

Recovery

Promoting hope, choice and opportunity

Issue 2, Spring 2016

Getting involved - what is co-production?

Co-production is a current buzzword, but did you know that it has the potential to revolutionise our services, and what it actually means?

Essentially, it is the collaboration of people who run services and people with lived experience of mental health who use services. Co-production is working together to commission, design and manage new services. And more!

Now we are learning together with the establishment of recovery colleges in each Health and Social Care Trust - details of your local recovery college are on the back cover.

Recovery college students include service users, families, carers, staff and those with an interest in wellbeing and mental health. Each course is co-designed and co-facilitated by two experienced tutors with knowledge and expertise in the subject matter. One tutor is known as a peer trainer with lived experience of mental health and one is a staff member.

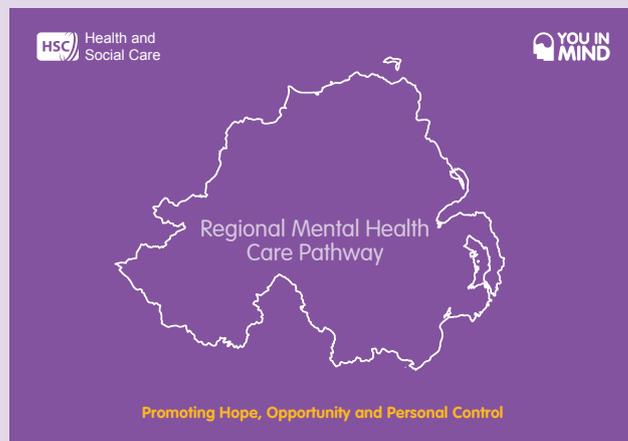
The unique thing about our recovery courses is that all participants are students who enrol to be educated in an area of wellbeing and mental health. You have the opportunity to hear perspectives you may not have heard before. This way of doing things recognises the value and benefits that can occur when people who use services work together in partnership with those who provide them.



Co-production!

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You can view the Regional Mental Health Care Pathway at www.hscboard.hscni.net/mentalhealth/Regional_Care_Pathway_Mental_Health.pdf

Getting the most from appointments

How many times do you leave an appointment thinking you didn't say what you wanted to say, or that you couldn't remember all that had been said? This is a common experience, and staff often feel that the appointment is less effective than it could have been.

To tackle this problem, Belfast HSCT has designed the 'How to get the most from appointments' form, to be sent out with appointment letters which helps the service users and carers prepare what they want to say at the appointment.

To build on this, the Belfast recovery college working group decided to co-produce a new course, 'Getting the most from appointments', available to service users, carers and staff.

The hope was that this particular course would help service users and carers understand why it was better to come with some preparation to the appointment and for staff to better understand what was important to the service user and carer by discussing the question on the new form. This requires staff to consider different ways of communication and approaches during appointments.

To further advance the impact of the course, the recovery college working group agreed to develop short film clips to demonstrate service users, carers and staff experience. Adhering to the ethos of the recovery college, the film clips were co-produced with service users involved from the outset.

A group of service users from North Belfast Day Centre agreed to participate in this project. ESC Productions were also involved in helping to produce the film clips with the service users. A launch event took place in

November 2015 at the Black Box Belfast to celebrate the development of the DVD, and to acknowledge the help of the service users and ESC Productions.

As one service user said: "It's great that people now ask me what I am doing and not how I'm feeling!"



(L-R) Jim O'Brien (Recovery College Peer Trainer); Peter McNaney (Chairman BHSCT); Aisling Curran (Co-Chair of Recovery College Group); Catherine McNicholl (Director, ASPC); Dr Kirsten Kearney and Tom Magill (ESC Productions)



Members from North Belfast Day Centre, Tom Magill and Ben Price from ESC Productions and Belfast Trust staff.

We would like to share a special poem written by Kieran Brogan, SEHSCT recovery college volunteer and member of the co-production trainer team. In its poetic simplicity, the poem tells a story of one's journey from despair to discovery. It denotes a shift from inner turmoil to acceptance, appreciation and hope for new meaning in one's life.

