

Newsletter Autumn 2024

MHELO

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE LED OPPORTUNITIES



Remembering Daniel Beale Cox



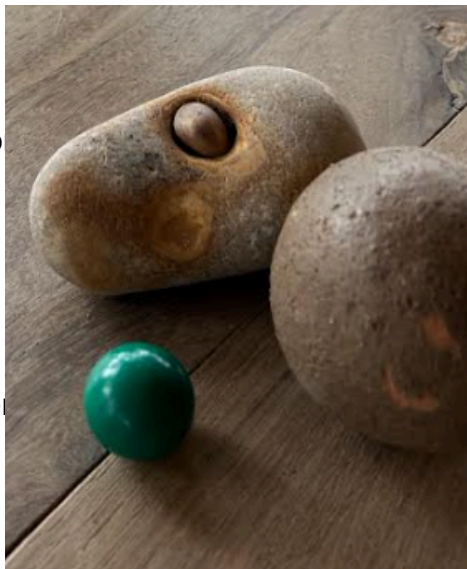
Dan Beale Cox was a founder member of MHELO and for a short time Co- chair of the Advisory Group that feeds into the Mental Health Clinical Programme Group.

He was also Co Chair of the Mental Health Partnership Board, I attended a memorial for him which was really well attended by people from the extensive boards and representatives that He worked with.

Dan was diagnosed with Cancer and died from it recently .He worked and contributed to an exemplary level always right to the end.

The picture enclosed is a Japanese activity called Dorodango where Earth is moulded and squeezed and with a long period of manipulation these balls are formed showing another example of Dan's attention to detail .

It was a pleasure to meet Dan's family who had set aside this time to talk about Dan and hear about his work. .



In this newsletter:

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Mud and
Mindfulness



Interview with Pharmacist by Millie

In your opinion are their options at all for people to get support coming off anti-depressants?

-Yes, there are options however they are not easily accessible which is a big problem within this system.

Do you see a lot of people wanting to stop?

-Most discussions usually go through the GP or MH services, so he doesn't see many people personally himself, however what he does see is more people starting rather than stopping.

Do you feel like people are supported enough to get help coming off anti-depressants?

-NO!! (said very quickly and confidently) there are a lot of problems around people having clear comprehension of what is necessary to support them coming off. He sees that it would seem for people it's easier just to continue then find the support they need as excessive stretch of the services means peoples options are very limited. He would suggest talking therapy's being pushed more to help people, as GPs and MH services are so scarce.

Have you recognised particular services that are more useful then others?

-Nothing more lack of!

What problems do people face when coming off anti-depressants?

-Existential problems usually bring people back to them for instance people stop then things crop up in life and it drives most people to want to go back.

Do you have any feedback on how people have found the experience after coming off them?

-Lots of people have reliance on this medication, and there are lots of aspects to it which could make it difficult i.e. emotional aspects, MH aspects etc. Which then causes a cycle of people going back and forth on this medication which brings the reliance back to the forefront.

In your professional opinion do you think there is enough support for people?

-Absolutely Not!! (again said with very clear confidence!)

What are the biggest problems you face supporting people to come off anti-depressants?

