

# TOGETHER TOWARDS CHANGE

Events | Meetings | Talks | Publications

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## AWARENESS DAYS FEBRUARY - APRIL

**3rd February**

Time to Talk Day

**7th-12th February**

Children's Mental Health Week  
Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence  
Week

**17th February**

Random Acts of Kindness

**28th February - 6th March**

Eating Disorders Awareness Week

**18th March**

World Sleep Day

**30th March**

World Bipolar Day

**Throughout April**

Stress Awareness Month



**Together Towards Change**  
Newsletter will be coming out  
quarterly from now on, with this  
issue covering the period between  
February and April 2022, while the  
next issue featuring the period  
between May and July.  
Throughout August TTC we'll be  
taking a summer break.



**In this issue: An interview with Charise Jewell, author of 'Crazy –  
Memoir of a Mom Gone Mad', pages 10-13**

**3RD FEBRUARY**

# TIME TO TALK DAY

**Time to Talk Day encourages everyone to be more open about mental health – to talk, to listen, to change lives. There is loads happening around on that day or soon after**

T. A. L. K.

LISTEN

change lives



However you do it, start a conversation about mental health

## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY TO ME?

**by Sandeep Saib - London Champion**

First and foremost, it is important to recognise that 'recovery' doesn't necessarily mean 'cure'. Instead, the concept of mental health recovery for me is more about empowering, educating and encouraging individuals to regain control over their lives, thoughts and emotions, and provides them with the tools to manage their mental health challenges in healthy, holistic ways.

I believe mental health recovery:

- Is a personalised approach, defined by each individual, unique to solely them – never a one size fits all model
- Act of dignity and respect to one self and to others – learn and challenge yourself, define your rights and attitude, be honest, challenge stigma and discrimination
- Goes beyond symptom elimination to include 'social recovery'
- Is a journey, not a destination – slow and steady wins the race. Always find time to evaluate and source next steps
- Focuses on building a meaningful life, as defined by the person themselves and for them to make real choices in life
- Moves away from pathology, illness and symptoms to health, strengths and wellness – have a positive mindset
- Comprises treatment guided by attention to personal life goals – keep seeking supporting, build your network and continue to communicate.

I also think that in order to have effective mental health recovery, we need to lay out the foundation and the following elements are incremental:

Hope  
Personal responsibility  
Self-advocacy  
Education  
Support

To me, recovery means gaining and retaining hope, developing an understanding of one's abilities and disabilities, engaging in an active life, and acquiring personal autonomy, social identity, a meaning and purpose in life, and a positive sense of self.

**Recovery is always a journey that is always possible.**





**4TH FEBRUARY  
IN LONDON**

# **WIRED – POWER OF ANALOGY**

**TIME TO CHANGE WALTHAM FOREST HUB  
PRESENTS**

# **WIRED**

**POWER OF MENTAL HEALTH ANALOGY**

**4TH FEBRUARY 2022**

**STARTS  
AT 3PM**

©DorotaChiomaArt

**A LIVE EVENT, FUNDED BY TIME TO CHANGE WALTHAM FOREST HUB, CELEBRATING GREAT MINDS WIRED TO CREATE AND SHARE THEIR UNIQUE VOICES WHILE GIVING OTHERS THE INSIGHT, THE LANGUAGE, THE IMAGERY, THE VOICE TO BE HEARD, UNDERSTOOD, AND LISTENED TO. LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN AN ARTISTIC WAY...**



**VENUE: BIG CREATIVE ACADEMY, CLIFTON AVENUE,  
WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON, E17 6HL.**

**FOR TICKETS [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK/E/WIRED-THE-POWER-OF-MENTAL-HEALTH-ANALOGY-TICKETS-255212496447](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wired-the-power-of-mental-health-analogy-tickets-255212496447)**

**INFO: [HTTPS://WWW.WF-TIMETOCHANGE.CO.UK/EVENTS](https://www.wf-timetochange.co.uk/events)**



**7TH-12TH  
FEBRUARY**



## **CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**



Place2Be launched Children's Mental Health Week in 2015 to shine a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health. They hope to encourage more people to get involved and spread the word. This year's theme is Growing Together, encouraging children (and adults) to consider how they have grown, and how they can help others to grow.

