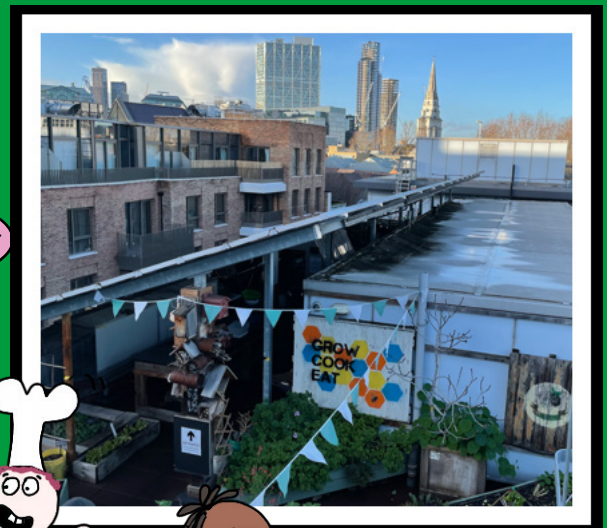
Our Urban Roof Garden

Julie, our head gardener spends her days planting, harvesting and composting on our roof garden.



Despite the wintery weather, Julie continues growing salads and herbs, as well as planning for the year ahead.

To keep up to date
on Providence Row's services, visit
www.providencerow.org
or email
info@providencerow.org.uk



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MANAGE YOUR MEDICINES

BY VOLUNTEER FRANCES!

Many of us are prescribed medication for a health condition, sometimes for a short-lived complaint such as antibiotics for an acute infection. Other medications can be prescribed for a longer term condition such as high blood pressure.



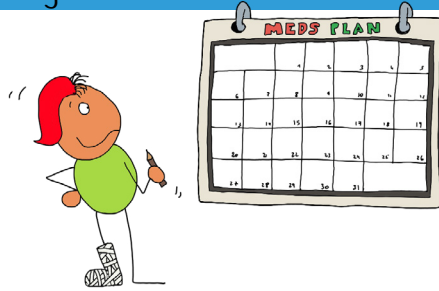
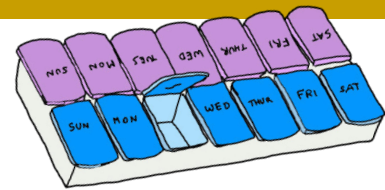
Taking our regular medicines has become especially important during lockdowns as we try to stay as healthy as we can. But medicines can slip the mind when we are stressed or anxious especially if you take several medications at different doses, frequencies and times of the day.

Here are a few aides memoire:



When prescribed a medication, it helps to understand the purpose, dosage, frequency and timings. Pharmacists are generally helpful on these points. You can also read the information sheet enclosed with the medicine.

Some pharmacies can supply free or cheap Dosette boxes. These allow you to organise a week's supply of daily medicines in the containers compartments.



Make a plan. Draw up a weekly or monthly schedule of your medications, their dosage and timings. Again, pharmacists can help.

Your plan can include other information about your medication such as whether to take before, with or after meals and whether you can drink alcohol while taking the medicine.

You can set a 'take medicine' alarm on your phone and mark your schedule when you have taken the medicine

You can also record any side effects and when you need to request a repeat supply of the medicine if appropriate.



Keep your medicines in one place together with your plan and record of taking your medicine. You may need to refer to it later.

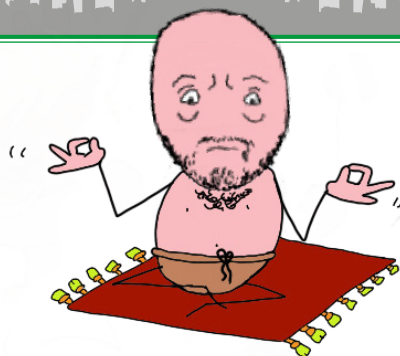
Remember too : many people are eligible for the free flu vaccine available from pharmacies and GP surgeries

Helpful go tos ...

