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## letter to the editor

### Article helped find alternative support

Thank you for your recent article "SonFlower Stables provides an equine connection for those seeking personal understanding" (Norwich Gazette Jan. 25, 2017).

For those suffering from mental illness - no matter how mild or severe - finding helpful ways to cope other than just sitting in an office talking to a therapist are few and far between.

Recently in Oxford County there has been a real effort by the mental health community to offer help and suggest ways to deal with feelings of depression, anxiety and many of the other daily struggles that people have.

The Woodstock Hospital now has a walk-in clinic on Thursdays for counselling and many different out-patient support groups based on an individual's needs, all of which are free. From the moment that you walk in to register, the many different staff who you may speak to are friendly, caring and non-judgmental.

The reason that I was particularly interested in your article on SonFlower Stables is the animals. I have a lot of trust issues with people and have always found that I relate better to

animals. Animals don't care about your past or future; they care about how you are at this moment. Just having an animal to take care of or talk to that doesn't expect anymore from you than who you are means a lot. They are there for you without a lot of the expectations that people put on you.

For people like me, therapy and support groups are good but animals, especially horses from what I understand, are extremely beneficial in quieting "the voices" in my head. I tend to focus on the "now" while I'm with the animal and all of the other worries and insecurities are no longer important. Everyone needs "quiet time" but for some people, it's almost impossible to find on their own.

Thank you to SonFlower Stables for offering another tool in my recovery and thank you to the Norwich Gazette for publicizing their good work and making people aware of a new, different and healthy therapy that is available locally, in our time of need.

Dave Kerr  
Norwich