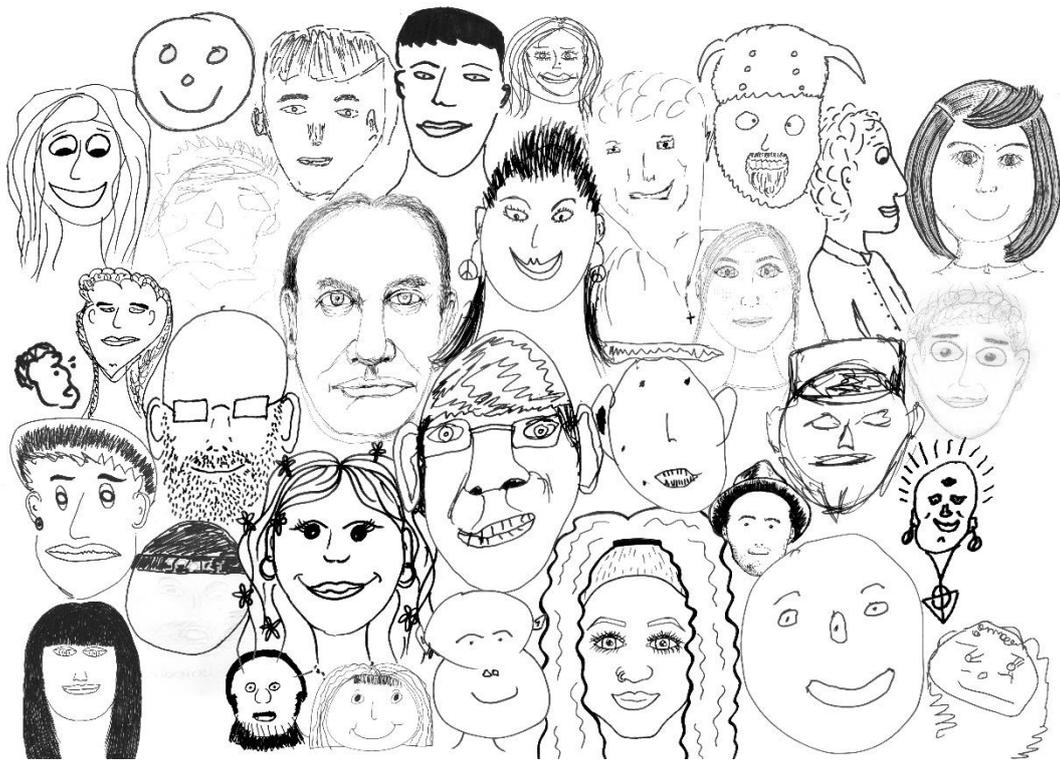


# *Making Recovery Real in Dundee*



*Recovery Stories Film*  
*A discussion guide*

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The Making Recovery Real partners in Dundee are:



## *Welcome to our Dundee Recovery Stories Film*

This guide has been created to help you get the most from the Making Recovery Real in Dundee Recovery Stories film and to ensure that your discussions about mental health recovery and wellbeing are as rich and inspiring as the stories shared by those involved in the project. The guide is complemented by a Recovery Story Sharing Facilitator Guide and suite of story sharing materials. These can all be downloaded from [www.scottishrecovery.net](http://www.scottishrecovery.net)

### *Project background*

Making Recovery Real in Dundee brings the Scottish Recovery Network, local mental health organisations, service providers and people living with mental health issues together to make recovery a reality for everyone in the city. It started in late 2015 at a launch event in Discovery Point where we asked people what helped their recovery and what was needed to happen to make Dundee a City of Recovery. Since then Making Recovery Real in Dundee has been bringing people together on a regular basis to share stories of recovery and develop our activities around recovery story sharing and peer recovery.

Our approach has been to hold a series of events and discussions where people living with mental health issues, local organisations and services and decision-makers came together in an environment where lived experience was listened to and valued. This has not been a consultation on proposals but the start of a long-term discussion in Dundee about how best to support recovery and wellbeing. Focusing on lived experience and stories of recovery is important. It emphasises the often missed evidence we have of recovery and what inspires and supports recovery.

When we think about stories of recovery we often think about individual stories. We wanted to move beyond that to show that recovery can be a reality for everyone. In this way we hope our Dundee Recovery Stories Film inspires people on their own recovery journey and also leads to change in how we support people living with mental health issues.

