



NORTHERN RECOVERY NEWS

ISSUE 3 | AUTUMN 2018

Welcome to the Autumn 2018 edition of ***Northern Recovery News***.

We are delighted with the response we have had from readers to our first two editions and hope that you like what you find in the pages that follow. We are particularly pleased with the number of new contributors this time around and would encourage all our readers to consider putting pen to paper for future editions.

If you are viewing this edition online, please do 'share' the publication with your contacts network and ask them to do likewise. This will really help us to broaden our reach into local communities and ensure that awareness is further raised of the fantastic recovery journeys being undertaken in mental health services within the Northern Trust.

In this edition we have adopted a ***"Self-Care"*** theme. Good self-care is central to everyone's recovery journey and in the pages that follow you will find many personal versions of what that term means. The key point about self-care is that it brings together for an individual those things that are within their control to help them tackle situations that seemingly are not. While good self-care is unique to every person, there are a number of common themes that emerge. Routine, a healthy diet, fresh air, exercise, staying connected, continuous learning, a good sleep pattern, celebrating achievements (no matter how small) and finding fun and joy in everyday living are just some of the things that contribute to looking after yourself. Above all else it is vital that those of us who have an "off day" can remind ourselves that "this too will pass". "I have walked this way before and I am here to tell the story". Good self-care builds and nurtures resilience so even when things seem tough, hopeless, never-ending the good news is that we all have an inner ability to draw on our strengths, pick ourselves up and carry on. Simple little steps can and do make all the difference. And not being harsh or impatient with yourself is the place to start.

Thinking about "self" conjures up so many facets of what makes us tick as human beings. Our negative self wrestles with feelings of pity, doubt, stigma, harm and low self-confidence/self-esteem. But look at what we can do with a healthy dose of self-awareness and self-compassion. Getting good self-care on track is the place to start. The impact of this on your self-esteem, self-respect, self-belief and self-determination will surprise you. And once learned, the value of good self-care will never be forgotten.

Rosemary Hawthorne (Recovery Facilitator)

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SELFIE#

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Recovery College

Our Growing Recovery Community

What a year of growth it's been at the Recovery College! With more free Courses/Workshops and venues to choose from than ever before, student numbers continue to climb year on year.

Looking at the figures for 2017/18 we ...

- had 32 workshops on offer
- delivered 172 individual courses
- used 29 venues
- welcomed 1300 students



RECOVERY COLLEGE

We are particularly pleased that our mix of students continues to include not just service users but increasing numbers of carers, staff members and interested members of the general public. Our workshops have something to offer everyone with an interest in Wellbeing Recovery.

Overwhelmingly our students report positive personal outcomes from attending and indicate that they would recommend our events to others.

People join our events from all walks of life, all age groups from 16+ and from all corners of the vast geographical area that makes up the Trust.

For 2018/19 our new prospectus has a number of new courses on offer as well as fully updated versions of many of our most popular events.

Hundreds have already applied so if you would like to secure a place on any of our courses or request a personal copy of our 2018/19 prospectus just contact the College using any of the methods shown on the back cover of the Newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you at some of our events this year and to welcoming you to our growing recovery community.



Readers' Questions

From time to time we receive questions and letters from our readers at the Recovery College. We have assembled some of our most frequently asked questions below. If you have any questions or would like to write to us about anything, please email us at recovery.newsletter@northerntrust.hscni.net

Q. My daughter suffers from anxiety. I believe she would benefit from some Recovery College courses, however, she gets anxious at the thought of a classroom environment. Can you help?

A. Recovery College classes offer a more relaxed environment than a traditional classroom setting. This year we have introduced a 'buddy' system. Trained volunteers are available to meet your daughter for a pre-course coffee/chat. Meeting with your daughter a 'buddy' would provide a familiar face and support for your daughter, and that 'buddy' would also be available to meet your daughter at the venue on the day of the course.

Q. I'm a carer for my son who lives with Psychosis. If he registers for a Recovery College course can I attend with him as his carer?

A. Yes! Recovery College courses are free for anyone aged 16 or over. Carers, family members and friends can attend by enrolling through the same processes if they note they are attending as a carer for another person.

