

Recovery College Newsletter



BEING - BELONGING - BECOMING



WELCOME

to the first edition of the Recovery College Newsletter. We are thrilled to announce upcoming events to help make recommendations as part of a funding application at both local and national level to set up Anuerin Bevan University Health Board first Recovery College.

A huge thank you to the 35 people in the Gwent area who attended our first online workshops in January which included carers, experts through practice, experts through experience, family members and people who have living experience of mental health challenges and life interrupting events. Your time and stories were invaluable. We could not do this without you all at the heart of this.

WHAT IS A RECOVERY COLLEGE?

A Recovery College provides free educational courses on a range of mental health, physical health and wellbeing topics for any student, including staff, people with lived experience, carers or members of the public. The courses are co-produced and delivered in partnership.

What is happening right now...

HOW ELSE CAN I GET INVOLVED?

In the spirit of co-production, there are many events running between February and April to help inform recommendations for a future recovery college in Gwent using a community and strength based approach.



[Survey for a Recovery College in Gwent, Wales \(Aneurin Bevan University Health Board\)](#)

[Bannau Brycheiniog National Park \(Brecon Beacons\) - Google Maps](#)



WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE NEXT WORKSHOPS?

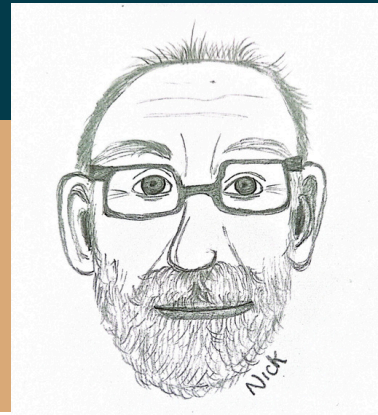
- 17th April Pilot Recovery College Course at Nant Bran Wellbeing Centre 10am - 1pm
- 23rd April on Microsoft Teams 10am - 1pm
- 24th April at Nant Bran Wellbeing Centre 10am - 1pm

To Book a Space please contact:

ABB.RECOVERYCOLLEGEMODELPROJECT@WALES.NHS.UK

TIME CREDIT SCHEME AVAILABLE

CONTRIBUTOR



WHO IS HELPING WHO? Getting to the heart of co-production in MH Recovery Colleges by Nick Andrews, Research and Practice Development Officer, Developing Evidenced Enriched Practice (DEEP) Programme, Swansea University

Co-production is a rather impersonal word, for a deeply personal and relational activity. Over the past few decades, the relational and responsive aspects of care and support have been undermined by an excessive reliance on 'perform or perish' bureaucratic processes. Co-production calls for a different way of working, which is often alien to the world of emotionally detached and compliance focussed task-based care or classroom-based teaching.

A co-production approach to using evidence in learning and development requires an inclusive approach to valuing and engaging with diverse types of knowledge; from research, practice and lived experience. Within this environment, participants care for and learn from one other.

This collective approach to learning and development has been applied in the transformative work of the Cardiff and Vale Mental Health Recovery College. Reciprocity between practitioners and people with lived experience has been central in recognising and supporting interdependent well-being and collective learning.

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At the heart of co-production, is an understanding that everyone has something to contribute and that the mutual exchange of these contributions is enriching for everyone concerned. Greg Boyle who works with gang members experiencing mental health challenges in Los Angeles, sums this up beautifully:

'You talk about the margins, the poor, the powerless, the demonised, the voiceless, the easily despised, the readily left-out - all those people who are at the margins, and you go to the margins, not to make a difference. You go to the margins, so that the folks there can make you different. If you go to the margins to make a difference, then it's about you and it can't be about you. But when you go to the margins to be made different, then it becomes about 'us'. There is something that happens in this. This is how people don't burn out. They go to the margins and they delight in the people they find there'

I am so pleased to see the MH Recovery model being expanded across Wales with relational and responsive co-production at its heart.

RECOVERY COLLEGE PEER LEAD

LOUIS DAVIES

Louis has living experience of complex mental health, substance misuse and living with a disability. As an adult, he has engaged with both mental health and third sector services due to the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Louis's professional background includes working in Health, Emergency services, private care and the third sector. Areas include mental health, substance misuse, trauma and the criminal justice system. His involvement working within the criminal justice system and Health as an ISVA (Independent sexual violence advocate) saw him work with survivors. Specialising in working with male survivors and people with specific needs, Louis initially started off as the first paediatric advocacy support worker in Cardiff and Vale UHB and FGM clinic in 2019.

