



Newsletter
Spring
2012

Recovery Devon Welcomes You!

Recovery Devon Newsletter Re-launch

Events:

Next Open Meeting

Tuesday, 22nd May 2012

Venue –Mayoralty Room
Tiverton Town hall

Time 1.30-4.00pm

Everyone is welcome

We can offer travel ex-
penses within Devon to
those who are unwaged.

This is an exciting year!
There is a drive for more
person-centred provision
and exploring valued
approaches to Recovery.

Recovery Devon has an
important opportunity to
work with you to focus
on service improvement,
hope, and to amplify our
collective voice.

Thank you to all who have
made this possible with

your enthusiasm, commit-
ment and belief in
Recovery. We aim for bet-
ter futures for those with
mental health difficulties.

This is our first newsletter
for three years. We have
been funded by Devon
Partnership Trust via Re-
think Mental Illness with an
expectation that we can
become self funding in the
future.

We aim shortly to become
a Community Interest

Company committed to the
work and practice that can
make recovering a meaningful
life truly possible.

We welcome your interest.



Supporting Devon

How do You Keep Yourself well?

Some wellness tools:

- Stepping outside
- Appreciating the moment
- this moment Now.
- Eating well
- Being kind to ourselves
and others
- Making helpful changes
- Friends and family

Please do let us know
some of your own.

In Recovery Devon we
believe that Recovery
practice needs ongoing
exploration and research
to progress.

Recovery perspectives
and approaches grow
out of a commitment to
hope, and compassion-
ate and purposeful living
for each individual and
group.

Personal Recovery

Because Recovery is a
personal and unique
process, everyone has his
or her own definition.

Along with Bill Anthony
we define Recovery as:
*“a deeply personal,
unique process of chang-
ing one’s attitudes,*

What is Recovery?

*values, feelings, goals,
skills and roles.*

*It’s a way of living a
satisfying, hopeful and
contributing life, even
with the limitations
caused by illness.*

*Recovery involves
developing new meaning
and purpose in life as one
grows beyond the catas-
trophic effects of mental
illness”.*

Changing Attitudes

Laurie Davidson, previous
lead for Recovery Devon
said this :-

*“ Seeing the world
through recovery glasses
challenges the way staff*

*are trained and treated.
Supervision, work man-
agement, outcome
measurement, job plan-
ning, recruitment, train-
ing strategies, policies
and procedures, support
services, governance
and incident manage-
ment; all have to be re-
visited in the light of
recovery values.”*

Long may we all wear
our Recovery Glasses!

Website

www.recoverydevon.co.uk

Facebook

www.facebook.com/recoverydevon

Twitter

[https://twitter.com/Recovery Devon](https://twitter.com/RecoveryDevon)

“Act as if what you do
makes a difference.
It does.”

William James

Working Together for Recovery

Who We Are

We are a community of people who support Recovery, people with lived experience of Mental Health issues and people providing services, as well as family, friends and others.

We are connected by a wide email list and have a history of holding workshops and meetings around key issues.

Steering Group

Recovery Devon has an active Steering Group helping us towards our

goals. We aim for equal numbers of experts by experience and experts by training, and representation from as many local areas of Devon as possible.

We have well attended meetings and value your support through these and through email contact and other links. Recovery Devon is only as strong as its wider membership. You can help us stimulate debate and carry forward the aspirations and goals for

mental health and wellbeing. We believe that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

Local Activities

We realize that if we are to be in touch with activities across Devon, we need links with individuals and groups throughout the region. We hold our meetings at alternate venues either in Exeter or in different venues around the County.

Other Activities

ImROC (Implementing Recovery Organisational Change) is working with staff and people who receive services to develop ideas around safety planning, valuing personal narratives and developing a Recovery Learning Community. We have also seen the benefit of D-RRIG bringing together many people in research projects to improve provision.

Recovery Devon Meetings - Partnership in Action

Recent Meeting Topics *Arts on Prescription.*

David Baker in North Devon has worked with a group of people who have developed their creative skills and their wellbeing through this innovative and valuable project. This was evaluated and demonstrated a positive impact.

The Reader Organisation

Emily Lezzeri talked on a project begun in Liverpool around groups reading together with discussion of the lives of book characters and also shared poems to discover or rediscover their own individual wellbeing. (emilylezzeri@thereader.org.uk)

Living with Psychosis

A project by Elina Baker with James Wooldridge has offered those experiencing psychosis a chance to meet and learn together
Suicide Prevention Research. Gareth Owen of Exeter University is seeking help from families with this project. gjowen@pms.ac.uk

Next Meeting Topics

Time to Change

James Wooldridge our local representative for this campaign will update us.

Overcoming Depression

Stephanie, Jo and Alan will tell us about the moods disorders activities developed at Exeter University and their personal stories booklet.

Getting in Touch

Our Steering Group members are: Linden Lynn (Co-ordinator), Russ Drayton, Caroline Nicholson, Chukes Maxwell, Darren Bleek, Elaine Hewis, Elina Baker and Geof Lynn, with Glenn Roberts and Dan Towse as Advisers.

