



Compassionate Mental Health

# Compassionate Mental Health

*Turning Towards Clarity*

**11 - 14 March 2024 - Coed Hills, South Wales**

Our programme offers an exciting mix of plenary sessions and workshops, with plenty of opportunities for participation, reflection and making new connections.





## WHO'S IT FOR?

**The event is for anyone curious about a compassionate approach to mental health.**

We bring together people and families with personal experience, front-line staff, commissioners, managers, clinicians, GPs, policymakers and Third Sector staff, to explore what works for people recovering from a mental health crisis.

## WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

**Compassionate Mental Health** is part of a growing worldwide movement calling for a more regenerative approach to mental health - one that relies less on diagnosis and prescription drugs, and more on empowering the person, engaging social networks and cultivating inner and outer resources. At the heart of the project is a belief that it is possible to begin to heal oneself and others through the power of community, connection, access to healing environments and inclusive opportunities.

We're bringing people together for three days of conversation and workshops. The theme of this Spring's gathering is **Turning Towards Clarity**. We'll explore more compassionate and relational ways to meet our own and other people's distress, and create true safety in ourselves and the places we work.

Our key message remains that a mental health crisis can become a meaningful turning point and catalyst for change. Along with many other critical voices - we are calling for a radical shift in the way we understand mental illness, changing the script, challenging stigma and raising expectations.

## WHERE'S IT HELD?

Each gathering has been held in a stunning venue that is therapeutic in its own way.

This time we are at **Coed Hills** in the heart of beautiful South Wales. Let's leave behind our professional and personal roles and labels, build community and connection, and move forward together to create positive change.

Coed Hills (pronounced Coyd) is a unique, off grid sustainable community. The on-site residents still work the land using ancestral methods and manage the 180 acres of unspoilt ancient woodland, man-made lakes and beautiful summer meadows. With elevated views reaching as far as the Jurassic coastline of Wales, yet just a stones throw from the Welsh capital, Cardiff, Coed is a hidden Utopia from modern life.

Coed has been the leading centre for low impact living in Wales since it was established in 1997. It has hosted many international events including the UK Permaculture Convergence, and has been internationally identified as a place for those who want to embrace an off grid way of living in harmony with nature or to explore and evolve their connection with themselves in tranquil and peaceful surroundings.



Turning Towards Clarity

Turning To



# FACILITATORS



**ARNAUD VALLET**  
Arnaud Vallet is the lead nurse and art therapist on the Adamant – a floating daycare centre in Paris on the banks of the River Seine.



**CHARMAINE HARRIS**  
Charmaine is a peer support specialist working in the NHS in London, and on core team of the Peer Supported Open Dialogue Training.



**BROTHER FREEDOM**  
Brother Freedom is a Zen Monk and freedom facilitator, helping people find calm, peace and heal.



**CIARA GLYNN**  
Peer worker in North Dublin HSE, core member of the Kyrie Farm team and activist for rights based approaches.



**CHRIS SALWAY**  
Chris is a Consultant Psychiatrist and former GP. He has a wealth of experience in a variety of NHS settings.



**RHYS THOMAS**  
Former international rugby player, Inspirational Speaker, Mental Health Ambassador, Mentor and Charity Co-Founder.



**LIZA PREVOTT**  
Psychiatric nurse and core member of L'Adamant therapeutic community.



**JOHN MCKEON**  
Founder and CEO of Kyrie Farm – first of a new network of therapeutic farms with healing, human rights and access to meaningful activities and therapies at the heart.



**DR. EOIN GALAVAN**  
Eoin is a Senior Clinical and Counselling Psychologist in the HSE and board member with Kyrie Farm.



**PAT BRACKEN**  
Irish psychiatrist Pat Bracken believes in a more humane future for psychiatry, one that questions some of the fundamental assumptions of how we approach mental distress.



**WENDY LIU**  
Wendy is an architect, designer, yoga teacher, freediver and wellbeing coach. Along with her partner Mika, Wendy is the co-founder of The British Sauna Society.



**ANDREA ZWICKNAGL**  
Andrea is an experienced peer support worker who works using principles of Open Dialogue and is part of the Swiss Hearing Voices Network.



