

# Recovery

Promoting hope, choice and opportunity

Issue 6, Summer 2018

## Recovery Colleges promote hope and opportunities



### From student to tutor

Two years ago my life did not extend beyond the walls of my home. With the exception of a few medical appointments, I did not leave the house, finding it less threatening to isolate myself so that my mental health difficulties remained as secret as possible. I was signposted to the

Recovery College by an occupational therapist who explained to me the college's ethos of 'education' rather than 'therapy'. My imagination was tweaked for the first time in many years and I felt sure I was about to discover something stimulating enough to encourage me to break through my self-imposed detachment.

I attended my first college course with a mixture of trepidation and anticipation. Going through the doors was tough but by the end of that workshop I had developed an appetite for information on how to formulate strategies for my recovery. I was hooked! Over the following months I explored many different courses from "Meditation" to "Assertiveness" to "Managing anxiety".

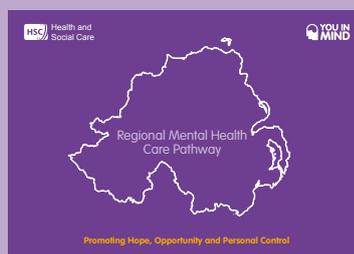
Alongside the educational aspect to the Recovery College, I also witnessed for the first time the concept of 'lived experience' and 'learned experience' being played out in front of my eyes. Never before had I seen a person with a mental health diagnosis own their experience and use it as a platform for teaching others how to develop their recovery journey. The co-facilitation between 'lived' and 'learned' meant that for me the perfect blend was being achieved, with both tutors enjoying equal import. Instead of merely being a patient with bipolar disorder, I saw the potential to become someone who could have something valuable to offer to those who also had mental health challenges.

Before I became involved with the college, I had not worked for ten years. My background was in group-work and co-facilitation with Women's Aid. The transition from having a responsible position where I was instrumental in supporting women and families recovering from violent relationships to a situation where I was filled with self-doubt was traumatic. I was convinced I would never work again. However, connecting with both students and tutors was inspiring and gradually I began to own my recovery story. And when I was eventually asked to co-facilitate a course, I could not have been more encouraged and flattered. Becoming a tutor is not for everyone, of course, but my particular employment skill-set has been

*continued on next page...*

### In this issue:

- Belfast Recovery College launch success
- 'It's for me' photoboard campaign in SHSCT
- SEHSCT Recovery College experiences
- Excellence in co-production for NHSCT Recovery College
- WHSCT and MAGNI wellness camp



**HSC** Health and Social Care

**YOU IN MIND**

You can view the Regional Mental Health Care Pathway at [www.hscboard.hscni.net/mentalhealth/Regional\\_Care\\_Pathway\\_Mental\\_Health.pdf](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/mentalhealth/Regional_Care_Pathway_Mental_Health.pdf)

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transferable and I have found my new role as tutor has lent me a new lease of life. My self-belief grows exponentially with every course I co-facilitate.

Written into the college's DNA is co-facilitation but also co-production. By offering me the opportunity to co-develop workshops and courses, I not only deliver existing material but also write and conceptualise new material with my co-facilitator. In this way, my creativity

and mental health experience are utilised to the benefit of students, but also to my own benefit as I continue in my recovery. My mental health recovery narrative develops and unfolds on an ongoing basis. Like many tutors in the college I wear different hats. The beauty of the college is that I can contribute as a tutor, but also attend courses as a student, when I wish. There is a quote on the healthyplace.com site which has become a daily mantra for me: "Stay strong – your story isn't over yet."

**Ali McHenry, Recovery College Tutor**

## **Belfast Recovery College launch hailed as enormous success**

**The Belfast Recovery College held its official launch on 22 March 2018 at the Black Box Theatre in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter. Over 200 invited guests came from as far afield as the Recovery College, Dublin, other parts of the island and all over the UK. The special event consisted of music, narration, speeches and powerful drama.**

The Belfast Recovery College teamed up with Spanner in the Works Drama. The theatre company explored four students' real-life journeys, through the medium of drama. To standing ovations, these professional actors aimed to challenge, provoke, engage audiences and document the life-changing work of the Belfast Recovery College. Indeed, many in the audience later took to Twitter and other social media to express appreciation of what had been a powerful representation of the college.

