

ROOTING INTO PLACE



RASAC



KIRKLEES, CALDERDALE & WAKEFIELD

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

Rooting into place is a project abundant with **creativity, colour, natural pigment, ochre, plant medicine, foraging, painting, movement, voice, performance, and writing**. It is a **deep exploration into the territory of Place**—place as home, as the earth from which we emerged, and as the bodies that carry us.

Over the course of six months, the project followed a **process of deepening, unravelling, weaving, making, refining, and sharing**. Participants **journeyed through the realms of the plant world**, learning about **wild foods, foraging, and plant medicine**. They created their **own folk remedies, drawing on ancestral knowledge of community care and self-tending**.

The project explored the rich tones of the local landscape through **botanical inks and ochres, utilising handcrafted tools and working with ancient methods of colour-making**. It delved into **storytelling—local stories, childhood tales, and enduring myths**.

Participants walked the fields and hedgerows of Huddersfield, **learning from the land, being with it, and listening deeply**.

The culmination of the project was a **public exhibition held in the centre of Huddersfield**—a space that held the **participants' stories, words, and art**. It was a place to honour joy, anger, resilience, and collective voice. A space where they were truly heard.

HOW IS THE PROJECT FUNDED?

This partnership project, designed and delivered by **Hannah-May Batley**, founder and director at **Hedge School**, has been funded through **RASAC**.

WHAT ASPECTS OF HEALTH DOES THE PROJECT ADDRESS?

This project addresses **mental health, health prevention, social isolation and health inequalities**.

WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT?

This partnership project **supports female survivors of rape, sexual abuse and violence aged 18+**.



HOW DO YOU DEMONSTRATE IMPACT AND SUCCESS?

The project's success has been demonstrated through five key thematic dimensions.



Emotional and Psychological

Many participants described a profound personal transformation, including existential shifts, increased self-worth, and emotional healing as a result of engaging with the project.

Frequently described as helpful, participants have noted that the project has provided a space for them to feel seen, fostering feelings of safety and validation. Several people reported feeling more peaceful, open-minded, and emotionally regulated.

The project supports each individual on their unique recovery journey.



Creative Expression as Healing

Activities such as ink making, mark-making, and movement were central to the experience. These were not only enjoyable but facilitated connection, insight, and expression.

Creative exercises helped participants connect with their inner child, tap into their creativity, and explore previously unexplored areas of themselves.



Connection and Community

Participants felt supported by others and expressed the importance of being with other women survivors. A strong sense of community emerged from the project.

The space created allowed participants to be vulnerable, reflect, and explore their stories without judgment.



Connection to Nature

Participants deeply resonated with learning about plants, creating natural remedies, and spending time in nature. These experiences were described as grounding and empowering.

The land around Huddersfield was a powerful theme—connecting with it helped participants feel more rooted, present, and connected to their surroundings.



Long-term value and Recommendations

Participants overwhelmingly expressed that Rooting into Place should become a regular part of RASAC's offering.

There's clear enthusiasm for a regular art group at RASAC, with suggestions like a dedicated studio space or structured creative sessions following counselling.

HOW HAS THE PROJECT MADE A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S WELLBEING?

The **Rooting Into Place project** makes a difference to people's wellbeing by **creating safe, supportive spaces where survivors can reconnect with themselves, others, and the natural world**. Through creativity, nature-based practices, and community, **participants experience emotional healing, increased self-worth, and a sense of belonging**. Our approach **fosters personal growth, reduces isolation, and empowers individuals to explore their identities and resilience in a deeply meaningful way**.


The impact of engaging with the Rooting Into Place project is also evident in the numerous **powerful testimonials collected from participants, which highlight it's transformative effects**.

It has genuinely saved my life and shown me things I never would have participated in the past due to fear and feeling like a soar thumb.

This project is helping my recovery. The sharing of the group and tutor, the feeling of a safe space. Some of the information about plants and inks and really being given the feeling of how much power they and we have in our own healing journey. It's allowing me to sit with things/ feel things more and also have an outlet for this that's not just talking. A feeling of being held both by the tutor and the group. The sharing and experiencing other people's journeys alongside my own.

Seeing the depths of my loss and fear around healing again. I'd been very stuck and also feel a part of me had given up because I've been working hard all my life to be ok and really was for the first time for a few years until the last assault.. I was feeling so tired of trying to be ok but the course has shown me how much is started avoiding anything that was painful, to my own detriment, and reminded me that I need to be able to sit with my uncomfortable feelings in order to live again.

I think what I learnt so far, can help me once the course has ended. It will be a reminder of how important connection with nature is to me. Allowing myself to feel more and therefore shift some of my patterns/habits. A reminder that connection and vulnerability are scary but powerful in my healing journey. Having space for creativity each week, even if I don't make it for myself. Having a long term commitment to my healing journey. Creating connections and being reminded how much I need to keep trying to do that in my life.



*This has helped my recovery
by being held in a safe space,
being validated.*

*I'm more aware of things that are going on inside
me. I'm more able to sometimes sit with my feelings. I've
become more able to share what's inside/how I am in the
moment and feel seen. I am starting to use healing 'tools'
both my own if "lost" and ones I'm learning. I've joined a
yoga class I've been meaning to join for a year! Learning
to listen to what I need even if it's not what I think
I "should" be doing. I'm taking part in
'women who smoke' course at the
women'scentre with the intention
of giving up.*

*This project has been painful but
beneficial. I feel like I'm able to
look at myself more. Sit with
myself more. I'm starting to make
changes in my life for the long
term good. I am getting a lot of
benefit from the creativity. Having
connection with the other group
members is a big positive.*

*Absolutely would
recommend this
group!! It's a gift, it
feels as though I'm
starting on my
journey to heal.*



Find out more about Hedge School [HERE](#)



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