**NEELAM KHAWANI-CONNETT**  
Neelam is a Lived Experience Specialist and Therapeutic Communities International Trainer.



**REX HAIGH**  
Rex Haigh is a consultant psychiatrist, medical psychotherapist and group analyst.



**LISA MORRISON**  
Lisa is a lived experience consultant, mental health campaigner and post graduate student.



**ANNE COOKE**  
Anne is Clinical Director of the Doctoral Programme in Clinical Psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University.



**MIKA MESKANEN**  
User experience designer and researcher, freediver, breathwork coach and sauna expert.



**RUFUS MAY**  
Rufus May has worked as a clinical psychologist in adult mental health services for 25 years.



**KEMI NEVINS & HER SON PATRICK**  
Chief Nourisher Kemi is a former nurse and staple of Cardiff food scene. She is renowned for her warmth and welcome, and is joined by her son and long term kitchen collaborator, Patrick.



**ROBYN THOMAS**  
Robyn Thomas is CMH's resident ethnographer and will be writing about this retreat for her PhD research.



**CATHERINE THORLEY**  
Catherine is Clinical lead for Open Dialogue at the North East London NHS Foundation Trust.



**CAI TOMOS**  
Dancer, Arts Psychotherapist & Somatic Experiencing Practitioner helping people heal through movement & the Arts.



**BRIGID BOWEN**  
Brigid is the founder, organiser and curator of Compassionate Mental Health.

We've gathered influential speakers and facilitators who are passionate about changing the script around mental health, challenging stigma and raising expectations.

You can see full bios of all facilitators with at [compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](https://compassionatementalhealth.co.uk)



## Transforming Relationships with Open Dialogue

Cathy Thorley, Charmaine Harris & Chris Salway

Tue 11.30 / Wed 11.30

Open Dialogue is a compassionate approach that involves working with families and social networks, rather than just the individual. It equips staff of all disciplines with the tools to effect change at deeper levels, and discover how we can reshape a social response to psychosis and emotional crisis. Open Dialogue was developed in Western Lapland in Finland over the last 30 years. It has attracted widespread international attention. Results consistently show that it reduces hospitalisation, the use of medication, and results in less crisis recurrence compared with other approaches. Both Cathy and Chris have been involved with the roll-out of peer supported Open Dialogue in the NHS.

## Believe it or Not: Ways of Working with Powerful Beliefs

Rufus May

Tue 11.30 / Wed 11.30

When people are treated for psychosis, clinicians often focus on whether people's unusual beliefs have been reduced. As supporters there can be a dilemma about whether to challenge or not people's ideas and beliefs. In this workshop we'll create a space to think about the different possible meanings of powerful beliefs and how we can take a respectful and collaborative approach towards people when they have powerful beliefs that we might not share.

## Enabling Therapeutic Environments Informing the Future

Rex Haigh & Neelam Khawani-Connett

Wed 2.30

Meet the pioneers in the therapeutic community field, keeping the flame of therapeutic communities alive in the UK and beyond. Explore how the values and practices found in the world of therapeutic communities can help shape and inform future models of compassionate care. Explore reflective practice, and group facilitation skills, and think together about the ingredients that can help people grow and thrive through relationship centred practice.

## Cut Outs

Arnaud Vallet

Tue 11.30 / Wed 11.30

Inspired by Tristan Tzara and the Dada art movement, and further developed by William Burroughs and Bryon Gysin in the 50's and 60's, cut-outs are a way of freeing language and our inner critic. A lot of artists took hold of this idea, from the Beatles to the Clash, from Zappa to Genesis P-Orridge, from Ian Curtis to Patti Smith and David Bowie.

*"On the Adamant, we are not into art, we are not into therapy, we just create the situations, this kind of collective or singular workshops, to help everyone to unfold his psyche, to map his internal world, to explore and reappropriate his carta incognita."*

## The Listening Body

Cai Tomas

Wed 2.30

This is a workshop open to all who are curious to use movement and materials to guide our listening. There is an inherent grace that appears in movement when we begin to source and trust our own dance. The workshop focuses on simple processes that support creative dialogues between our sensation, imagination and our moving bodies.

