

**Our Reflections: Fife GP protected Learning Time event
School of Nursing and Midwifery, Kirkcaldy
Wednesday 24 September 2014**

Introduction

This event was created as a result of a recovery commitment made by several participants in the Lead Officers Recovery Matters training held in March this year. Restoration Café, the Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) and the GP's NHS Addictions sub group agreed to create an event to promote supports that already exist for recovery from addictions in Fife. A working group of partners was formed and met twice.

Fife GP's and practice nurses were invited to take part in a recovery awareness session as part of their own protected learning time study programme. The partners had 2 goals for the event:

1. GP's would be more strongly aware that people do recover from addictions
2. GP's would connect more directly with the existing community based and treatment based supports for recovery from addictions.

A total of 30 people attended; 10 GP's and Nurses from local surgeries, 6 representatives from mutual aid organisations AA/AI anon/Restoration/Solo/ and 2 AWTP trainees. Approximately 10 staff members of addiction treatment agencies and 2 additional people in recovery to assist with the dialogues and seed.

The Programme

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| 1.00pm – 1.30pm: | Stalls, refreshments and networking |
| 2.00pm: | Session 1 theme “People do get better with all our help” welcome and introductions |
| 2.10pm: | Personal testimony: The lived experience of recovery in Fife now |
| 2.20pm: | Dialogue at tables “How do you experience recovery from addictions in Fife right now?” |
| 2.40pm: | Presentation: “The research evidence – the facts about recovery from addiction.” |
| 3.10pm: | Theme 2 “A person to help” shared exercise at tables – using existing knowledge and resources. |
| 3.30pm: | Presentation “The research evidence – the facts about what helps people get into and sustain long term recovery from addiction.” |
| 3.40pm – 4.00pm: | Commitments, event close time to gather more connections. |

The table discussions themes- feedback

Group 1

- GP felt can't always do anything immediate re crisis and training on substance use took place while ago (need for refresher training?)
- Services should welcome a buddy system so you can take someone with you to appointments etc. and they should be allowed to go in to appointment
- More family orientated services
- Good recovery plans with on-going support based on individuals needs/wishes.

On a positive note, people felt that some services were improving. Examples included

Group 2

- Any Co-location including mutual aid
- Losing people by signposting at the window of opportunity – then a long process to start treatment
- Worrying inconsistencies in GPs prescribing practices for alcohol detox
- Too long to wait for inpatient detox
- Families being involved in care (especially on discharge from hospital or treatment)

Participants wish list for recovery services, not currently available in Fife

- Mutual aid workers in GPs surgery to support someone at point of crisis
- Direct GP referral top NHS Addiction Services
- Family Support package
- Visible benzo detox service

The participant feedback

The participant feedback on the day was positive but we have received no feedback from the SurveyMonkey carried out by Fife NHS.

Our reflections

As part of the day addiction treatment providers present were asked to fill in a recovery awareness survey themselves. There was good theoretical understanding and positivity towards recovery among this group. Abstinence was a topic that some responders were not so confident of and about half needed to contact and understand the part 12-step mutual aid plays in recovery. Most have a clear connection to SMART and Restoration.

The event was successful not in terms of the number of actual GP's taking part, but in that it brought all the main treatment providers into a room with the SRC, Fife AA and AI anon as part of a recovery conversation. We have offered to make this an annual event in the PLT calendar and this has been received warmly as an idea. The event was a beginning for GP engagement with recovery processes and approaches.

Recovery Commitments

19 recovery commitments were made at the event:

- Give the event feedback re-detox times and Benzo detox to new service manager
- To create crisis intervention that promotes recovery more
- To promote AI Anon programme

- To support others one day at a time
- Better communication with addiction service
- To continue to share my experience strength and hope wherever possible
- To give everything I have got to helping our members with their recovery
- To take forward the positive thought that Fife is improving in terms of recovery
- Organise extensive training on recovery and related matters for all ADAPT project staff.
- To understand addiction better
- Investigate self assessment and complete it
- Feed recovery issues into NHS services strategy development
- Feedback to ADP what changes people want to improve services
- To promote engagement with Mutual aid organisations through facilitated referral
- Look at websites on recovery for research
- To invite a member of staff from recovery to counselors meeting
- To look to see if my service could provide more of aftercare service post detox or initial prescription.

Recovery Bounce

This may have been a contributory factor (among many other recovery interventions and movements in the area) in that NHS addictions are now interested in the SRC Recovery Matters workforce development sessions. The Recovery Matters workshop scheduled a week later was fuller than expected with more treatment providers taking up the opportunity.

There was also strong Fife representation at Recovery Walk Scotland 2014 which took place in Edinburgh a few days later.

Kuladharini
October 2014