### **Launch gives new insight into life-changing work**

Notable insight into the life-changing work of the college was portrayed in speeches by Mary O'Brien (Services Manager, Recovery Mental Health Services); Barney McNeany (Co-director of Mental Health Services and of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAMHS]); Martin Dillion (Chief Executive of Belfast Trust); and Peter McNaney CBE (Chairman of Belfast Trust).

During his speech, Barney McNeany remarked how enlightening and powerful the dramatic portrayal had been and went on to say of the college: "From the informal chat, to the warm smile, to the welcoming cup of tea... the rediscovering of stories, whether carer, staff, service user... everyone is a student."

Helen Anderson, dedicated coordinator of the college, was presented the Accreditation from Continuing Professional Development (CPD) certificate. The professional points make it only the second Recovery College in the UK to have its courses accredited. Helen noted that not only had their courses achieved this accreditation, but the college had continued to substantially invest in its trainers: "Of the Belfast Recovery College educators, 38 have been awarded a Level 3 in Education and Training – a college quality standard."

Sincere thanks went to all the staff and students – all of whom together have made the college come alive today. This went from the administrative staff, who as first point-of-contact could be make or break for students, right to the leadership. It was stated that: "It is the co-leadership and the coming together of Staff Educators and Peer Educators which have made this college. At the heart of this collaborative model, is the recognition of the equal importance of expertise through both lived experience of mental health (the Peer Educator), and professional expertise (the Staff Educator), to co-produce and co-deliver learning and educational initiatives. The college is more than education and courses."

The last word was, as ever in the Recovery College, given to students helping to celebrate the launch, some of whom said:

***"Learning plans helped me find my identity again. When self-belief is there, there is hope that recovery is possible."***

*"The Recovery College atmosphere is a safe place in which to learn."*

*"Wellness' and 'recovery' is celebrated."*

*"Peer support from other students gave me hope."*

*"I have learned about myself as a practitioner and more about recovery-focused language – it has been an awakening for me."*

*"As a Staff Educator, I no longer see the student as a patient on the course. I have a different role as an educator. Staff, carers, families, friends learning together – we are all students."*

*"A culture that allows me to acknowledge my experience of mental health in a protected and positive environment, while raising awareness of mental health in Belfast."*

*"The peer model is a way of feeling equal."*

**The Belfast Recovery College would like to send thanks to all who made our celebratory launch so successful, especially our inspired and inspiring students.**



Pictured at the launch: Martin Daly, Service User Consultant; Mary O'Brien, Services Manager, Recovery Mental Health Services; and Gerry Skelton, Senior Lecturer at Belfast Met; along with some of his students.



### **Recovery is strength**

*Recovery can be short  
Recovery can be lifelong,  
But no matter how long it takes  
Recovery is strong.*

*Although initially perhaps feeble  
In body and mind,  
Recovery is strength  
Is what you will find.*

*So don't despair  
When you are feeling ill,  
Know that with recovery  
There is a future still.*

*It may not be  
The life we had before,  
Nevertheless it's a life  
We should be grateful for.*

**Paul Wilson**

# BHSCT Recovery College, a student's story

**After many years and much discussion, my mother's GP has finally shared with me my mum's diagnosis of personality disorder. While undertaking personal psychology, I hear of an organisation that could help me understand this diagnosis. This organisation is called the Recovery College.**

These two words suggest hope and self-education. Already I am interested.

The day of the course arrives, as do I, feeling unsure. Who I am going to meet? What I am about to hear?

I arrive at reception to find a familiar face – a former work colleague. There are also many others looking for the training room.

As I enter the room, feeling anxious and vulnerable, I notice two people standing at the front of the room having a coffee. They welcome me and instil calmness in me; it seeps into me through their tone of voice. "This course will be different," I think. "Less formal." That too puts me at ease.

