Creating recovery through Body and Voice: Rebuilding your Life programme

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Rebuilding your Life (RyL) is a recovery-focused programme developed as a Public and Patient Involvement project in Dorset by people with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (known as ME), some who had already recovered, and health professionals (2011-2013). Due to its outstanding positive results, it was replicated and further developed in Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (2014-2015). It’s a semi-structured group programme, co-enquiring by nature, and expertly facilitated using coaching and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). It utilises those who’ve already recovered as models of success, and a range of tools for realigning towards a healthy and positive future. The first Oxford cohort included 9 people who had ME, 1 recovered person from a Dorset RyL group, 3 NHS specialist clinicians and the main facilitator (Sarah Frossell). The majority of the group are now well on their way to recovery, some counting themselves already recovered. Experiences are shared below by two of the participants; Jenni - a recoverer, and Hilly - a researcher/participant.

Initially running over 8 fortnightly sessions, there were 6 follow-up sessions (as requested by participants). The group currently meets monthly, now outside of the NHS, with one of the participants facilitating it; coached in this role by Sarah. We anticipate that when the programme is commissioned in the NHS, some of the current generation will be the models of recovery in the next. As such, it’s a self-perpetuating programme with its own unique outcome measure of recovered members becoming the models of subsequent groups. Through an NHS internship (Health Education Thames Valley, 2014-2015), Hilly carried out a phenomenological study, using deep attention to the experience within the group. Together Jenni and Hilly continue to explore and to represent the possibilities from RyL, recognising significance of Voice and Body in the transformation to recovery.

Rebuilding your Life is a kind of theatre where each person may bring a new narrative into being.

It has a recovery theme – with the opportunity to imagine and envisage our own desired future, and then to step into it. Language is vital; each of us voicing both what has previously been unvoiced and that which we choose to create in our lives and the new directions we want to take.

It’s a community – establishing an auditorium and a stage on which to rehearse with others and bring recovery to form. Together we imagine, we dream, we research, we re-imprint, we create.

We are unfolding recovery by expressing through Voice and Body, in a way that’s right for each person. Creating fresh energy and new beginnings for a brilliant and healthy life.

I feel we’re part of a moment when health provision is changing and we’re part of initiating and creating it.

Hilly

Recovery isn’t a possibility – it’s a certainty. It just is…and I am...

Jenny

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