



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Utilising Digital Courses to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being



THEME:

Cross-Border Health & Social Care

FUNDING(ERDF+Match)
€6,057,591.36

MATCH FUNDERS:

Department's of Health;
Northern Ireland and Ireland

LEAD PARTNER:

Health Service Executive

PROJECT PARTNERS

Western Health and Social Care Trust, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency

Start Date: November 2017

End Date: 31/03/2023



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At the beginning of lockdown experts warned physical and mental well-being was likely to be severely impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. This prompted the Innovation Recovery Project, a cross-border mental health education initiative, to adapt its services and switch to free online and interactive learning.



Using a 'lived experience' learning approach to help people improve their mental health and well-being the project has successfully ran over 196 courses since the COVID-19 lockdown.

Since its inception just over two years ago, the project has delivered courses to over 3,000 people. The aim of the project over its lifespan of four years is to engage 8,000 people in mental health recovery education.

“Since lockdown began, we have had nearly 2,500 participants complete our tailored online courses, which has included The COVID Wellness Toolbox, Mindful Sleep and Mindfulness and Relaxation. The provision of the online courses has been so important and allows more people to attend from the comfort of their own home. They also give people the sense that they are not alone even if they sometimes feel that way, offering a connection to those who may be in isolation or going through a difficult time.”

Cathy McCloskey, Project Manager of the Innovation Recovery Project

“I very much enjoyed today’s online course, Coping with Change. Please express my gratitude to both facilitators. I particularly liked the short square breathing technique and will definitely be putting it into practice. Both presenters offered great slide content, with interesting and relevant quotes and great examples from their personal lives.”

Online course participant



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"Hi, I'm Wendy. I'm a Peer Educator for the Innovation Recovery Project, Western Hub, and deliver workshops cross-border.

I have lived experience of mental health issues and my ethos is to help others by sharing my journey of recovery. Prior to joining the Innovation Recovery Project, I volunteered with the Western Health and Social Care Trust Recovery College.

We have devised our online courses to reach out to those who may have already been getting support in the community before COVID-19, and to others who may find circumstances overwhelming and to help maintain their mental health wellness.

There has been a great return so far, with each course co-produced and delivered by people who have experience in mental health - and have the understanding of the need to be connected to others.

We provide education and discussions around feelings and behaviour due to extreme circumstances beyond our control. It's important we are able to reach people during this uncertain time, in order to help them develop skills to manage the current situation and give hope for the future.

For some people, these online workshops may be a break from the fast pace of life, for others it offers a crucial lifeline of support as the current crisis may mean a step back in their recovery."