

## **The SRC's Recovery College Leadership Programme Initiative 2017-18**

(Funded by Scottish Government Section 10 grant)

*"I felt excited to be part of something for positive change" Leadership Programme Graduate*

### **The Challenge: Creating and sustaining a recovery college model that focuses primarily on community recovery.**

The idea of the "Recovery College" emerged in the UK with the advent of the recovery approach to mental health. Recovery colleges were set up that helped individual recovery from mental distress to flourish and sustain itself. The addiction recovery community in Scotland however was already strong in anonymous self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous that are set up to support individual recovery. There were over 1000 such meetings every week in Scotland in 2012.

With the publication of the Road To Recovery in 2008, Scotland's own Drug Strategy, a shift in direction began in the recovery from addiction community. People in recovery felt invited by this policy, to contribute even more to the opportunities that exist to recover from addiction. They felt that by making themselves visible as people in recovery; showing that recovery is possible, they would help challenge the stigma that prevents people from seeking help for any problems earlier in their substance using. They wanted to create open, visible safe (substance use free) social spaces in the community for people in recovery. By 2012 there were several new prototype visible recovery groups and communities in operation and loads more interest to grow them. For this they needed community development skills.

### **The Scottish Recovery Consortium's college model**

*"The country will benefit as we build resilient community activists" Leadership Programme Graduate*

The Scottish Recovery Consortium has pioneered its own recovery college model since 2012. The SRC's recovery college has been an 8 day course that builds the community development skills of people in recovery from addiction. The goal of the SRC's recovery college is to sustain the growth of Scotland's visible recovery groups and communities.

The SRC has run 15 recovery colleges since 2012 all over Scotland. Of the 265 people who were offered a place on one of these 15 recovery colleges, 213 completed the full course and graduated.

These recovery college graduates have been a key component in the rise and stability of Scotland's now 120 self managed visible recovery groups and communities. In 2011 there were only 12 such groups to be found in Scotland. Graduates are often in the leadership of existing groups and are frequently found developing new ones. The model is highly regarded and places are much sought after, however the SRC has a limited capacity to deliver the model.

## **The opportunity**

*“More people will recover, the more visible we are and the more united we are” Leadership Programme Graduate*

With the on-going development of the visible recovery movement in Scotland there are now many more mature and capable recovery activists who can take on developing the skills of others.

There is a natural turn over of activists at a local level; people move on to get work, they go to other areas of community work, full time education or to a different life altogether. In addition, it is helpful for people in the post treatment period of recovery from addiction to be directly involved in helping others to recover. So there are many new activists coming out of treatment with energy and willingness to help and looking for a channel. This means there is a regular need to develop the skill set of new recovery activists.

With a highly regarded model, a range of talent that could be teaching in Recovery College, and a growing need for more recovery community development skills among activists in the expanding recovery movement, we have the core conditions for a successful devolution of the SRC recovery college model.

## **The idea**

*“I am a more informed citizen and I believe in my worth as a citizen and that I have power” Leadership Programme Graduate*

Our goal was to train up 20 facilitators of the SRC’s Recovery College model. We wanted to devolve the capacity to run the model to regional teams and thus expand the number of recovery college places available all over Scotland. This would mean that any emerging grassroots leadership of the recovery movement was

- Educated in community development
- Directly connected to other communities across Scotland
- Prepared for the challenges of maintaining the serenity of their own and others recovery in such visible community work.

It would mean that the facilitators of the college could become a national leadership team that could keep the College material relevant and meaningful for succeeding generations of grassroots activists. We applied for and received 36k from Section 10 grant in Scottish Government to undertake the initial facilitator training and college network organisation.

## **The Work -Phase 1**

*“The community will reap the rewards” Leadership Programme Graduate*

A working group made up of an SRC board member, a SRC staff member and a SRC intern all of whom were personally in recovery from addiction and who had taught at the 15 recovery colleges developed the facilitators training programme. The working group recruited applicants from all over Scotland. 38 people applied to take part in the course and form the new leadership team. Applicants were drawn from 15 separate Alcohol and Drug

Partnership Areas of Scotland, 1 from Scottish Prisons and 2 from the SRC staff team and board. All 38 people were invited to take a place on a course. Those who didn't meet the Initial qualification criteria of having already undertaken a STEPS TO EXCELLENCE course were invited to one of two preliminary basic STEPS courses in November and December 2017.

## **The Work -Phase 2**

*“Learning more about recovery nationwide can only benefit us as a community” Leadership Programme Graduate*

32 of those students were offered a place on one of the two-facilitator programmes run from January to April 2018. Every one of the 28 students, who took up their place on what was called the “The Recovery College Leadership” programme, successfully completed the course.