Ending is beginning

I was sitting on the sand,
I was looking out to sea.
I was searching for an answer,
But all I found was me.

I watched a glorious sunset,
Its colours lighting up the bay,
As the sun said farewell,
To another perfect day.

But, all I saw was burning red,
Like the anger and the pain.
Another day is dead and gone,
And my life is much the same.

But as the sun was sinking,
Into the cool of blue,
Something in me started
changing,
With every change in hue.

Then suddenly it dawned on me,
If you'll excuse the pun,
Maybe, just that part of life is
over,
And a new part has begun.

You see, what if I was over there,
On the other side,
Sitting on the sand, right now,
And staring at the tide.

The waves are surely breaking.
The sun is surely rising.
A new day is dawning,
And an ending is beginning.

And as the last ray of light,
Danced across the swell,
I felt an ease within me,
And I knew that all is well.

Kieran Brogan

Train the trainer course

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) recovery college has announced a new 'Train the trainer' course for the spring prospectus.

This course has been co-produced by members of the recovery college co-production team along with an associate professional trainer working in mental health.

This intense three-day course is recommended to anyone wishing to become a Trainer or for students who would like to increase their confidence and skills in delivering recovery-focused education programmes within the recovery college. The course aims to explore and evaluate different learning styles; support students to develop reflective approaches to teachings of others; to promote the development of confidence and skill planning, delivering and evaluating training; to educate learners on the importance of co-production and valuing different perspectives; and to support learners in creating structured learning plans and performance indicators. At the SEHSCT recovery college, we are thrilled and excited to be launching this individually tailored comprehensive Train the trainer programme in early April.

Recovery college volunteers

We are delighted to announce that over the past year the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) recovery college and volunteer services have been working closely together to develop and approve the recovery college volunteer role within the trust.

The recovery college volunteer is a highly valued role within the college and unique in its design and delivery. The role is embedded within the recovery ethos and therefore has been shaped by the cultural themes of hope, control and opportunity. We feel passionate about ensuring that recovery college volunteers are treated equally to staff and therefore we aim to fully engage recovery college volunteers within the team and to provide opportunities for volunteers to develop and proceed in achieving their aspirations.

To find out more about this role and other opportunities within the SEHSCT recovery college, please contact us on 028 90413872 or email: recovery.college@setrust.hscni.net

New website for Mental Health Forum

In October of 2015 a new website, www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk was launched in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) area. The website supports and informs mental health service users, their carers and the general public, as well as those involved in providing their care.

This ground-breaking project from the Mental Health Forum has been fully conceived, designed, built, and is run by service users themselves and presents the recovery message, support information, SHSCT and community news and involvement opportunities all in one convenient place.

This is a valuable resource for anyone with an interest in mental health. The content on offer includes partner sections from the SHSCT, NIAMH, Care in Crisis and CAUSE. The site has one of the largest interactive mental health 'jargon busters' available, a dedicated peer support area, an evolving resource section featuring everything from information and advice links to media downloads as well as a news section gathering content from across the area to engage visitors on many levels.

The Mental Health Forum is the recognised voice of service users within statutory mental health care in the SHSCT and, as a totally independent organisation, has representation at all levels of planning and provision. The forum is deeply embedded in the development of

all trust recovery initiatives as well as promoting the interests of service users and facilitating support and opportunities for involvement.

The forum was proud to share the launch with the SHSCT who, as part of the same event, also launched a newly published recovery booklet featuring inspirational stories, poetry and insight from service users, carers and professionals about what recovery means to them. This booklet, *My life, my way forward* can be downloaded from the resources section of the new website along with future publications such as recovery news will also be shared there.



Back row: Bryce McMurray, Assistant Director for mental health; Karl Hughes MHF manager Front row: Elaine Fogarty, MHF Secretary; Ann Butler, Recovery Coordinator;; Caroline Ferguson, MHF

Update from the Western HSCT

The Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) appointed Olive Young to the temporary post of recovery college coordinator in September 2015.

