



Practice

Finding Renewal in the Heart of the Forest: A Wellbeing Journey for Healthcare Practitioners

Roger Davies,

Manager, Golygfa Gwydyr

In the demanding field of healthcare, finding moments of stillness often feels like a luxury. However, a group of healthcare practitioners from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) recently discovered the transformative power of pausing, breathing, and reconnecting with nature. They participated in a unique wellbeing programme held in the serene Gwydir Forest, which provided not just rest but deep restoration.

This nature-based course, designed by Golygfa Gwydyr, was targeted at healthcare professionals grappling

with the heavy burdens of compassion fatigue, emotional strain, and the relentless responsibilities of their roles. Its mission was straightforward yet impactful: to create a sanctuary for healing through rest, kindness, self-compassion, and renewal, illustrating how time spent in nature can alleviate stress and restore balance.

The programme was structured around weekly themes, each guiding participants deeper into personal wellness and their connection to the forest. The themes shaped the group's shared experiences,

offering new insights into how nature fosters recovery, facilitating a powerful journey of reconnection, grounding, and renewal, emphasizing that wellbeing is both a practice and a path best explored among trees. The immersive sessions enabled participants to step away from the pressures of their clinical environments, entering a space that encouraged reflective healing. The emphasis on mindfulness included gentle breathing exercises, visualization, movement, stillness meditations, and creative sessions, all encapsulated by the forest's serene embrace.

While the programme provided immediate restorative benefits, it also equipped practitioners with practical tools for ongoing use after leaving the woods. Participants received personal journals to document their insights, observations, and coping strategies, which would aid in fostering balance in their daily lives and promoting long-term wellbeing.

This journey of healing highlighted that the need for self-care extends beyond patient care; it is essential for healthcare providers themselves. Often, simply stepping into nature can be the first step toward regaining one's centre.

Feedback from participants reflected the programme's profound impact:

"The benefits have not only helped me personally, but also professionally. I feel more grounded to manage the demands of work and home."

"I would highly recommend this programme to anyone working in the NHS as everyone deserves a break."

"All patients would benefit

from this programme—it complements resilience initiatives for children and young people, addressing mild to moderate anxiety and promoting preventive care."

"I gained so much from the exercises and meditations, fostering connections and kindness."

"This course arrived at a crucial time for me, allowing for reflection on how to best support my team and patients."

In conclusion, the Golygfa Gwydyr programme represents not just a respite for healthcare professionals but a pathway for sustained wellness, enabling them to nurture both their own wellbeing and that of their patients.

For information on future events or discussions about specific team sessions, please visit: <https://www.golygfaagwydyr.org/what-we-do/wellbeing/>