*We would love to hear about how you are using the film. Please get in touch and let us know at: [info@scottishrecovery.net](mailto:info@scottishrecovery.net)*

## Making the Film

When asked what would make Dundee a City of Recovery the overwhelming response from people was that we need to listen to lived experience and act on what people say helps their recovery. It was decided that Making Recovery Real in Dundee would *collect and share stories of lived experience and recovery* so that we can positively influence policy, practice and attitudes.

We started by bringing people together and using a range of approaches to support them to develop and share their stories. Creating environments where people feel safe, supported and in control is very important. We did this by:

- Emphasising that we all have lived experience and a story to share
- Recognising that thinking through your story can be emotional and challenging
- Using techniques which support people to recognise and celebrate their strengths, hopes and dreams
- Respecting that everyone's story is different
- Ensuring that people are in control of the process and are supported at all times

We recruited and trained a group of peer recovery story facilitators who reached out to people and supported them to develop and share their stories. We did this by running workshops where people could drop-in and develop their story; interviewing people and inviting people to write their own story. We found that running story sharing sessions with local organisations worked well people as it helped people to feel safe and in control of the process.

Once the film had been made the people involved saw it first – and loved it! We then had a fantastic premiere at Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) attended by all those involved, their friends and family and Shona Robison, Minister for Health and Sport and local MSP. We are now taking the film out to organisations, services and the wider community in Dundee.

*We hope you enjoy the film and that it sparks some great conversations!*

## The film

You can find the Making Recovery Real film on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/n0VySqJ1o-s>



The film is just under 20 minutes long. We have also created a number of short films featuring sections of the film. Themes covered in the short films include:

- Hope
- Taking control
- Sharing stories
- Opportunities
- Relationships

There are also three personal stories of recovery. You can view all the films on the Scottish Recovery Network YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/SRNYoutube>

Once you have watched the film we hope that you have the opportunity to discuss the film and what you have learned from listening to people's stories of recovery. The remainder of this guide suggests some questions you may want to use to prompt your discussions.

*I hope that a lot of the learning that we see in the film will be used to develop policy and practice and will make sure services users' voices are heard.*

(Making Recovery Real in Dundee project participant)

## Discussing the film

We want you to think about what the film means for you – personally and/or in your work role. To help you with this we suggest a number of questions. There are some general questions and then some more specific questions based on the themes highlighted in the film. We anticipate that you will choose the questions that suit you and your group or service best. You may also decide to work through the questions over a period of time.

### General questions

- 1 In the film people talk about what helped their recovery and what keeps them well. What do you do to keep yourself mentally well?
  - Think about the concept of '5 a day'. If we know what we should do to stay physically well what is your '5 a day' for wellbeing?
  - Are there similarities between what you do to stay mentally well and what the people in the film do?
- 2 What does recovery mean to you?
- 3 What have you learnt about recovery from the film?
  - Did the film confirm your thinking? How?
  - Did the film challenge your thinking? How?
- 4 What does the film tell us about what supports recovery?
  - Are these types of supports available locally?
  - What needs to happen locally for recovery to be well supported?
- 5 Mental health issues are often portrayed as needing specialist expertise. What does the film tell us about the range of expertise available to us?
  - How can we make the most of this expertise?
  - How can we get better at really listening to people's lived experience and expertise?
- 6 What does lived experience mean to you? How do you use your lived experience to support others?

## *Taking control*

- 1 What does the film tell us about people's ability to know and understand themselves?
- 2 What helped people to develop this self-awareness?
- 3 Positive risk taking is a key part of the recovery journey. How can we support people to take the steps they need to move on in their life?
  - What do David, Shona and Rona's stories tell us about what can support people to take positive risks such as getting involved in local groups and other activities?
  - What can get in the way of this?

## *Opportunities and relationships*

- 1 Good relationships are important to us all. What can you/your group/your organisation/your service do to help people develop positive connections with others?
- 2 What does the film tell us about the power and benefits of getting involved in groups and group activities?
- 3 How can we encourage and support more people to get involved in groups? What does David, Shona and Rona's stories tell us about this?

## *Hope*

- 1 How does hearing people's stories of recovery make you feel? What is powerful about a recovery story?
- 2 How can we support more people to develop and share their recovery stories?

## Peer support

1 What does the film tell us about the importance and benefits of peer support?

2 Why do you think it is important for people to be with others who have had similar experiences?

- What do you think people get from peer support?
- What peer support have you experienced in your life? Why was it important to you?

3 Think about Rona's story. How has helping others helped her recovery?

What does this tell us about the role people living with mental health issues have in their own and other's recovery?

4 What type of peer support opportunities does your group/organisation/service offer?

5 How can we develop more peer support opportunities and peer recovery roles in our groups/organisations/services and communities?

