ReCoCo: The Recovery College Collective

ReCoCo is an independent peer-led mental health charity commissioned by the NHS and others to deliver **groups**, **courses**, **activities**, **engagement** work, **training** and **research** in and around mental health (interpreting mental health in a broad inclusive fashion, thus acknowledging crossovers with drug and alcohol issues, troubled family situations, poverty, learning disability and autism spectrum problems etc.). Everything we do is guided, steered and delivered by people with direct lived experience of distress and “complex needs”. That said, we are reluctant talk in terms of complex needs, because when people relate their stories, they aren’t complex, but very understandable, with intersecting factors.

The complexity arises with the traditional system’s response to people, and its tendency to deal with problems singly, and in a linear fashion.

ReCoCo is a radical mental health recovery college, entirely peer led and coordinated. Our courses, workshops, groups and events have been developed and run by people who themselves have used services and have their own stories of hope and recovery. This means that all of our staff have lived experience in some form or another.

Courses have structure and last for a set number of sessions

Groups and drop-bys are open-ended, and once enrolled you can can come to those as and when you need.

Many courses and groups deal with with mental health, addiction or overlapping issues, but many others are about **interests, hobbies, conversation, connecting and enjoyment**. The key is that people feel at home, feel that there are others who have had similar experiences, and have a chance to learn, develop skills, develop themselves and feel accepted.

Almost all facilitators for our courses and drop-ins come up from our student body and many of our courses and drop ins are developed with/by our students and volunteers. As an organisation we do not concentrate on diagnosis or pathology, and instead focus on the individual and their needs, helping them to realise the strengths they already have in surviving adversity, and to build upon these.

Furthermore, we do **not** discharge, students can come and go as they need and are able. They can even become volunteers, Therapeutic Enablers, facilitators and more!

We believe that the best placed person to help, is often someone who has had a similar experience to your own. Throughout the college we provide opportunities for education and peer support, creating spaces for mutual learning, developing hope and aspirations and realising and building upon existing strengths and talents.

We try to create a place for everyone, somewhere those who have felt isolated by their mental distress can find **belonging, acceptance, connection and friendship**.

We believe in the power of **peer-support** and **lived experience** and provide a focus for peer leadership, peer support and recovery orientated practice.

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Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryCoCo/

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZvEaDf21R3thoqJ9y0t4nA

Opening Hours: Generally Mon-Fri 9am-5pm.
Most groups and activities are Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays. partner organisations and allies may have different timings.
We observe terms the same as those of the local schools, so we take a "break" when the schools are off. We're not closed in the break, but we won't have our usual groups and courses running, as the "break" is when we develop new groups and courses, plus train up service users and volunteers in facilitation etc.

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