

MHELO NEWSLETTER



SPRING EDITION 2024

MHELO (Mental Health Experience Led Opportunities) is an independent network that gives people with lived experience of mental ill health a collective voice.

We work together, listening to the voices of people who have lived- experience of mental health.

We created a FREE resource for you to pick up whenever you're feeling stressed out, out of control, anxious or just need a bit of a boost! Download for the link below.

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT



<https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/engagement/mhelo-mental-health-expert-led-opportunities>

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white Qigong uniform, is shown in a forest setting. She is in a standing pose with her arms extended horizontally to the sides, palms facing down. The background is a soft-focus forest with green foliage and tree trunks. A semi-transparent dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

QI GONG FOR MENTAL WELL BEING

What is Qi Gong?

BY LISA HEPWORTH

A 5,000-year-old practice. An eastern secret to longevity.

Pronounced "chee-gong".

Here are some of the short and longer-term benefits:

Improved energy - Improved mood - Improved mobility
Improved posture - Improved circulation - Improved digestion
Improved balance - Increased bone density - Reduced anxiety
Reduced blood pressure - Strengthened immune system
Improved cognition - Improved sleep quality

'Qi' means life force energy, and 'Gong' means work or skill. So by practising 'Qi Gong', we develop skills in working with our own energy.

Qi Gong is a blend of exercises incorporating mobility, strength, breath, and intention work. Some liken intention to a form of meditative state, which comes through continued practice (gong).

With Qi Gong, you need no equipment. The only requirement is clothes that you can move freely in.

LISA'S QI GONG JOURNEY

My 2-year-old grandson can do it, and so can 103-year-olds; anyone from world-class athletes to the more sedentary benefit from it.

I started my Qi Gong journey to improve my mind-body connection and balance after suffering balance issues.

Now, Qi Gong balances my strength and helps give me clarity, like meditation does for those who practice it.

Qi Gong is the most practised exercise in the world! It actually gave birth to Tai Qi, Kung Fu and many other martial arts.

The benefit you can feel immediately from doing a Qi Gong session is feeling energised yet relaxed at the same time.

A Qi Gong Taster session focused on calming the system., resetting the parasympathetic nervous system. Rest and digest. This is the nervous system that we want to be dominant in our day-to-day lives. We feel calm and grounded.

Moves are smooth.

Remember, the opposite is the sympathetic nervous system, which causes us to feel agitated, on edge, and triggered. This is the fight-or-flight and stressed nervous system that we do not need most of the time.

In this modern day, we can find ourselves in a loop of the stressed system.

If you find yourself stressed, or not yourself then this is the flow for you.

Breath is slow, deep and soft. Connection to the infinite energy that surrounds you, but that is also within you.

Remember you can do the flow multiple times, and there is zero pressure to do it perfectly.

Mental Health & well-being collaboration event

By Denise Holder

This was the second event held at Churchdown Community Centre on the 8th of February. It was the second event held since things opened up after not being able to meet. The first one was held at Guild Hall Gloucester on the 22nd of June last year.

The idea is to bring together various people from the health and voluntary sectors and, importantly, people with lived experience.

There were 150 tickets, and the venue was sold out. The invited speakers showed us where projects are active, such as a university project with BME.

Also, Rethink, an established project, has recently had a change of focus. Previously, it was the Self Harm Helpline, but it has now changed its name to Connect and Offload, or Cando for short.

From April, Rethink will have the contract previously held by Independence Trust for many years.

It is hoped to include more people with lived experience working together in the co-productive model we aspire to use.

CO-PRODUCTIVE

Permitted Work

Permitted work means you can:

- work for less than 16 hours each week
- earn no more than £183.50 each week, after tax and National Insurance has been taken off
- get your normal amount of benefit
- build up your skills and experience
- be supported while you work - we call this supported permitted work.

You must fill in a form first and send it, see the link below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employment-and-support-allowance-permitted-work-form/permitted-work-factsheet>

Here is a story from Denise Holder, one of our team about how it changed her life.

I've been doing permitted work for a while now. There was a time when the life I have now wasn't seen as possible by professionals and, certainly, not by me.

My journey started by getting involved with MHELO.

MHELO proposed to the council mental health quality checks. I was keen to do it, but I didn't feel able to at the time, although by the time the recruitment process happened, I thought, why not try?

I love quality checking, and also my role now extends to the Chair of MHELO and Co-chair of the Advisory Group. Also, financially, it enables me not to have to think about doing extra things with grandchildren or other priorities.

These steps forward are baby steps, but they were steps forward. I did the initial training on my iPad on the way to Gloucester as I couldn't concentrate at home.

I would encourage anybody to do permitted work if they feel able to start that journey.

Carers Allowance

BY JACKIE SALLIS

In the news recently, many carers, some of whom care for people with mental health issues, were shocked to receive notification from the DWP that they have been overpaid, and now have to pay money back. In some cases this amounts to thousands of pounds, as they had exceeded the threshold years later.

Carers allowance is a benefit, full time carers can claim for looking after a family member or friend. In order to qualify, they have to be caring for their family, friend or loved one for 35 hours a week. The benefit is paid at the rate of £81.90 a week and the carers earnings need to total less than £151 per week.

In April this year Benefits were uprated in line with the inflation rate of 6.7% meaning that for someone claiming ESA a single person over 25 would see their amount rise from (£84.80) to £90.50 per week and severe disability premium has risen from (£76.40) to £81.50 per week

CHECK YOUR INCOME AGAINST THE NEW ALLOWANCE

You must ensure that you take home no more than £151 per week (2024/25) after tax and pension contributions.

Because wages, including the minimum wage, have risen, you might not be able to work so many hours and still qualify.

In addition, national insurance is now zero for low-income workers, so gaining this increases the amount you take home.

Or your pension might have risen because of inflation faster than the £151 allowance.

**Incomes
Are Rising,
But Allowances
Rise Less
Quickly
Beware!**

Become Part of Our Team

BY MHELO COORDINATOR, LISA HEPWORTH

We are looking for volunteers...

- Good listener and clear communicator
- Good at putting people at ease and building rapport
- Ability to show empathy and kindness
- Ability to maintain Confidentiality
- Able to work independently with guidance and support
- Open to learning and accessing regular training opportunities
- Basic IT and organisational skills e.g being able to use the internet and send emails join a teams meeting
- Team player and willing to work under their own initiative
- Ability to be able to ask for support but after support be able to work independently
- Able to respect the choices and differences of others.

Join Us

What you will gain as offering time and skills as a volunteer.

- Join a team of committed friendly people who want to make a difference just like you
- Opportunity to make a real and significant difference to local mental health services
- Indepth training programme including an induction named peer mentor safeguarding and listening skills.
- Increased skills confidence and employability building on your cv
- New social networks as you will be part of the MHELO team and the wider inclusion partners
- Increase in your own wellbeing and mental health
- Support to work from home including wellbeing checks.

FOLLOW US



@MHELO_Glos



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

As
no one else
can know how we
perceive, we are the
best experts on
ourselves.

Carl Rogers

BENEFIT FACTS.

We researched the new benefit levels for ESA and PIP for 2024. Here they are...

DLA Care component

Higher £101.75 to £108.55

Middle £68.10 to £72.65

Lower £26.90 to £28.70

**PIP Daily living enhanced from
£101.75 to £ 108.55**

Standard from £68.10 to £72.65

**Mobility enhanced from £71.00 to
£75 75 per week**

**Standard £26.90 to £28 .70 per
week**

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