Since taking up the post Olive, along with service users, carers and other professionals, has been working hard on a number of key areas:

- The launch of the recovery college in Enniskillen on March 4 2016.
- A two day 'Train the trainer' course was successfully rolled out in Enniskillen.
- Development of a booklet of recovery stories, *Reflection on recovery*. It is planned that these booklets will be disseminated to all WHSCT mental health facilities, making them available to a wide range of service users, carers and staff.
- The 'My Mind' app has now been further developed to include stories describing involvement in the recovery college.
- A number of service users have completed the five day WRAP training and are now involved in delivering this training to staff and service users throughout the WHSCT.
- Video clips of service users stories have been filmed for the WHSCT website.
- A service user and Olive presented to the WHSCT Board meeting in January, describing personal experience of mental health recovery and co-facilitating with the recovery college.

TRIPs continue to be developed by our day care and acute services; this is a really positive step in the recognition that the service users recovery journey crosses all service provision.



Left to right: Paul Ferguson, Olive Young, Martina Galbraith and Mark Hunter, who all attended the Train the trainer course in Enniskillen in February

Busy year at the Northern Region Recovery College



Recovery poems - **Loud Silence** by Bill McKnight

Recovery
*Wellness –
living with illness.*

Recovery
*Depression's lifting.
'tis music to my ears.
I heard a smile today!
An unchained melody.*

Good mood
*The rain is away.
It's a wonderful day!*

Stigma
*Insight
that is skin-deep.*

Hope
*It is said that the darkest hour
is just before dawn.
In a similar vein
growth and change
can be gained
at the moment of greatest pain.*



It has been a year of growth and development for the Northern Region Recovery College.

After piloting some co-produced courses in 2014/15, we listened carefully to feedback, ideas and suggestions and co-designed a full prospectus of workshop/training events for 2015/16.

The college prospectus, timetables and the recovery college itself were formally launched in September 2015 at a highly successful event attended by professionals, people with lived experience, carers, partner agencies and members of the general public.

Since then we have been rolling out an extensive programme of over 40 course titles at 30 venues across the vast geographical area covered by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT). From Portstewart to Pomeroy in the west, Ballycastle to Crumlin in the east and everywhere in between, well over 200 individual workshop and educational events are scheduled for delivery in the period from September 2015 to June 2016.

Of course none of this would be possible without the magnificent efforts, experience and commitment of our ever-growing 'community of equals' within the

college. Volunteers with lived experience, mental health professionals, carers and partner agencies alike have teamed up to co-produce and co-deliver a programme that will embed the recovery message and WRAP principles deeply within our urban and rural communities. We are also indebted to the many organisations who have welcomed us into their premises, on many occasions at minimal or no cost to the college.

Our student enrolment and volunteer rates continue to grow and we are particularly pleased that we will shortly appoint a number of part-time/full time peer trainers to work within the college. These posts will soon be further augmented by the appointment of several Peer Support Officers, both ward-based and community-based across the NHSCT.

It is truly an exciting time to be involved in the Northern Region Recovery College as we look towards consolidating and further developing our activities, in full consultation with all of our members. If you would like to find out more about the College or our courses just contact us on 028 9441 3449, email us on recovery.college@northerntrust.hscni.net, visit our Facebook page 'Northern Region Recovery College' or write to us at Recovery College Hub, 60 Steeple Road, Antrim, BT41 2RJ.

James' story

Despair ... discovery ... recovery

I'm here ... I've survived ... I'm recovering! It isn't all plain sailing but the Northern Region Recovery College is helping to turn my life around.

Almost 3 years ago a lengthy episode of bipolar depression collided suddenly with an unexpected series of deeply challenging events in my life. My life plan was shattered. I felt alone, betrayed, hopeless and worthless. I spiralled further downwards into despair.

Then something absolutely remarkable happened. In the Autumn of 2014 I was introduced to the Recovery Facilitator at the Northern Region Recovery College. This proved to be a turning point for me, as she guided me through the ongoing work and the aspirations for the College. For the first time I heard the language and ethos of recovery expressed in everyday terms. I discovered that the Recovery College, and in particular the principles of WRAP, were in fact the 'missing link' I had been searching for to help me take back control of my life. To put it bluntly I realised that I could **learn to recover**.

