

Recovery

Promoting hope, choice and opportunity

Issue 8, Summer 2019

Transforming minds

In this issue we focus on how the recovery colleges play a key role in transforming the minds of not only people using mental health services and their carers, but also the minds of staff and providers of services.

Belfast recovery college wins Aontas award

Belfast recovery college has won a prestigious all-Ireland award for adult learning. Coordinator Helen Anderson said: "We are delighted to get this recognition as it shows that people are engaging in the concept of recovery from mental health issues, and that the journey through recovery is something in which we can all participate."

The Award, presented in Dublin and called The All Ireland Aontas Adult Learning Award 2019 for Health and Wellbeing – Large Organisation, recognises outstanding contributions in the field of adult learning.

The Aontas award convener said at the presentation: "adult and community education is about more than receiving a qualification. From improved confidence to better health, the wider benefits are far-reaching and can have a hugely positive impact on a person's life, family and wider community. That's why our award categories for 2019

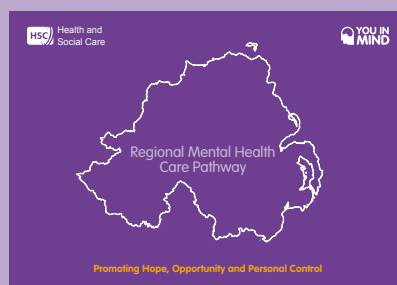


reflect the diversity of adult learning initiatives taking place across the country."

Since starting in 2015, more than 1,800 people have enrolled as individual students in the Belfast recovery college. John Morgan, Senior Peer Educator at the college, said: "Recovery education empowers me. Why not give people hope? Schizophrenia no longer defines me thanks to the recovery college."

In this issue:

- Belfast recovery college wins Aontas award
- Transformation in Belfast HSCT
- Creative Conversations workshop in SHSCT
- How SEHSCT recovery college changes lives
- Training for Trainers in SEHSCT
- Making recovery a reality in WHSCT
- Co-production and co-delivery in the SHSCT recovery college
- 10,000 More voices and World Mental Health Day 2019



HSC Health and Social Care

YOU IN MIND

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



A student's perspective – from peer student in the Belfast recovery college to peer support worker

For the past six months I have been on a work placement with the Belfast recovery college. This was the next step in my own personal recovery journey and one that had a profound effect on my wellbeing. Not only was I on a work placement but I also enrolled as a student, registering for every course I felt would be of benefit. I was particularly impressed with the ethos and outlook of the staff at the college, Hope. Not a particularly impressive word but one that can mean so much.

For everyone who attends the courses provided by the college, hope has a different meaning. For those on their own personal recovery journey it can be the hope of a better future, hope that they can again become an effective member of society. Hope that they can feel empowered or at the very least gain a better understanding of their own mental health. For any professionals that attend they may be hoping for a better grasp of what it is to suffer from mental ill health, or to be able to adapt the services they provide to better suit clients who may have difficulty with mental ill health.

The range of courses provided by the college embodies its holistic approach to recovery and every person attending is made to feel welcomed and included. Each course includes examples of lived experience with a mix of different media to improve the learning experience.

The recovery college provided a safe environment for learning and an appreciation of the difficulties many people face on a day to day basis. This is due mainly to the fact that most, if not all the wonderful staff within the college have real lived experience of mental health issues. I have learned so much during my placement and want to thank everyone involved with the college for enriching my life. The impact of which has encouraged me to get back to work, hopefully in a mental health recovery capacity.

Peter Blair, Peer Support Worker, BHSCT

NB Peter subsequently achieved his ambition of getting back to work as a mental health Peer Support Worker with Belfast HSCT.

Leading the way in transformation

In summer 2019 the Belfast HSCT has seen the introduction of 11 peer support workers in the new purpose built Acute Mental Health Inpatient Centre, the Home Treatment Team service and the Community Mental Health teams.

These new posts demonstrate the continued commitment towards a more recovery focused service within the Belfast Trust.

Each peer support worker has been on their own journey of recovery and will bring an authentic, person-centred and empathic approach to those they work alongside. They will be doing recovery focused work, giving hope and understanding to those who are accessing mental health services and supporting them to find their own way forward on their journey. With the right support from their colleagues and managers these

workers will be helping to transform our mental health services for the betterment of our staff, service users and their loved ones.

