

Tribe Warriors:

An Evaluation of Write To Freedom's activities, February 2017 to April 2018

By Lucy Lepchani

Introduction to the organisation

Write To Freedom is an independent organisation with Charitable Status. It is dedicated to an innovative and holistic approach to addiction recovery. It defines its aims, interventions and outcomes explicitly:

"Write to Freedom supports people in changing their lives through mentoring, self-empowerment, wilderness experiences and the power of personal stories. We work with those in recovery from addiction. By addiction we mean any behaviour that causes harm to self, other or both."

- Write To Freedom 'About'

The website's vision statement further outlines Write To Freedom's core values and beliefs, in relation to the causal environments of addiction.:

"Our vision is of a society where people's actions (for example crime, substance abuse) are understood as being an expression of dysfunctional families, communities and societies when healthy means of expression have not been modelled or available. Write to Freedom believes that all human beings should have equal access to supportive communities; to learning healthy ways of expressing and untangling confusing pasts and behaviours; to accessing natural environments; and to exciting, creative and inspirational experiences."

- Write to Freedom 'Vision'

This statement also introduces the reasoning by which Write to Freedom identify the general causal events which lead to addictions. It further assumes that wider society has not modelled values and behaviours required for overcoming addictive behaviours, and is in part causal to individual addiction.

Write To Freedom's activities take place in an exceptional outdoor setting and where the values of their considered and structured 'Tribe' model those of a supportive, expressive, stimulating, community environment with view to providing Recovery Capital within an effective Transformative Learning experience.

The synthesis of these positions is uniquely presented, primarily through activities relating directly to creative writing, mentoring, and outdoor activities. This is further elucidated by its founder, Caspar Walsh's statement on the website:

“ Everything I have done has led me to this. My love of nature, myth and being in community. Adventure. Friendship. Challenge. Looking at how I can make a difference in the world. This work came looking for me and wouldn't let up till I gave in and committed to it. It's my calling, a big part of my life's work and what I want to leave behind. A positive footprint for future generations.”

- Caspar Walsh

Clearly, causes and solutions regarding addiction, as defined by Write To Freedom, are stated confidently in relation to established and effective theoretical models as well as with emic reference to addiction and recovery. It is by this reflective analysis of his own experiences, and conviction of his beliefs that prompted Walsh to found Write To Freedom. That perspective, and the journey from which it derives, is in harmony with findings produced by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs 2012, (ref) and with regards the concept of Recovery Capital. (see footnote and further reading).

The organisation clearly combines perspectives from a number of experienced and qualified individuals and consequently provides a diversity of experience and skills amongst its leadership.

Write To Freedom engages with its participants from a diverse range of addiction histories, not just those who misuse drugs. Recovery Capital is a relevant concept in relation to all addiction behaviours in that it seeks to redress behaviours and attitudes arising from a lack of access to sufficient resources or 'capital' (see footnote).

The overall position of Write To Freedom's philosophy is diverse and its client-centred dynamism is reflected throughout activities and events, as well as how it operates within its organisational operations.

Elements of Critical Social Theory, Pragmatism, and Social Constructionism are all visibly present as viable research positions; however, Write To Freedom does not formally identify as a research organisation nor does it participate in any formal research programs at this time.

Write to Freedom - Stated Aims

Aims are stated explicitly and with reference to transformation .

- Promote values of respect, equality, authenticity and trust, and create spaces where healthy communication and sharing can occur.
- Increase access to, and deepen people's connection with, natural environments
- Promote meaningful self-expression through the written and spoken word
- Provide positive, authentic role models
- Offer contemporary 'rites of passage'
- Demonstrate the use of story and narrative as a means of transformation ie Tribe Warrior
- Increase participants' self-awareness, self-belief and self-compassion
- Build stronger communities through inter-generational sharing and mentoring
- Shift attitudes away from 'labels' and towards 'stories'

- Prioritise engaging with people who are socially excluded and would otherwise be unlikely to access similar interventions.

Objectives, identified as a means to achieving these aims, appear across several pages of the website and are embedded within an ongoing narrative including: personal statements, descriptions of activities for Write To Freedom clients/participants, and other information. Although not stated explicitly as 'objectives', the narrative presents these as focused, feasible, and emphatic in relation to activities under sections titled Mentoring, Creative Writing and Wilderness. Narrative is explicit, honest and engaging; for example, on the page title *Why We Do It* the subheading : *'We want life to be an adventure worth living'*, emphasising desirable values beyond the usual or mundane. Rather than standing alone as a soundbite, or a sales spin, these few powerful words reflect a pervading attitude of the organisation and also makes reference to the physical-world setting of activities.

Mentoring, Creative Writing and Wilderness as sub-headings focus and emphasise the means to such an adventure.