What would help make this happen? What can you do to help make this happen?

## What next?

- Do you want to get involved in recovery story sharing in Dundee?
- Do you want to work with others to develop new approaches to support recovery?
- Are you interested in peer recovery?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then get in contact with Making Recovery Real in Dundee.

Contact details to be added locally

## Appendix 1: What do we mean by recovery?

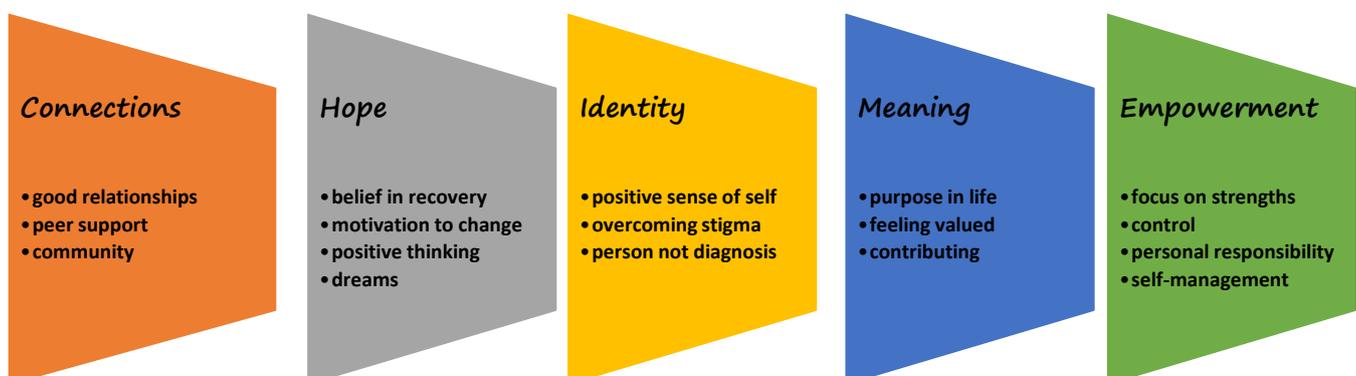
People can and do recover from even the most serious mental health problems. Recovery means being able to live a good life, as defined by the person, with or without symptoms.

Recovery is....	Recovery isn't...
An individual experience	Just about having a job
Both a journey and a destination	An excuse to cut services
About what you CAN do	An unrealistic dream or a fad
A reality	A one size fits all model

We know that recovery is not necessarily easy or straightforward. Many people describe the need to persevere and to find ways to maintain hope through the most trying times.

The Scottish Recovery Network has fifteen years' experience of working with story sharing. Our understanding of recovery is based on the views and experiences of people affected by mental health issues. In 2005 the Scottish Recovery Network ([www.scottishrecovery.net](http://www.scottishrecovery.net)) undertook a large scale [Narrative Research Project](#). This project has provided the foundation to all of our work and has influenced a number of other story sharing initiatives including the [Write to Recovery](#) project, the eUpdate feature [What Recovery Means to Me](#) and of course, Making Recovery Real in Dundee.

There have been many studies of recovery narratives or stories internationally. In 2011 a group of researchers from Kings College London\* looked at many of these studies and identified five characteristics of people's experiences of recovery



\* CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PERSONAL RECOVERY IN MENTAL HEALTH (LEAMY ET AL, 2011)

You can find out more about recovery and what support it in the Scottish Recovery Network's [short animation](#)

## Appendix 2: Why should we share our stories?

Personal stories of recovery can inform and inspire people with experience of mental health problems, their carers and supporters and service providers alike. Learning about other people's experiences can also help to challenge misconceptions. Stories offer hints and techniques on recovery. They recognise the fact that people in recovery are experts by experience, stating very clearly that people can and do recover.

Many people say that the process of developing and sharing their personal story helps their own recovery. Developing a recovery story is an opportunity to review the past and identify the things that have gone well as well as the difficulties, distress and challenges. This can be an empowering experience and can create a sense of meaning and direction.



Making space for people to think through and share their own story is important. Being assessed can result in the negative effects of poor mental health being emphasised and over time the problems and difficulties can begin to define the person. For example, a person's story might become about their diagnosis, traumatic experience or addiction. While these facts are true they are not the whole story – or the whole person. The fact is that many people living with mental health issues have had to face severe hardships – yet they've survived. This takes resilience and strength. Developing personal stories helps us see the whole person and recognise interests, strengths and skills, including those that have been forgotten.