Tory Cunningham, Senior Peer Support Worker and Project Development Lead, BHSC



Creative conversations – transforming attitudes about mental health

A QI project in SHSCT

‘Creative Conversations’ is a workshop that evolved following a service improvement event where I was asked to share with staff from four different directorates about my experiences using the Emergency Department. Staff attitudes significantly impacted on whether my experiences were positive or not. I was asked to co-produce a training workshop for staff about attitudes towards people with mental health conditions. We developed this through the recovery and wellness college, where I work full time.

In my role as a peer trainer, I observed that staff training on regional and local recovery objectives were not explicitly linked to their day to day practice. Secondly, as much as the recovery agenda focuses on people with lived experience having a voice, I was seeing that staff too can feel unheard and undervalued. Recovery is for everyone and is about listening to and valuing others and I did not want to develop training without first listening to and understanding staff perspectives and exploring how attitudes are inextricably linked to recovery values and principles as well as our own wellbeing.

From this, Creative Conversations #howwearewithpeople was born. This workshop has been co-designed and co-delivered with Paul McConnell, Liaison Interface Practitioner, and Ann Butler, Recovery College Manager and Recovery Coordinator to help facilitate a conversation among staff about attitudes and recovery principles in order to encourage reflective practice and provide staff with an opportunity to have a voice in service development.

Continued on next page...

...continued from previous page

It provides an opportunity for staff to reflect on the impact on their own wellbeing, job satisfaction and to identify solutions where barriers exist. Data collected from this will help to inform a way forward to more fully embed the values and principles of recovery focused practice as outlined in the Mental Health Care Pathway. #languagematters #conversationsmatter.

This course is using a live feedback system by Turning Technologies, which will help us capture data in real time and inform a way forward.

Lisa Morrison, Peer Recovery Trainer, SHSCT

Comments from staff after the first workshop

'Restored a sense of hope in challenging times'

'Challenged existing thoughts/feeling and very motivated to change the status quo'

'Good to be heard as a staff member'

Good to hear lived experience and other staff's views'

'Recovery – the whole meaning of it – all staff should know what it really means'



Ann Butler and Lisa Morrison, SHSCT



How SEHSCT recovery college transformed my outlook and life

I worked in emergency acute care in the South Eastern HSCT. I was passionate, hardworking and enjoyed the rush of the Emergency Department. The variety of people I met amazed me, the different illnesses intrigued me and my colleagues were next to none.

I hid my own battles for a long time, kept everything to myself; away from family, friends and colleagues. I was a different person. I smiled, laughed, joked but behind my smile was a great actor.

Work became overwhelming, life became more challenging and I was struggling to keep in character. The pressure of work, family life, ongoing medical tests, triggers arising bringing me back to my childhood trauma and my struggles growing up.

In an attempt to escape the secrets, the pressures and the pain buried deep within me I fell apart, I was broken, lost and felt no worth. I felt as if I was being strangled with chains around my neck as I was being anchored to the ocean's seabed while trying to gasp for air. I tried to take my own life, I self-harmed, had paranoia episodes and was hospitalised four times. Colleagues, friends and family couldn't believe that someone so cheery could hide so much pain. I was proof.

I underwent specialised counselling; I had Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and was seen by several different professionals. I received the top treatment and with their best efforts I felt good but soon relapsed.

I attended the SEHSCT recovery college as recommended by my Community Psychiatric Nurse and in all honesty I didn't know what to expect. The word 'college' terrified me and all I thought of was classroom based teaching and fitting in with the student, but I jumped to conclusions and judged too quickly.

I felt overwhelmed attending the courses, I instantly felt welcomed. I was free from stigma, I could share my story and not feel judged, I was listened to and the course materials were so beneficial, I learnt so much about mental health, recovery and self-management. I had found hope, the college gave me opportunities to feel proud of the person I am, I created great friendships and I gained some qualifications too.

I soon started to volunteer to co-produce courses, offering input as a person with lived experience and created opportunities through my learned experiences too. I began co-facilitating and found this new passion to help others through their mental health journey and recovery. My attitude changed, my core values enlightened my outlook and I learned I didn't want to lead students, I want to guide them. I want to be part of their journey.

Now I'm employed as a peer support worker and trainer. I'm optimistic about my future and career development and I believe no one is a failure, no one loses or fails, but we only learn. I know I'm not perfect, normal and ordinary for they don't exist in my world, but I'm human and I know I am good enough.