<https://tinyurl.com/managemedic>
<https://tinyurl.com/influzvacc>

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Practical philosophy



By volunteer Liam

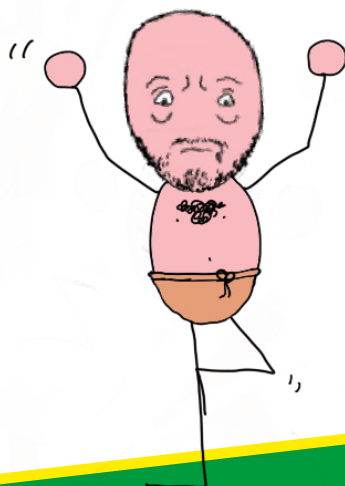
Philosophy is the study of wisdom; practical philosophy is the application of that wisdom in everyday situations.

An area I am especially interested in is “the present”; that is what’s happening right now, rather than dwelling too much about what has already happened, or indeed what might happen.

It’s said that if you focus too much on what has already happened, you become prone to regret. Similarly, if you place too much emphasis on what might happen, you may become anxious, and miss out on creating opportunities in the here and now.

One way of finding the present is to calm your mind by connecting with your environment through your senses, rather than your thoughts.

A simple exercise
to connect with
your senses.



First think about what you can see around you and perhaps note five items.

Then think about what you can physically feel, perhaps the chair you are sat upon, or the clothes you are wearing; note four items.

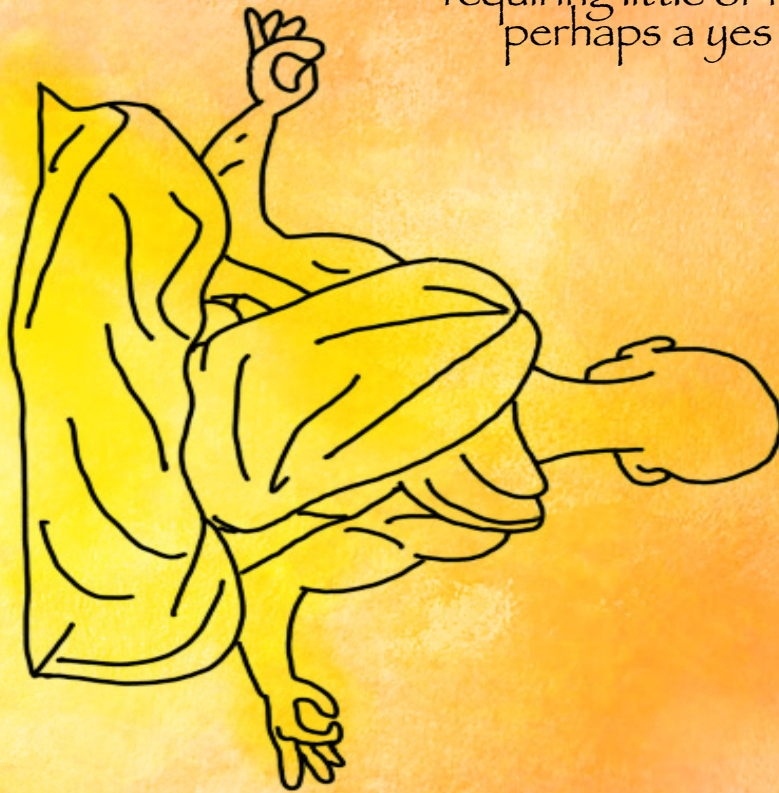
Next think about what you can hear; sounds close at hand, then others, maybe more distant; note three sounds.

Then think about what you can smell; pleasant or unpleasant, it is irrelevant; note two of these smells.

Finally, focus upon taste, perhaps something you’ve recently eaten; bitter or sweet, sour or spicy; keep that taste in your mind.

That's it, you are in the present, courtesy of your senses; it's really that easy. The exercise can be performed anywhere, although a quiet time when you are alone might help, and takes little effort by way of preparation, and no equipment, except your brain! Also, if you find your mind wandering, re focus and repeat the exercise, you have access to your mind at all times, so I read.

I'd now like to talk about the practical application of philosophy in our day to day lives. Often we face problems; many of these are minor, requiring little or no thought, a simple decision, perhaps a yes or no, is all that is necessary.

