

MHELO NEWSLETTER



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

The last 3 months

These are some of things MHELO have been doing since our last NEWSLETTER which we hope you will find interesting

Since our last newsletter, we have been involved in looking at Crisis Care Alternatives with the Mental Health Clinical Programme Group – our experts' experiences and recommendations for alternatives were presented by co-chairs Denise and Karen and 3 members of MHELO attended a workshop organised by the Integrated Care Board who commission services in Gloucestershire.

We have also been reviewing our Self-Care Toolkit before we print some more and consulting far and wide on what needs improving. If you would like to comment on it, please complete this short survey: <https://forms.gle/XAVTsNjySzaqCKrG9>

We've also welcomed new steering group* member Steph – thank you Steph for your time !

In January we held a fantastic **Hygge event**, a winter warmer to bring together MHELO members and the Wellbeing Group that meets at the Friendship Café at Chequers Bridge – we had a great turn out and there was much conversation, drinking of hot chocolate and mulled apple juice and Jackie ran a mindfulness exercise which was very relaxing.

Thanks also goes to Sana for bringing the delicious samosas!



Positive mind.
Positive Vibe.
Positive Life.

***The steering group** meet every 6 weeks to discuss what MHELO should be focusing on. We are looking for new members so if you are someone with lived experience or a carer of someone with mental ill health, get in touch with Clare at mhelo@inclusion-glos.org if you would like to come along to a meeting to see how it works.

In this edition we wanted to share with you what members of MHELO's steering group have to say about being an Expert by Experience

My own experience

"For most of my life I have suffered from mental health issues, my main diagnosis is Emotional Unstable Personality Disorder, although I also suffer with Depression and Anxiety.

Since joining Inclusion Gloucestershire as a Volunteer for MHELO and the Mental Health Clinical Programme Advisory Group I have become an Expert by Experience. Being an Expert by Experience is important to me as I have on various occasions been able to share with others including with professionals a glimpse of what it is like to live and experience my struggles and my journey of living with mental health issues.

By being an Expert by Experience I feel that I can make a difference to others in Gloucestershire who suffer from mental health issues as by sharing my experiences of living with mental health issues I hopefully can help shape and improve services.

Before Christmas I attended a mental health workshop on Crisis care. At the workshop I shared my experiences of crisis care which I felt empowering, I felt respected and listened to by the professionals who also attended the workshop. In addition, I felt human not just a number I was respected and felt equal, rather than Them and Us, which too often I have felt as a service user.

Going forward I hope that I can continue to use my experiences of living with mental health issues to improve services here in Gloucestershire as well as being a voice for those who for whatever reason are too scared to speak out and say how they feel."

Jackie, MHELO and Inclusion Glos's Speak-Up Group volunteer



Interview with Denise, Chair of the MHELO steering group

When did you get involved with MHELO?

I was at a personality disorders group about 7 years ago, which was run by Joy Hibbins from Suicide Crisis and met a couple of people who were involved in MHELO. At the time I was very disillusioned with the NHS and they said about MHELO seeking to be the voice of people with lived experience so I decided I wanted to be constructive rather than just moaning and went along to the groups.

What do you think the biggest impact MHELO has had so far?

The three biggest things we've done I would say, are the self-care toolkit, which was co-produced by MHELO members. Mental health quality checking which was a pilot scheme, started 5 years ago and is still running, now within quality checking team at Inclusion Glos – that involves going into care homes commissioned by the council to check that people are having the best living experience by the providers. There was also the personality disorders stake holders events that lead into the personality disorder strategy and the outcome is the complex emotional needs service which started last year

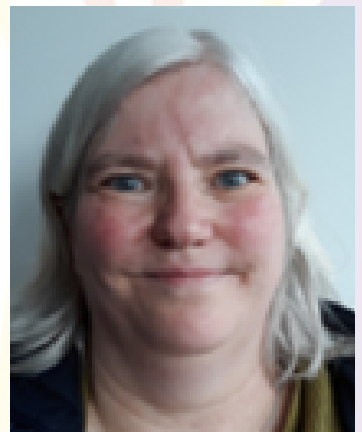
What is the future of MHELO?

I would like to see more members get involved and realise that they can be the voice of lived experience and that it's important and valuable and empowering.

When you're not MHELOing, how do you spend your time?

Following our social in January which had the Hygge theme, warmth and wellbeing, I been have embracing the concept of Hygge and as part of that I've made these super tasty cinnamon buns (see pic below)! I recommend them highly :)

<https://pastryandbeyond.com/cinnamon-sugar-muffins/>.



GOING FORWARD

This is what we will be focussing on over the coming months

MHELO have been approached to get involved in the naming of the new Rethink mental health /wellbeing helpline. ReThink currently run the Self Harm and Support After Suicide help lines. You may have already seen the email from MHELO about this, with an invite for any interested people to the consultation with **ReThink on April 20th**. Email mhelo@inclusion-glos if you would like to come along to this Zoom meeting

MHELO is also getting involved more in the **Community Mental Health Transformation** engagement and coproduction including a new model of Community Mental Health Services (in each district), changes to assessment and care planning using new assessment tool **DIALOG*** (more on that when we have it) and more on trying to increase the amount of people with severe or serious mental illnesses taking up the Annual Physical Health Checks including involvement in a film. We will share with you opportunities for involvement for MHELO members in these subjects as and when they come up.

We are updating the **Self-Care Toolkit** that MHELO members produced in 2021 and looking for some funding to get more printed. Here is a link to the current one which we will be updating in April:

<https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/engagement/mhelo-mental-health-expert-led-opporiunities/>. If there are any improvements you want to suggest, please feedback by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <https://forms.gle/XAVTsNjySzaqCKrG9>.

If you have any ideas for funding for this, do get in touch!



MHELO is now going to be organising the Mental Health Clinical Programme Group (CPG) Advisory Group (let's call it **Clinical Programme Advisory Group** or CPAG for short 😊) and we are looking for volunteers with lived experience or a carer of someone with mental ill health, to be involved in this group. This group meets every 8 weeks online. The CPG along with the co-chairs of the advisory group (MHELO members) decide on the agenda based on priorities for mental health services in Gloucestershire and then requests all members of CPAG to meet online or feedback by email/over the phone their thoughts and experiences on the subject. For example last time the agenda item was Annual Physical Health Checks – accessibility, the session before that was about our experts experience of co-production and recommendations for other clinical groups wanting to do the same. The one before that was on the Crisis Care Alternatives and ideas for alternatives to A&E for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Email Clare at mhelo@inclusion-glos.org for more information on getting involved in this advisory group.

We are also looking at the wider socio-economic determinates of mental health of Covid and ongoing impact on mental health; Cost of living crisis and impact on mental health; Housing; Accessing health services in non-traditional settings and will research and share information on these matters over the coming months.

And Finally

When walking my dog Bella and in my garden I'm noticing that spring has arrived, which is so refreshing after what has been such a long winter. Flowers are starting to appear and I am noticing trees with colourful blossom and birds are starting to nest. for me this is a sign of new hope and new beginnings.



The MHELO Newsletter is produced by Jackie Sallis, An Expert By Experience Volunteer with Inclusion Gloucestershire - involved in MHELO Steering Group, Clinical Programme Advisory Group & Inclusion Gloucestershire's Advocacy Team's Speak-Up Development Group