

# **Recovery Academy of Ireland**

**A voice for people in recovery**

**A forum to promote and support recovery**

**A way to challenge stigma**

## Who are we?

We are people in recovery, supporters, advocates, researchers and professionals who want to promote and champion the concept of recovery. We believe – and international research backs this up – that people can move from a dependence on addiction services to a life of fulfilment, wellbeing and full participation in society. We want to help empower people to achieve that life.

## What is the Recovery Academy?

The Recovery Academy is a forum to:

- promote recovery,
- provide support for people in recovery and their families,
- organise recovery activities,
- raise awareness about recovery,
- provide workshops and training on recovery,
- conduct research, and
- advocate on policy.

We want to give a voice to people in recovery, their families and allies, and offer a vision of hope for the future. We want the academy to be a place where people can learn about recovery from others who are 'loud and proud' in their own recovery. Ultimately, we want to see a re-orientation of addiction services toward a recovery model (and not simply harm reduction) as in other countries.

## Where did we come from?

The Recovery Academy grew out of research carried out on the Soilse drug rehabilitation project by Keane (2011) and Keane, McAleenan and Barry (2014). The Recovery Academy recognises that recovery has been championed in mental health services and addiction services internationally. We recognise that recovery does not include just drugs but also alcohol and behavioural addictions.

## **Why do we need a Recovery Academy?**

There is a huge, international groundswell of support for recovery. The US, UK and Australia are paving the way for a new addiction treatment approach that sees the goal as an independent, drug-free lifestyle. In this approach, the recovering drug addict progresses through the addiction services and is proactively supported to become an active, contributing member of society.

In Ireland, there is growing interest among addiction workers, some policymakers, but most importantly people in recovery, for a similar approach. The Recovery Academy will empower both people in recovery and communities to advocate for a re-orientation of addiction services along these lines.

## **How will the Recovery Academy support people?**

Making communities safe, healthy places is essential if people are to recover. We will help develop community awareness of the benefits of recovery. We will advocate for 'recovery houses' solely for people who are drug- and alcohol-free and trying to rebuild their lives. We will also support and encourage social projects aimed at people in recovery such as recovery cafés, sports clubs and creative groups. We will do this by building links with existing community organisations and networks.

We will also continue to develop 'recovery coaches' who mentor and give practical assistance to people in early recovery and 'recovery champions' who advocate for recovery and demonstrate the benefits of recovery through their own lifestyles. In addition, we hope to hold an annual parade during International Recovery Month in September to celebrate recovery.

## **What are the benefits of a Recovery Academy?**

The Recovery Academy will make sure the authentic voice of recovery is heard, not only within the addiction services but also at community and national – policymaking – level.

We will build on the emerging evidence base of recovery from addiction. We want to develop an alliance of service users, professionals, allies and families. Specifically, we want to develop and empower leaders within the recovery community.

Above all, we want to give a voice and hope to recovering drug users, recovering alcoholics, those with behavioural addictions, and those still contemplating detox and treatment that recovery is not only possible, but achievable.

## Principles of recovery

1. There are many pathways to recovery.
2. Recovery is self-directed and empowering.
3. Recovery involves a personal recognition of the need for change and transformation.
4. Recovery is holistic.
5. Recovery has cultural dimensions.
6. Recovery exists on a continuum of improved health and wellness.
7. Recovery emerges from hope and gratitude.
8. Recovery involves a process of healing and self-redefinition.
9. Recovery involves addressing discrimination and transcending shame and stigma.
10. Recovery is supported by peers and allies.
11. Recovery involves (re)joining and (re)building a life in the community.
12. Recovery is a reality.

## Interested in finding out more?

**Contact: Kieran White on our Facebook page – [recoveryacademysocialgroup](#)**

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| <b>Your name:</b>    |  |
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