More info here:

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/#:~:text=The%20next%20Children's%20Mental%20Health,and%20young%20people's%20mental%20health.>

**7TH-12TH  
FEBRUARY**



## **SEXUAL ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE WEEK**

Have a look at @timetochange\_somerset on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter on the 8th Feb for a podcast discussing this topic. There will be an open conversation with SWISH to discuss the issues people face around this topic and why people choose not to talk about it.

Join and add your voice to thousands of people across the UK saying #itsnotok.

You can join the conversation on social media using **#itsnotok** and follow @itsnotok2021

You can find more info including downloadable resources here:

<https://sexualabuseandsexualviolenceawarenessweek.org>



# HIV TESTING WEEK

**7TH-13TH  
FEBRUARY**



## Why National HIV Testing Week 2022 is important? by Brooke Dobson - Somerset TTC.

The number of people diagnosed with HIV fell by a third between 2019 and 2020, but there is still work to do:

- 1 in 20 people with HIV are unaware they have it, increasing the risk of passing HIV on to sexual partners.
- In 2020, 42% of people first diagnosed in England were diagnosed late.

This correlates to poorer long-term health outcomes; in 2019, people diagnosed late had more than a sevenfold increased risk of death within a year of diagnosis.

The number of people testing for HIV in sexual health clinics decreased by 30% in 2020. It is important to remind people at risk of HIV the importance of regular testing and the options available.

References:

[https://www.hivpreventionengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NHTW-2022\\_campaign-briefing\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.hivpreventionengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NHTW-2022_campaign-briefing_FINAL.pdf)

You can tune in to Somerset having a honest conversation about this on a LIVE Q&A with SWISH services at 4pm on the 10th of February head over to @swishservices\_ or @timetochange\_somerset on instagram to see us talk about this more.

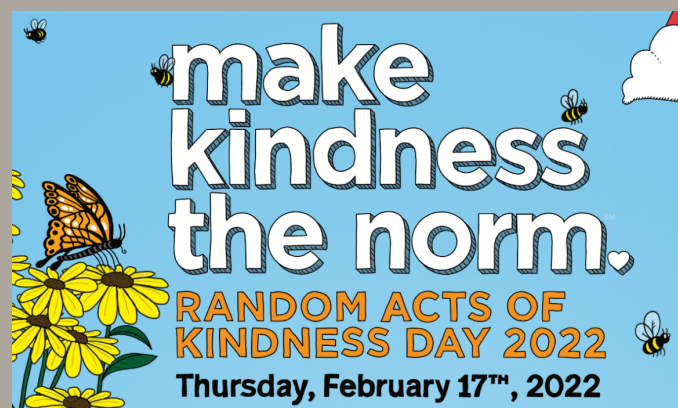
**17TH FEBRUARY**

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

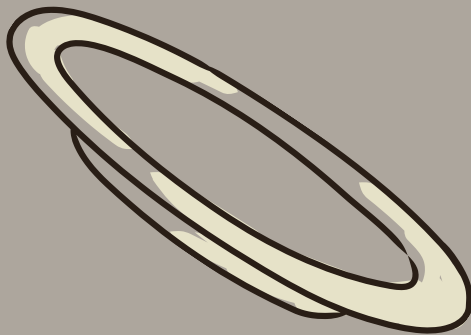
**A few ideas for you to do on the day  
by Brooke Dobson - Somerset TTC.**

- Write a thank you note to someone important in your life who's helped you.
- Offer to cook for a friend or family member.
- Listen, don't interrupt.
- Smile so as to share kindness with others.
- Volunteer for a charity you feel passionate about (TTC ;)
- Phone a loved one.

Try a couple of these and see how it makes you feel, maybe write down how you felt so you can look back on it? How did the other person react? How did that make you feel. Has someone done something kind for you lately that you can remember?



**28TH FEBRUARY  
– 6TH MARCH**



**18TH MARCH**



## **EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK**

The charity BEAT runs Eating Disorders Awareness Week annually to tackle myths and misunderstanding around eating disorders.

