

NURTURING RECOVERY

Evaluation OF CASP Recovery Cafés



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Introduction

About this Document

This document records an independent evaluation of the Recovery cafés operated by CASP¹ at the Muriel Boothman Centre on Fonthill Road Clondalkin. The evaluation is based mostly on the reflections of CASP staff and attendees of the cafés. Staff involved were interviewed in one-to-one meetings. Attendees volunteered to give their input in one-to-one confidential interviews on the nights of the cafés. Interviews were conducted during a single visit to both the Monday and Wednesday meetings.

An interview with of the Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force, (CLDATF)² and with the company³ leading the mindfulness sessions that were a part of the cafés in 2023 are also part of the evaluation.

The report also places the cafés in the context of CASP's work as an organisation, and the recovery movement, particularly in Clondalkin. It places the work in the context of policy frameworks relating to drug misuse through a review of some key policy documents such as the National Drugs Strategy Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery⁴ and the report on the Citizens Assembly on Drug Use in Ireland⁵. There was a review of some seminal texts on the theory of recovery, particularly William White's work on recovery capital⁶ and The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)⁷

About the CASP Recovery cafés

The first recovery café opened on February 21st 2022 at the CASP building on Fonthill Road. This welcoming space provides an opportunity for people in recovery and their supporters to come together, share stories, enjoy a hot dinner, and connect with others who understand their journey. Everything at the café is completely free, including holistic therapies and live music. On May 4th, 2022, a second weekly Recovery café was introduced on Wednesdays, followed by an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

There continue to be two recovery cafés in operation in CASP. One takes place each Monday evening from 6.30pm to 8pm and precedes a Cocaine Anonymous (CA) fellowship meeting which is hosted in the building but is not CASP operated. The second takes place on a Wednesday evening at the same time. This precedes an Alcohol Anonymous (AA) fellowship meeting, also hosted at the Muriel Boothman centre and also non-CASP operated.

Both cafés are attended typically by around 40 people. Most, though not all, of those attending the cafés stay on the attend the fellowship meeting. During the hour and a half, food is served which includes a hot meal along with tea, coffee and pastries. People mingle in the foyer area of the building, or outside in fine weather or in the meeting room which is just off the foyer. Three to four CASP staff and volunteers are present, cooking serving food and engaging with attendees.

Most evenings holistic therapies are available to attendees in small anterooms off the foyer. These include Reiki conducted by CASP staff trained in the practice.

¹ [CASP - Clondalkin Addiction Support Programme](#)

² [Home - Clondalkin Drugs Task Force](#)

³ Magic Minds See [MagicMinds.ie – Stories that have the power to Inspire](#)

⁴ [gov - Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

⁵ [Assembly on Drugs Use | Citizens' Assembly \(citizensassembly.ie\)](#)

⁶ White, W. & Cloud, W. (2008). Recovery capital: A primer for addictions professionals. Counselor, 9(5), 22-27. Posted at [www.williamwhitepapers.com](#)

⁷ [SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

During the period under review, group mindfulness sessions led by an external professional were offered to attendees. From time to time, there is also live music. At Christmas, a Christmas meal was served to attendees.

Development of the Recovery Cafés.

There had been a long-standing evening drop-in at CASP used mostly by a small number of opiate-addicted service users. Staff reported that this service was under-used as the numbers were small. There was a sense that the service had become a routine that was not having much positive impact on those attending and could not justify the staff input.

During COVID, the café drop-in was suspended, and it was decided to rethink the service. Some staff visited a recovery café in Tallaght which informed the CASP initiative. The biweekly cafés in CASP were begun. Those who had been attending the drop-in were invited to continue to attend at the new service. Most of them declined. The new cafés quickly grew in popularity over the following two years.

The Purpose of the Cafés.

CASP proposes the following understanding of the purpose of recovery cafés.