I owe the college the world, I found a new passion, my mind has transformed, I have hope and found friends and a family. I'm proud to be part of an amazing team. I feel the luckiest guy to be given such a powerful role to enhance mental health services. The college changed my life, it can change yours too.

James Keenan, Peer Support and Trainer, SEHSCT

Training for trainers – staff and peer perspectives



Recently I completed the Training for trainers course. I was nervous as I didn't know anyone, but when I arrived the atmosphere was relaxed and put me at ease. The trainers were supportive, friendly, knowledgeable, worked at the groups pace and the three days flew in!

The group I was with were lovely. Everyone was there to share experiences, learn from each other and the trainers and to enjoy themselves. I felt privileged to be learning from people with lived experience who were willing to share their stories. I gained lots of tips from members of the group and the tutors on how to facilitate a group, the challenges this can present and the skills required.

The training was done in different ways, such as through presentations and discussion. The tutors encouraged everyone to join in and worked to make sure people felt comfortable and they were there to provide support if anyone felt anxious or upset. We also received resources to be able to refer to after the course was finished. I would recommend anyone to come on this course as you will get so much out of it personally and professionally. Thanks to the recovery college tutors for all their hard work!

Petra Fulton, Disability Hub Coordinator, SEHSCT



Regarding my experience during and after the recent course I attended with the recovery college called Training for trainers, I'll start by saying how much I thoroughly enjoyed doing the course. I must be honest though, at first I was a little nervous, but as the first day went on this soon disappeared.

The facilitators made everyone feel involved and within an hour or so I, and I'm sure others, felt relaxed and actually started to enjoy it. It was also great to hear other people's experiences.

One big thing I did take away from the course was my confidence in doing the role play. This helped me to speak up and have my voice heard, and in doing so I could help others by advocating, and in return, helping them to speak up and have

their voices heard. I would highly recommend this course to others, and regarding my experiences from the course itself I would change nothing.

The course and the facilitators were 100%. They got it to a T. I'm looking forward to doing other courses with the recovery college, which all adds to the role I do as a peer advocate on the wards.

Martin Logue, Volunteer Peer Advocate on mental health inpatient wards, SEHSCT

Recovery coaching in NHSCT



I began my journey to recovery five years ago with the help of the NHSCT Community Addiction Team. I was appointed my own key worker who saw me for a period of time and enrolled me in other courses that helped me with my recovery, like the Changing Together Group.

She and other staff members from the Community Addiction Team and the recovery college in Holywell Hospital got me involved as a service user attending training courses and support groups within addiction.

I was then given a great opportunity to be trained and gain a recognised qualification as a recovery coach. I now help facilitate the Changing Together Group and have coached others in my role as a recovery coach.

I have found that the coachees I have coached benefited hugely from hearing about my past experiences and my journey of recovery. Also after the sessions with the coachee, from their feedback they mostly said that it was good to talk to someone who understood how they felt and where they were in their recovery.

Recovery coaching has helped me in my life and my recovery by obtaining and being able to use all these skills. It enables me while volunteering as a recovery coach to feel like I am giving something back and really helping people in their journey of recovery.

Recovery coaching is also a great benefit to the staff at the Community Addiction Team and the recovery college because with both of us working with a coachee they are getting the right professional help and the lived experience of the recovery coach.

John Byrne, Recovery Coach, Addiction Services, NHSCT

*I'm in recovery, what does that say?
I've taken the step to see better days;
I have not found a miracle, or not found a cure,
In fact on this road sometimes it's hard to endure;
I'm walking this road with hope in my soul,
Learning about myself, my thoughts and control.*

Caroline

This is me

*Memories as a child for me are few,
However, a couple of stories, I can share with you,
The eldest of three 'steps of stairs',
Two younger brothers, a sister preferred.*

*A protective young Mother,
Hardworking provider on her own,
Doing her best to give us a home,
I often wondered how she did it alone.*

*Daddy, his priorities were different to Mums,
He worked long hours and preferred to 'Run',
Spending his earning on booze and fun,
Leaving bills and responsibilities to mum.*

*Mum finally had enough and decided to go,
With our best interests at heart, this was no way to grow!
All packed up, three kids in tow,
Dad, oblivious in the pub, with his 'blackcurrant
and Pernod'*

*Off on our 'holidays' that day we did go,
The Blue Bus picked us up by the side of the road,
So excited we were, our surprise journey began,
To the coloured houses, 'free from man!'*

*Women and children escaped here together,
A new life, they longed for things to get better,
Faithful friendships to hold onto forever,
Memories, slowly fading of the 'stormy weather!'*