## Sauna for Well-Being

Wendy Liu & Mika Meskanen

Tue 11.30 / Wed 11.30 & 2.30

Wendy and Mika are co-founders of the British Sauna Society and are launching a campaign to make sauna on the social prescribers list, for mental and physical health. This workshop will introduce you to the well-being benefits of sauna, and how they can help build community and connection. Join this workshop to tune into your potential, optimise your well-being and draw inspiration from the traditional Finnish sauna rituals.

Bring a bathing costume and towel.

**Optional early arrival from 2pm on Monday for residential guests.** Take time to land at Coed Hills, relax and unwind. Nothing to do for arrival day, but **relax and eat supper together at 6.30pm, and orientation and option of a pre supper sauna with Wendy and Mika and deep relaxation session with Brother Freedom, or simply read, relax, enjoy the surroundings.** Bring your warm clothes and boots, as there are lots of paths you can explore the 180 acres of woods and natural meadow land, and if the forecast says rain, make sure you're prepared for that too. Bring your swimming costumes and a towel if you want to enjoy Coed's wood-fired sauna, wild swimming pool, or the nearby beaches...Or sit around the fire and make new friends. **If you are non-residential and would like to join us for arrival day, a quiet afternoon at Coed and supper, contact Brigid on 07711 051 241**

All of the programme is optional, so please please put your own wellbeing first - you are welcome to take time out if you need it, and we also have a wellbeing team on hand should you need some support.

# Tuesday 12 March Programme

**Our programme offers an exciting mix of plenary sessions and workshops, with plenty of opportunities for participation, reflection and networking.**

**7:00 - 8.00 Optional Sitting and Mindful Movement Session**

**8.00 - 9.00 Breakfast** for people staying onsite If you are non-residential and want to come to the early morning session and stay for breakfast, email [ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](mailto:ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk) to book in, with breakfast as the subject. Or come early, bring your own flask of tea and enjoy the beautiful woods and relaxing surroundings.

**9:00 - 9:30 Register/Meet & Greet in the Circular Barn**

**Plenary Sessions in the Circular Barn**

**9:30 - 9:40 Welcome, Setting the Scene and Introductions** Brigid Bowen

**9:40 - 10:10 Compassion Pods & Deep Listening** Cathy Thorley & Charmaine Harris

**10:10 - 10.40 Holding Hope Lightly** Lisa Morrison

**10.40 - 11.10 Mindful Walking** Brother Freedom meet outside Big Barn

**11.10 -11.30 Pause & Refresh in the Circular Barn**

**11.30 - 1.30 Experiential Workshops**

- A Transforming Relationships with Open Dialogue**  
Cathy Thorley, Charmaine Harries & Chris Salway
- B Believe it or Not: Ways of Working with Powerful Beliefs**  
Rufus May
- C Cut Outs**  
Arnaud Vallet & Liza Prevott
- D Sauna for Mental Well-Being**  
Wendy and Mika  
Meet outside the Big Barn

**1.30 - 2.30 Eat & Enjoy (mindfully) in the Jacobean barn**

**2.30 - 4.30 Whole Group Session**

**Transforming Mental Health Care: The Journey to Kyrie Farm**  
John Mceon, Eoin Galavan  
Ciara Glynn and Pat Bracken

**4.30 - 5.30**  
Optional close of day reflective circle, free time to enjoy Coed Hills or sign up for the sauna

## Tuesday 12 March (cont)

### Evening Programme in the Circular Barn

**6.00 - 9.30 \*Dinner**  
followed by documentary  
showing of L'Adamant  
introduced by Pat Bracken

\*If you have a non-residential ticket and do want to stay for the evening programme, or go and come back, then please be sure to let us know  
**contact Brigid on 07711 051 241** or so we have the right numbers for catering.