Here is what they say:

Eating disorders are devastating mental illnesses that affect 1 in 50 people in the UK.

Recovery is possible. But we rely on our GPs to spot early warning signs that may have nothing to do with a person's weight or appearance.

Their role is crucial. Their responsibility is huge.

But how much training does the average GP receive on eating disorders?

Less than 2 hours!

Less than two hours in their entire medical degree. And a fifth of UK medical schools don't provide any training on eating disorders at all.

This isn't good enough. It's delayed access to treatment and led to misdiagnosis of eating disorders for years. And the consequences for people living with these mental illnesses and their families can be devastating and sometimes deadly. This has to change. And the time is now.

## **WORLD SLEEP DAY**

**A celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep**

For World Sleep Day 2022, the theme and slogan is Quality Sleep, Sound Mind, Happy World. How does quality sleep help maintain mental health? How might better sleep help people focus during the day? Or how might fatigue weigh us down physically, mentally, and emotionally? You can help to share the importance of quality sleep for these reasons and for all of the other many reasons that sleep is a foundational pillar of human health.

Visit: <https://worldsleepday.org/>



# THE POWER OF SLEEP AND MENTAL HEALTH – A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

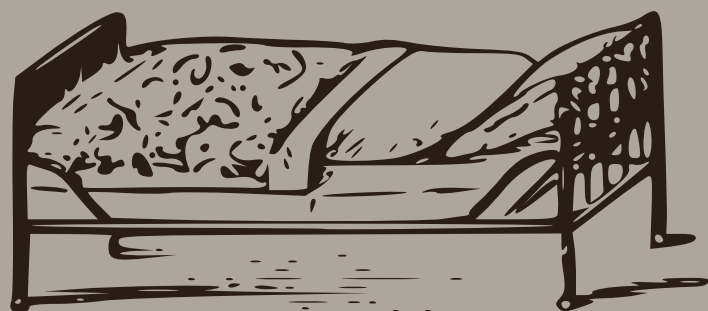
by Sandeep Saib – London Champion

Did you know that we spend about  
a third of our lives asleep?

Sleep is extremely important and  
at times, taken for granted.

#smallthings

Sleep and mental health are strongly  
related and inter-connected.



As eating, drinking and breathing is so vital and a necessity to us, sleep is just the same and crucial for maintaining good mental and physical health, and great for recovering from mental as well as physical exertion. You relax your mind, body and soul, so let's explore sleep in more depth.

Having a poor or lack of good quality sleep can increase the risk of having poor health, directly affect mood, energy, concentration levels, day to day functioning as well as relationships. Even sleep disturbances can be one of the first signs of distress and the start of mental health problems occurring.

You need to intervene early and dedicate focus and time on sleep quality and quantity, in order to help you relieve the symptoms of such mental disorders.

Small changes in your life can lead to such vast positive improvements to help you sleep better, so why not try it for yourself and start today!

Here are some handy tips for you:

- **Tip 1: Lifestyle** – ensure you are taking regular exercise during the day as it can help boost adrenaline, as well as eating well and ensuring you consume healthy, high nutritional foods – keep these two elements balanced always. I always find that eating anything heavy right before bedtime really affects my sleep and at times, struggling to fully dose off, so don't be a victim to it. Perhaps keep a food and exercise diary to keep tabs on this for yourself and adjust anything you need to accordingly.
- **Tip 2: Environment** – head to your bedroom, try to relax yourself before bedtime, reduce screen time i.e. TV, laptop, phones and also lights surrounding you. Perhaps try keeping a daily sleep diary to see if there are patterns which can help identify a problem. Dig out your best duvets, blankets and anything that makes you feel comfortable and happy, and pop these on your bed.
- **Tip 3: Attitude and behaviour** – before heading to bed, try and wind down, be less stimulated, and be relaxed as much as possible. Try relaxation techniques i.e. yoga, breathing etc, a warm bath, mindfulness practice, a warm milky drink or even herbal remedies such as sleep oils on your body pulses or on your pillow i.e. lavender. Try to ensure that you are positive-minded all day every day, but ever more important to be just right before heading to bed for a restful night.
- **Tip 4: Health** – it is really important to get any health concerns addressed immediately both for helping physical symptoms and for addressing any worries that might keep you awake. Noticing any issues? Do go and book a doctors' appointment, have a look online for specific medical-related resources out there as well as therapists/clinics also who specialise in sleep.

