



Roses on the Clyde

A memorial event on Glasgow green for the recovery community

Introduction

We hosted the second 'Roses on the Clyde' memorial on Friday 13 September. The memorial has evolved as a significant ritual for the community to express its grief at the loss of friends and family to drug related death. This year we released 581 red roses into the River Clyde on Friday 13 September 2013.

Our aim

- To create a positive outlet for the feelings associated with drug deaths and the loss of life to addiction
- To challenge the stigma associated with drug related deaths and the shamed silence in the community by openly claiming our right to grieve as a community.
- To assist in the healing and letting go processes of family and friends
- To acknowledge the feelings of helpers; treatment providers, mentors, peers and allow space for them to grieve also.

Were we successful in achieving our aim?

Yes

Agenda

This year our format was incredibly simple:

- A short service with prayer and minutes silence beside the memorial bench in Glasgow Green
- 581 red roses piled on the bench before the service and then distributed among the 50 attendees
- A short walk to the suspension bridge where all 581 roses were laid in the river Clyde.
- An immediate response to the annual drug deaths announcement and a blog write up after the Roses on the Clyde event.

Practical matters

The simple format of the ceremony this year worked well. This year we used social media/text/web advertising direct to our key relationships to raise awareness of the ceremony which generated greater attendance than the email format that we used last year.

Event planning

This event involved very little in the way of planning beyond agreeing the date, ordering the roses and sending out text notification.

Who came to the event?

This was an open event where we did not seek pre-registration or names, therefore we do not have the demographic information that is normally generated through our registration process. We know that approximately 50 people attended the ceremony and it was evident that family members were present.

Feedback

We do not request formal feedback for this event. People present were evidently powerfully affected by the simple ceremony and the opportunity to give such concrete expression to their grief. Informal feedback comes via people in recovery talking about it at recovery meetings, thanking us for organising it.

Visibility of Recovery: Initial impact

We are clearly visible in a public park in good numbers and literally finding space for feelings and healing in a communal setting. A quote from recent recovery research in Scotland underpins the importance of this;

"In order for people to recover, they need time, place and space to heal their wounded self"
V. Tallon.

Visibility of Recovery: Developing impact (the recovery bounce)

This event is part of creating new cultures of recovery that both give voice to the experiences of people in recovery and create forms and rituals that have meaning in which to express their voices and feelings. By leading this we hope to encourage local recovery support groups and communities to express both the joy and the pain of recovery from addiction. Already some local groups are considering the development of their own roses in the river style ceremony.

International impact

None yet that we know of.

What did we learn?

This style of event would have been an excellent volunteer opportunity for Team Consortium. The Text/Facebook/web networks that we use are active and alive.

Kuladharini

1st October 2013.