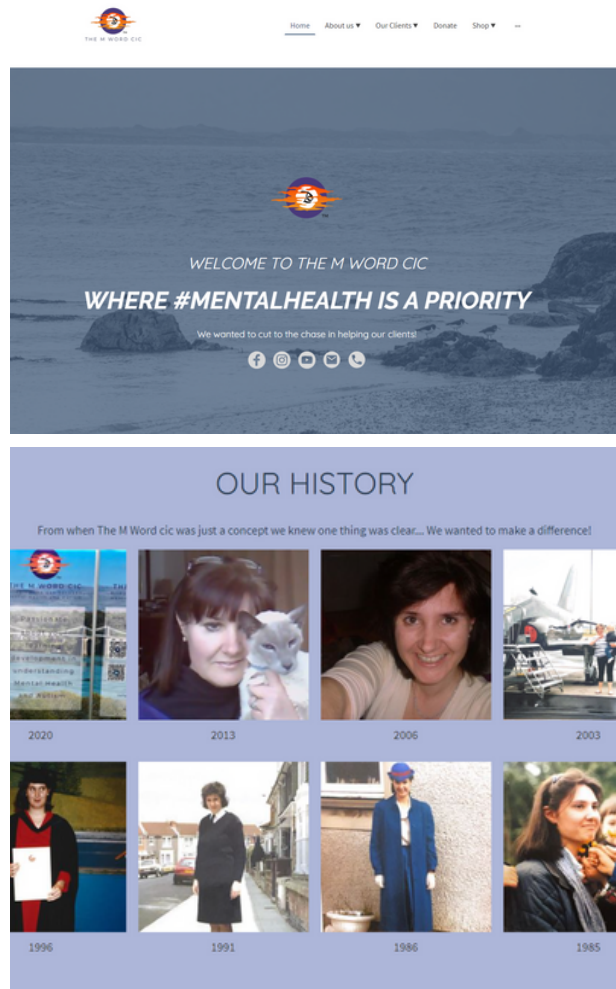


SATURDAY 24TH FEB 2024

With Lavinia Donling

THE M WORD'S NEW LOOK

I wonder how many of you have noticed that Yasmin has launched our new website. What a website! I would encourage you to go and have a nosey. Feedback has already been positive such as "easier to navigate", "fresher", "lots more content". Even the NEDs commented with Ron particularly liking the unveiling to launch it, with Ginny swiftly adding "Great work!". Wendy very kindly tested the donation page for us. Katie loves the front page picture so much, she asked Yasmin for the design to put on our business portfolio! We had to put the date back twice, but then chose Valentine's Day to launch. Yasmin, you made it look very easy on many occasions, and, despite my reservations, asked me to trust your judgment with the look and feel of the new website! So, this is a very public space to say a huge thank you, Yasmin, for all your hard work. It is so good, and we look forward to your further contributions.



FIRST DIAGNOSED

Not many of you will know, but a few years ago, Yasmin was in a very dark place with her mental health. If you wish to know how bad things got for her, she has written plenty of blogs on our website, as well as discussions on our Youtube channel about her difficulties. Yasmin was diagnosed quite late, due to her ability to mask, and it was not till I was working screening in Surrey that I began to have an uncomfortable feeling of 'this all seems very familiar' to myself and Yasmin. Everything collided for me around the same time, pretty much just after I started my Doctorate, with first being diagnosed with Dyslexia, and then Autism and ADHD, and then PDA. That pivotal moment of being diagnosed with my neurodiversity made such a significant shift for me, as it did for Yasmin.



In the last week, I have screened parents who had initially come to us to investigate the difficulties their children were having. One parent was quite shocked to hear about their Autistic traits, as they were simply expecting to have ADHD traits confirmed. However, scores generally do not lie when I see raised indicators from a Mental Health assessment. Another parent I saw this week has been assessed repeatedly with collecting another diagnosis, and “not getting anywhere”. Yet, I could see and hear the tell tale signs, and am willing to bet that they are triple complexity of neurodiversity.