These cafés aim to make recovery more visible and create a supportive atmosphere for all. They are intended as a support to recovery for attendees. As they precede fellowship meetings, most attendees see the café experience as a complement to their fellowship experience. In the cafés, they can build a deeper social connection to others in recovery. They find in this support for their own recovery journeys. They also see the cafés as an opportunity to support newcomers to the fellowships as they are a way to ease them into the experience into going into a fellowship meeting.



Summary of Evaluation Findings

The recovery cafés are highly valued by those attending. They see them as an important resource to their recovery. The key elements in this have been:

- The warmth and welcome by CASP staff
- The professionalism of staff in their informal engagement with attendees
- The creation of an atmosphere conducive to creating peer support in recovery among attendees
- The timing of cafés preceding fellowship meetings
- The provision of services such as food, holistic treatments, music and mindfulness classes as part of the café experience

Recovery cafés provide an essential element in the range of services already on offer in CASP in that:

- They underline the significance and the possibility of recovery in the message that CASP gives to its service users.
- They offer the opportunity for all CASP service-users a way to experience of peer-led recovery support within the same service.
- They strengthen the commitment to facilitating peer support among those in addiction evident in other CASP services, particularly in the range of group work and educational programmes.
- They connect CASP to the growing recovery movement within Clondalkin and beyond.

The recovery cafés have impacted significantly on CASP as an organisation. They have energised staff because their work now includes assisting significant numbers of people who are making real progress in tackling their addiction in a more focused way.

The recovery cafés are in sync with policies in the National Drugs Strategy, recommendations of the Citizens Assembly and elsewhere.

The recovery cafés are an important part of other recovery orientated initiatives locally, such as recovery week, the recovery choir and the recovery cycle events.

There is scope to further build in the success of the CASP recovery cafés, particularly by:

- Developing further the holistic and mindfulness programmes
- Developing peer support by offering suitable attendees a role in leading such programmes
- Strengthening as appropriate referrals to the cafés from other services within CASP such as counselling, key-working, engaging with long-term methadone clients etc.
- Working with others in the local community to strengthen the recovery movement in the area.

Recovery in Policy and Theory

National Drugs Strategy

The National Drugs Strategy, Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery is the guiding policy document for drug and alcohol services in Ireland. Its very title underlines the centrality of recovery in its framework.

“Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery emphasises a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland, based on providing person-centred services **that promote rehabilitation and recovery**”⁸

Goal two of the strategy is to

“Minimise the harms caused by the use and misuse of substances and promote rehabilitation and **recovery**.”⁹

The strategy recognises that recovery from substance dependency is a personalised journey, differing in character from one person to another.

“Problem substance use is a chronic, often recurring condition that can cause substantial harm to the person concerned. As a result, recovery is often seen as a journey, and rehabilitation as a process, that supports and encourages the individual at each stage along the pathway to recovery. **Recovery is a personal matter.**”¹⁰

The strategy is based on an understanding of recovery as a process based on having recourse to both internal and external resources. This draws on the theories of William White and others who use the framework of *recovery capital* to understand how recovery works¹¹. Recovery capital refers to a range of resources needed to support recovery. These include personal capital, such as commitment and drive, but also social and community capital, including supportive peer, family and social networks and access to community-based services.

“In addition, some people do not have the internal and external resources needed to achieve and maintain recovery from substance misuse, as well as make behavioural changes. Internal resources may include their resilience, whereas external resources may be their social networks, family or community supports. These resources are also referred to as “recovery capital.””¹²

The strategy also recognises that the need to support recovery capital is more evident in disadvantaged communities such as those served by CASP.

“Building social capital is seen as particularly important in those communities that are most impacted by socio-economic disadvantage, marginalisation and exclusion, as such communities may require more targeted interventions to address the issues they face.”¹³

The National Strategy includes a number of measures specifically related to the work of supporting recovery. Those relating to recovery are:

⁸ [gov - Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie) p 13 EA

⁹ Ibid p 17

¹⁰ Ibid p 33

¹¹ White, W. & Cloud, W. (2008). Recovery capital: A primer for addictions professionals. *Counsellor*, 9(5), 22-27. Posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com

¹² Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery p 33

¹³ Ibid p 17

2.1.18 Help individuals affected by substance misuse to build ***their recovery capital***.

2.1.19 Increase the range of ***progression options for recovering drug users*** and develop a new programme of supported care and employment.

