

**Recovery College Edinburgh: Our Reflections
Monday 18 August – Tuesday 16 September 2014
Simpson House, Queen St, Edinburgh.**

Introduction

Recovery College Edinburgh was co-produced by the Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC) and Edinburgh City ADP. The college was open to individuals with a personal lived experience of recovery from addiction and family members too. Students were invited from the Edinburgh and Lothians area in acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of recovery from addiction.

We received 24 applications to attend college, 20 were accepted and 17 students began and completed the ten day recovery community activist course. While the majority came from Edinburgh City, there were 6 students from the Lothians and 2 students originally from Edinburgh who were currently residing in Castle Huntly open estate, Dundee.

The Edinburgh Recovery College Programme

The majority of the programme is delivered by people with personal lived experience of recovery from addictions and a specialist skill set. The ten day programme includes Steps to Excellence, an internationally recognised and certified 4 day personal development course, media and presentation skills, recovery community development, recovery community maintenance and network building.

The Evaluation

Students took part in a collective group evaluation to discuss the benefits of attending the Recovery College and reflect upon their achievements across the 5 week programme. The results of this evaluation are recorded below.

The Students' Experience: personal benefits

The group agreed that attending Recovery College had a positive impact on their personal recovery; resulted in increased confidence, a change in thinking and renewed faith in themselves and each other. Students were confident that their attendance at Recovery College would lead them to build recovery in their own local area.

Family and Friends benefits

Students reflected that their families also benefitted from their attendance at Recovery College. Families have witnessed recovery becoming the norm and not addiction. Children have a calm and confident mum, families are less anxious about the students and have expressed pride in the student's achievements. Students are more able to challenge unhelpful attitudes and behaviours in their family members.

Edinburgh/Lothians benefits

The Recovery College gave people hope and the students will now lead by example in making recovery contagious. People listened to the recovery message and there is empathy for it in the community. The group want to give back to those communities by building recovery in their local area.

Scotland benefits

It was agreed that country benefits because attendance at Recovery College can help to keep people in recovery.

Recovery Commitments

16 recovery commitments were made on graduation day. They included;

- Open a recovery hub in Dalkeith
- Organise a re-union for recovery college graduates before Christmas
- Start a men's recovery group
- To become an addiction/recovery support worker with SDF/ NHS
- To create a recovery band
- To start a women's recovery groups
- Continue to volunteer for Penumbra Milestone
- To make myself available for events
- To introduce a recovery café into my local community centre
- To get a job in recovery and pass on the message
- Make that phone call!
- Open new premises of West Lothian Recovery hub
- Visit more recovery cafes
- Open a recovery hub to keep me on the right path
- Get information on new hub in Dalkeith and see if recovery can have a part of new building.
- Offer myself to Team Consortium using my work/ life experience to develop recovery.

Graduation and Beyond

Graduation was held in the beautiful surroundings of Edinburgh City chambers with the ADP in attendance. This was the busiest graduation so far with approximately 40 family members, friends and colleagues present to witness the simple ceremony co-hosted by Edinburgh city ADP and SRC. Each student signed up to Team Consortium, the national volunteer task force to promote recovery from addictions. Many students took immediate training in event management and volunteered to steward Recovery Walk Scotland 2014.

The Recovery Bounce

We are delighted that Edinburgh ADP has already requested another Recovery College. Graduates from this college have contributed to the delivery of SRC Recovery Matters training for treatment staff across Edinburgh. The SRC is currently working with the local ADP to host an ORT, Recovery and Me event in Edinburgh which will unite students, recovery communities and treatment providers in building recovery from opiate substitutes in the city.

This has been an example of a co-ordinated and thoughtful approach to ROSC building and it has been a delight to partner both the city ADP and local recovery groups in Edinburgh and Lothians.

Kuladharini

30 September 2014