*Let down time and time again,
Hard lesson learned, 'men don't remain!'
An angry adolescent this message ingrained,
Lacking compassion, I caused loved ones pain.*

*Mum found a new love, this I did struggle,
No matter what Dad did, my head was a muddle,
A new little sister and brother I gained,
A role model again, I had to change.*

*Becoming a Mum was my favourite thing,
Having an inspirational mother, I have much to bring,
Often singing, playing, running around,*

*My children kept my feet firmly on the ground.
Working hard to give them a home,
With no belief in men, I did it alone,
A fort built around my children and I,
No water would flow, for the moat was dry!*

*Loving the joyful sound of their laughter,
Bright, bubbly, belly laughter,
It echoed around our home thereafter,
My children are my 'happily ever after!'*

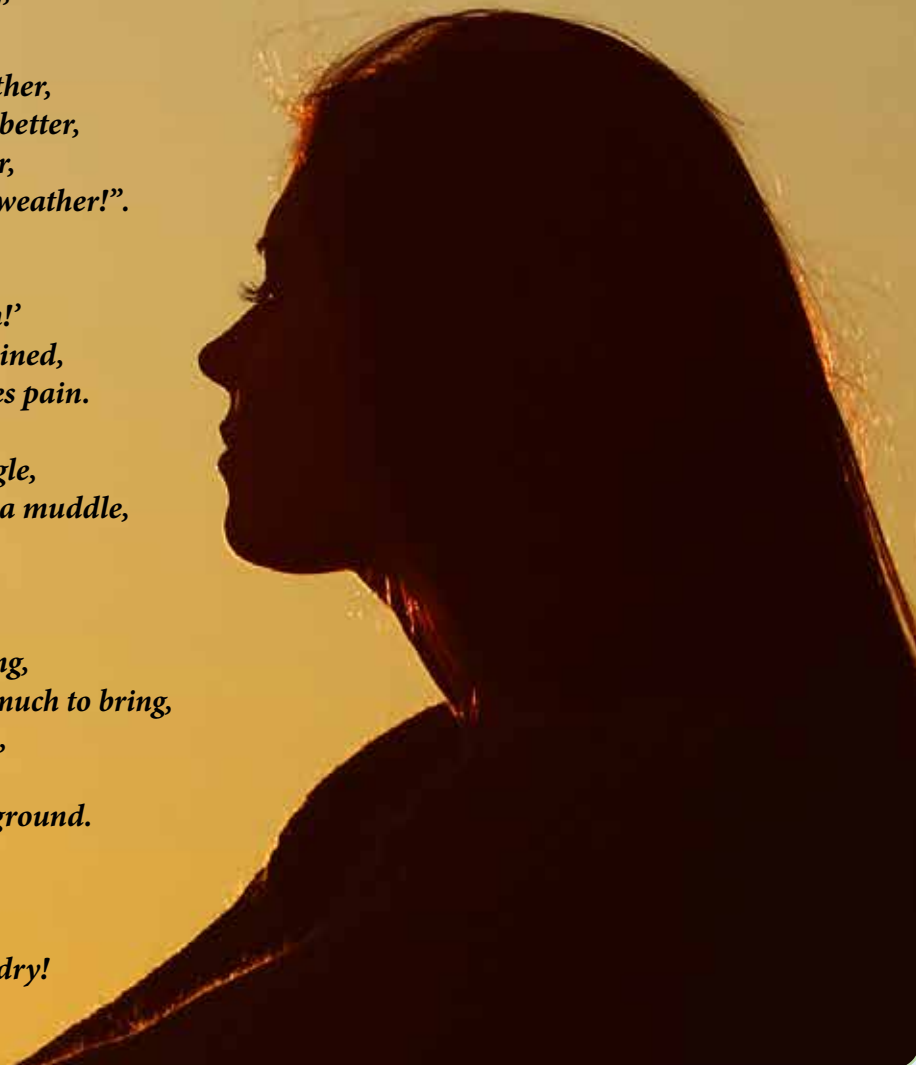
*As well as being a loving mother, I am so much more,
With a caring heart and a confident core,
Forgiveness has taught my heart to soar,
A fiancée now, I found new love forevermore!*

*A chef, he dished up his love for me,
He cooks the best steak in history!
Thankfully that night while flicking through Tinder,
I 'accidentally' swiped right, and found my 'winner'!*