Promote the participation of service users and their families, ***including those in recovery***, in local, regional and national decision- making structures and networks in order to facilitate their involvement in the design, planning and development of services and policies.

Citizens assembly¹⁴

The Citizens Assembly on Drugs Use 2023 in which 100 citizens deliberated on drugs use in Ireland over five weekends published its recommendations at the end of the process. A number of these relate to recovery.

Recommendation 25 again cited recovery capital at the heart of strategies to address drugs misuse urging that:

“The learnings from successful community-based targeted initiatives should be considered for other disadvantaged areas in the country to enable communities strengthen their resilience and build their recovery capital to respond to drugs related challenges.”

The Assembly heard and was influenced by the contribution of Professor Jo-Hanna Ivers, who criticised the National Drugs Strategy for emphasising harm reduction over recovery and urged a systemic approach to building recovery capital. This is reflected in recommendation 30 which reads:

“This recommendation calls for the National Drugs Strategy to prioritise a systemic approach to recovery. Funding and service planning should support evidence-based innovation in the provision of residential and community-based recovery services”.

In addition to these national strategy development instruments, the National Drugs Strategy and the Citizens Assembly, a 2017 study of Drug Task Forces entitled Drug and Alcohol Recovery Outcomes Framework is useful. It sought to create a framework identifying factors that contribute to recovery and measures that support these in the life of an addicted person. As well as measures addressing personal attitudes, drug-misuse behaviour, personal circumstances (housing education, mental health) measures that enhance positive peer social networks were found to be effective in supporting recovery.

“The recent review of the role that human and social capital plays in drug and alcohol recovery found substantial evidence for the positive role of social networks, community and family support. Many studies have found that recovering addicts who maintain positive networks are more likely to refrain from substance misuse.... Positive peer networks in a person’s community can also help recovering addicts better engage in meaningful activities and therefore improve the likelihood of recovery. P 14”¹⁵

¹⁴ [Assembly on Drugs Use | Citizens' Assembly \(citizensassembly.ie\)](https://citizensassembly.ie)

¹⁵ Eibhlín Ní Ógáin & Lindsay Hodgson Drug and Alcohol Recovery Outcomes Framework Health Research Board 2017

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes four major dimensions of recovery which complements the Drugs Task Force based research. The four dimensions are Health Home Purpose and Community. The community dimension refers to:

“Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love and hope.”

In summary, both the National Drugs strategy and the Citizens Assembly advocate placing recovery at the heart of the response to drugs misuse. Recovery is seen as a process which is personal to every addict. However, policies refer to the importance of supporting recovery capital to achieve meaningful recovery. That capital is made up of inner personal resources, the resources present in interpersonal social connection and the resources available through community services.

A key measure in building recovery capital are measures that facilitate positive social and peer networking. Our evaluation of the CASP recovery cafés will explore the extent to which these services are effective in providing such measures.



Attendee Reflections

Sixteen attendees were interviewed over the two meetings. Most attendees at both meetings were male. The Monday group preceding the Cocaine Anonymous meeting was notably younger in age profile than those attending the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Most interviewees were from the general Clondalkin area, one came from Lucan and two from outside the LDATF area. Four mentioned that they currently attended other services in CASP or had in the past. All interviewees were also going into the fellowship meeting after the café. Interviewees varied in terms of time in recovery. Some were only months in sobriety. Other had many years of recovery behind them. Three interviewees referred to lapses from which they were currently recovering.

Interviewees were asked about their experience of the cafés, what they valued about them and if they had any suggestions for improvement. All of the interviewees were very positive about their experience of the café. They indicated that it was a significant resource for their recovery. The following were the reasons for this.

