

**Recovery College no 6: The Pan Lanarkshire
UWS Hamilton Campus, Hamilton
April – May 2014**

Introduction

Kuladharini met with Lanarkshire Recovery Forums and the local ADP and agreed to open a recovery college in Lanarkshire in April 2014.

A total of 12 students applied and were accepted for the college and 9 students attended on the first day. A further 3 students withdrew; one gained employment, one felt unable to commit to the full college programme and another had to devote more time to his family. Graduation was held on Tuesday 27 May where 7 students graduated; 4 men and 3 women, and 7 Recovery Commitments were made on the day.



What is a recovery college?

A recovery college cultivates recovery assets for the good of the whole community. In practical terms this means that a group of individuals in recovery from addictions undergo ten full days of learning, sharing and practice of the key skills they will need to become the future recovery community builders in your area.

Recovery College Syllabus

Lanarkshire Recovery College opened on Monday 28 April 2014 and met every Monday and Tuesday thereafter until Tuesday 27 May. The following sessions took place:

- **Steps to Excellence (Monday 28 – Tuesday 29 April & Monday 5 – Tuesday 6 May)**
Steps to Excellence offers people an opportunity to take a fresh look at their lives. The programme will help you to see how much you are truly capable of achieving and offers the tools to make it happen. This part of the college programme runs for two consecutive weeks and it is essential that participants attend every session.
- **Presentation Skills (Monday 12 May morning session)**
People in recovery are increasingly being asked to share their stories and thoughts with others. Students will learn how to plan and structure a presentation and pick up tips on dealing with nerves.
- **Media Training (Monday 12 afternoon session – Tuesday 13 May)**
This session offers insight into the journalist's world, shares tips and tricks for working with the media and provides the opportunity to test your newly learned skills!
- **Asset Based Community Development (Monday 19 May)**
Negative norming, glass half full/half empty, deficits and strengths...we use worksheets and discussion to explore capacity inventory building in communities and within the individual.
- **Funding Your Recovery Initiatives (Tuesday 20 May)**
Recovery groups can need funding to turn their dreams into reality. This final session explores the administrative processes around setting up a recovery group and the sources of funding that can be available
- **Management of relationships in recovery groups & organisations (Monday 26 May)**
Recovery developments are driven by strong, positive and robust relationships. Being able to handle difference, conflict and betrayal in organisational settings is key
- **Graduation Day (Tuesday 27 May)**
A day of celebration where students receive their graduation certificate and your opportunity to get to know key recovery activists in Scotland.

The syllabus has developed with each recovery college and in this one the final four days benefited from the Aberdeen Recovery College feedback and were adapted quickly to focus on Recovery Community Development and aspects of that work and practice.

What did the students say about it all?

At graduation they spoke movingly about how much they got from the course and each other. In the survey monkey

“Recovery College helped me look at myself and how I see myself and others, also how others see me.”

“Very Informative and interesting, lots of good debate (wrong word), talks and good company, very good facilitators and lots of fun.”

“Very Informative.”

The students view themselves differently, and see others differently as a result of the STEPS to Excellence. The 'can do' attitude of the college and asset based community development really rubbed off on the students who feel ready to move forward with their recovery and to make an impact in their local community. They are more likely now to look at themselves more, speak their mind and get involved with building new recovery events.

What could we do differently?

The students felt the course could have been longer and at times it was heavy going for some, although others loved that. The faculty felt we needed a longer run in period to recruit more students, and that the new course material around recovery community development needed some development.

Recovery Impact- Initial

The college did develop six new recovery assets for the area; at least 2 of whom committed to helping the Blantyre Recovery Café that had been opened by previous recovery college graduates (West College 2013). The local ADP chair and Vice Chair attended the graduation as did many students' families and significant others. This was the most moving part of the whole experience was the intensity of emotion and pride that families expressed seeing their student in a whole new positive light and in public. The family photographic portraits were well received by the group.

Recovery Bounce

We now have the basis of a recovery pipe band for the next recovery walk! The family portraits were bounced round the web and moved quickly through Facebook. Our experience tells us that it takes a few months for the bounce of a college to assert itself.

Kuladharini
Chief Executive
July 2014