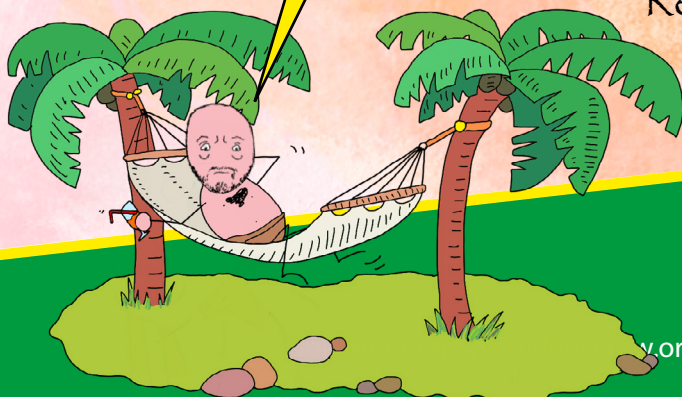


However, sadly, sometimes, problems we encounter are complex, involving difficult decisions that impact upon not only our lives, but the lives of others, maybe friends or family, and sometimes these decisions have far reaching implications, often over many years. At these times, especially when a problem seems particularly demanding, I ask myself, "What would a wise person do"?

Enjoy the present; you can't change the past, and the future is yet to happen!

Sadly, the wisdom needed to make the right decision isn't always upstairs in my head; however, if time permits, I approach someone else who might know, and ask them, sometimes several people. For example, if it's a medical problem, I'd ask a Doctor or a Nurse, or if it's a legal problem, a Solicitor or Barrister; you get the idea. You ask the person best placed to offer a sensible solution.

Really what I'm saying is that we don't always have the answer; however, if we reach out to others, often we can find an answer.



WATCHING THE WORLD OUTDOORS

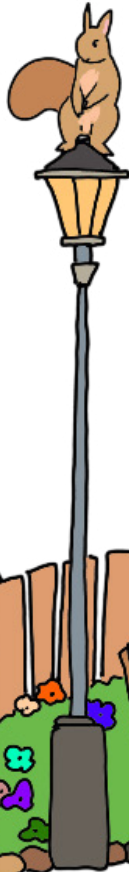
By volunteer
Jo!



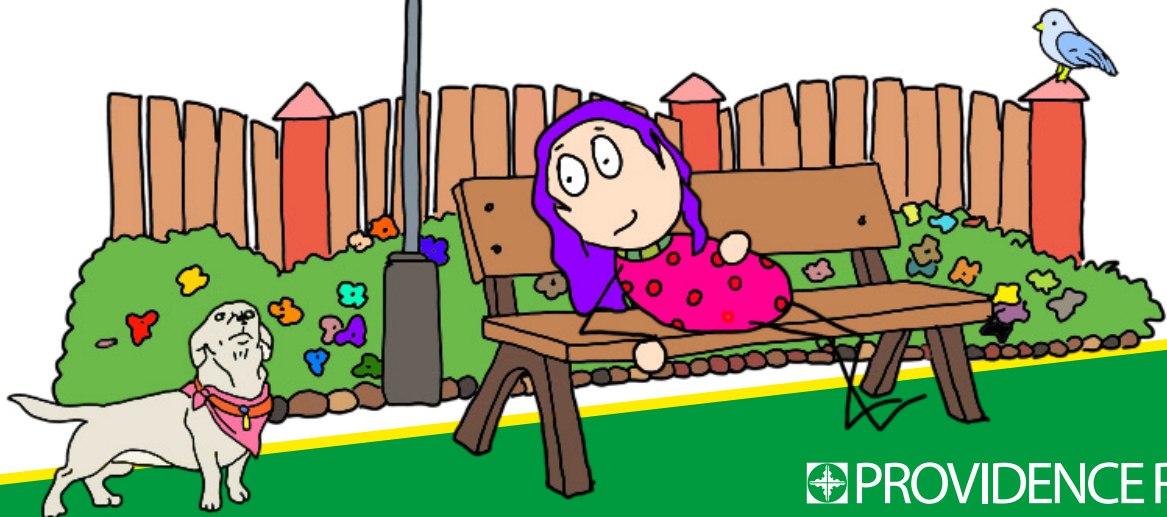
In this curious time we are all trying to understand how to protect ourselves and others. Sometimes we need compassion and imagination to understand how others are thinking and feeling, as well as determination to make our world safe eventually.