# THIS ZINE HAS ISSUES

**THIS ZINE HAS ISSUES**  
**IS BACK!!!**

with a new issue out in March 2022

Calling for entries on the topic:  
**SLEEP & MENTAL HEALTH**

*Open Call*

Should you feel that you can contribute to the exploration of such an important aspect of life and a huge issue in many conditions of ill mental health, submit to: **thiszinehasissues@gmail.com** by **20th February 2022**

## ATTENTION

## VISUAL ARTISTS, WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS...

A colour print zine dedicated to breaking the stigma of mental illness featuring art, poetry, prose, photography, comics, and essays, with a new issue to be released in March 2022...

Seeking submissions related to the issue's theme of sleep and mental health to be included in the new issue.

We accept contributions in all forms of 2D art or written word particularly from those with lived experience of ill mental health.

### Submissions due 20th February 2022.

Email your submissions to **thiszinehasissues@gmail.com** or email us for more information.

Follow us: IG: @thiszinehasissues FB: facebook.com/thiszinehasissues

Editors: Dorota Chioma @dorota.chioma.art and Dave Combs @davemakesstickers



**30TH MARCH**



# **WORLD BIPOLAR DAY**

**World Bipolar Day is organised by the International Bipolar Foundation to bring global awareness to bipolar conditions and to eliminate social stigma.**

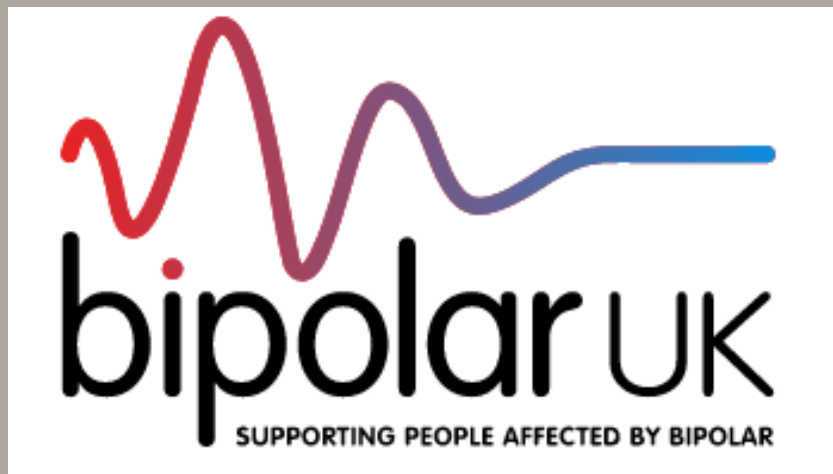
Bipolar disorder is a serious mental illness that affects over 1m people in the UK alone. It is a very serious condition and the NHS service provision is severely lacking in many areas leaving people affected with nowhere to turn – says The Bipolar UK

Bipolar disorder is identified by two mood states: depression and mania. There is also hypomania, a milder form of mania and cyclothymia, a condition related to bipolar with milder symptoms.

Bipolar is classified by some psychiatrists as bipolar 1 and bipolar 2 with different balances of mood states. So people's experience of bipolar can differ with some alternating between moods over long intervals whilst others may experience mood swings in quick succession – this is called rapid cycling.

You can find out more by visiting: <https://www.bipolaruk.org/>

**Read the interview on the following pages with Charise Jewell – the author of 'Crazy: Memoir of a Mom Gone Mad' providing an insight into bipolar experiences...**



# Crazy: Memoir of a Mom Gone Mad



Dorota Chioma in conversation  
with Charise Jewell

I came across this memoir by chance when looking for any literature providing an insight into bipolar. I waited for it to arrive for a long time and as anticipation grew, I reached out to Charise in desperation on wondering whether it would ever arrive. It finally did and I got pretty glued to it from the first page. I could not resist speaking to Charise straight after...