No more blaming myself, others and circumstances. I faced up to some very difficult questions and found enlightenment and empowerment in several Recovery College courses. For the first time in my life I began to understand myself and my condition more clearly. I realised that I could put strategies and tools in place to help me live with and manage daily life more effectively. I began to volunteer with the College almost immediately and today I feel intensely proud, privileged, supported and fulfilled to continue my involvement there. I am now following my personal pathway to wellbeing recovery. There are still twists and turns along the way but I am now better equipped and supported to deal with these.

Without hesitation I encourage everyone with an interest in their wellbeing to explore the work of our Recovery Colleges in Northern Ireland. You will find, just as I have, that **learning to recover** is one of the most rewarding gifts you can give yourself.

Back to work: a parent's view

I had attended the job centre with Mary when she met the Disability Officer, who was extremely helpful and supportive. She talked to Mary about the type of work she might be happy doing. I cannot describe the relief and the hope that I felt listening to them talking. They were actually discussing Mary's return to work! That had been something that I would not allow myself to even dream about. I knew that day, that eventually my very gifted daughter would return to satisfying work.

The Disability Officer seemed determined to help us. I say us because we were all involved. When Mary was sad, depressed or anxious we were all affected. Mary had been doing voluntary work for some time. While this helped her regain confidence, there was a restlessness and a desire to prove that she could support herself and at the same time help other people. As parents my husband and I did what we could, listening, encouraging and most importantly staying positive. This was not always easy.

There had been many setbacks over the years that it required a real effort at times to stay sane and rational. There was always the anxiety about Mary's energy. Her drugs, while excellent in their results, caused extreme tiredness and sleepiness especially in the mornings.

Since working we have watched with genuine delight her growth in self-confidence, her creative approach to her work and her common sense in tackling the tiredness.

It is a real source of joy to watch Mary so happy. She genuinely loves her work and her clients seem to appreciate her. This job has provided her with satisfaction, an outlet for her creative nature and a real sense of purpose. As a result we are more relaxed and at ease. We are extremely proud of our daughter who has fought a serious mental illness and now manages her home, supports her brother and does an excellent job with the Belfast Trust. She even finds time to organise parties, babysit her nieces and nephew and enjoy her friends and family.

Another aspect of Mary's return to work was the fact that the job was supported under the Workable scheme. This meant that our anxiety around loss of benefits and personal support for Mary was dealt with. Mary has had continual regular support within her job which provides further peace of mind to ourselves. Mental illness as such provides no guarantees. There always seems to be a lot of trial and error.

By Deirdre

David's story

Hi, my name is David, I am a service user at Foyle New Horizons (FNH) training centre in Derry. I have been with Action Mental Health New Horizons since April of 2015 and I can honestly say that it has reshaped my life in many beneficial ways.

Since I started at FNH I have been working through an NVQ level 2 in Business and Administration and have already successfully completed BCS ECDL Level 1 which has updated my IT skills, OCN Level 1 in Healthy Living which has helped me to make better and healthier lifestyle choices such as healthy eating and starting the gym.

Being with FNH has helped me learn how to apply myself in a learning environment again and has enabled me to gain focus and has given me great ambition to use what I achieve here to possibly rebuild my career and to reengage in the workplace in the future.

I thoroughly enjoy each day I spend at FNH as I have

made a lot of new friends and the craic is good. I would definitely recommend this programme to anyone experiencing mental health difficulty as it also helps put structure to my week and makes each day more worthwhile.

I have recently started two new courses OCN L1 Health and Safety in the workplace and Using Woodwork Tools OCN L1, which I will complete in the next few months with the help and support of the tutors. I am hopeful that these will all count towards helping me find a work placement and possibly a volunteering job at the end of it, alongside the support of the unit employment officer Valerie Holmes.

The staff here are really friendly, helpful, and supportive and are great at their jobs. In addition the unit is welcoming and the food is great too. I hope that more and more people with mental health difficulties can take the first step to starting a programme like this from my experience so far it will not be something they regret.

Nottingham recovery college provides training to SEHSCT

The Nottingham NHS recovery college has provided the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) recovery college team with a full and comprehensive two-day training programme.

