

**Our Reflections: West Dunbartonshire Recovery Conversation Cafe.
Building Recovery in West Dunbartonshire: Dumbuck Hotel - Wednesday 4 December 2013**



The cafe in action

It all started with a phone call from Helen Weir, ADP Lead Officer for the West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to meet up and look at the possibilities of what intervention and support we could provide. After a meeting in Glasgow on 27 July 2013 it was decided that a Conversation Café would be a great starting point. This was provided free of charge but the ADP paying for the venue and catering. We would like to thank the ADP for their contribution here.

Our aim

The aim of the cafe working group was to host the first West Dunbartonshire Recovery Conversation Café. The working group had ten members from different backgrounds; both in recovery and by profession. The hope was that we would invite a larger slice of the community who were key assets and would have the opportunity of this “conversation of intention” to look at what West Dunbartonshire’s “next right Step” for their Recovery Agenda.

Event planning

The working group met for the first time on the 8 October and subsequently had another 3 meetings, not a lot by all accounts as the café date was planned for 4 December 2013. We spent the meetings building relationships and connections within the group. We planned and discussed the personal invitations, the

programme and the questions that would be offered for discussion. Hazel, a willing member of the group, agreed to design the menus and book the venue.

As Hazel had attended our Conversation Café Host Training, I asked that she would co-facilitate the café with me. This was the first time we experimented with this and it was incredibly successful. When at all possible we will endeavor to do this at all our café events for local areas.

The Event Agenda

10.00 a.m.	Tea & Coffee
10.15 a.m.	Etiquette & Introduction
10.30 a.m.	Seed One
10.45 a.m.	Conversation Café Question One
11.10 a.m.	Overview of Commitments
11.15 a.m.	Tea Break
11.45 a.m.	Seed Two
12.00 p.m.	Conversation Café Question Two
12.30 p.m.	Recovery Walk 2013 Film
12.40p.m.	Café News & Themes
1.15 p.m.	Lunch
2.00 p.m.	Seed Three
2.15 p.m.	Conversation Café Question Three
2.45 p.m.	Whole Group Conversation
3.15 p.m.	Tea Break
3.45 p.m.	Commitment
4.00 p.m.	Close

The host team



Were we successful in achieving our aim?

Yes.

"I really enjoyed the format and style of the conversation cafe. From those involved in hosting and helping to everyone taking part, it was enjoyable and allowed individuals to speak openly without being judged and I personally hope that all the hard work put in has been given back through the responses and that these will be put into practise in West Dunbartonshire to ensure those going through recovery or will need to access recovery in the future receive the best possible service. The services being provided at present are all excellent in their own way however I personally do not think this is being promoted enough to the general public and this still leads to stigma being attached to those requiring recovery. Thanks again for letting me be part of your event."

Who came to the event?

A total of 65 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, the community, services, those with a lived experience of recovery and from mutual aid treatment services in West Dunbartonshire. There were also visitors from other areas and from other Café Working Groups.

"Had I not been invited I would have missed such an excellent, and informative, opportunity to find out something of the views, and future outlooks, of the many service providers involved in the local area."

Feedback

Feedback was received informally on the day and through a SurveyMonkey questionnaire. A breakdown of responses received are; 50% Treatment Provider, 25% Other Staff and 25% Person in recovery. A selection of these below:-

We asked - What was your overall experience of the West Dunbartonshire Conversation Café?

"Shining a new light a different way forward for recovery."

"Welcoming, inclusive and recovery focused."

"Absolutely fantastic, an excellently presented opportunity to input somewhat my opinions and feelings, something which previously I had not been offered many chances to do."

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

"Interagency gaps and practices."

"How perspectives differed on what constitutes recovery."

"Personal experiences, job roles, using a more holistic approach with people experiencing addiction, stigma."

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

"Speak to DWP regarding recognition of "Recovery" and highlight areas for additional support to be put in place for people in recovery."

"Always lots of learning but especially made new connections which are invaluable."

"Never underestimate the asset in the room."

Visibility of recovery - initial impact

I have no doubts that this working group will go on to do great things together, so great was the connection, each and every one a key recovery activist in West Dunbartonshire.

"We cannot wait to get involved with my group at DACA and to this end we have already arranged an opportunity to involve the service users who were not present, to open a discussion and inform anyone interested how the day progressed."

Visibility of recovery; developing impact (recovery bounce)

- Professor Fraser Shaw agreed to be on the Working Group for our ORT, Recovery and Me Event.
- A Recovery Matters Workshop was agreed to be rolled out in April 2014.
- 11 recovery commitments were made.

One of the café tables



What did we learn?

We learned to work with the assets in the area and will now actively seek co-facilitators for Conversation Cafes from the working group, or local area.

We will now incorporate a Team Consortium Coffee after each café set down. It is really useful for members of the working group to appreciate the day, the challenges and just to breathe before going back to our working lives.

That 60% of people who attended the café left with new ideas.

That 20% of people who attended the café had never attended an event focused on recovery before.

Anne-Marie Quigg
Scottish Recovery Consortium
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