



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

# SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVERS & BLOGS

HEALTHYOCEANS, HEALTHYMINDS



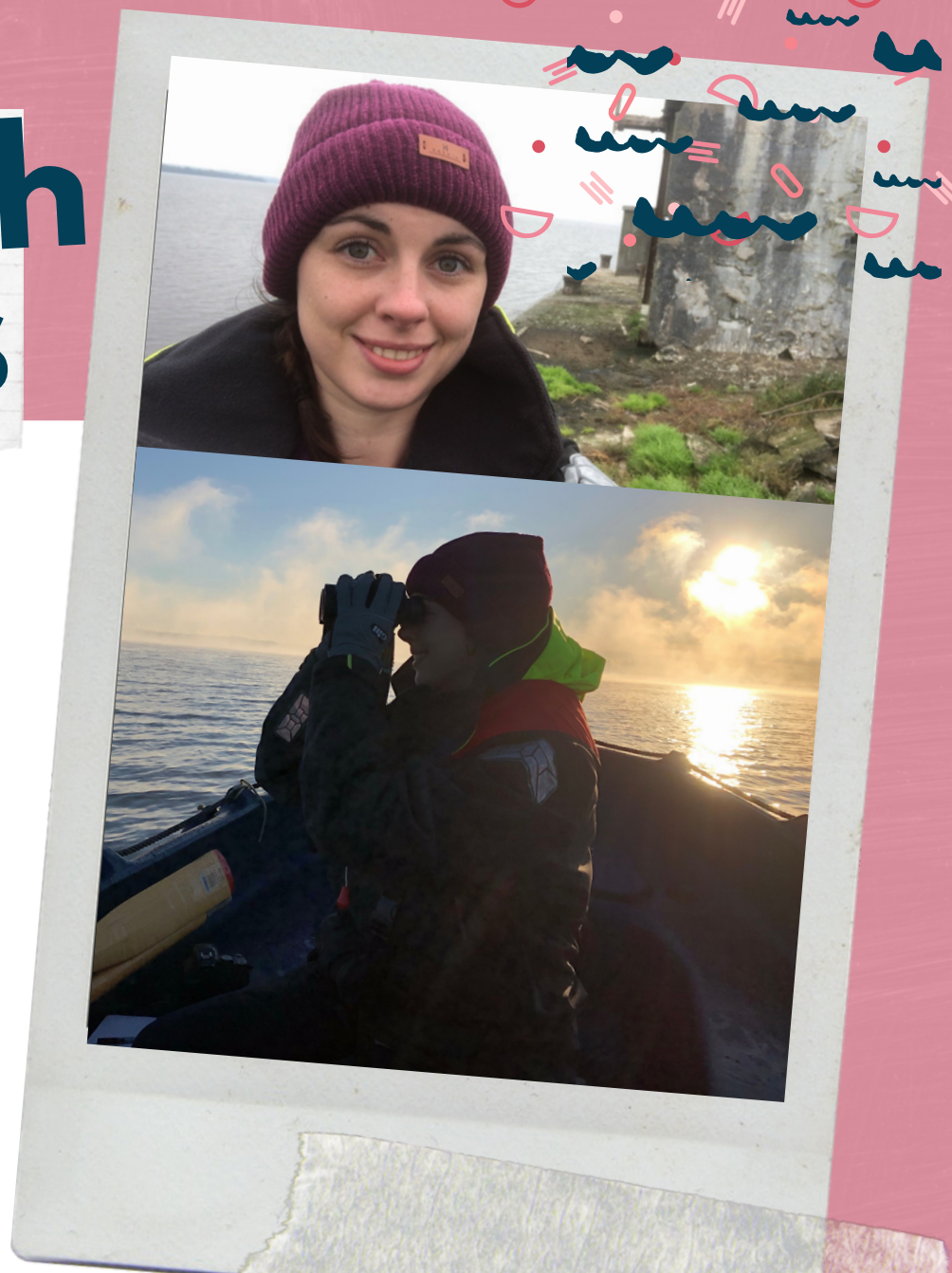
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# Lough Neagh Connections

Ciara Laverty is a Lough Neagh Ranger for the Lough Neagh Partnership. She works closely with Shoreline Environment Officer Peter Harper to survey the breeding birds on islands in the Lough, carry out Wetland Bird and Heronry surveys during the winter months, litter clean ups and habitat management.

Ciara will be writing about why Lough Neagh is an important resource to Northern Ireland and its relevance to Healthy Oceans, Healthy Minds as well as sharing some of her videos from the lough. Ciara will also give some helpful tips on where to explore on the Lough and what to look out for to help you beat the winter blues!



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# What the sea saw

'Beachcomber, beach-cleaner and accidental crafter. Mum of two boys, a rescue dog and a cat with razor claws. Employed by a mental-health charity since 2004, currently working part-time, as a skills tutor for adults with learning disabilities. Lived in Northern Ireland as a young child and then came back 17 years ago, to settle in Bangor. An avid swimmer, but mainly in a warm pool, I'm sad to say. Must rectify that. Have a twin sister, who looks identical... if you think I did it, she probably did.'

Aileen creates art from sea-tumbled glass, ceramics and wood that she finds on her local beach.

Her blog will give us an insight into her relationship with the sea, beachcombing and how it inspires her work.