As the course unfolds, I get a chance to work with others in groups. I make connections. Suddenly, I don't feel so alone anymore, because everyone else is also here to learn something about personality disorders. I talk to social workers, who share their experience from within their role. I go to the shop during break. I stand beside a fellow student, who lives with a personality disorder. I watch her anxiety while she shops; I listen to her speak of feeling like a burden on her family, especially her daughter. "How ironic," I think. "I am the daughter of a mother who lives with personality disorder. Yes, I came here because I felt burdened. However, all I can feel for this lady is compassion at this moment."

The peer trainers/educators introduce themselves. One is a professional. However, I am shocked and yet inspired to be told that the other tutor lives with personality disorder. One word: "WOW... Now this is interesting." The details unfold from the slide show. The jigsaw of information I have been trying to put together alone, is finally falling into place. Not only do I get a chance to ask the questions no one has ever been able to answer. Not only do I hear and see first-hand what it is like to live with personality disorder but the difference is... it is positive, inspiring, hopeful and at times funny. Most importantly, for me, is that I had previously been told there is nothing that can be done for people with

personality disorder; I now hear there is specialist support available. There are alternatives out there. There is hope and opportunity for my mother.

I participate in a group and we share some of our experiences. I listen, observe and realise there are reasons for my mother's behaviour – things that just can't be helped. I start to become more acceptant and connect once again to my empathy and compassion for my mother. This is perhaps not what I expected – I wanted to change things for her. But this is the truth of the disorder and that's what why I attended the Recovery College course that day.

On my way out, I approach my former co-worker and say "Hello." We exchange numbers and promise to meet for coffee. Two weeks later, we meet. We catch up on our years of living, working, childrearing and more. I also share my experience of living with depression. She tells me about the role of the Recovery College and the opportunities for all which underpin its work. I feel inspired, excited. This brings me back to the skills I used to use. I remember past training courses and work I did a long time ago before I became depressed. I had filed all of this information and knowledge away in a box in the back of my mind. She tells me about how students, carers with lived experience and professionals, all work together, and support one another, with one thing in common: providing education for all in a safe environment at the Recovery College. The one thing about this which is different is that the subject is mental health. Yes! The subject most people whisper about. Not only are those at the centre of the work also those in the front line, those living with mental ill-health are peer educators and co-facilitators, but there are those who care on a daily basis and those who treat, prescribe and support people with a mental health diagnosis working in the Recovery College delivering training. I think to myself: "At last!"

Fast forward many months later and I am a peer educator at the Recovery College, co-facilitating a course. I am using skills I had thought were long forgotten, never to be used again. Each day I remember something I once did, which I try my hand at again. And it feels good. Yes, I will stumble and I will fall at times. However, I am surrounded by people who understand mental ill-health and that is reassuring. The Recovery College provides training, self-care, support packages and more, including potential employment for those who walk through their doors.

For me, well, it's baby steps. One step at a time.

# Southern Trust Recovery and Wellness College event

The positive impact of co-production was recently celebrated at a packed event hosted by the SHSCT Recovery and Wellness College in Dungannon on 22 June. Nearly 200 people attended for the launch of a film featuring service users, carers and mental health practitioners.

“It’s for me” was directed by Peer Trainer Brian Toner and produced in conjunction with On the Boil Productions. The film focuses on the process of co-production and what the college means to students who attend classes. Attendees at the event also received copies of the college’s latest Recovery Stories booklet, following on from the very popular first edition released in 2016.

The keynote speaker at the event, John McCormack from the Scottish Recovery Network, also delivered an inspiring speech on the benefits of co-production based on his extensive experience in Scotland.

SHSCT Recovery Coordinator, Ann Butler, stated that the large turnout was a reflection of the hard work of

the college’s team who deliver courses throughout the Southern Trust area. According to Ann, the presence of so many mental health practitioners in the audience was a positive sign that the ethos of co-production is becoming embedded in mental health practice across the Southern Trust area.



Pictured: Back L-R: John McCormack, Scottish Recovery Network; Ann Butler, Mental Health Recovery Coordinator; Brian Toner, Peer Trainer. Front row: L-R: Stephanie Holmes, Peer Trainer; Adrian Corrigan, Assistant Director Mental Health; Eileen Mullan, Non-Executive Director.