Q. I have attended Recovery College courses in the past and would like to volunteer with them. How do I register to volunteer?

A. We are currently looking for volunteers to 'buddy' other students. If you think this is the opportunity for you, contact Rosemary Hawthorne at the Recovery College: 02894 413449 or rosemary.hawthorne@northerntrust.hscni.net for further information on how to apply.

Q. I saw a poster in my doctor's surgery advertising the Recovery College. Can I have more information on where and when the courses are held please?

A. Recovery College courses are held in community venues across The Northern Health and Social Care Trust area. The areas we cover are: Antrim/Ballymena, Magherafelt/Cookstown, Ballymoney/Coleraine and Larne/Carrick/Newtownabbey. Our prospectus has the full details of the venue for each course. If you would like a personal copy of the prospectus, please contact the college on 02894 413449.

Q. I have signed up for a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) course, can you tell me what to expect on the day?

A. The Recovery College's aim is to make all our courses friendly, informative, informal and enjoyable. Our WRAP workshops are designed with a strong emphasis on shared learning and having some fun. Two trained tutors co-facilitate each class. One tutor is a lived experience expert, who will share their own recovery journey as part of each course, the other is a health professional working in their particular field of expertise. Together we will guide students through WRAP®, encouraging them onwards and upwards on their recovery journey.

Volunteering

If you would like to volunteer within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, please contact the Volunteer Co-Ordinator on 02894 413449 to discuss what volunteer opportunities are available in your area, more information and to obtain an application form. Alternatively, you can contact the Volunteer Co-Ordinator and administration team by emailing volunteer.service@northerntrust.hscni.net

WHAT 5 WAYS MEANS TO ME?

Each and every one of us faces challenges in life. What these challenges look and feel like will be unique to us all. The '5 Ways of Wellbeing' offers the opportunity to consciously apply small, simple actions into our daily lives, helps build our resilience and improves our wellbeing.

The beauty of the '5 Ways of Wellbeing' is, that these actions are applicable and beneficial to people from all walks of life. Some of us may be good at connecting, whilst others may be better at being active. It is important to recognise what action we are good at and what we may need to work at. I would like to share with you all how making such changes has benefited me.

I love **connecting** and meeting new people. Through the Recovery College I have made lifelong friends who support me - and add flavour to my life. I also took the opportunity to give something back by volunteering. This has been a really positive experience, which has enabled me to form new connections, and build my self-confidence.

For me personally, I am keen to grow as a person, develop skills and further my knowledge about mental health. **Learning** new things gives me a sense of achievement, purposefulness, and improves my self-worth. Learning to cook a new recipe or rediscovering an old interest are simple ways to develop personally.

Being active doesn't have to mean joining the gym. Activity can be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the lift. Recently, I started running with the dog. I find that after a burst of exercise, my mood is heightened, and self-esteem boosted. If you can spare even 10 mins for a walk I'd encourage you to do so, you can reap the benefits too.

Many of us lead busy lives, therefore it is imperative we pause, savour the moment, and reflect on experiences. **Taking notice** broadens our self-awareness and promotes positive behavioural changes. Sand squelching between my toes, waves crashing, children laughing - some of the things I like to appreciate and reflect on when I visit the beach.

Giving is much more than sharing material things, e.g. give a compliment or volunteer. Expressing gratitude through giving boosts your positivity, reinforces your kindness and strengthens bonds.

These are five simple steps to help maintain and improve my wellbeing. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your 'five a day' for wellbeing – and watch your life improve.

Sarah Armstrong

Sessional Trainer



If Sarah's story inspired you to want to:

- **Connect**
- **Keep Learn**
- **Be Active**
- **Give**
- **Take Notice**

Then why come along to one of the courses ran by the Recovery College. Here we cover all 5 topics over 2 weeks. Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.

The courses we have available are:

- 6 & 13 November 2018, 10 – 12.30 pm
All Saints Parish Centre
- 16 & 23 January 2019, 1.30 – 4 pm,
Meadowbank Sports Arena
- 30 April & 7 May 2019, 1.30 – 4 pm,
Oakfield Community Centre

If you would like to attend any of these courses please register with the Recovery College.