The café complements the fellowship meetings

Most spoke about how the ninety-minute café experience was a valuable prelude to the fellowship meeting. As one interviewee put it: "It is an excellent foundation". The social, informal nature of the café eased people into the meeting, especially those new to fellowship.

"A meeting can be a bit intimidating for a newcomer. So, the café helps them relax, meet a few people in an easy way, before going into the formal meeting."

"Someone only new to a meeting has chance to meet others – It's like a mini-meeting. Newcomers feel more settled after the café. When we see a newcomer coming in we make them feel welcome."

It affords an opportunity to develop a deeper connection with people that the attendee will hear sharing in the fellowship meeting in a more social setting. This development of relationship deepens the sense of supportive fellowship the meetings aim to create.

Some interviewees described the fellowship meetings in CASP as their favourite meetings, because of the cafés. Others noticed that, in their experience, more newcomers "stick at it" than at other fellowships, and they attributed that to the cafés.

The atmosphere created by staff and attendees at the café

Most interviewees referred to the friendly atmosphere and the warm welcome modelled by the staff and echoed in the way attendees relate to each other.

"The kindness I've experienced here! It's invaluable. Listen to that laughter! Its always such a great atmosphere."

"The staff are amazing. They make everyone feel welcomed and at home."

The food

The food, centred on a curry prepared and served by a staff member was mentioned as a significant element in the café experience. Its significance is not only as a focus for social engagement but can also be meeting a basic need for some attendees.

"When I got sober first this was often the only meal I had. It helped save my life".

Some interviewees referred to others for whom the meal is most important. They described how many attendees in recovery live on their own and how they can often neglect to feed themselves. This meal is an important step in building a better nutrition regime as part of recovery. On one evaluation night, a service user just came in for a quick chat and to take a meal away. Attendees are free to take meals away too, not only for themselves. One confessed that he brings a portion home to a family member who is unwell.

Safety

Some interviewees referred to the safety of the cafés. This sense of safety was created by the supportive nature of the group in helping people towards recovery. There was no fear of being in the company of intoxicated people or people who were trying to sell drugs.

It also provided an alternative evening time to staying in at home, which, for some was stressful and for others who are living alone, isolating.

The fact that the cafés were local and were always open on the two evenings provided a sense of stability and routine that interviewees identified as key elements in building recovery.

Ancillary activities

A number of interviewees referred to the other activities that go along with café nights. These included the occasional live music, the Christmas events and the holistic therapies. Special mention was made of the mindfulness programme, which is detailed below.

The interviewees appreciated the Christmas events as gestures of kindness towards them. The opportunity to celebrate Christmas in a recovery focused peer group strengthened the effect of the café experience as Christmas often has difficult associations for those in addiction. Some referred to the fact that some attendees may not have other opportunities to participate in a Christmas celebration.

Some interviewees said they often went to reiki with a trained staff member during café evenings which they appreciated as it grounded and relaxed them.

The Mindfulness Course.

Two six-week mindfulness courses were offered to café attendees. A number of the interviewees attended one of these courses and they reviewed them very positively.

The mindfulness programme was led by a trained practitioner whose life experience helped him identify with attendees at the recovery café. The programme was educational in nature, using participative, experiential exercises to encourage reflection and learn about internal processes that block or enhance recovery. It also taught and practiced skills to strengthen self-acceptance.

“The course was educational and informative. The tutor was great, very creative. The exercises helped stretch your thinking...break out of the comfort zone.”

“It was very powerful. I got a lot out of it. You question yourself throughout it...cop on to the destructive thinking.”

“I was devastated when it was over. I learned a lot. It was very therapeutic...helped me heal.”

The tutor was very appreciative of how the staff at CASP set up the experience for the attendees, creating a warm and encouraging atmosphere. Prior to the course with the attendees, the same

programme was offered to the staff so that they could experience what their service users would be experiencing. This helped cement the staff commitment to hosting the programme for attendees and encouraging them to participate.