## RCN Nurse of the Year award commended



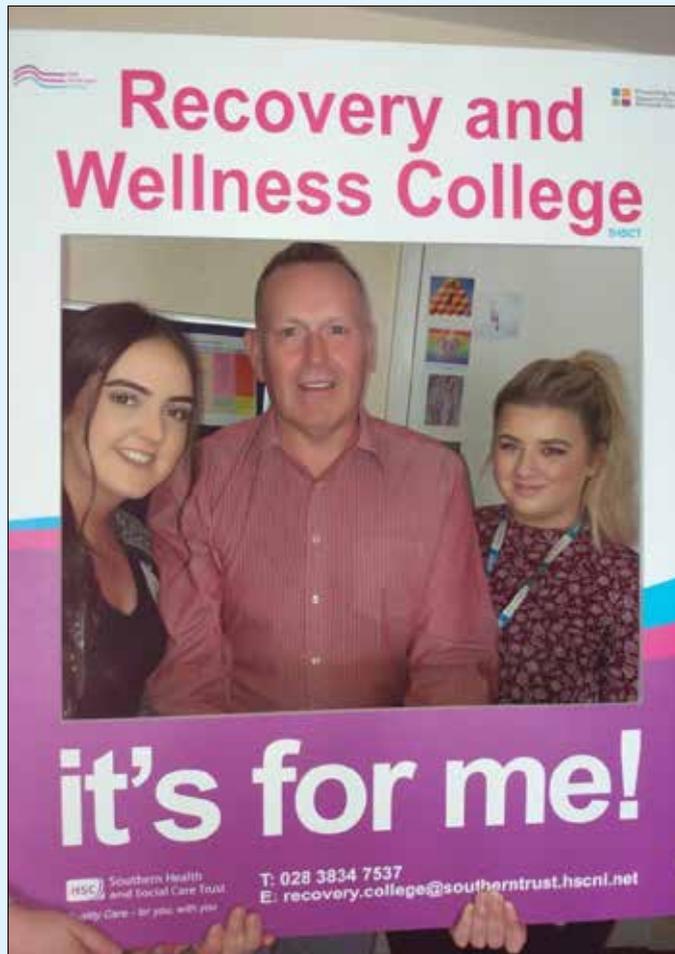
Ann Butler was recently nominated for the Northern Ireland RCN Nurse of the Year award and received a commendation for her work developing the Recovery and Wellness College and her commitment to recovery focused practice in the Southern Trust. Ann has been a key driver in putting recovery-focused practice at the heart of all mental health service development as part of the wider public health agenda in the Southern Trust area.

Ann has been championing recovery focused services through her work as the Recovery Coordinator since 2015. Since taking up the role she has been working to transform the perception of recovery colleges from being a marginal addition to mental health services to being a central component of recovery-focused practice.

Ann has developed close working relationships with community/voluntary organisations and service user and carer forums in order to promote courses and make them available to as many of the trust population as possible. She works enthusiastically to promote the role of those with lived experience in the college and works tirelessly to increase opportunities for involvement.

Ann recently launched the second edition of the Southern Trust’s Recovery Stories book featuring inspirational stories, poetry and insights from service users, carers and professionals about what recovery means to them and the importance of instilling hope as part of the journey.

## “It’s for me” Photo board campaign



**Brian Toner, Peer Trainer at the Recovery and Wellness College in the Southern Trust, launched the “It’s for me” campaign in May to highlight the importance and value of the college courses for everyone.**

The college team took the message right across the trust to staff in different areas of mental health services. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of the value of education at the college for all stakeholders.

Staff in the trust are engaged in co-production and co-delivery at the college and are continuing to support the growing number of courses available in the next semester. Courses delivered at the college are open to everyone age 16+ and take place in community venues.



## My recovery journey through volunteering



**I have been lucky enough to be involved with the Recovery College since the beginning, attending training both here and in London to learn how to get things started as well as the principles of the Recovery Model and co-production/co-facilitation and its benefits.**

My journey has been exciting, unpredictable and at times anxiety provoking as I have navigated my way into unfamiliar territory with no sat-nav to say “please turn around when possible”. As a volunteer and a student and with support from my colleagues at the college I have found myself doing things I never thought I would have the confidence to do again.