Building Resilience

“Everybody has resilience – it’s just a question of how much and how well you put it to good use in your life.” *Harold Cohen PHD*

Everyone can learn to build upon their resilience. There are different ways to do this such as; making supportive relationships as these can provide support when things get tough; having a positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities; being able to make plans and regularly carry out these plans; being able to manage your feelings and impulses; having good communication skills; develop good problem-solving skills.

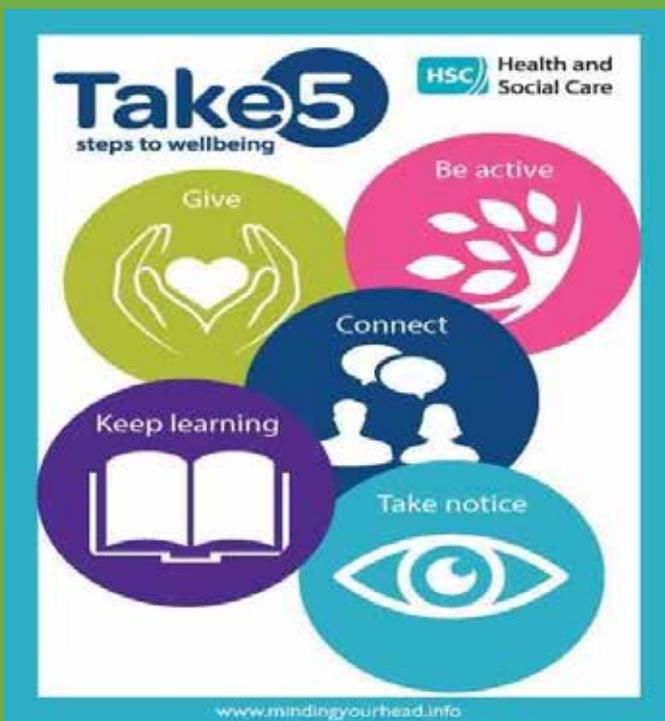
Self-care is really important when thinking about resilience. “The most powerful relationship you will ever have is the relationship with yourself.”
Diane Von Furstenberg

Self-care is the actions that individuals take for themselves in order to develop, protect, maintain and improve their health, wellbeing or wellness. Examples of self-care are **Sensory:** When you feel stressed try focusing on things around you – smells, sounds, taste and touch; breathe in fresh air; get a massage; cuddle with a pet or listen to music. **Pleasure:** A great way to take care of yourself is to do a pleasurable activity – take yourself out to eat; watch a movie; catch up with friends; walk your dogs. **Mental:** Try a new activity; go to a new place; make a list; read; do a word search. **Emotional:** Accept your feelings; cry when you need to; laugh when you can; learn to love yourself. **Physical:** Engage your body; try yoga; go for a walk/run; dance; take a nap. **Social:** Connecting with others is an important part of self-care. Go on a lunch date with a good friend; talk to a friend on the phone; Join a support group. It can also mean remembering that others go through similar experiences and difficulties as we do. We're not alone.

“Self-care means giving yourself the permission to pause.” *Cecilia Tran*

You can learn more about how to build resilience at our “Building Resilience” course at the Recovery College. More information can be found on page 40 of the Recovery College prospectus.

Marbeth Kirker and Audrey Montgomery



The Northern Region Recovery

I have been working for the Recovery College since April 2016. From this time, I have seen the college go from strength to strength, from having only 300 registrations when I began to now over 1,200! I have had the privilege of watching the college grow in numbers, increase in workshops offered and watch our team steadily increase, it only seemed natural that our next venture would be to begin hosting graduations and introduced this to our 2017/18 prospectus.

It was a relaxed day and great to see everyone together interacting on a level that you may not get to when attending the workshops.

This was a very successful first graduation for the Recovery College, and I look forward to our second one in the summer of 2019 and seeing new faces.

Stephanie Minford
Project Lead

When planning we tried to keep the location as central as possible since our Trust has the biggest geographical area out of them all. We went for the Adair arms and then let the planning commence. We were fortunate to work with Learning Works who helped with the production of the day. We knew we wanted to offer more than a simple 'awards ceremony' so decided on having something fun to do which resulted in the 'make and take' activity. This proved to be very successful and entertaining for all those involved (myself included). We also offered everyone to have the chance to have a professional photograph taken in real graduation gowns, which as a big hit!

