

**Lead Cafe Host Training: Our reflections**  
**Friday 4 October 2013**  
**Renfield St Stephens Church, Glasgow**



### **Introduction**

Over the last two years The Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) has developed Lead Café Host training to meet the fast growing demand for skilled and confident 'world style' conversation cafe hosts from all over Scotland. Lead hosts are trained to chair a conversation cafe working group, provoke explorations for deeper and more meaningful questions at these events and to manage the mechanics a conversation café in action.

### **Aim**

Our aim was to train a significant number of recovery assets (people in recovery, their friends and allies) in the key skills of leading a 'World style' conversation cafe experience. Some local recovery groups and ADP structures had requested the training and the SRC had a need for a large skilled workforce to help host the National Recovery Summit.

### **Were we successful in achieving this aim?**

A total of 42 people registered to attend the training and 76% of those registered had a personal lived experience of recovery from addiction. Participants came from across Scotland and all were clearly involved with either conversation cafe in the works or a desire to hold such an event. The SRC achieved its goal of a large skilled workforce to host the summit.

### **Agenda**

09:30	Coffee
10:00	Conversation Cafe - a deeper experience
11:00	Tea break
11:30	Conversation Cafe- a deeper experience
12:30	Lunch
13:30	Systems Theory/ Social Network Theory
14:15	Tea break
14:30	Study groups; Questions/ Environment/ Process
15:30	Recovery Commitments and close

### **Practical matters**

This was very short notice training organised in response to the immediate needs of one local area for skilled hosts and fully booked within 4 days! We opened it to all the cafe working groups across Scotland and evidently there was a strong need elsewhere too. However, with such short notice we had less choice of venue. There were odd drawbacks with caterer's timings and the loss of our paper tablecloths. However the team's flexibility skills were high and we managed to prevent either from materially affecting participant experience. Not checking on venues disability access however was an oversight on the organisational side.

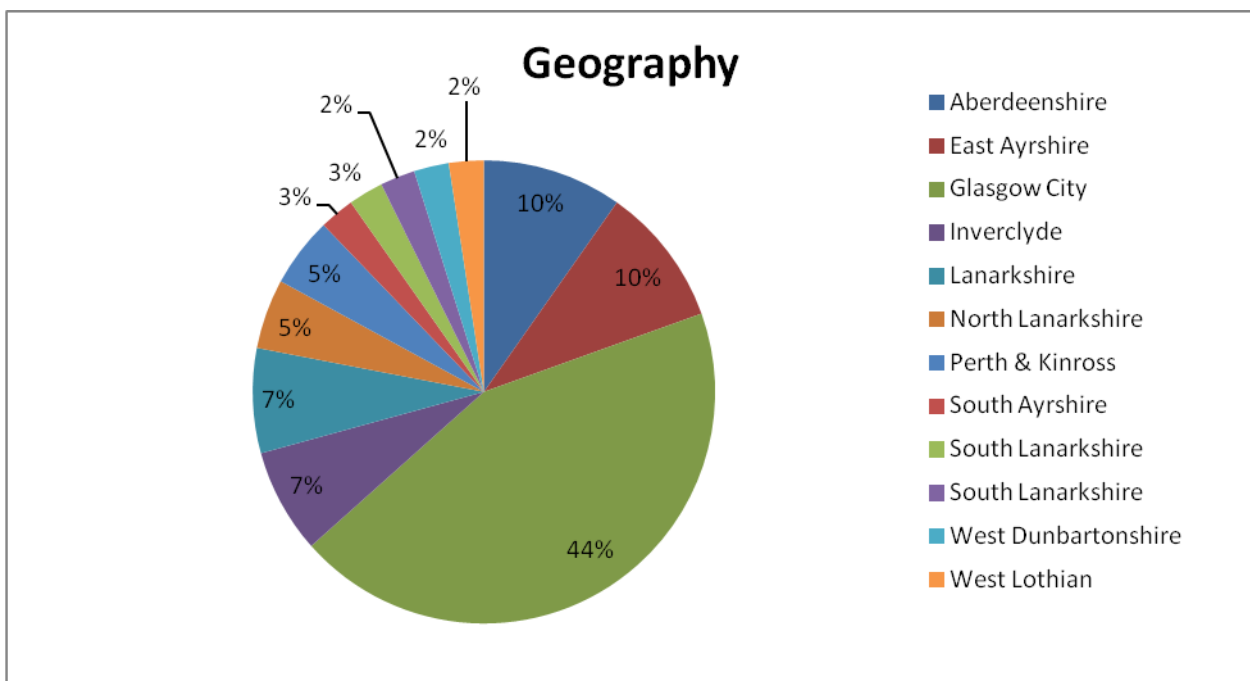
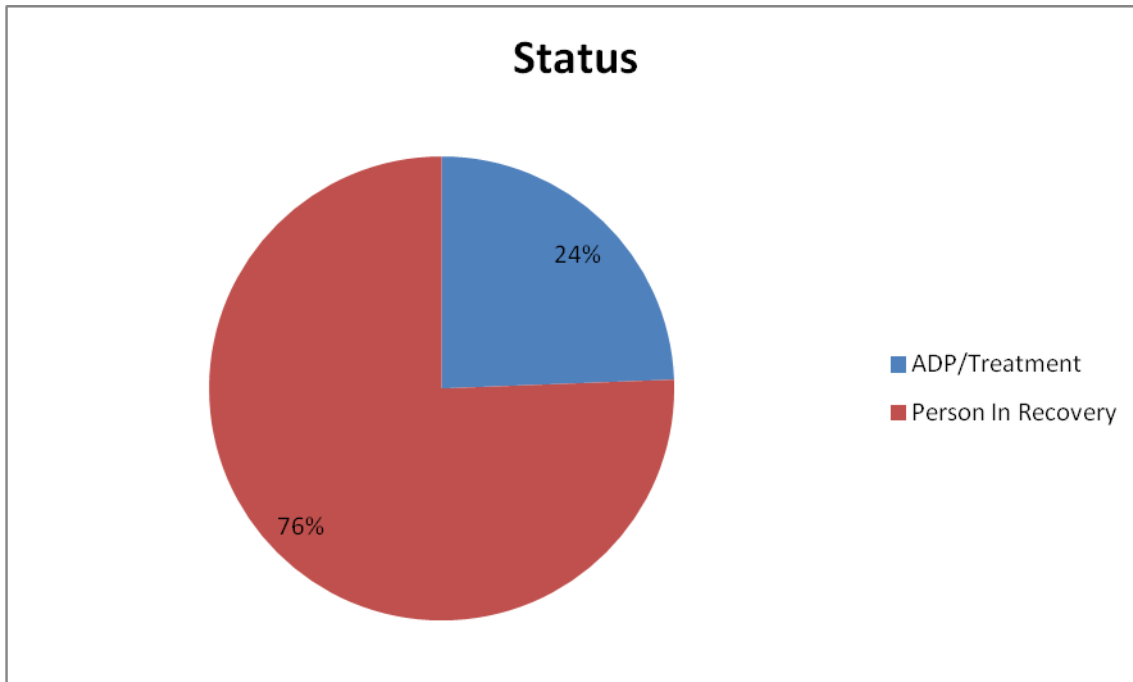
### **Event planning**