I was asked to take on a role as a ‘Learner Support’, a new role which hadn’t been tried before – there were no real instructions just to support students to get the most out of their experience. It was such a confidence boost not just to be asked to take on the role but to be trusted to support other students and to make it my own. It was definitely pushing me out of my comfort zone but it could not only be good for students’ recovery but for mine also. Feedback from students and tutors was very positive. Sometimes I support students who are anxious about coming to training, anxious about asking questions or find things

overwhelming and need someone to speak to on a one to one basis without interrupting the group or one of the tutors having to leave. Sometimes I just make sure the room is comfortable, the fan isn’t blowing anyone away and there is water and refreshments available. I am also available to support tutors in making the classroom environment a welcoming and safe place for everyone. One of the most rewarding things is observing students grow in confidence and returning to attend different courses and sometimes then volunteering in different roles within the college.

Despite my fears and worries I have really enjoyed this volunteer role and was even advised by a student to be a counsellor. I take that as a massive compliment and although I may be going down some unknown and winding roads I am heading in the right direction. I have been doing this particular role for about 10 months and it has also lead to me co-facilitating if one of the tutors can’t attend. I have also recently co-produced and co-facilitated a course which a few years ago I never thought I would do – again, I have to thank the facilitators of the Train 4 Trainers courses for that and to Anna for believing in me.

So for anyone out there reading this and thinking of embarking on their own journey and worried or anxious about where it’s going to go or feeling “I can’t do this”, believe me it’s a journey of self-discovery worth going on and you can do it – I still am!

*Roisin Donnelly, Learner Support,  
SEHSCT Recovery College*

## Voice of hope: a singing group that helped me be me

**I have always loved music. It has been something that has been a major part of my life since I was 9 months old and dancing to ‘Queen of the night’ by Whitney Houston. I have always loved a wide range of songs, artists and genres. I have attended many concerts throughout the years and don’t even get me started on my love for musical theatre.**

Music has been with me when I have been at my lowest, when I couldn’t find the words to express the sorrow and pain I felt I found it through music. Equally

it has been there when life has been the best. Whether I’m dancing to ‘Proud Mary’, belting out ‘Defying gravity’ or trying to rap as fast as Eminem, music is a major part of my life. So you can imagine that I would love to be able to sing Christine Daae’s high notes in ‘Phantom of the opera’ (which I cannot).

I have always loved singing. I had a karaoke machine growing up and always auditioned for every school play to get a starring role. Unfortunately I was always a star in

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the background (literally a star) with a couple of lines to show my participation in the play. At secondary school I was part of the choir just for the chance to sing and as part of a group no one could hear if I was good or bad.



I knew I wasn't the best singer but I thought I could hold a note or two. As I grew up I still did the karaoke at parties, I still sang my heart out alone in the car while forgetting I was parked at the traffic lights but I settled with the fact no one really wanted to hear me sing.

Then in September 2017 the Mental Health Recovery Network advertised that they would be having a singing group on a Monday morning with the focus on singing for health, everyone welcome. I thought I would give it a go: once again I can blend into the background but sing songs I enjoy. Everyone who attended had their own experience of living with their mental health like me and I was surprised to hear how many other people who had been told throughout their life that they couldn't sing. Shelia, who is the musician and coordinates the singing, said that this was a common comment that many people who attend her groups have been unwantedly told at some point in their life. What Shelia said next put things into perspective for me: "everyone can sing, some people are just more pleasant for the ear to listen to but everyone can sing."

A few weeks into the group Shelia asked me to come up beside her and give an Adele song a go. I thought to myself "Adele? What? Yes I love Adele but have you heard her singing? There is no way I am going to be able to hold this tune". However, the singer in me who had been itching to get out to sing a solo overtook with "if you don't try it you won't know if you can do it or not!" So I decided to try it.

The song was 'Someone like you' one of my favourites by Adele and when I took that mic and I started to sing, I closed my eyes and felt the passion I had for music and my love for the song I was singing. I gave it everything

I had. I felt the tingles through my own body, the same ones I get when I go to London to see my favourite show Wicked. I belted my heart out; it was the most amazing emotional, uplifting experience. I felt recovery through my whole body as my smile beamed from cheek to cheek as I thought to myself "I just rocked an Adele song!"