Some insight into our conversation:

**Tell us a bit of the story behind this book and how the idea got born**

I began writing *Crazy* after my first manic episode and bipolar 1 diagnosis. I was hospitalized for two weeks and upon returning home, I started to write as a form of therapy. Journaling has always helped me.

I found it beneficial to write about my feelings, but it also helped to write about exactly what had happened to me while in the hospital. I was in a great deal of shock and rejected my diagnosis, and the post-manic depression hit me hard. Writing helped me to make sense of everything. There's a Virginia Woolf quote that sums up how I felt: "In expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest." Writing didn't entirely lay everything to rest but the more I got out, the more I was able to accept my diagnosis and move through my denial. At some point during this time I also began to read memoirs written by other people who had bipolar, which comforted me. As I continued to read and appreciate other mental illness memoirs, it occurred to me that everything I'd been writing in my journal could be consolidated and expanded on, and potentially help others in the same way. The idea was instantly appealing. I also realized that my memoir could begin conversations about mental illness and help to reduce stigma, which would be beneficial for anyone with a mental illness, including myself. It was the first time I felt excited and motivated since my mania.

**Is there any mission statement behind your book (in another words, what is the aim of your book)?**

My brilliant editor, Shannon Moroney, often reminded me that the best memoirs comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. In other words, they help people who are struggling because of similar circumstances or relatable trauma, and have a meaningful impact on other readers who don't have the same lived experience and in the case of a mental illness memoir, are not aware of the stigma or impact of their words and actions. That was my goal.

**You can follow and reach out to Charise Jewell via these channels:**

<https://charisejewell.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/reesechaell>

<https://www.facebook.com/ReeseChaell>

<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/charise-jewell-5a181681>



## **During the journey of writing your memoir, did you learn anything about yourself?**

Definitely. I have always worked to understand myself better and thought I knew all there was to know, but this journey taught me a few things. For example, I am a night owl by nature and never knew I could wake up before dawn to write and actually enjoy it! The process of trying to find a publisher was extremely difficult for me and the rollercoaster of emotions often made me question if it was too detrimental for my mental health. I routinely reassessed my triggers and self-care, and learned better how to take breaks when needed, ask for help, and prioritize my sleep. I also figured out some fun strategies that helped me to write more efficiently, which I would have loved to have known a decade ago.

## **Why people should read your book and who should reach out for it?**

Anyone who wants to learn more about mental illness either for themselves or a loved one, or anyone who wants to read a book about trauma, resilience, and hope. So I think everyone should read it, except for kids. It has some mature scenes.

## **If there was a cure for bipolar would you be interested in taking it to eliminate that illness from your life? Why?**

That is a tough question. Of course I would love to never feel depressed, or not react too strongly to things other people seem to take in stride. But at what cost? I know people who seem quite stable but barely notice any of the beauty, or the pain, even in their immediate surroundings. I wouldn't want to live like that. I work hard at my stability and I'm lucky because my medications work well for me, so I've been stable for four years.

The minor mood swings I've had are fairly easy to figure out and then prevent, and I'm still quite creative, passionate, and sensitive, which I love. I would definitely not want to trade any of those qualities for a cure.



## **What advice would you give to someone who might be at the dark state of mind due to mental health struggles at this very moment?**

I would repeat what my husband told me when I was in a dark state of mind: do any small thing that brings you joy. It can't hurt anyone else but it doesn't have to make sense. He liked to time taking the subway a certain way to hear specific machine pings, and it made his day. For no reason. After he told me that story I began to sit on the one seat at our kitchen table that had been warmed by the sun, because it was a nice little bit of extra comfort. Then I began to pick up litter while walking my kids to school. Small things and not life-changing, but moments of joy. Second to that, I would say to talk to someone. Anyone. I found it impossible to talk to my family or friends, so I understand how difficult this is. If you have a therapist, doctor, or anyone you feel comfortable turning to, please do it. Or call a support hotline, which is great for its anonymity. I also benefitted from sharing with people who had similar lived experience, like the bipolar community on Instagram.