If you would like to get more involved, please contact a steering group member or send a message to our email address recoverydevon@gmail.com or leave a message on 07779 729525. We look forward to hearing from you!

Recovery Devon—Exeter CVS, Wat Tyler House, Exeter, Devon EX4 6PD

“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.” Michelangelo

Sharing Stories of Personal Recovery

Stories of Hope

We believe strongly in the value of sharing personal stories of recovery. People's lives are governed by making meaning of events. When things go wrong, it can leave us feeling powerless and alone. Doctors often see people when they are very

unwell and part of their role is to view each person through a diagnostic lens. We can build up a picture of our life - as a 'single story'.

But we are all more than any illness. This single story is not our only story. It is a partial view and often echoes with loss. This can keep

us 'stuck' in a static story. In order to move forward, we and those alongside us, need a fuller view that leads us to identify our own strengths and routes to recovery. So that with the right help and helpful choices we can move on. If you would like to share your own story then please go to our website.



In the Creative Café you will find advice from Julie Leibrich, Editor of a 'Gift of Stories', as well as Recovery Devon's guide, on sharing your story. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Recovery Devon - An Interview with a Peer Support Worker

'Why I Do What I Do - Sitting In The Other Chair' - Zoe shares her experiences.

"Zoe works in a Peer Supporter Role for Rethink Mental Illness and shares her lived experience to help others"

Q) How did you become a Peer Support Worker?

A) Having been bullied at work around my mental health in the past, I couldn't quite believe that this advert was aimed at people with lived experience - people like me. And that the lived experience was a good thing - that was refreshing, and all the encouragement I needed. My motivation went from a low simmer to a fast boil as I set about applying. Selling myself was difficult as I've never been a confident person, let alone having recently emerged from the dark depths of my own mind. However, my passion was stronger than my nerves and with the help of a friend I was able to apply.

Q) How did you feel when you started this new work?

A) I was nervous about starting - I had degree level qualifications, but not directly in this field - what did I know? Wasn't it hypocritical to move from the couch to the chair? My mind was put at ease straight away through meeting another new peer supporter, the support from colleagues, and training opportunities. Soon I started trusting myself and realised how useful my personal experience was. I wondered what difference telling people I support that I had my own lived experience would make, but it does. It can help people relax, help them see that recovery and change are possible, and open the lid from the taboo to ask questions. It can enhance the relationship as the support is coming from a vulnerable and honest place. Sitting in the other chair, at first, was strange. During my own appointments, I felt infe-

rior, as though there was a higher person sat across from me with designated wisdom to impart. Changing this dynamic in the way I work was important to me - I have experience, and so I do know 'what it's like.' I've been 'there.' But everybody's 'there' is different. It's not *the* other chair, it's *another* chair. I have empathy, which I now realise is very different to sympathy and has a different impact. I don't pretend to have answers, but I have many skills I've acquired over the years, and I'm keen to share my tool box. And I can promise that there are no judgments lurking in there.

Q) What have you gained personally?

A) Being able to use my own experience gives a purpose to the pain I went through. It allows me to

share my passion with others and to make changes; some of the ways I was treated were stifling and unacceptable. At the time I was unable to stand up to this, so it gives me the opportunity to make a difference to others in ways inaccessible to me back then. It has made me proud of my lived experience and reminds me how far I've come. It is challenging sometimes to find a way to help someone, heartening to see people improve, it keeps my skills alive, restores my faith in humanity and is a constant reminder that life is ever changing and recovery is a journey we are all on in one way or another. People's stories are humbling and I always feel privileged to be the listener. *Recovery Devon wishes to thank Zoe for sharing this Recovery Story.*

"It is our choices ... that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities".

— J.K. Rowling (*Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets*)

Recovery Inspiration

We all have lessons to learn in life, but often we make the same mistakes over and over, until the lesson is learned. This short poem eloquently sums that up.

“Autobiography in Five Chapters”
by Portia Nelson:

1) I walk down the street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost - I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

2) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.
I can't believe I'm in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

3) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in — it's a habit
My eyes are open
I know where I am
It is MY fault.
I get out immediately.

4) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

5) I walk down a DIFFERENT street.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIEJcLCRjY> for a video



Recovery Devon Website

In the Creative Café on our website we are encouraging people to share ideas and images that inspire. Please feel able to contribute!

Recovery Devon - Share Photos, Paintings, Poems and Pictures



Recovery begins with Hope!

Visit our online links

Recovery Devon has a Twitter and a Facebook page where we share more frequent items that may be of interest.

Google for Twitter or Facebook and then search for Recovery Devon

We very much value you taking the time to check out these links.

We hope that you will find something in this newsletter to give you encouragement whether you work in Mental Health Services or receive such services or indeed, do both or neither.

Our aim is to share ideas, information and creativity in a companionable way.

We plan to issue quarterly /seasonal newsletters and will be pleased to receive contributions. As we build a stronger voice for Mental Health and Wellbeing we hope to hear from you.