What I love about attending the singing group was that there was no pressure to sing solo but the opportunity was there. We do covers of songs from artists such as Simon and Garfunkel, Adele, Johnny Cash, Elvis along with many others and self-composed songs from Shelia.

The popularity of the group started to grow with 15 or so coming back each week to sing our hearts out. It was amazing to see the confidence grow with individuals and special recovery moments taking place. There have been tears, joy, sorrow and laughter. Friendships have blossomed and everyone in the group has become a support to each other. It's a safe space where people can share their feelings and not feel judged.

We had our first performance at the La Mon Hotel at a Recovery Celebration for the Recovery College. It was an emotional, uplifting night with family, friends and supporters of the singing group present.

The singing group has had such an amazing influence on my recovery. I am no longer scared to be heard singing as the joy I feel from singing outweighs the fear of others not liking my voice. This is a message I now try to remember myself in all aspects of my life and throughout my recovery: to not be afraid, to just be myself. I'd like to finish with a verse from a song that means a lot to me from The Greatest Showman: "Look out cause here I come and I'm marching on to the beat I drum. I am brave, I am bruised, I am who I'm meant to be. This is me."

I would like to say special thank you to Eileen Shevlin and the Mental Health Recovery Network, who organised the singing group and also Shelia Smyth who leads the singing group.

**Angela O'Hara,**  
**Recovery College Tutor and singing enthusiast,**  
**SEHSCT Recovery College**

# Patient and Client Council – excellence in co-production award

In March 2018 the applications for the Patient and Client Council Awards were advertised. One award category that stood out was that of the Excellence in co-production award. As a college, we felt this was an area we work hard at achieving excellence within, on a daily basis. We aim to value all individuals who are involved with us and recognise the importance of everyone's contributions. We focus on recognising people's capabilities, as opposed to focusing on some of the challenges they may experience.

When we looked at co-production for ourselves specifically, we identified that all 32 courses we deliver have been co-produced by peers, professionals, carers and partner agencies. We also review these courses each semester by taking into account all feedback from students who have attended. We hold the belief that genuine equal partnership with all involved in the college from the onset of any of our work/courses is essential. With this in mind, we knew we had to nominate the Northern Region Recovery College for this award.



We were delighted to receive an invite to the awards ceremony in April, advising that we had been shortlisted for this Award. Colleagues and volunteers from the college headed off to the Crumlin Road Gaol, for what proved to be a very exciting afternoon. We were absolutely delighted to receive the runner up award for Excellence in co-production, against some very stiff competition.

This award is a true reflection and recognition of all the hard work, support and commitment shown by everyone who is involved with the Northern Region Recovery College. May I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all volunteers, staff, carers and our partner agencies, without you all this work would not be possible. I look forward to working with you all in the new college semester 2018/19, and further developing the Recovery College in the NHSCT.

**Margarette O'Donnell, Volunteer Peer Trainer.**

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***

# 5 Ways to Wellbeing course

As we come to the close of another successful college year, we reflect on all courses and sessions delivered over the past year in the Northern Trust. One of our most popular courses was that of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, a new course for the 2017/18 prospectus.

This course was very much developed to highlight the Take 5 campaign by the Public Health Agency, which looked at five different concepts, produced from a large research study. This research showed that if people introduced these concepts into their daily lives, they could experience an improvement in their overall mental health and wellbeing. As a Recovery College, we wanted to educate and support people in developing the skills that promote mental health and wellbeing and build resilience to cope with those times that are more challenging for us.

For this Recovery College course, it helped to think about “being well” as something we do rather than something we are. The course gave students a brief background to the Take 5 campaign and then looked at each of the five concepts: connect, learn, active, take notice and give. For each concept, we developed as a

group, simple and practical ways we could integrate these into our everyday routines.

Our final session was a practical session in which we made gifts for our fellow students to demonstrate the impact of giving. Feedback for this new course was extremely positive, with students reporting that “fun and enjoyment” along with the “thought-provoking” discussions all lead to a very successful course.