After the photographs, activities, and lunch the awards ceremony commenced. We had members of our team talk about their own experiences and how the Recovery College has helped them progress in life, to one of our students who read a personal letter [opposite page] she addressed to Rosemary, talking about how the College has helped. To hear first-hand how the College has had such a huge and positive impact on people's lives is amazing and I am so proud to work for the team that is achieving this. Although this was a graduation for students, we extended this to our facilitators who undergo training to delivery these workshops and for every facilitator.



College Graduation 2018



Dear Rosemary/Recovery College

I have attended many recovery college courses - some of which I have attended twice - such as, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), living with and understanding bipolar, living with and understanding schizophrenia/psychosis, mindfulness, stress control and many others.

Having benefitted from attending these courses, I thought I would write and tell you some of the benefits I have received. I have a much better understanding and knowledge of each topic, through which, I discovered techniques to help manage my illness and all the symptoms which come with it. I have gained confidence and improved my self-esteem, now I feel empowered and more in control of managing my illness. I feel at ease with like-minded people on these courses, who understand and relate to what I am experiencing.

I have made good friends at these courses and we meet up and socialise together. I attend monthly WRAP support groups where we reinforce WRAP and support each other. I have gathered resources to reflect on, should my mood be low, and also daily affirmations to read from WRAP support peers. I really enjoy the courses and always learn from them - while also enjoying fun. The recovery college has been a lifeline to me and a tremendous support in difficult times.

I highly recommend these courses to anyone.

Heather Armstrong

Gerard's Recovery Journey

My life had become unworthy of living, or so I thought. I felt doomed, isolated, with lasting feelings of unhappiness and hopelessness. I became frustrated and tearful.

Unknown to me, I was in a mental health crisis. I felt great emotional distress and anxiety, couldn't cope with day-to-day life, and thought about suicide or self-harm daily.

My family were suffering from my behaviour. My irritability set off conflicts and derailed my family dynamics. My major responsibilities got displaced and bred feelings of rejection.

I discovered recovery through the *Northern Region Recovery College*. The college believed in me - a person with *lived experience* of mental health issues - having the ability to live a satisfying life through my own route to recovery.

With the Recovery College's *Discovering Everyday Mindfulness* workshop, I learnt how to tune into my senses and discover when I was tense or happy. Through support I became able to make more informed choices and decisions about how I lived my life. The workshop gave me more practical ideas on how I could "*listen to myself*" more effectively, this impacted positively on my everyday life and helped me make more decisions that were right for my *Self-Care*.

In the Recovery College's *Choose to Lose* class I came to realise the importance of building a self-care routine, one that cares for my physical health in addition to my mental. I was educated on how to take small steps within everyday life, achieving a balanced diet and increasing levels of physical activity.

Through the Recovery College's *Creative Writing* class I was able to self-reflect in a supportive and non-judgemental environment, allowing me to understand and tell my own recovery story – which you're now reading.

Moving forward with the Recovery College emphasised that, I may not have full control over my symptoms, but I could have full control over my life. I was able to recognise my abilities, interests and dreams. My *Self-Care* road to recovery is not a set route, as there are no set rules for recovery. My journey is individual to me and uniquely personal. I no longer have to

withdraw from a sense of loss and hopelessness. I am aware and realise that all is not lost, a fulfilling life is possible. I recognise my strengths and weaknesses within my *Self-Care* recovery and continue to develop



and work on Self-Care skills. I continue to work towards a positive identity by setting goals and taking control of my life. Living a meaningful life by self-management of my illness and positivity enables me to grow.

Hope was central to my recovery, as without hope I could not recover – The Recovery College gave me that hope.

Gerard Quinn



#SELFIE!

We all have our own approach to self-care and our own understanding of what that little phrase means. While preparing my WRAP plan some years ago I stumbled on a way to help me remember the key things I needed to do every day to help me stay well. All of these things are within my control and, while I may not manage to do all of them every day, doing most of them really helps me to stay on track.

