

# Scottish Recovery Network (SRN)

## Stories of Change



### *Write to Recovery* at Strathclyde University

#### Introduction: aims and context

The aim of our initial engagement with the student support services at Strathclyde University was to provide a new and innovative way for them to support the cohort of students seeking help for distress and mental ill health within their counselling and support services. It was a chance for students to forge connections with each other and share their experiences of what can be a stressful time in their lives through story sharing and creativity.

#### Activities & Process

We were met with excitement and enthusiasm when we proposed facilitating the Write to Recovery group work programme at the University. Sarah, our co-facilitator from the University, fully engaged with our strengths based ethos and put time and effort into making the group work a success. She gladly took on the responsibility of student coordinator, even though the demand on her own role was immense and challenging. By participating in the group herself, she witnessed first-hand the **aspiring connections made** as a result of participants sharing their experiences of student life in an open and honest manner.

As the group progressed, **they increasingly displayed behaviours of hope and encouragement**, allowing each other time and space to explore their difficulties in a more positive way. Participants quickly changed what started as a discourse around student life, into something more personal and unique to their individual life experiences. This gave them the chance to **utilise strengths and positive learning** from the group in different areas of their lives.

#### Outcomes & Learning

The positive changes that happened led to **participants taking ownership of the group**. When **we provided facilitation training** we could have never envisaged just how much growth this group would go through. Some students eagerly took on the shared responsibility of keeping their peer group going, allowing Sarah to make the programme available to other students within the University.

By working together, Sarah and the peer group provided students with a resource that may **go some way in helping their waiting lists for 1:1 work.**

As the peer group grew, so did their connections with other Write to Recovery groups. **Peer Facilitators went on to volunteer** with the group run at the Mental Health Network Greater Glasgow. In doing this they strengthened our Write to Recovery community, helping us to offer the group work to more people in the local area. Some peer supporters also went on to volunteer with other mental health organisations, something which they wouldn't have contemplated if it weren't for their involvement in the Strathclyde group.

The success of this group also highlights the importance of a shared responsibility between SRN and our stakeholders. Without Sarah's continued hard work, the Strathclyde group wouldn't be where it is today. Our volunteers continue to support us with the running of and participation in events and training, without this, our Write to Recovery community would be far less rich. This has been a great example of how **Write to Recovery helps people build on strengths and utilise their self-management skills.** We look forward to see how the group grows over the coming year.

- **Project helping ease pressure on waiting lists for 1:1 work**
- **New connections and friendships formed – peer support**
- **Increased behaviours of hope and encouragement**
- **Students using positive learning and shared self management skills**
- **Students taking ownership of group and trained as Peer Facilitators**
- **Students volunteering outwith the University in the local community**

**“I co-facilitate a peer-led Write to Recovery group at the University of Strathclyde. Helping people tell their story and having a safe space to do so is rewarding and helps me in the process, as we learn recovery techniques from each other. Recovery for me has been about regaining my voice, and Write to Recovery has helped me on the way to doing so. You'd better believe I am ready to be bold again!”**

For more information about Write to Recovery and other Scottish Recovery Network projects contact **0141 240 7790** or [info@scottishrecovery.net](mailto:info@scottishrecovery.net)

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