The success of this course was further highlighted when we were asked to deliver the course to senior managers within the trust, at a recent Divisional Directorate Day, recognising the need for all to look after our mental health and wellbeing. We look forward to further developing the 5 Ways to Wellbeing course for the new semester 2018/19, and have no doubt this will remain a popular favourite among students.



## WHSCT and MAGNI wellness camp

**Our Recovery College was privileged to participate in a Wellness Camp for people with longer term mental ill-health, which was a joint initiative between the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) and Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland (MAGNI). Held in the unique and fascinating surroundings of the Ulster American Folk Park situated just outside Omagh, the seven month project which began in October 2017 was a true example of collaborative working, and the team included professionals from the Strabane and Omagh Community Mental Health Teams and Ulster American Folk Park (MAGNI), and staff and peer trainers from the Recovery College.**

The aim of the project was to enable and empower people with the lived experience of mental ill-health to become more engaged with each other, with the various range of services available to them, and with their wider communities under the auspices of the 'Five steps to wellbeing' programme. We were happy to get involved as we want as many people as possible to benefit from what our college offers – the sharing of knowledge from perspectives of those with the learned and lived experience of mental ill-health, with a focus on inspiring people to have the hope that they can make a meaningful recovery; empowering them to take control over the direction their lives take; and giving them the

skills and confidence to see, and reach for the myriad of opportunities for fulfilment that exist.

The Five steps to wellbeing are evidence-based steps we can all take to improve our mental health and wellbeing: learn, connect, give, take notice, and be active. We took walks around the grounds taking notice as the seasons changed through the months, learning about life in years gone by as we visited the various period houses and dwellings, and tried our hands at traditional crafts such as quilting, wreath-making and blacksmithing. It was an honour for me as someone with lived experience myself, to see the progress that the participants made, how genuine friendships flourished, how everyone staff and service user alike, supported and encouraged each other to try new activities, and laughed and learned together.

We make a real effort to get to know our students at the college, so it was lovely to be able to spend so much time with everyone at the camp, and even see some of them enrol as students with us, outside of the camp itself – a real sign of progress, and a big, brave step in the right direction. Here's to more opportunities for people to move forward on their recovery journeys and for the WHSCT Recovery College to continue to play its part.

*Bernadette Donaghy, WHSCT Recovery College*



WHSCT wellness celebration

# A Specialist Doctor's Recovery College experience in WHSCT

I am a Specialist Doctor in Psychiatry and work with the Fermanagh Recovery Team. I became involved with the Fermanagh Recovery College as a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Facilitator.

I was initially asked to present an introduction to WRAP as part of the first Fermanagh Recovery College term. Much to my relief, this wasn't to be a solo venture and I was paired with a service user. The first time we met was the morning of the presentation and as the day came closer some doubts crept in: What if we didn't get on? What if nobody turns up? These worries quickly disappeared when I first met Bernadette, she was friendly, warm and reassuringly a bit apprehensive like me. Since this we have held a two-day WRAP course each Spring and Autumn College term. Getting to know Bernadette has been a pleasure and I consider her a trusted friend and colleague.

For me, the Recovery College has been a positive and rewarding experience. Our course is attended by those who want to get the most out of life and maximise their wellness, so are a motivated, receptive group. The learning is a two-way process and I take home something from each session that helps my own

wellness. We certainly don't claim to be experts in our area but our double act seems to work and we aim to keep it informal and relaxed with plenty of opportunity for queries, coffee breaks and craic.

Facilitating in the Recovery College has provided more variety in my working life and also helps in my management of clients in outpatient clinics. I frequently use WRAP and the Recovery College as a focus for discussion during appointments, which I hope helps clients feel in control and involved in their care.

I feel enthusiastic about the future of the Recovery College and its potential to expand and grow. I'm keen to continue on the Recovery College journey and would encourage anyone considering this to step out of your comfort zone and give it a go!

***Rowena Deering, Specialist Doctor in Psychiatry,  
WHSCT***

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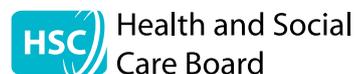
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