

RIF Talks at The Caves: Our reflections Thursday 6 March 2014



Introduction

On Thursday 6 March 2014 the Scottish Recovery Consortium hosted RIF Talks, an exclusive gathering for the recovery community in Scotland. The event marked the one year anniversary of the Recovery Initiative Fund (RIF) and aimed to connect people who have used RIF funding to build recovery in their local area with those who are ready to learn from their experience.

Our aim

1. To mark the one year anniversary of the RIF;
2. To share learning from those who have successfully used their grant to build recovery in their local area with the next generation of recovery activists;
3. To provide the opportunity for recovery activists across Scotland to connect and share their experience;
4. To create 5 short films of each recovery activist presentation to share online as a 'second generation' recovery share.

Were we successful in achieving our aim?

Yes. You said:

"It was a wonderful day. It was a great experience to learn from other groups. The day was informative and great for hearing how other groups have promoted recovery."

Agenda

The day was hosted by Kuladharini and designed to provide opportunities to listen, participate in table dialogue and also in whole room dialogue. Those present were encouraged to ask questions on each presentation and also to join the whole room dialogue at the end of each section. The agenda closed with a whole room discussion around the possibilities for Recovery Walk Scotland 2014.

Event planning

The idea for RIF Talks was based upon the well-known TED Talks brand which focuses upon sharing ideas. We wanted to invite people to hear the ideas of recovery activists that were awarded a RIF grant and to learn from their achievements. We also wanted to create a library of second generation recovery shares which focus on life 'in recovery' rather than 'war stories' from the past.

The Caves in Edinburgh was selected as the venue for this event due to past experience when the venue staff provided an excellent service. Invitations were sent out to every RIF applicant, recovery communities and our RIF partner Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland. The Scottish Government were also invited to attend. A small crew of three Team Consortium members, all graduates of the recent Recovery College West November 2013 programme, volunteered to help crew the event on the day.

The quality of presentations shared at RIF Talks was crucial to the success of the event and in light of this we built training and support into our event plan. We identified ten potential speakers from our list of RIF applicants and invited them to attend a one day presentation skills workshop. We invited five people from this group to speak at RIF Talks and the remaining five to speak at another event that the SRC had been asked to make a contribution to.

On the day before the event our 5 speakers were invited to an afternoon workshop to practice the delivery of their speech to a small audience of the Team Consortium event crew and we all went out for dinner that evening. We then travelled together to the venue and ensured that the speakers were given time to acclimatise to the event space before participants were admitted to the venue.

Who came to the event?

A total of 61 people attended RIF Talks at The Caves and we received 10 responses to our SurveyMonkey questionnaire. We did not ask participants to make a recovery commitment at this event.

Practical matters

It was necessary to order in tables for the event as The Caves do not provide such equipment. This proved challenging as the recommended supplier was at times unhelpful, but this was quickly rectified by changing supplier.

Attendance

People from recovery communities across Scotland made up the vast majority of the RIF Talks audience with three participants from the Scottish Government and one from Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland.

Extract from survey monkey questionnaire

How helpful do you feel the Recovery Initiative Fund (RIF) has been to the growth of recovery groups and communities across Scotland in the last year?

- *There has been significant growth - 90% Agree*
- *There has been a little growth – 10% Agree*

What was your most significant learning (if any) from the presentations made at the event?

- *“Anything is possible when people set goals and keep going with support from the recovery movement”;*
- *“The extent of recovery all over Scotland and how easy it is to access funds.”*

What were the most significant connections (if any) that you made with other organisations and people at the event?

- *“I got lots of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.”*
- *“Lots of good connections for my personal wellbeing and new opportunities for the people that I support in my job.”*

Visibility: Initial impact

- The room was full of people making connections and sharing their experience.

Visibility: Developing impact (the recovery bounce)

- Photographs shared on the SRC Facebook page were then shared again by those who attended the event.
- Our forthcoming short films of the RIF Talk presentations will be available online soon which will add to the recovery bounce.

International impact

None.

What did we learn?

It helps to strengthen both individual confidence and team bonding when participants are invited to meet prior to an event. We will incorporate this into our forthcoming event planning procedures.