Critique and suggestions

Interviewees were asked if they had any criticisms of the cafés or suggestions for the future. There were no criticisms forthcoming except that occasionally the cafés and the fellowship meetings are very full and there is no room to sit.

Most suggested that the mindfulness programme be repeated. Some had not participated but had heard positive reviews and would like to. Some others who had participated said they would like to do it again, or to “do more of it”.

Other suggested extending the holistic therapies and having more reiki sessions available. One contributor with experience of leading yoga classes offered to lead yoga as part of the holistics programme.



On the whole interviewees experienced the cafés as an important part of their recovery journey. Some underlined the lack of opportunities locally to find support for recovery. Some complained that recovery is not encouraged strongly enough in the world of supports for addiction in their experience. One interviewee, who had been part of a methadone programme described how they finally found a path to recovery with the help of a doctor who agreed to help them reduce and then detox from the drug. They put their success to date in building recovery post detox down in large part to having local access to a fellowship linked with the recovery café in CASP.

Staff Reflections

Staff recalled the evening drop-ins that had been in place for many years pre-COVID. In their view, these drop-ins had become unsustainable as numbers attending were small for the staff input required to supervise. There was no sign of progress in those attending who were long-term opiate users, many homeless and mostly attending the methadone clinics.

“It became about people needing a dinner, and there were only about four or five attending.”

They noted that, while these clients were invited to participate in the recovery cafés, they did not. One suggested they might be a little intimidated by being among a large group most of whom are in a very different place in their recovery.

CASP had already been approached by fellowships to hold recovery meetings at the Muriel Boothman Centre and, following COVID when this was possible, the idea of holding both a recovery café and fellowship meetings on the same evening to replace the old drop-ins was agreed.

“We started with ten and it grew very fast until now we get more than forty most evenings. It brought a whole lease of life to the place!”

For staff interviewed the development of recovery cafés has impacted very positively on the morale of staff. Generally they were very positive about the facility being used more fully by such large numbers. And it was important for them to be supporting change and movement in recovery in the lives of addicts as well as supporting those for whom addiction is a part of daily life.

“You can get stifled – tunnel visioned. Is this all there is? Methadone – long term? That’s very flat! Then you see people moving on building support networks and they bring that into recovery cafés.....It brings an enthusiasm into us. A focus on more than maintaining people. That changes the atmosphere.”

Staff recognise that there was something of a loss for those using the drop-in originally. But most of these are still coming into CASP for other services such as lunches, other drop-in times showers and attending the methadone clinic which is housed in the centre.

There have also been incidences of some clients on longer term maintenance attending the cafés and one has moved into a detox and treatment clinic. A number of those attending the recovery cafés are also using other services in CASP such as counselling or keywork or have availed of them in the past. CASP now offers those who have successfully moved on in managing their addiction through such services a further support for their recovery. The whole gambit of a continuity of care is now, as one staff member expressed it – “all under one roof.”

“There are people at the cafés that are still using and people who are abstinent. That can be a bit triggering, but they are all working on recovery as far as I can see. They get to know each other and there’s good peer support.”

The fact that recovery is a growing part of CASP’s offer to those in addiction has meant that the organisation’s local image has been enhanced. Staff noted that some in the community might have seen CASP as mostly a methadone maintenance service, despite the range of services available there. But the advent of the recovery cafés has changed that, perhaps because more people attend it that do the HSE clinic.

Staff echoed the positive role that holistic therapies play in the café experience. They pointed to the potential to develop this dimension of the cafés by utilising the recently added holistic therapies ante building to offer more reiki and to add acupuncture to the menu of therapies.

The mindfulness course was also positively renewed. Staff appreciated the opportunity to take part in that programme themselves before it was offered to the clients.

“The mindfulness was really good. It offered a different dynamic in that it was very innovative. It brought issues to the fore in a safe way and helped us to break patterns.”

“It was important that we (staff) had done it as then we could explain it to clients.”

