

THE *Spark* NEWSLETTER

TALENTED YOUNG WRITERS

We are on the lookout for some talented and passionate young people to write some written content for us. Whether it is a blog post, newsletter article or social media post, we need young people to help us spread awareness of mental health. You can write on any topic you wish, and it could be seen by thousands of people.

To find out more, email info@sparkuk.co.uk

QUOTE OF THE HALF-TERM

Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going.

Aim for the moon. If you miss, you may hit a star.

Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.

You will never win if you never begin.

If you fell down yesterday, stand up today.

Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th

RUNNING

BY JOSEPH CARTER

For me, running is one of the most beneficial self-care acts. It always helps me to reset and afterwards I always feel better, more positive and motivated than I did before.

Aside from the chemicals and endorphins that are released after exercise, the satisfaction and accomplishment of having completed a run never fails to lift my mood and the actual activity of running and focusing on what my body is doing, helps me to clear my head. There is something I find very powerful about detaching (for half an hour or so...) from your thoughts and the stress of daily life and I think this is one of the most beneficial results of exercise.

Admittedly, the actual process of running is not as easy and simple as I may have described above... however once I am out and warmed up, the joy of running kicks in. There will always be more difficult parts of a run and sometimes I really am not in the mood, but I find those days are the ones I benefit the most. Running isn't easy, so the feeling afterwards is great.

The "Runner's High," and the endorphins released have been proven to reduce anxiety and lift mood. The state of mind after a run is calmer and can increase creativity and productivity. Keeping fit and healthy has a key connection to mental health so for me, running is an essential self-care act.

PUZZLES AND MENTAL HEALTH

BY KAIA BOND FROM PUZZL.ED

Hey there! I'm Kaia from the Young Enterprise company 'Puzzl.ed'. Our company focuses on the exposure of mental illness and revolves around mental health and mindfulness in the form of puzzle-solving. We want to change these regularly carefree implements that are disregarded after one-time use by developing a way to raise awareness for those in need, encouraging quality time while educating and making sure the person struggling feels valued and included but not out of their comfort zone. Puzzles have been shown to have calming effects and are a great way to get people together as they are accessible and give us the power to inform people about the realities of mental health but deliver it in a light-hearted way.

The design is going to be an apartment building which will symbolise how so many people with different stories can be in one place and live such varying lives and none of us truly know what is happening with them and their minds.

To find out more head to puzzl-ed.weebly.com



PET THERAPY

BY TEGAN PHILLIPS

Pet therapy is animal assisted therapy. It's a field that uses dogs or other animals to help people recover from or better cope with health problems such as mental or physical health issues and for example heart disease. It can also release endorphins that produce a calming effect. This can help alleviate pains, reduce stress and improve your overall psychological state. Research is shown that simply petting a dog can reduce stress, while the social interaction between people and their dogs actually increases levels of the feel good hormone, oxytocin. Animals can help treat conditions such as anxiety, depression and PTSD or alternatively help

people develop social skills.

People can develop social skills from animal assisted therapy by having them get out in the community more, ie going for a walk.

Not only that, walking is an excellent way to clear your mind and feel more relaxed and centred. This can be helpful in promoting positive social interaction. But it's not only dogs that are used for pet therapy, you can have guinea pigs, rabbits, horses, cats and even llamas!!

Some places you can go to have therapy with animals are a local petting zoo, pet shop, a farm, a friend who has a pet or of course your own pet if you have one!

SELF CARE

Self-care has been defined as the process of taking care of oneself with behaviours that promote health and active management of illness when it occurs. Individuals engage in some form of self-care daily with food choices, exercise, sleep, and dental care

Self-care is an important part of living a healthy and happy lifestyle. Looking after yourself both mentally and physically is crucial to taking control of your health.

We have created 8 simple self-care acts that we encourage you to practice daily. These include Taking A Rest and Doing Something You Enjoy.

Go to www.sparkuk.co.uk/self-care-acts to view them all

HOW "DON'T LOOK UP," ECHOED TEENAGERS FEELINGS.

BY JOSEPH CARTER

THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS SPOILERS.

After watching the film, "Don't Look Up," it took me a few days to properly digest and understand the deeper meanings and themes aside from the obvious metaphor to climate change. Here's what I noticed and why strangely it is comforting despite the film being a disaster movie.

If you haven't watched the film already, it is about an Earth in which a meteor is about to strike and destroy all life on the planet. The characters have 6 months to stop it or everybody dies, yet the people in power do not believe in or make any decent attempt to prevent it from happening. While the scientists and younger generations are scared and anxious of the coming meteor, presidents and billionaires label it a conspiracy.

The fear in the characters eyes is an accurate (exaggerated) representation of sometimes what we feel in terms of facing climate change when politicians don't listen and disregard science. The knowledge that something bad is going to happen but having no power or ability to prevent it, and the feeling of not being listened to and being ignored is what we, as teenagers, battle with regularly. Somehow, it's reassuring to see this feeling expressed and acknowledged in the film. This idea of being ignored is one we encounter every day because we are young and for the film to be based around this is actually entertaining.

Although the film doesn't end well (spoiler alert), there is more hope in our world. For example, the COP 26 event, where topics that had been emphasized by young people and scientists were being heard and policies made (some still not great) for change. Another example, the Mental Health crisis is being spoken of as a top priority, when before it had been avoided. This is progress.

There are still large and pressing similarities between the film and reality however I would like to think that there is hope. I definitely recommend watching "Don't Look Up," and seeing what similarities and metaphors there are regarding politics and climate change.

You can watch 'Don't Look Up' on Netflix UK. However, it is rated a 15.

ANIMAL FACT

Honeybees can flap their wings 200 times per second



@sparkteens



Spark UK



info@sparkuk.co.uk

www.sparkuk.co.uk

WRITTEN BY THE SPARK TEAM
WITH HELP FROM BLUE ELEPHANT CHILDCARE

Spark UK

THE SPARK
NEWSLETTER