In this strange time, walking in parks and looking through windows, I noticed with amazement the way of life of birds and small animals such as squirrels. I often felt cheated off by life. But I saw things during lockdown which I have never noticed before. There are murderous little dramas and ridiculous battles, going on out there.

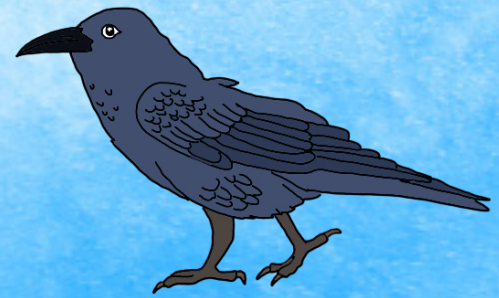
In the park the squirrels are fast and mischievous. One sits transfixed on the grass with bright eyes fixed on a huge dog three feet away who is frozen still in a kind of Mexican standoff. The dog with a murderous look lunges, the squirrel is off, up and up into the tree laughing at the dog who never catches him.



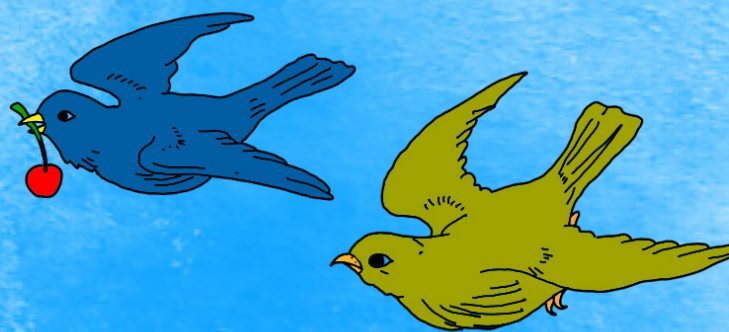
And two baby grey-brown squirrels on a wide, straight up tree trunk. On one side of the trunk a bushy tail and on the other a little head peeking out. Then suddenly a chase in diagonals up the tree like kids playing hide and seek with each other all the way up and down again.



In Spring by a scruffy bit of the canal a charcoal coloured, feathered, mother coot with a splotch of white on her beak and with six tiny chicks by the reeds, floats warily. Suddenly there's a flurry of huge wings and little bodies. An attacking black crow. But amazingly lots of other coots arrive and beat off the attack. The whole kerfuffle seems to go on for ages.



Some birds come in packs. We have a little patch of green out the back with a couple of small evergreen trees. There are often six or seven magpies all round the garden two or three up high on fences and roofs of houses nearby with two or three on the ground raiding the birdfeeders and picking up scraps dropped by the little birds. They're in charge of the world out there.



Three magpies in a row on a roof far away watch as a human clears away autumn leaves. They're checking him out to see if he's working hard enough on their behalf before swooping down to pick up juicy worms now exposed on the bare wet grass.

Other birds we see are big black crows stalking and flying powerfully. Pigeons who are too big and fat for the bird feeders have to wait for the little birds to drop seeds on the ground so they can pick it up.

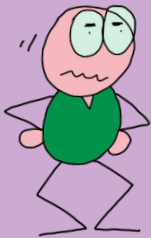
Then there are new birds for example the bright green and yellow parakeets. They are unpopular with some people because they say they make a rough noise and eat up all the food for native birds. But I disagree. With a couple of parakeets clustered on a hanging bird feeder, I have seen little tits or even wagtails feeding happily on the other side of the feeder at the same time, seeming to feel quite safe with the parakeets when they are frightened off by other native big birds.



ART &

FUN

My dear cat Leo has brought some friends over and they all have joined his hide-and-seek game. Of course, they hide, I seek... can you help me, please? There are four cats plus Leo hidden somewhere in this place!



By volunteer Sam!



Leo is inside the cart full of hay! The rest of the cats are: by the window in the house in the background, a white cat hanging from the curtain in the yellow house, a grey cat in the first cart in the first floor behind the wood handle and a brown cat trying to squeeze inside the jar in the fountain!

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