“Mindfulness helped us value what we do as staff in our work. We all need to work on ourselves to be able to help others. And doing the course together strengthened our connection to each other.”

Staff were enthusiastic about repeating the mindfulness course and offering training in mindfulness to those attendees who might be interested as a way of deepening peer supports among those in recovery.

Staff also echoed the attendees view that the serving of hot food during the café was key to its success.

“It breaks down barriers and creates a good convivial atmosphere.”

They noted how it was also a practical support to attendees who might not be eating well and how some took food away with them to share with family members.

Local Community Recovery Movement

There are a number of local initiatives in the Local Community Drug Task Force catchment which are recovery related. These include:

Recovery Month

Many communities, particularly those in Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force areas, mark Recovery month in September each year. Recovery month is a series of events focused on supporting recovery from addiction and problematic drug and alcohol misuse in a locality. It is seen as an alliance of those in addiction and working on their recovery, their family and friends and services and groups that offer support. Recovery month is sometimes cited as an expression of a “recovery movement” within and across communities most damaged by drugs misuse.

The Clondalkin area became a participant in recovery month each September since 2021. During the period, a range of activities and events are organised by a coalition of local services under the umbrella of the drugs task force. CASP has taken responsibility for aspects of recovery month. For example in 2022:

“CASP hosted its recovery event to mark September being recovery month. It was an amazing day and evening. The event featured an inspiring talk from a man who attends our Recovery cafés about his own journey into recovery, a tree planting ceremony in Ballyowen Park, holistic treatments, a BBQ and an outstanding performance by Clondalkin Recovery Choir. In the evening at our Recovery café, we had live music, a powerful play and another BBQ to round off the event. The aim of the event was to celebrate and support people in recovery and encourage others that there is happy and fulfilled life beyond addiction.”¹⁶

Recovery Road Cycling club

This initiative focuses on peer support in recovery through participation in a healthy activity. It is led by Tus Nua and is the second such initiative to have been established in Ireland following on established in Ballymun in 2021¹⁷.

The Recovery Choir

Following an idea developed during recovery month in 2021, a choir was formed by those in recovery and their supporters. After a slow start during COVID operating on zoom, it began with its first official choir practice on April 1st 2022.¹⁸

These initiatives are explicit about their connection to recovery. But there are many services and initiatives across the Drugs Task Force area that are supporting recovery, both within CASP and elsewhere. These include counselling, peer support and education groups, fellowships, drop-ins, key working support and much more.

It was suggested by the CLDATF that there is scope to develop further the sense of a recovery movement in the local area. The events listed above show an interconnection between initiatives both within Clondalkin and beyond. The recovery choir came about as a result of reflections during recovery month activities. The recovery cycling initiative is linked with a similar one in Ballymun. Recovery month itself is a feature in many communities nationally and attendees at CASP recovery cafés participate in Clondalkin recovery month events.

¹⁶ [A Year in Review, CASP 2022: Clondalkin Addiction Support Programme - CASP](#)

¹⁷ See [New Recovery Road Cycling Club Established in Clondalkin | NewsGroup](#)

¹⁸ [About – clondalkinrecoverychoir](#)

Conclusions and Suggestions

Supporting recovery is an important strand in state policy in response to substance misuse. Indeed, it is part of the title of the national drugs strategy. It was also highlighted during the Citizens Assembly. The policy framework is based on an understanding of recovery as an individual pathway for each person in addiction along their continuum of care. But for every person on that path, the policies recognise that enhancing recovery capital is key to supporting them including supporting social and community measures.

The recovery cafés, on the evidence of the testimonies of attendees and of staff facilitate the enhancement of recovery capital in two important respects.

1. They strengthen key peer social networks among those in recovery in the local community. While these exist in fellowships, the cafés enhance the impact of fellowships considerably by making them more accessible to newcomers and by providing a deeper support interaction between members. Cafés also offer peer social supports to those who do not attend fellowships.
2. They provide a key stage in the continuum of care which is available within CASP. A service user can move from drop-in to key-work to learning group to counselling – all within CASP- and at the time that is right for them – move into active recovery.