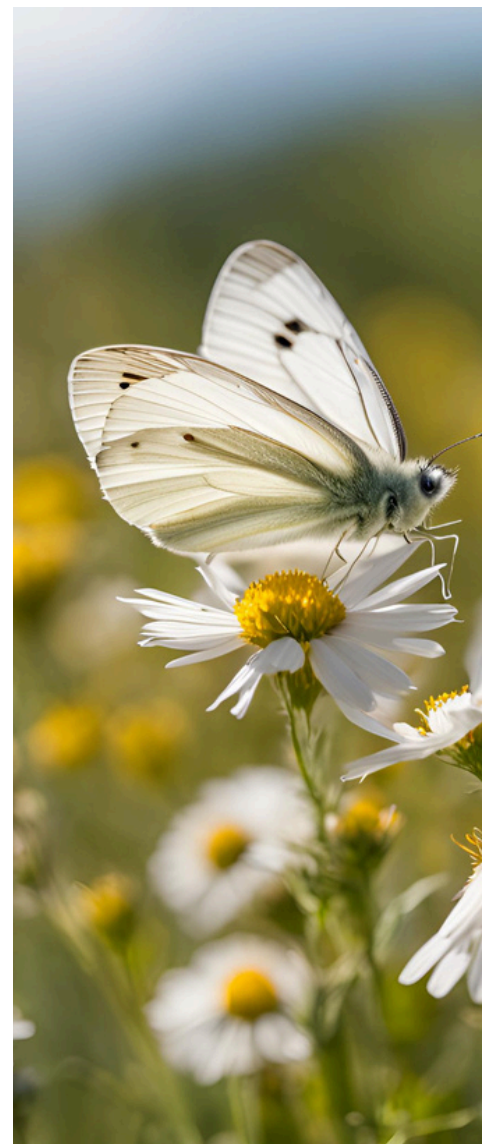
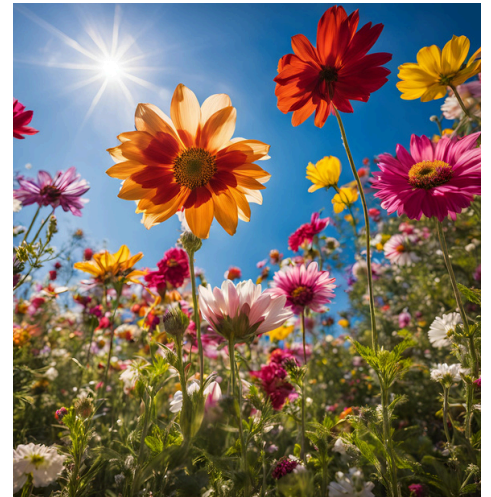
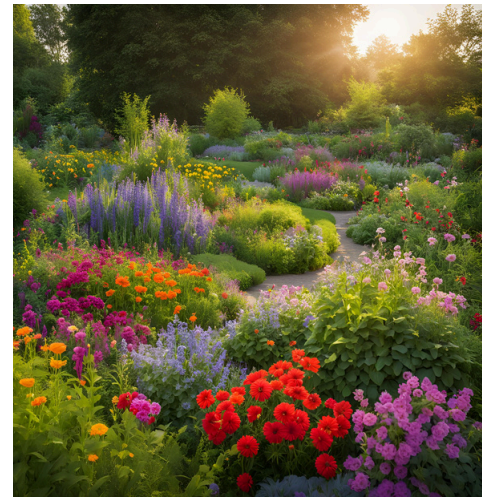
-Wait times are a big problem it can cause people to just not bother or by the time the help comes everything's changed. It's very difficult to plan such things as again life events can take over and cause uncertainty around lack of support. People see it as a big risk coming off them as they worry about needing them back again.



Butterfly Garden by Jackie

The Butterfly Garden is based at Dundry Nurseries Cheltenham. It is an educational therapeutic and recreational scheme, initially based on gardening. However, it offers so much more. It caters for those who want to escape the world some looking to re-enter it and for some just looking and discovering the world around them. The Butterfly Garden is open to anyone with a disability including people with mental health issues. The aims of the Butterfly Garden is to offer a diverse and stimulating opportunity for people to come and take part in recreational,

educational and therapeutic activities. The Butterfly Garden have various activities for people to enjoy such as a recycling project where they recycle video tapes wood aluminium cardboard and plastic. They also offer a cookery group and cook 4 times a week and, on a Thursday, gather together cook a meal and eat it. They also have a drama group music group and do arts and crafts that people can take part in regularly. Finally, the Butterfly Garden organise trips to Weston-Super-Mare and also a visit to the pantomime at the Everyman theatre at Christmas. If you want to find out more about the Butterfly Garden, they have a website butterflygarden.org



Jackie's Winter Survival Tips.



Like many people I struggle with my mental health during the winter months. So here are a few tips that I find helps me cope during these cold bleak times.