WhatTheSeaSaw



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# Blue and I

Catherine is an ocean lover, sea swimmer and Surfers Against Sewage Rep for Northern Ireland. Catherine raises awareness of plastic pollution in and around our coastlines and trying to introduce as many plastic free and low waste alternatives as possible. She'll be sharing some of her top picks and swaps as she takes over our social media for the day.

Follow her journey further at [@blueand\\_i](https://www.instagram.com/blueand_i) on Instagram.



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# Ladies who litter pick

Hi! My name is Hannah Crawford, I am 23 and from the village of Ahoghill. I have worked for Women's Aid ABCLN for three years as a Children and Young Person's Support Worker. Sometimes the victims of domestic abuse are often the smallest, it can affect both their confidence and self - esteem.

Hey! I'm Chloe Jamison, a 21 year old full time student at Ulster University studying geography. I have been a volunteer at Women's Aid ABCLN for 9 years. Women's Aid ABCLN is something I'm incredibly passionate about and I have seen first-hand the impact of this on the lives of these women and children. Through my degree I'm acutely aware of the impacts that litter can have on the environment, wildlife and people's mental health, an incredibly important issue during these times.

During lockdown, we were going on more walks than usual and the litter that we noticed on the country roads was so shocking! We decided to start litter picking whilst turning it into a fundraising opportunity for Women's Aid ABCLN. We set a goal to complete 40 hours of litter picking, which we have almost achieved. We have currently walked 19 miles, collected 50 bags of litter and have raised £600 so far!



Hannah and Chloe tell us about the challenge they undertook to help their community, the environment and the very important charity Womens Aid.



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# Normalise

Sophy Irwin is originally from Lurgan but moved to the North Coast in 2011 to study a BSc in Psychology followed by an MSc in Applied Psychology (Mental Health & Psychological Therapies) at Ulster University Coleraine. Sophy currently works full-time delivering training and carrying out one-to-one restorative interventions with victims & offenders of hate crime.

Despite living so near the ocean for almost 10 years, Sophy has just this year (thanks to lockdown and a lack of trips abroad) got herself a wetsuit and bodyboard and started to spend time out in the water. This has really opened Sophy's eyes to the many benefits the ocean has on our wellbeing.

Sophy's learning on the MSc course helped her as much in her personal life as her professional life. This made her realise that everyone deserves to learn about mental health, not just those who are pursuing a career in it. This is when the idea was sparked for her to create a platform to share her learning and experiences in the hope that it might help others. Sophy sat with the idea for two and a half years before Normalise was born in July this year.

Sophy's hope for her Normalise account is that it will do just that... make more normal those things in society that we do not speak about. She hopes that her posts will open up conversations for people, and help people understand that thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are normal when the context and the bigger picture is taken into consideration.



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# SupHub NI

Iain runs a mobile SUP School aiming to provide a hub for our community, and visitors alike, to access the world's fastest growing watersport in Stand Up Paddleboarding, whilst using the wonderful coastal waters that surround us.

Iain will be telling us more about what he does, the benefits of getting outside and why we should all value the world around us!



"The cure for everything is salt water; sweat, tears, or the sea" – Karen Blixen (Author)



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# AWARE

AWARE is the Depression Charity for Northern Ireland. On average, 1 in 4 people in Northern Ireland will experience an issue with their mental health in their lifetime. AWARE's mission is to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, while promoting the importance of looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

AWARE has an established network of support groups across the country, which are run by trained volunteers. Support groups welcome people with depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder as well as carers for people with the illness. AWARE delivers mental health and well-being programmes into communities, schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. They also now have an online support group, online email service, support helpline and a dedicated COVID-19 section on their website providing information and resources to help you manage your well-being at this time.

AWARE will be sharing information about the services they are providing during COVID-19 as well as a blog focused on mental health and the importance of connecting to nature. Keep an eye on our social media channels to hear all about AWARE and what they do.



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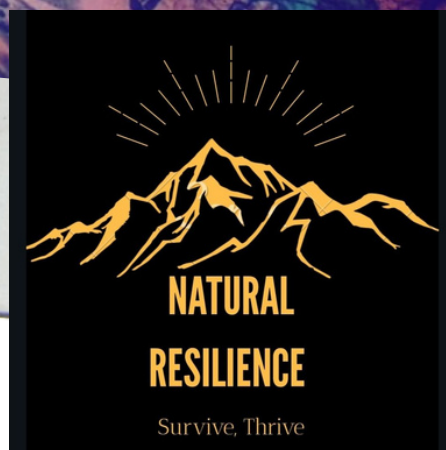
# Natural Resilience

Ciaran runs Natural Resilience Workshops and Retreats based in several locations throughout Northern Ireland teaching The Art of Living and more.

'I've been passionate about cold water swimming for a number of years. I initially used it as a recovery method when I was representing NI in the NI Powerlifting Team.

However I found it also had massive benefits mentally as well as physically and so I've integrated it into my daily routine. I also organise regular group sessions including Swimrise sessions and Full Moon Sessions. Having conquered some of the UK and Ireland's highest peaks, along with successful solo overnight camps in the Mourne's.'

Ciaran is acutely aware of the benefits of connecting with nature and escaping the hustle and bustle of modern life. He'll be sharing more of his story and those he has worked with on our social channels.



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# Action Mental Health

Through a series of video and social media posts the team from Action Mental Health will share their thoughts on how being outdoors and getting involved in positive environmental activities can be a tool when working on the 5 ways to wellbeing. We'll also be hearing from some of their services users about how the outdoors and litter picks have benefitted their mental health.



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