The development of the cafés has also boosted the morale of CASP staff as it introduces into the work the satisfaction of supporting positive outcomes in peoples' lives in balance with responding to crises. The fact that the cafés are well supported by large numbers of attendees and are recognised as a positive by the community underlines this morale boost.

The successful elements of the cafés are identifiable in the evaluation. These are:

- The complementarity with fellowship meetings.
- The creation of a warm and welcoming atmosphere through the provision of food, the attitude and professionalism of staff and the additional elements of music and occasional special celebrations, such as Christmas dinner.
- The opportunity to avail of recovery support activities such as holistic therapies and the mindfulness programme.
- The gateway into the recovery café through an attendee's participation in other CASP services, and the gateway into other CASP services through attending the café.

There was little criticism made of any aspect of the café by attendees, except a minor concern at the space being a little restricted for the numbers on occasion. However, there are a number of suggestions arising from the process that may be worth consideration by CASP.

Suggestions for development of Recovery cafés

1. Repetition and enhancement of holistic therapies and mindfulness.

Holistic therapies are an important support for recovery as recognised by attendees in this evaluation. With the increased capacity in space in the ancillary building on the Muriel Boothman Centre site, there is scope to increase the availability of such therapies. It was suggested that acupuncture be added to the menu of such therapies using already trained CASP staff and others if funding allows.

The Mindfulness programme was overwhelmingly endorsed by participating attendees and staff. There is scope to repeat this programme again to support recovery and be down recovery orientated thinking and practices in attendees.

The suggestion was made by staff that training suitable attendees to lead mindfulness with peers be considered. Such a proposal has merit as it would also support a peer led approach to recovery which is recognised as a key element in building recovery capital.

A small budget to support these activities could be earmarked.

2. Strengthening the interconnection between the recovery cafés and other CASP services.

Recovery cafés are a relatively new service within CASP and already have been seen as transformational in the experience of the service by staff, service users and the community. This is because it introduces in a very explicit way a key element in a continuum of care. CASP aims to be a holistic service, offering a range of options to service users.

A number of those attending the cafés also avail of other CASP services or have done in the past. In a small number of cases, some long-term dependents on substances have moved into treatment and recovery and no attend recovery cafés.

It would be worthwhile to consider how much more scope there is to encourage people using other services in CASP to avail of the recovery café, even if they are not attending fellowships. This said, it is of course important not to pressure people in addiction to move into recovery at an unhelpful pace.

Strengthening further the recovery movement within the Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force area.

Along with other recovery focused activities in the wider community such as the choir, the cycling and the recovery month, the fact that recovery cafés exist strengthens the sense of solidarity in a *recovery movement* for local people. The promotion of recovery through these activities underpins recovery capital for those in addiction.

It is suggested that, under the auspices of the Clondalkin LDATF, CASP reflect on the recovery movement locally and how else it can be supported. Such reflection could consist of:

- Local organisations reflecting on what recovery means and how each local service is supporting it.
- Local organisations reflect on how the branding of recovery can be strengthened through social media or public notices within their services and in the community generally. It can also feature as a heading in the strategic plans of organisations.
- Opening opportunities to share and learn from other communities which support recovery focused activities.

Drawing on the leadership potential of those in recovery, particularly attendees at the cafés to support and inform the work of CASP.

Many of those in recovery and attending cafés have much experience in struggling with and recovering from addiction and exhibit significant leadership skills. It is worth considering how to develop and draw on this leadership potential within CASP by

- Creating more opportunities for suitable attendees to promote recovery on behalf of CASP. Already attendees have given testimony at recovery month events.
- Facilitating attendees to offer suitable services to other attendees, with support and training, such as leading mindfulness sessions or other such activities.
- Involving attendees as advisors to CASP in a service-user like forum.