Two separate meetings were held by training team; one on practical booking venue catering and equipment and one on content and team allocation of teaching components. A local (Glasgow) long standing lead cafe host was also being trained for moving up to becoming a facilitator of the Lead Host training. The team of 3 met again after the event to review the feedback and draft this report.

### **Who came?**

The bulk of those present were recovery activists of a new generation. They had all attended 'World style' conversation cafes in the last year and were keen to develop their own now. They came from all over Scotland and many areas new to working with the SRC were well represented.

Attendance Data:



**Feedback**

Feedback was given via SurveyMonkey, Facebook and in person. We received 17 responses to our SurveyMonkey evaluation and 100% (a first!) of respondents stated that they felt able to Lead Host a Conversation cafe.

“My experience at the training was fun, factual and thought provoking.”

“I thought it was a pleasant day, with a good group of people in or helping others in recovery.”

“I found it very beneficial and got a lot of insight into running our own conversation café.”

### **Visibility of recovery - initial impact**

The new cafe hosts were very clear about putting this learning into action. The majority of SurveyMonkey respondents noted conversation cafes in the works that they are involved in running. Many of the 33 recovery commitments made at the training involved hosting conversation cafes.

About 6 of those trained that day went on to host the cafe conversations at the National Recovery Summit. Given the numbers of attendees from recovery communities, the capacity of those groups to run skillful conversations has immediately increased. We now have a new Lead Host training facilitator in Glasgow, from the local recovery community.

### **Visibility of recovery - recovery bounce**

It's clear that 'World style' conversation cafe is the engagement tool of choice of the rising recovery movement. This is evidenced by the ubiquity of 'world style' conversation cafe events and the enthusiasm and speed with which the hosting training is taken up. In just 4 years since the very first 'world style' conversation cafe was held in Scotland around the theme of recovery, it has spread like wild fire across Scotland. The training is the SRC's contribution to sustaining that spread with skilled and thoughtful lead hosts. The more hosts we train, we notice they contribute an invitation to more depth at table dialogues, even when they are not hosting. We know this conversational technique:

- Creates the recovery positive condition of mutuality
- Engenders the recovery positive condition of belonging
- Values talking and the witnessing of personal experience
- Brings new creativity and possibilities
- Builds a sense of community and brings the collective healing aspect of recovery
- Provides immediate benefit for the personal recovery from all of the above.

### **International impact**

'World style' conversation cafe is spreading in recovery active circles in England, led by hosts trained last year by SRC, who are now developing their own teams of cafe hosts.

### **What did we learn?**

We learned that:

- 'World style' conversation cafe has equity as a tool.
- We need to make a routine of disability access check for venues.
- Timing the training in relation to national summit allowed us to access new labor source.
- While there is much to recommend a planned and calendar approach to training; there is also a flow in responding to local need when it arises.

### **Cafe Host Training Team October 2013**

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