It is all very well getting an understanding around your mental health and neurodiverse traits. But then, where do you go? I was connecting with a lady who is doing her Doctorate about her journey from mental ill health and then shifting the lens when she was diagnosed with ??? Autism and ADHD with a PDA profile. She was so pleased to hear that I had set up The M Word cic to help young people and adults as there is “nothing, anywhere, to help people”. I think her book will be extremely revealing and helpful once her Doctorate is completed and her book published. Learning about your mental health can seem very overwhelming, particularly when you have deteriorated so badly that you have given up hope and attempted to take your life. However, we really are not encouraged to consider our mental health. If we do, it is because we are usually in crisis, but it is too late then, and requires more labour intensive work on our behalf. Of course, life gets in the way, and it is much easier to take prescribed medication to numb our physical feelings that gyrate our nerves, as well as dial down our thoughts and feelings so they do not feel so raw. Yet, we then become dependent upon them, and then becomes more challenging as we come to rely on them.



What I can tell you, is that if you like my approach in therapy, you will come to realize that learning about your mental health is interesting, fun, although sad at times. Yet, through it, you become more in tune with yourself, more confident and stronger in your resilience. Years ago, I had a telephone call from an ex-client who asked me to be sitting down when she relayed her news. It had only been months before she had rung me upset feeling she was deteriorating. I asked her a couple of questions, and she acknowledged she had forgotten to empower herself. I duly sat down. 'Ok, I am sitting, what's your news?'. She then told me about a program that was airing that week called 'How to Look Good Naked' with the tv presenter Gok Wan in which she had been filmed. She reminded me of our previous phone call, and how she went away and did her TLC, her journaling, and revisited her notes from our sessions. Within hours she felt so much better, she set herself a challenge and saw an advert asking for volunteers for the program. Gok loved her so much, he invited her back twice over a further 2 seasons.

“The inner journey, at times has been a very painful one, but exciting too as I discover more and more the underlying factors and influences that originally led me to allowing myself to fall into a very low state. Having more understanding of this, and gaining in confidence, I am starting to see myself as a person who has the power to change things!”

Lisa Mayall How to Look Good Naked? May 2007



Reminding yourself of who you are and what you can achieve is something that Lisa proved to herself, although she said she suggested I might have done the same in applying to the program. I was swift to reassure her I did not have that kind of courage! And whilst I am not suggesting others go and out and do the same as Lisa, I think you understand what I am trying to convey.

U P C O M I N G

Today, John and I are off down to Southampton to catch up with Ron, one of our amazing NEDs. We are all looking forward to this catch up, as I believe it has been 18 months since Ron and I last met up at another charity he supports with military veterans.

It is Ellie's Birthday on Wednesday. We and the NEDs love having Ellie on our team, as she is so good at what she does, and she works so hard to make our services for our families even better. Please join me in wishing her a very Happy Birthday! We hope you have a lovely day celebrating, Ellie. (Remember, we are not expecting you to work on your Birthday!)



So, have a lovely weekend, everyone!

Lavinia



TO Be Myself Wellness Journal £10.50
 To get your own copy email us at info@the-m-wordcic.co.uk

Unveiling the Mask

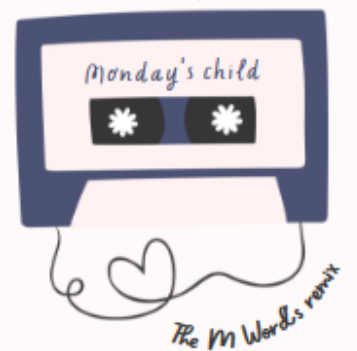
NOT JUST SUPER HEROES WEAR A MASK - PLENTY OF WOMEN DO TOO.

#AUTISMINWOMEN #ADHDINWOMEN

MANY WOMEN HAVE TO PUT ON THEIR MASKS TO BE THE WARRIOR, THE ADVOCATOR, THE PROTECTOR. BUT THEY ALSO PROVIDE THE SAFE SPACE, COMFORT ZONE, PUNCH BAG. DO YOU CONSIDER THAT, WITHOUT THE MASK, YOU DISPLAY TRAITS OF AUTISM AND/OR ADHD?

TICKETS COST 7.50 PER SESSION. STARTS 20:15 TO 21:45 FORTNIGHTLY ON THURSDAY THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY. PLEASE PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS THROUGH INFO@THE-M-WORDCIC.CO.UK

Children's Mental Health Week
 6-12 February 2023



Children's Mental Health Awareness week.
 Keep an eye out for The M Word's remix of 'Monday's Child'

£7.50 per session from 20:15-21:45 starting Feb 16th