The tailored training package focused on key aspects of recovery college developments, such as: the education approach; co-production and co-learning; peer trainer roles; and the fundamental structures of recovery colleges.

The SEHSCT team gained insight and appreciation for an established recovery college and were delighted to have had the opportunity to meet the Nottingham team and be guided by a leading centre of excellence in the field of mental health recovery.



Left to right: Fiona Dagg, Anna Devlin, Kieran Brogan, Eileen Shevlin, Helen Brown, Linda Erskine, Angela O'Hara and Debbie Milanowska



The Mental Health Recovery Network

The Mental Health Recovery Network (MHRN) was established by a group of nine individuals from various backgrounds who have experienced different mental health issues.

They recently held a coffee morning in December 2015 at the Ulster Hospital recovery college. It was an opportunity for them to introduce their newly founded organisation and for some of the members to tell their story 'from despair to recovery'.

The event was chaired by Davy Hann, committee member. Eileen Shevlin (chairperson) and Angela O'Hara (committee member) both shared their story, discussed what recovery meant to them and how they managed to turn their life around with their own personalised recovery journey. Kieran Brogan (committee member) displayed some amazing photographs and gave some beautiful poetry recitals which he wrote along his journey.

The event was very successful and was attended by people from a variety of backgrounds, health professionals, service users, and carers, and local councillors.

Eileen Shevlin said: "The morning was an amazing success and very uplifting for all who attended. We also developed very important relationships with our local councillors (also elected mental health champions) which we know will deliver mutual benefits for our community in the future."

The Mental Health Recovery Network (MHRN) allows people to share their experiences in the hope of helping others who are suffering and unable to reach out for help. The MHRN offers peer support, gives people a voice within the mental health services and encourages people to use these services.

Angela O'Hara co-produces and co-facilitates courses at the recovery college. She is currently putting together one minute films from five service users and five health professionals on 'what works for me'. This will be broadcasted during Mental Health Recovery Week (Southeastern Trust), beginning March 21 2016.

Angela said: "We understand how difficult it can be to live with mental health issues. It can be very isolating and often can feel like you will never get out of despair. Every experience is different but if there is one thing that connects us all, it's that recovery is possible! We want to promote a positive attitude to mental health with dignity, respect and show the capabilities of people with mental health issues."

MHRN also plan to promote the organisation via regional road shows during Mental Health Recovery Week and they plan to connect with people to enable them to have a voice in the service the organisation can provide.

Community psychiatric nurse (CPN) views on peer support



As a mental health professional, how does the peer support role fit into your work?

"I feel peer support workers compliment the keyworker's role in helping service users embark on their own personal journey of recovery. Peer support workers share their lived experience of recovery from mental illness, and this

can have a positive impact on service users. As a practitioner, I find the input and experience of peer support workers to be very useful in my work."

(Jessica Uprichard, CPN, Support and Recovery, Craigavon and Banbridge)

How do you decide to refer a service user to work with a peer support worker?

"A referral to a peer support worker generally follows a discussion between the service user and their keyworker based upon identified needs. I also consider other factors such as the relevance of the peer worker's lived experience to that of the service user. "

(Jessica Uprichard, CPN, Support and Recovery, Craigavon and Banbridge)

What do you feel your service users gain from working with peer support workers?

"I feel service users gain additional social, emotional and practical support from peer support workers. In particular, peer workers help service users identify personal and social barriers to recovery and how these can

be overcome. Peer support workers also assist service users with a range of practical tasks aligned to their recovery goals, for example securing voluntary work."

(Emma Thompson, CPN, Support and Recovery, Armagh and Dungannon)



Do you feel peer support has made a contribution to your work with service users?

"Yes, our peer support workers have helped service users put into practice the concepts of recovery and they have assisted my key worker role."

(Emma Thompson, CPN, Support and Recovery, Armagh and Dungannon)

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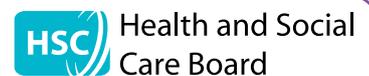
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Find us on:

Many thanks to the Recovery newsletter co-production team for their contributions and work.