I call these my '7 Fs' and a copy is always stuck to my fridge door for easy reference. These days I hardly have to refer to it. I'm doing it rather than reading about it!! So what are these Fs and how do they help me with my self-care on a daily basis?

FOG – Sometimes it can be difficult to shift that fog which descends first thing in the morning. It's oh so easy to pull the duvet over your head and keep the alarm on repeat! FOG is all about having a routine in place that gets my FEET ON the Ground at a set time each morning. One well placed, very noisy alarm clock did the trick for me. Now I have to physically get out of bed to stop that little monster from its raucous ringing. Once up it's easier to stay up and immediately get on with the next part of the day
.....

FUEL –This F is all about everything I take into my body. Get those windows open and let in some fresh air and light! Get the kettle on and, while waiting, drink some water and take my morning meds. Once showered breakfast is a must for me plus two further healthy meals per day. Ease off on the caffeine – I use to consume 12+ cuppas per day. Now I'm down to 4 and there are no caffeinated drinks after 6pm. I've replaced my caffeine with 8 large glasses of water per day and the difference that has made to my sleep, my skin and my stamina is remarkable. Getting out for a 30 minute walk each day has also had an impact. Fresh air and natural light are so important.

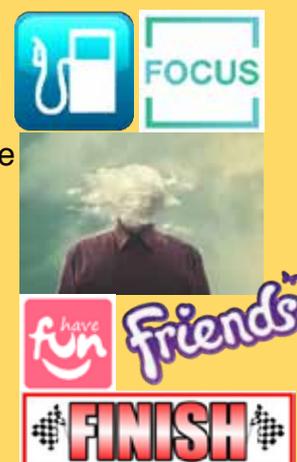
FOCUS – This F is about having a simple plan for the day – even some simple little things that you would like to achieve that day depending on how you are feeling. I usually try to have a “to do” list ready from the previous evening, tick things off as they get done, celebrate every little success and not beat myself up if I have to carry some forward!

FAMILY/FRIENDS – This F reminds me to be in touch with a friend or family member at some stage EVERYDAY. Staying connected is vital to my wellbeing. I can't imagine a day without speaking to someone, regardless of what medium I choose to use!

FUN – Someone much wiser than me said “everyday may not be fun but there is fun to be had in everyday”. This F reminds me to look for fun and joy in everyday situations. Before the end of the day I always try to delve into my Wellness Toolbox and do at least one thing that's fun to me!

FINISH WELL – This is something I learned from the Recovery College's “A Good Nights Sleep” workshop some years ago. Be organised for the next day before going to bed. Clothes ready, “to do” list sorted, take meds at least an hour before bedtime, no iPad or iPhone in bed, no clutter in the bedroom and close the day down with some soothing music or a mindfulness/meditation exercise. This stuff really worked for me and I recommend the course to anyone who struggles with their sleep pattern.

So, there's 6 of the 7Fs! The final F is the sense of FULFILLMENT I feel when I'm applying the first 6 consistently. Anyone can produce their own version of what their 7 Fs might look and feel like. I hope that by sharing this, others will be inspired to do just that.



Jimmy McAleese

Evaluating the effectiveness of “Pet’s as Therapy” Group in Carrick 4 Rehabilitation Ward, Holywell Hospital

Clare Hudson & Jayne Hill, Occupational Therapy Department

Background

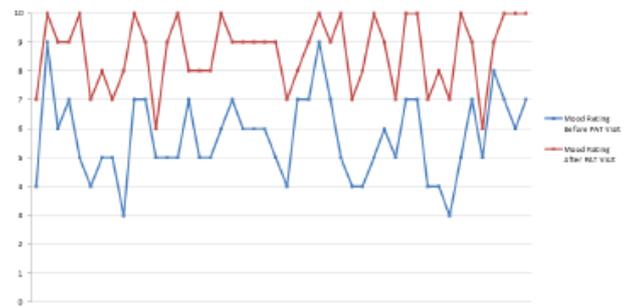
The therapeutic benefits of using animals as part of the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with autism, mental health diagnoses and forensic histories has been well documented. Based on such findings, OT staff working within Carrick 4 have identified the value of animal-based therapies and explored various avenues to access same. In March 2017 we established links with Pets as Therapy (PAT). As the PAT groups had been successful, we felt that it was of importance that we as clinicians attempt to identify and quantify the benefits elicited from the sessions along with areas of improvements needed.