**You mention in the book:** *"my reactions are sometimes attributed to my illness before being dismissed (...) I have to fake it till I make it"* **when referring to emotions pretty natural to all of us in certain circumstances. How do you manage to keep your integrity while most of the times your illness is the lenses through which people/medical staff perceive you? What advice would you give to others to cope with this kind of 'challenge'?**



© Charise Jewell

### What do you perceive as the most difficult aspect of your ill mental health?

A circular word cloud of negative emotions and actions, with a spiral in the center. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some words appearing multiple times. The words include: SORROW, FORGIVE, REMEMBER, HEALING?, RESENTMENT, COMFORT, BITTER, TIME, SORRY?, SADNESS, MISTAKE, ACCEPTANCE, BITTER, SNAKE, RESENTMENT, DISAPPOINTMENT, LIE, EMPTY, BROKEN, DESIRE, TIGHTEN, BAGGAGE, DRESS, ANGER, ASSHOLE, DARKNESS, HATE, EQUALITY, STOP, NASTY, MADNESS, BITCH, SHOUT, LIAR, REVENGE, SORROW, DIVIDED, WOUND, CRACK, DELICATE, SORRY, BITTER, HEALING?, REMEMBER, FORGIVE, SORROW. The words are in various colors and fonts, creating a vibrant and chaotic visual. A black spiral is drawn in the center of the circle.

Funding is needed to make it significantly better. With enough funding I would train all hospital staff (especially security guards) to understand mental illnesses properly, hire more staff so the job is not so exhausting, have training and feedback from people with mental illnesses who can make patient needs and requests heard, put cameras everywhere except washrooms and allow families to view from home at any time, and begin marketing campaigns to spread awareness about mental illness, to make it better understood by society.

Yes. It's difficult to describe how drawing or painting helps me to feel better but somehow it does. I think it's like the small moments of joy for me. As a teenager, I used to draw album covers of my favourite bands when I was bored. Even though I was copying someone else's artwork, I still felt a thrill every time I took a blank piece of paper and turned it into something cool. I feel the same way about growing plants from avocado pits or lemon seeds or any other fruit I've just finished eating. Creating something where there once was nothing is powerful. It makes me feel proud. I add little creative twists every day to most of the things I do to capture this feeling, from how I organize our bookshelf, to the way I braid my daughter's hair, to the meal I make for dinner. Those are all opportunities for creative moments of joy, which add up together to help me overcome minor mood challenges and feel a bit better every day.



## What's next, any other books, projects you are working on?

I've started writing a new novel about mental health aimed at children aged nine to twelve. When I was diagnosed my children ranged in age from four to nine and when I went looking for resources to help explain bipolar disorder to them, I could hardly find any. My new book tells the story of friends who are struggling with their own mental health issues or severe mental illnesses of loved ones, and is meant to help comfort and empower its intended audience.

Crazy: Memoir of a Mom Gone Mad is available on Amazon.



Charise will be also a guest on live podcast: Art My Medicine via The Mental Health Warriors TV on their YouTube channel:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Lg5LECYvq7HR7xdzzyt\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4Lg5LECYvq7HR7xdzzyt_Q)

on 26th March 2022 at 2pm UK time

Should you have missed the podcast costing Steve Loft, you can re-watch it on YouTube

**THE MENTAL HEALTH WARRIORS**  
Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness

**Art My Medicine** *Specials Episode 12*

EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH WARRIORS

**Dorota Chioma** - the Creative Warrior - in a conversation with:  
**Steve Loft**  
- a fellow mental health champion building communities of mutual support and creativity.

Intrigued?  
**Watch the conversation on YOUTUBE:**  
**HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/KWLL6UNSFVG**

**Editor's Note:**

**Together Towards Change is delighted to bring you this newsletter.**

**Many thanks to Dorota Chioma for facilitating and creating it and to all contributors.**

**We would love your feedback.**

**Should you have any events in May, June, July you wish to publicise, the deadline for submitting the info and graphics is Friday 15th April 2022.**

**You can submit your entries via email to: [admin@ttc-london.org](mailto:admin@ttc-london.org) or directly onto the Google Drive (preferable).**

**with warm wishes for a great month ahead**

**Steve Loft (Time to Change - London Network) & the Team**