*My individual journey on this road to recovery,
Has been a gift of personal discovery,
To recognise the strength and determination within me,
'Demons of the past', I am now set free!*

*Recovery is Me, and the journey beyond,
Loving each day, I have become fond!
Self-love, self-belief and trust in myself,
My health, happiness and wellness are my wealth!*

Margarette O'Donnell



Invisible transformations in WHSCT



Trauma creates changes you don't choose; healing is about creating change that you do choose. Not all transformations are visible. Due to the trauma and changes I experienced I really had to transform my mind. The mind is such a powerful tool, controlling our thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

I was lost, I felt that I had no purpose, around some negative people – I knew that things had to change. Thankfully I was introduced to the recovery college which has helped me to transform my mind. Taking

control of my illness, my issues and my mental health has helped me in my recovery. Through the courses I have attended, especially WRAP, I have increased my knowledge and understanding of how to self-care, and transform my mind into more of a positive mind-set.

I had to choose to walk away from some people and groups for my own health. This wasn't easy but I had to choose to create change. This quote by Jillian Michaels is one I find inspiring: "It's not about perfect, it's about effort. And, when you bring that effort every single day that's where transformation happens. That's how change occurs".

Kate Tierney, Peer Educator, WHSCT

Making recovery a reality



Persuade someone to change their perhaps long held opinions on a particular subject. Make the subject something challenging, like mental health. Complicate matters further by making the target of your powers of persuasion someone with an actual mental health

diagnosis. Not an easy task by any means, and sometimes, when you have mental ill-health yourself, in my case anxiety and depression, the most damaging stigma and stereotyping you have to face is your own. Yes, diagnostic overshadow is certainly a real issue, as is the possibility of your abilities and intelligence being wildly underestimated by professionals and the general population alike, but so too is self-stigmatisation something that needs to be overcome.

"That's it, my life may as well be over; I always knew I was weak; and, this is too hard for me to do anything about" are just some of the negative thoughts I have repeated to myself over the years since my initial diagnosis. Never mind what anyone else might have thought or said about me, the

mind I really needed to transform was my own. The transformation began slowly but surely, from the very first workshops I attended at the recovery college. The topic was recovery itself, which was a revelation, because whilst it might have been implied, when I was first diagnosed no-one thought to tell me I could recover, and that things wouldn't always seem as horrifyingly black as they were then.

It was only when I heard first hand the experiences of people who had made their own meaningful recoveries from mental ill-health that I started to think it might be a possibility for me. That "maybe" was enough to motivate me to enrol for more courses and to work on challenging my own negative thinking and the way I was stigmatising myself. Fast forward a few years, and now as a peer educator myself, I try to always be mindful of the need to instil in students the belief that they too have within them the potential for recovery. That belief, along with the knowledge, confidence and skills that one gains at the recovery college enables students to make the possibility of recovery a reality. "Maybe" is just the start.

Bernadette Donaghy, Peer Educator, WHSCT

Staff experience of co-production and co-delivery in SHSCT

I was very grateful for the opportunity to work with the recovery and wellness college to co-design a workshop using my professional experience as a pharmacist. I found working with Lisa Morrison, Peer Recovery Trainer, very rewarding as she was able to use her experience of taking medication for a mental health condition and demonstrate what impact this has had on her own recovery. Lisa and I knew each other over the years and it has been encouraging for us both to co-produce this course using our own individual experience.

We jointly agreed the aim of the course was to help educate participants and develop awareness of available information so that people can make informed choices about medication for mental health conditions and to understand how working in partnership with the specialist mental health pharmacists can ensure safe and effective outcomes. Feedback so far has been very positive, participants felt empowered and we are considering incorporating an interactive online activity to enrich the experience of navigating the 'Choice and medication' website.

Aaron Coulter, Community Pharmacist, Mental Health, SHSCT



I work in the Support and Recovery team in the Southern HSCT. Through the recovery college, I was able to realise one of my career goals in the introduction of complimentary approaches to manage mental health and personal wellbeing. I embraced the opportunity to co-produce and co-deliver a new course 'Complimentary approaches to mental health and wellbeing' which is a workshop providing an overview of a wide range of complimentary therapies such as meditation, tapping, yoga, aromatherapy and reflexology. These are all wellness tools I have used myself for many years to promote my own wellbeing and I am passionate about promoting the benefits of these to others and the college has created this opportunity for me.