Aim

To evaluate the effectiveness of PAT groups amongst patients with a diagnosed mental health condition. Focusing on any changes in mood and anxiety levels, as well as any other identified benefits.



Patient Self-Assessment Mood Rating Before & After PAT Visit



Patent's and staff say...

Having Barney come to the ward really brightened my day, especially as I miss my own dog

I feel more active when Barney visits. He helps Motivate me to go out for a walk

Having Barney visit Is the best part of my week

Barney is a friendly dog I look forward to his visits & feel more relaxed when he is here

The introduction of therapy dog Barney to the ward has really lifted the mood. We have seen patients who have declined all other therapeutic activities engage with the therapy dog in a meaningful way

Evaluation

- Development and implementation of self-assessment mood rating scale to identify any change in mood amongst patients following on from PAT sessions.
- Dissemination of questionnaires to elicit feedback from patients.
- Dissemination of questionnaires to elicit feedback from staff.
- Highlight identified benefits of PAT
- Highlight any issues with PAT sessions and / or suggested changes which may need to occur.

Outcomes

- Reduced levels of anxiety amongst patients on ward and improved mood
- Patients report experiencing improved energy and sleep
- Patients report feeling more relaxed and distracted from their symptoms



What's next... Given the success of the project and its popularity amongst patients we will maintain established links and continue with PAT sessions in Carrick 4. Our hope would be that other therapists seeing this initiative and its benefits would be encouraged to explore this intervention in their area of work.

Positive affirmations

10 GREAT WAYS TO START YOUR DAY

#8anight

1 DON'T HIT SNOOZE



2 HYDRATE



3 DON'T REACH FOR YOUR PHONE



4 FOCUS ON TODAY



5 GET SOME NATURAL LIGHT



6 STRETCH



7 MAKE YOUR BED



8 EXERCISE



9 THREE THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR



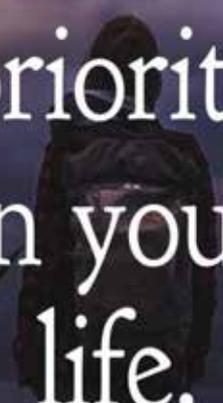
10 LISTEN TO MUSIC



Self-care is how you take your power back.



Become a priority in your life.



I NOW SEE HOW OWNING OUR STORY AND LOVING OURSELVES THROUGH THAT PROCESS IS THE BRAVEST THING THAT WE WILL EVER DO.



Give yourself time to grow



Self-acceptance is a process

Sometimes self care is exercise and eating right. Sometimes it's spending time with loved ones or taking a nap. And sometimes it's watching an entire season of television in one weekend while you lounge around in your pajamas. Whatever soothes your soul.

Nanea Hoffman



the only cure I have ever known for fear and doubt and loneliness is an immense love of self.



How to Feature in Northern Recovery News

Would you like to write an article or feature for the next edition of **Northern Recovery News**? Perhaps you have a personal recovery story you would like to share? Maybe you'd like to showcase the recovery-orientated work being done in your area of practice? Remember this publication is not just about mental health examples – recovery-orientated practice is happening in so many areas of the Northern Trust.

Please forward articles or enquiries to recovery.newsletter@northerntrust.hscni.net

Thank You to Our Contributors

Contributors to this edition were ...

Rosemary Hawthorne, Sarah Armstrong, Marbeth Kirker, Audrey Montgomery, Gerard Quinn, Jimmy McAleese, Clare Hudson, Jayne Hill, Heather Armstrong

Editor's

Jimmy McAleese & Stephanie Minford

How to Contact the Recovery College

To find out more about our workshops in YOUR AREA and how they can help, and to request a prospectus please contact us:

✉ The Recovery College Hub

Holywell Hospital Site
60 Steeple Road
Antrim
BT41 2RJ

☎ 02894 413449

@ recovery.college@northerntrust.hscni.net

f find us on Facebook, search; 'The Northern Region Recovery College'

📱 Download our free app – 'My Recovery NI'



Watch out for the next edition of the Northern Recovery News