- 1. I try to get as much natural sunlight as possible. For example, I like to sit by a window and watch the birds and squirrels outside or have a wander in the garden so that I get enough vitamin D.**
- 2. I make sure I stay connected with others. Even if the weather is bad, I will pick up the phone and have a friendly natter with friends or family. I also keep a list of helplines to ring such as the crisis team or other people in my network such as my friends in MHELO.**
- 3. I try to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruit, pasta, vegetables etc. I also make sure that I have my flu and covid vaccines, so that my physical health is protected because if my physical health goes down, it affects my mental health directly.**
- 4. I make sure that I get enough sleep, as if I don't, I'm irritable and grumpy.**
- 5. Finally, I try to stay in the moment and practice mindfulness and relaxation.**



Re:think The Meaning Crisis by Kate

Jackie and I attended a talk by Dr Daniel Maughan, a prominent psychiatrist, on Wednesday, September 25th. In this one-and-a-half-hour talk in St Matthews Church, Cheltenham, we discussed whether rising stress, anxiety, and depression are symptoms of a crisis of meaning in our young people.

Those with a “why” to live can bear with almost any “how”. Nietzsche.

Maughan said there were three factors intertwining:

Identity - Meaning - Purpose

Identity - who am I, gives rise to meaning and leads us to have a purpose.

For example, if I see myself as an adventurer, I might become a traveller and visit many exotic places. If I see myself as a father, I might strive to get a high-paying job so that I can provide for my family.

In the past, it was noted that we are what we have, do, and what other people say we are. However, for Gen Z, it has changed to: we are our experience. When our identity is tied to experience, our meaning is to gratify our emotional needs, and

Maughan argues that this is a problem for many young people.

Maughan told of a dramatic paradigm shift that he had encountered in his life after an accident that paralysed his arm. Before that, he had been a high-flying doctor and academic achiever, whereas afterwards, he began to question what was really important in his life. Instead of having long-term goals of high achievement, he now has a goal for each day to live as kindly and authentically as possible and connect to others in meaningful interactions within that day.

Connect with Nature: Mud and Mindfulness by Lisa

Following up on the last newsletter, when I focused on the ancient art of Qi Gong, I was inspired by Denise, who had described the art of Dorodango, an ancient Japanese art form, to find out more about it.

I enjoy mindfulness and connecting with nature as part of the 5 ways to well-being (see self-care tool kit). So, I have enjoyed a kokedama-making workshop, learning how to make beautiful Japanese moss balls. Not only are these a great way to add some green to your home, but they're also a perfect way to help you relax and de-stress.

Kokedama making is a unique form of gardening that originated in Japan. The word "kokedama" literally means "moss ball" in Japanese.

I learnt how to make my own kokedama and discovered its benefits for mental mindfulness. It was a great opportunity to relax, de-stress, and connect with nature.

Kokedama-making is a great way to focus on the present moment and achieve a state of mental mindfulness. The process of creating a kokedama requires you to pay close attention to what you are doing and to the plant itself. This can help clear your mind and give you a sense of calm.

While I was getting my hands dirty, I was encouraged to slow down, share stories, and connect with others. I had a beautiful experience and left feeling empowered by my newfound knowledge and skills.



These polished balls are actually made of 100% Dirt

I created not a perfect round moss ball plant—it was quite irregular, in fact—but the sense of achievement was there, and I have managed to keep it green for some time now.

So I was intrigued to find out more about Dorodango I love Chinese calming Zen gardens for relaxation and was this art form perhaps an extension of what I had already experienced Japanese?

Dorodango (Japanese: “mud dumpling”)

Hikaru Dorodango, translated into English as “shiny mud dumpling,” is a Japanese art form that has existed for many years but has only recently been acknowledged and appreciated. To make Dorodango, you take common soil, form it into a ball, and polish it until it gives off a magnificent shine. It is so satisfying to see something make such a transition from a useless material to a work of art! People who see a finished Dorodango can hardly believe it is 100% dirt!

Hikaru Dorodango are shiny balls of mud moulded by hand, dried, and polished to an artefact of utter simplicity and perfection. The art form has its origins in ancient Japan, where making the simple Dorodango was considered a traditional form of play for children. Dorodango was almost forgotten until Japanese psychology Professor Fumio Kayo re-introduced it to schools and kindergartens a few years ago, making it popular again throughout Japan and sparking international interest.

If you want to get inspired, try Dorodango for yourself—a beautiful, calming art form for connecting with nature. Look at American Artist Bruce Gardner, who has YouTube videos of his experimenting with Dorodango after reading an essay on the subject in Tate Magazine.

Volunteer with us at MHELO

**If you are interested in joining our friendly team,
please contact Lisa Hepworth at Inclusion
Gloucestershire on
lisah@inclusion-glos.org**