



**Recovery
Cymru**

**10 Years
Of connection**

Our Stories

Volunteers

Nathans Story

I've volunteered with Recovery Cymru for about a year now and have nothing but good things to say about my experience. I feel genuinely proud to be part of such an amazing team.

A few years ago, I overcame a year's long amphetamine addiction which sparked a journey of self-discovery - trying to understand the complexity of my own mind, whilst trying to put myself in a position to help others. Recovery Cymru has been the perfect environment to do this in. I'm currently studying for a degree in Psychology and volunteering with Recovery Cymru has been a fantastic way to gain experience and help an amazing community.

When I first joined Recovery Cymru as a volunteer I was struck by two things, their friendliness and their professionalism. The friendliness runs throughout the whole RC community, from the staff to the members, it always feels like a welcoming place to be. The professionalism comes in the way that Recovery Cymru supports their volunteers. Right from the start, I was given training which prepared me for everything I've come across and the support has continued ever since.

I work on reception once a week, welcoming people into the centre and signing them in and out. There are often new members visiting for the first time but there are also the regular faces I've come to expect and look forward to catching up with every week.

Anon

After being a heroin addict and dealing with depression and anxiety for over a decade I was lucky enough to find a community like Recovery Cymru after I had overcome my substance misuse.

It was only really early days (about a couple of weeks) when I found out about R.C on the internet. I then signed up to do the 'Footsteps to Recovery' course. In all honesty I didn't think it would suit me, but I was desperate and thought if nothing else it would give me some sort of structure in my crazy life. I was right. And it was hard for me at first. I probably did not engage much or speak for the first few weeks but I listened. And as I listened I came to the realisation that it wasn't just me who felt the way I did and did the things I had done. On finishing the footsteps programme I became worried about where to go from there, so I started doing the groups at R.C. It was just for something to do at first, but I soon started getting something from the groups. It is very powerful listening to other people who are going through very similar things to you. Everyone's journey is most definitely very different, but listening to other people speak about their thought processes, feelings and behaviour around addiction really made me see that I wasn't the only one going through these things.

From there, R.C encouraged me to do the MILE programme and R.C's own volunteer training to prepare for volunteering as they said I was very proactive in my recovery journey. I can't really explain the boost this gave my confidence. I had actually found people who were not judging me and actually trusted me. After years of judging myself and really thinking I was worthless, I had actually found people who could see the good and also the potential in me. The best was that these people were 'peers' which I may not really have understood at the time, but soon I would come to see the strength in peer support. So, I completed the training and started volunteering at R.C in about August/ September 2017 as a recovery buddy and covering reception. I also started cooking on Wednesdays for the cookery social which was really good for me as I am a trained chef and hadn't done that sort of thing for well over 10 years. I would worry that people wouldn't want an ex 'smack head' cooking for them. I did this for 8 months or so and found my fears to be unfounded (nobody can judge you the way you judge yourself!)

I can safely say that volunteering has really helped me in my own recovery journey. Recovery is an ongoing thing, but I can say I have been in recovery for 3 years with the help and support of the staff and volunteers, even some of the members. I have made a few friends along the way which is massive for me as I didn't think I could trust people again. Because of my old life I found it really difficult to trust others, but thanks to the support and trust of everyone here at this recovery community, I am getting there.

Obviously, the issues that were there before I got into addiction are still there, but with sobriety I find I have a clearer mind to try and address these issues as they arrive. I now know that there are people out there who really do care and will be there to support and help, so long as I ask for it when I need it. I think that volunteering in the buddy role is suited to me as I know I can be empathetic and could never judge anyone. I know other places say that they are non-judgmental but Recovery Cymru is the only place I have come across which is true to its word. I am so happy to have found R.C as it has made a massive difference in my crazy life. For one thing, it's not so crazy anymore and I am still clean!

Ellies Story

The main reason I was interested in volunteering at Recovery Cymru was to gain the relevant experience and also help others. However, I have learned much more than that. I have learnt that stereotypes do not exist within addiction and that addiction can affect any individual from any walk of life. I have also learnt many transferable skills, such as listening techniques, how to read body language and good communication skills. From active participation, I have enjoyed learning about the psychology behind addiction and the different components that substances are categorized in and made up of.

I decided to volunteer at Recovery Cymru because throughout my upbringing, I have seen how addiction not only affects the individual themselves (my family member) but also their friends and family around them. Through volunteering for Recovery Cymru it has allowed me to have a better understanding of how addiction consumes an individual and their life and from this, I am now a lot more educated and a lot more understanding and forgiving. Every time I step foot in the centre I look forward to the day ahead as each day is different. The atmosphere at the centre is always welcoming and friendly and all the individuals that attend there, both members and volunteers make me feel welcomed every time, the centre is more like a big family! I have met so many amazing, caring, strong and determined individuals through Recovery Cymru that I admire and look up to.

Matty

Hi all. My name is Matty. I'm fairly new to volunteering, having completed the Recovery Cymru volunteer training this time last year. Who would have thought that the shy, retiring guy I used to be would have stepped into the world of volunteering, giving back the knowledge and proving that recovery is not only possible, it's a beautiful journey. I began volunteering at the beginning of 2020 and I love it! I love every minute of getting involved and giving back.

I completed two detoxes, one in North Wales in 2017 and later one in South Wales. I found the journey hard and frustrating but I never lost hope that it was achievable. The seed was planted in December 2016, I wanted to change. My Mum had been diagnosed with breast cancer, I was very low at the time, very depressed. I was stuck indoors as anxiety and alcohol controlled my life.

Finding Recovery Cymru in 2018 was the fresh start I needed; what I had craved since finishing rehab. It gave me the chance to rebuild my life, filling it with the routine and stability I needed to have a life - to feel alive again. Group work allowed me to make new friends and peers - members, volunteers and staff so clearly believed in me. Now, I feel a part of a very special community/ family. I feel blessed to wake up every morning feeling like me!!



Recovery Cymru

10 Years
Of connection