## **The Programme**

*“Always really enjoy this stuff; challenging stigma, building community, looking at campaigning from grassroots to national level” Leadership Programme Graduate*

The Recovery College Leadership Programme took place from January to April 2018 It was run over 8 days for each course and was delivered by CEO of the Scottish Recovery Consortium and the SRC's Lived Experience Development Officer both of whom are in long term recovery from addictions themselves and have a history of grassroots community activism. The Pacific Institutes' own trainer in Scotland who has long connection with the emerging recovery movement through their STEPS TO EXCELLENCE basic training led the STEPS facilitator course. The 8-day Leadership programme included:

- The Big Picture- the history, current context and ideas driving the recovery movement in Scotland.
- STEPS Facilitators programme
- Community Development and Community Campaigning
- Organising your own recovery College

With 100% of students completing the course successfully; the Borders, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North and South Ayrshire, Glasgow City, Lanarkshire, Edinburgh City, Forth Valley, East Dunbartonshire, Aberdeen City areas all now have people qualified to lead the Scottish Recovery College model.

In addition the Scottish Prison Service have one graduate who can head up a team delivering to the new prison based recovery groups.

### **The Work -Phase 3**

*“Who will help me with my next idea? The rest of the leadership network and the SRC team”  
Leadership Programme Graduate*

The Leadership Programme Graduates assisted in the development of a new Recovery College model. Now to be called “ The Scottish Recovery College” wherever in the country it is delivered, the college is now a branded product. It is an 8-day course that will be delivered only by leadership programme graduates. The Scottish Recovery College has its own logo and branding identity that quality assures the product.

Leadership Programme Graduates have their own hard copy of the full Scottish Recovery College course. The course handbook includes the teaching programme of each day with copies of handouts, brain food inputs (mini talks on the given subject) and online links. A video of Top tips for recovery activists, featuring many recovery activists from all over Scotland was made especially for inclusion in the course materials. A private online resource section will be created on the SRC website to support the Scottish Recovery College programme delivery around the country.

### **The Scottish Recovery College Collective**

*“What am I going to do with what I have learned? I will start the process of building an autonomous/visible recovery community” Leadership Programme Graduate*

In April and June 2018 the graduates met again and explored how they might support each other to deliver the colleges. They renamed themselves the Scottish Recovery College Collective. They hold the shared responsibility for approving proposals to deliver the college. They will work in teams to organise, fundraise for and deliver the college in their region. They will draw on other members of the network if they don't have enough hands to do the job in their region. The Scottish Recovery College is a region wide initiative and to be given away free to students and for which no one receives payment specifically for teaching in it.

In June the Collective approved the first proposal it received from the North East team to deliver the model in Aberdeen City in the autumn 2018. Inverclyde and Renfrewshire teams are combining to do a joint delivery in their region in August/ September 2018. The Collective have already come up with a way to make the leadership network self-sustaining financially that will be considered at their next meeting.

The Scottish Recovery Consortium's new national recovery community development officer convenes the collective. She is also a qualified member of the collective having completed the training. The Collective are exploring online meeting and a social media account to keep in touch with each other directly between bi annual face to face gatherings.

This Scottish Recovery College Collective is now poised to become a new voice of leadership in the recovery movement in Scotland.

Day	Course	Details of Course
1	The Big Picture	An introduction to some big ideas, new research and perspectives that are shaping the recovery movement building around the world.
2, 3 & 4	Steps to Excellence	An accredited course, internationally recognized, designed to give you the positive thinking tools so that you can release more of your personal aspirations and help your community fulfill its potential.
5	Community Development	The day begins with a conversation about what is community, what are its characteristics? From there we move towards the purpose and mechanisms of recovery communities in particular. We will use appreciative enquiry, see how we can look at each other, our groups, our wider community and ourselves as assets that help build sustainable recovery.
6	Community Campaigning	What it is and what it isn't. How do we make ourselves visible with safety? We explore different examples and methods. We look at some methods of campaigning, some theory and the possibilities for the future in a local to global (human rights) way.
7	From Theory into Practice	Putting your positive psychology, community development knowledge and newly learned tools into action. Bring back the learning into your life and form new aspirations for yourself and your community. Key Lessons from the elders in our community who are already making their ideas come to life. What will you contribute to the future of recovery?
8	Looking Back; Looking Forward	Practical exploration of your local area and practical help for turning any ideas into reality. What you will do as a result of being at the college? Looking back on the experience of the last 8 days, followed by the Graduation Ceremony.

***The course, materials, lunch and refreshments will all be provided free of charge.***

### **In conclusion**

The grant's objectives of creating 20 new facilitators of recovery colleges and a network to support the development and delivery of recovery colleges around Scotland have been more than exceeded. We have 28 facilitators, a national network of people trained to deliver all the parts of the course not just the STEPS TO EXCELLENCE, a fully developed programme with brand new materials, a new identity for the model and a regulatory and support framework for the model. It was a timely injection of funds at precisely the right time.

Kuladharini, Chief Executive, Scottish Recovery Consortium.