

**Our Reflections: Forth Valley Recovery Conversation Cafe.
Building Recovery in Forth Valley: – Forth Valley College, Stirling - 22nd January 2014**

The seeds are sown...

A huge thank you Elaine Lawlor, Co-coordinator for Forth Valley Alcohol and Drug Partners. (That is Elaine hosting the tables below) For agreeing to meet on 25th October 2013. Along with Margaret Jamieson and Jenny Svanberg,(thank you ladies) we discussed options for Forth Valley Workforce Development and it was decided the best way forward was to host a café.....and the rest is history! Elaine thank you again for your huge generosity of spirit in organizing and paying for the Working Group De-Brief.



Our aim

Our aim for the café was to have dialogue with intention throughout the day Recovery Focused and a working group was borne from a slice of the partners and recovery assets that we would wish to attend the Café. A huge thank you to all to gave up their time and made the café come to life.

Event Planning

Our first meeting was a bit of a damp squid, as I for some reason did not have it logged in my diary. The phone call came asking where I was. Yes it is most definitely the time you would like the ground to swallow you up and eat you whole but applying an asset based approach, I made all subsequent meetings and took on the chin my missing the first meeting with a sincere apology and acknowledged the frustrations of the newly formed working group around this.

The intention of the group was to try and have a café for Christmas, but the reality was that it was too ambitious given that the whole process of a working group is connecting and building up a relationship with each other in order to come up with the correct questions to ask on the day, so the 22nd January was decided upon. This was still a tight deadline as it was also over a holiday period but the working group were fabulous and truly committed to making this happen.

Rosemary Duffy, clinical manager in one of Forth Valley's prisons, agreed to co-facilitate with me as she had attended the Conversation Café in West Dunbartonshire and had a really good idea of how a café works.

A very special thank you to Anita Duffy, who saved the day administratively in more than one occasion. Scottish Recovery Consortiums IT failed in the middle of an office move and Anita kept the registrations on target (formal apology below). Anita also did the beautiful programme with the Recovery Communities Logo and a wonderful rainbow so the programme below does not do the programme on the day justice

The Event Programme

10.00 am	Tea & Coffee
10.15 am	& Etiquette
	<i>Overview (tree)</i>
10.30 am	Seed One
10.45 am	Conversation One— <i>(Overview/commitments)</i>
11.15 am	Tea & Coffee Break
11.45 am	Seed Two
12.00 pm	Conversation Two
12.30 pm	Lunch
1.30 pm	Seed Three
1.45 pm	Conversation Three
2.15 pm	Tea Break
2.30 pm	Whole Group conversation
3.30 pm	Overview and Outcome
4.00 pm	Close



The Tree of Life with all of the Lovely Messages of Recovery, hope and inspiration.

The Host Team



In the picture at back row, Rosemary, Jenny
In front row from left to right, Tam, Narek, Margaret, Elaine, Jean and Anne-Marie

A huge **thank you** to all members of the **café host team** who really got their sleeves rolled up on the day making sure everyone had refreshments and kept the tables cleared. Were all there for the set up and stayed for the cleanup. This was a dream team....

The café in Action



Were we successful in achieving our aim?

Yes..... From our survey monkey 71.4% of people who attended had never attended a 'World style' conversation café before and.....61.1% of participants said they left with new ideas

Who came to the event?

A total of 64 people came to the event. Invitations were allocated to each member of the working group, who in turn invited key assets with an interest in Recovery, in the community, in services, with a lived experience of Recovery and from Mutual Aid treatment services in Forth Valley. The invites extended to key assets with an interest in Recovery in outlying areas and the growing recovery community.

Feedback

Feedback was received informally on the day and then a survey monkey sent out. All feedback given on the day in response to the dialogue questions has been typed and will be available to interested parties in a separate document. . A special mention to Hollie Henderson for the very creative and beautiful way all the feedback on the day was typed up. The responses were Made up from 47.6% Treatment Provider, 33.3% Other Staff and 19.0% Person in recovery. A selection of these below:-

We asked - What was your overall experience of the Forth Valley Conversation Café?

"Positive and aspirational"

"I met people from other services I either deal with but have never met face to face or have never heard about"

"The café extended a warmth not common in the conference arena more generally. The Café was inclusive and there were a variety of ways in which to communicate. It was also very motivational resetting the compass being outward looking and more recovery focused."

We asked - What themes emerged in the conversations that you took part in at the event?

"A real drive to try to move things forward in terms of recovery in Forth Valley. Role of peer supporters in growing a recovery community"

"Need for service users, communities, families and services to work together to promote and sustain recovery capital"

"The need to focus on those well into their recovery when and if they have a dip in motivation or feel isolated from appropriate support. There are a range of community supports but we do not seem to use what is already there, a focus on a whole community response and breaking down barriers would be advantageous"

We asked – Did you leave the event with any new ideas?

"That similar events need to be rolled out and include as many people as possible, especially service users"

"probably that the recovery message needs to be furthered within all support services and not just within the treatment services"

"In terms of my individual practice I will focus more on looking to recovery at the very beginning of treatment, planting the seed that recovery is possible and whilst it may take time, it is achievable."

We asked – for any final comments for the SRC that related to your experience at the café.

"Really well run on the day, left with a sense of greater unity about moving forward. Community circle at end was powerful"

"Very well organized, very positive atmosphere. Shame that very few medical services in attendance"

"Enabled a diverse group of people from those with lived experience and those who support and help those with lived experience whether friends, families or workers to work closely together to share ideas, views and future aspirations on the theme of recovery. The workshop was a community in itself for that day with a clear motivation to try and make things better for the future."

“The event was well organized from the” greeter” at the front desk as you came in to the last comments of the day in the circle. It was a lovely experience for everybody, especially the Service Users who talked about it all the way home in the car

Visibility of recovery - initial impact

- ♥ A decision made to enter into negotiations with Caird Forsyth to hold a conversation café in Falkirk

Visibility of recovery; developing impact (recovery bounce)

- ♥ 26 recovery commitments were made

The café tables



Apologies

Apologies made to both the Cafes which were running the same week in January as due to a change of premises there was a huge blip with our IT and that impacted on our ability to continue effectively or efficiently with holding the registrations for these cafes. So a huge thanks to both working groups for their administrative work and tolerance. A Recovery Matters Workshop, and all the catering has been offered as a token of our gratitude.

What did we learn?

Not to rush the working group this is a process in itself...just like a smaller conversation café..

Any future cafes will hold their own registrations, as if we do this it takes away the ownership and local feel for connectedness in the local area.

Forth Valley is totally committed to the Recovery Agenda and has currently got several pieces of Recovery work in the pipeline, the first being ROSC Training for all staff in Forth Valley.

Anne-Marie
Scottish Recovery Consortium - April 2014