



The science of the mind: investigating mental health

Talking about Blackthorn: Geoff

Narrator

Geoff worked in industry for 30 years, before suffering mental health problems. Blackthorn Gardens has helped him turn his life around again.

Geoff

I think one of the best things about Blackthorn is being able to talk with the other co-workers, and you find that you're not alone in your symptoms. It's surprising how many people have been through the same thing and they're on the way out and it's very easy for the professionals to say, you know, you're doing well, you will come out the other side, but when you can see it in practice, someone that's actually been there and done it, and they understand and if you're having a bad day you can perhaps talk to one of the other co-workers. I mean obviously the staff are there and, and they will help, but I think certainly from my perspective it helps to know that someone else has been there and they understand exactly what you're going through, and you talk to them and you can see the smile coming across their face, you know, been there, done that, the tee-shirt's in the drawer, and I think that helps a hell of a lot and it's very difficult to find somewhere like that. I never knew this place existed. It was my GP that suggested I come here.

You have to I think accept sometimes that the GP knows what will work, perhaps what's better for you. So you go in there with, you have to go in there and approach it with an open mind and at least take a punt, take a try at it, and when I first came here I did find the environment a bit alien. I come from a manufacturing background, and I found this very, very soft which is not what I'm really used to, and I found some of the nuances of the place were quite difficult for me to get to grips with. It probably took about two months before I felt particularly comfortable in coming in, and I was coming in at that time I think two days a week, I now do three days a week – two days in the workshop and one generally in the offices, working with them on, on trying to develop the social enterprise side of things, And I've really enjoyed my time here, I mean it's brought me out, I'm a totally different person to what I was. I was very down and you know would spend days in bed, the temper would flare up at any point, apparently all classic signs but it doesn't feel like that at the time. And now because I'm starting to come out of it a bit, I'm getting, I'm not exactly in a good place but I'm in a lot better place than I was, and now I can help some of the other guys that are just coming in, and when you see someone having a bad day you can actually go over there and, and not sound patronising because they know you've been there. I think that helps and it gives you a sense of achievement and a sense of satisfaction. You can actually give something back, albeit a lot of the time it's unseen, you know you're doing it, and that makes a big difference, makes a huge difference, gives you back your self worth and your self confidence.