## Wednesday 13 March Programme

**7.30 - 8.00 Optional Sitting & Mindful  
Movement Session**

**9.00 - 9.30 Register for new arrivals  
in the Circular Barn**

### Plenary Sessions in the Circular Barn

**9.30 - 9.40 Welcome**  
Brigid Bowen

**9.45 - 10.15 Compassion Pods & Deep Listening**  
Cathy Thorley & Charmaine Harries

**10.15 - 11.00 Building a Nest for Our Suffering**  
Brother Freedom talk followed by Optional  
Walking Meditation  
meet outside the Circular Barn

**11.00 - 11.30 Pause & Refresh  
in the Circular Barn**

### 11.30 - 1.30 Experiential Workshops

**A Transforming Relationships  
with Open Dialogue**  
Cathy Thorley, Charmaine Harries  
& Chris Salway

**B Believe it or Not:  
Ways of Working with Powerful Beliefs**  
Rufus May

**C Cut Outs**  
Arnaud Vallet & Liza Prevott

**D Sauna for Mental Well-Being**  
Wendy and Mika

**1.30 - 2.30 Eat & Enjoy  
in the Jacobean barn**

### 2.30 - 4.30 Experiential Workshops

**E Enabling Therapeutic Environments -  
Informing the Future**  
Rex Haigh & Neelam Khawani-Connett

**F Sauna for Well-Being**  
Wendy & Mika

**G The Listening Body**  
Cai Tomos

**4.30 - 5.00 Pause & Refresh  
in the Circular Barn**

**5.00 - 6.00 Reflective Circle  
with Rex & Neels**

### Evening Programme in the Circular Barn

**7.00 - 10.30 \*Dinner**  
followed by after dinner talks with  
Andrea Zwicknagl & Rhys Thomas

**Optional community be-in - and  
dancing and deep relaxation**

*You are welcome to bring songs, poems  
and stories to share.*

\*If you have a non-residential ticket and do want to stay for the evening programme, or go and come back, then please be sure to let us know  
**contact Brigid on 07711 051 241** or so we have the right numbers for catering.



**7.00 - 8.00**  
**Optional Morning Sitting and Moving Meditation**

**8.00 - 9.00 Breakfast** for people staying onsite. If you are non-residential and want to come to the early morning session and stay for breakfast, email [ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](mailto:ask@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk) to book in, with breakfast as the subject. Or come early, bring your own flask of tea and enjoy the beautiful woods and relaxing surroundings.

**9.00 - 9.30 Register/Meet & Greet** in the Circular Barn

**Plenary Sessions** in the Circular Barn

**9.30 - 9.45 Welcome**

**9.45 - 10.15 Compassion Pods**

**10.15 - 10.45 A Not-Knowing Approach to experiences seen as psychosis in conversation with Anne Cooke**

**10.45 - 12.30 Stepping into the Field of the Future - Co-Presencing**

This final session will bring us together as a group to sense some of the questions that have emerged from our two days together. We will have a combination of dialogue and journaling to connect our self reflection and knowledge to create concrete actions around the best possible future we want to create. How can we meet complex challenges and let go of patterns and habits that are no longer valuable. How can we collectively imagine a future fit for mental health service? What are the ingredients of compassionate, relational mental health care and what is our part in helping initiate that future?

This workshop will include some time outside, weather depending.

If you don't want to participate, you can take time for yourself to sit and read, or sign up for alternative activities - look for sign up sheets in the circular barn. Or take time for yourself to sit and read, or enjoy the beautiful surroundings at Coed Hills.

**12.30 - 1.30 Reflective Closing Circle**

**1.30 Eat & Enjoy in the Jacobean Barn**

Please let us know if you are staying for lunch so we can be accurate with our numbers.

End of programme - thanks so much for joining us and please stay in touch.

## CONFERENCE CONTACTS

**Wellbeing Team**  
 Charmaine Harris  
 Andrea Prevett  
 Cathy Thorley  
 Chris Salway

**Hosting and Welcome Team**  
 Brigid Bowen  
 Rob Sage  
 Elizabeth Fitzgerald

**Chief Nourishers**  
 Kemi Nevins  
 Patrick Nevins



If you have any worries or concerns while you are onsite please don't hesitate to reach out, and for questions before the event please contact

**Brigid Bowen 07711 051 241**  
**or Rob Sage 07907 022 818**  
 on WhatsApp

or text to arrange a callback or email [brigid.bowen@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](mailto:brigid.bowen@compassionatementalhealth.co.uk)





# Compassionate Mental Health

[compassionatementalhealth.co.uk](http://compassionatementalhealth.co.uk)

 [@CompassionMH](https://twitter.com/CompassionMH)

 [@compassionatementalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/compassionatementalhealth)

 [#compassionmh](https://www.instagram.com/compassionmh)