The recovery and wellness college courses are designed to inform and educate people on a wide range of topics that promote wellbeing and empower people to take more control over how they are able to manage their wellness in day-to-day life. It provides a safe social environment for people to meet regardless of their role, identity or lived-experience.

Many people who attend courses have been inspired to complete the Training for trainers course and go on to become facilitators for the college like myself. Promoting recovery and wellness is central to my role and working with people with lived experience has been both humbling and powerful. The recovery college isn't just for people who experience mental health challenges, it's for everyone!

Nina Foster, Mental Health Nurse, Support and Recovery Team SHSCT



Pauline Reid, Richard Gardner and Adrian Cluett, SHSCT

Understanding bi-polar affective disorder course in SHSCT

The opportunity to co-produce a course at the rRecovery and wellness college brought tremendous meaning and value to me; it was a great experience which I learned a lot from. We all worked collaboratively from the beginning validating all our own experiences/expertise, both lived and learned. I believe this was evident as we approached completion and worked closely with the quality assurance team. I felt we challenged the barriers throughout the process.

It has been extremely important for my own professional development as a mental health nurse to hear the lived experience of my co-production team and I came to realise during the process that I had been involved in the treatment and care of some of the team members, this made the experience more interesting as it added a new dimension to co-production.

I look forward to my ongoing involvement and engagement with the recovery and wellness college and to support the co-production ethos as I see it going from strength to strength in the coming years.

Richard Gardner, Supported Living Manager, SHSCT

As a volunteer at the college, I relished the opportunity to get involved in course delivery, the whole process of co-production and co-delivery of the bi-polar affective disorder course was totally new to me. I really enjoyed working with the clinicians and I believe it did break down barriers. I feel that my confidence has grown as a result of having a voice and being heard and validated.

It was a very good way to work and I am looking forward to building additional skills and developing worthwhile relationships as I grow in confidence.

Pauline Reid, Lived Experience and Volunteer Recovery College, SHSCT

10,000 More voices – Mental health survey

The Public Health Agency in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Trusts developed a survey on the service user experience of mental health services between December and July 2019. The survey, which has just closed, generated an excellent response with 591 stories submitted. Each story is extremely valuable and will inform part of the upcoming report, which will help shape mental health services in the future. Thank you to all those who shared your stories.

Alongside this, we have developed a staff survey for people working in mental health services to share their views and experiences of working in mental health. The staff survey is still open for responses and can be accessed online at www.10000morevoices.hscni.net or ask for a hard copy from the 10,000 More Voices

Regional Office on 028 9536 2868 (office hours) or email 10000morevoices@hscni.net

Please note that by taking part in this survey you are consenting



to your anonymous information being used in a variety of ways, for example: in the development of reports, staff induction, staff education and training and for meetings, to improve the safety and quality of services and to influence how services are shaped in the future.

World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day, observed on 10 October, is an opportunity to raise awareness of mental health. This year, the theme is suicide prevention. Every year close to 800,000 people take their own lives and there are many more people who try to. Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries and has long-lasting effects on the people left behind. Suicide occurs across all age groups and is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds globally (WHO, 2019).



Contacts

Belfast Recovery College

Helen Anderson
Ground Floor
Lanyon Building, 10 North Derby Street
Belfast BT15 3HL
Tel: 028 9504 3059
Helen.Anderson@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Northern Recovery College

Rosemary Hawthorne
Recovery Facilitator and Manager for Whiteabbey Day Hospital, Carrick 3, Holywell Hospital,
60 Steeple Rd, Antrim BT41 2RJ
Tel: 028 9446 5211 ext 323449 or 028 9055 2201
Rosemary.Hawthorne@northerntrust.hscni.net

Southern Recovery College

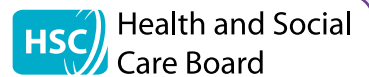
Ann Butler
Recovery Coordinator, Trasna House,
Lurgan BT66 8DN
Tel: 028 3756 1938
Ann.Butler@southerntrust.hscni.net

South Eastern Recovery College

Nadya MacLynn
Recovery College Coordinator
Mental Health, Home 3, Ulster Hospital,
Upper Newtownards Road, Dundonald BT16 1RH
Tel: 028 9041 3872 ext. 89872
Nadya.Maclynn@setrust.hscni.net

Western Recovery College

Olive Young
Lisnamallard
5b Woodside Ave, Omagh BT79 7BP
Tel: 028 8225 2079
Olive.Young@westerntrust.hscni.net



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:



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