

THE PUPIL BECOMES A TEACHER

Recently I was invited to participate in the Mind Recovery College as a facilitator in the Food and Mood program. My whole experience at the Recovery College has been a positive one where I have felt a sense of empowerment that comes with self-directed recovery.

Through participating in the group sessions on offer I have felt comfortable in sharing aspects of my journey to recovery in a non-judgemental environment. I have felt supported and validated in a way that I have not experienced in many years in clinical settings as both an in- and outpatient. There is a totally different feel to the college and a sense of equality in having facilitators with lived experience. Just knowing everyone there is on a recovery journey contributes to the sense of shared experience and growth. It felt very natural to become involved in facilitating, and the kind words of support and encouragement from other students at the college was a big plus.

While it can at times be a little confusing learning how the place runs behind the scenes, the camaraderie and support from the staff and other facilitators keeps me going. In particular, the sense of hope that I can help and teach others what I have learned from my own recovery and conversely learn from those attending the groups is very encouraging. Learning to think on my toes again and overcome past fears and anxieties of talking in front of groups has melted away. My confidence in my abilities and people skills has been boosted by this whole experience.

Self-directed recovery has not always been an easy road. I have achieved a greater sense of self-reliance, self-mastery and self-control by becoming a facilitator, and I feel more positive that more opportunities like this will open up for me in the future. More important than that, my self-belief has returned in a way that four months ago I never could have anticipated, in a role I never could have imagined.

It is with much gratitude that I reflect on my time at the Mind Recovery College. My journey is leading me to help, teach and inspire others to reach within themselves to find their own unique pathway to recovery.

Mind Recovery College participant