Evaluator position and this evaluation

This evaluation seeks to present a broad, transparent, narrative account which incorporates mixed methods of evaluation; and to portray a balance of intellectual, aesthetic and affective observations; and with critical perspective of how Write To Freedom effects Transformational Learning throughout its activities with clients.

The evaluation is retrospective; as an evaluator, I have not been involved with any aspect of Write To Freedom activities before this task, although is familiar with theories of, and practices which use Transformational Learning; with arts informed evaluation; mentoring; holistic environments and work with those in addiction recovery. This position appearing sympathetic: an intention for critical examination will seek to ensure that there is evidence of robust reasoning for all aspects of the work of Write To Freedom at all times to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of evidence provided.

Evidence of reflective practices, consequent reflexivity and organisational development towards its own aims and vision will be examined. This evaluation covers the time period January 2016 until May 2018.

The evaluation process is reliant on published materials on the website and which includes film and links to blogs by former participants; also access to data including both qualitative comment and quantitative data presented on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (incorporating four additional evaluation questions); access to unlimited interviews with key personnel: Creative Director and Lead Facilitator, Caspar Walsh; and Project Co-ordinator and Facilitator, Ben Ford. Also, access to contact with other personnel where requested, and access to other published materials produced by Write To Freedom.

No details of finances have been provided for evaluation and therefore no comment about costs not return on investment has been included.

Further Elements of The Transformational Journey

The nature and structure of activities that Write To Freedom offers are explained in some depth on the website. The following paragraphs outline these process by which participants engage, and then opt to participate in leadership:

Clients begin as participants on a group weekend called New Horizons, where each participant is introduced the staff team, and begins the informal mentoring process. This mentoring relationship continues after the event for as long as the client wants it, meeting once a month, back on Dartmoor.

There is then the option for those who have attended the New Horizons weekend to become new staff at the next residential, thus beginning their mentoring into leadership. Once this relationship begins, so do phone and Skype supervision sessions between staff volunteers and Caspar. Currently, we have 5 individuals who have returned to staff: 5, 3 and 2 occasions respectively. One woman has now decided to specialise and become a trainee nature connection facilitator, and shadows the lead facilitator.

Some significant theoretical roots

These following theoretical models all contribute to Write To Freedom's culture: its activities, values and relationships. Each of these alone holds proven weight in numerous research projects, but provide an additional fortitude by working in synthesis.

For the duration of their involvement, participants are immersed in a rich culture of Social, Human, and Cultural Capital and following which, participants can continue to belong as part of their 'Tribe' / recovery community within Write To Freedom's model. This takes place via mentoring face to face as well as online; and even consequently, via blogs that link to the website.

These theories are:

Transformative Learning: implicit rather than stated overtly in its literature, Write To Freedom's experiential learning reflects an embodied understanding of Jack Mezirow's lifetime body of work. Dean Elias describes this as:

Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of the self; transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing underlying premises."

Recovery Capital

"Recovery capital Recovery capital refers to the breadth and depth of internal and external resources that can be drawn upon to initiate and sustain recovery" from substance misuse (dependency) (Granfield and Cloud, 2001). In 2009, Granfield and Cloud revisited their initial concept and argued that there are four components to recovery capital:

Social capital is defined as the sum of resources that each person has as a result of their relationships, and includes both support from and obligations to groups to which they belong; thus, family membership provides supports but will also entail commitments and obligations to the other family members.

Physical capital is defined in terms of tangible assets such as property and money that may increase recovery options (e.g. being able to move away from existing friends/networks or to fund an expensive detox service).

Human capital includes skills, positive health, aspirations and hopes, and personal resources that will enable the individual to prosper. Traditionally, high educational attainment and high intelligence have been regarded as key aspects of human capital, and will help with some of the problem-solving that is required on a recovery journey.

Cultural capital includes the values, beliefs and attitudes that link to social conformity and the ability to fit into dominant social behaviours.”

- Advisory Council of the Misuse of Drugs, 2012

The 12 Steps program - as originated by Alcoholics Anonymous and now a fundamental model across many recovery groups: Write To Freedom is not structured around this model but accommodates it competently with both emic and etic knowledge. Many participants are already committed to the 12 Steps Program.

Bruce K. Alexander’s **Rat Park** theory: the evidence bound belief that environmental enrichment can eliminate already established addiction-related behaviours.

Men’s work/Mythopoetics - Robert Bly’s book *Iron John: a Book About Men* (Bly, 1990) was an international bestseller. It consolidated and led to the development and expansion of a global Men’s Movement and its narrative culture entitled *mythopoetry*. Bly asserts that men need active guidance out of boyhood, by their elders, and towards a differently defined manhood than that of the default position and mainstream processes of wider Western Society. The understanding and telling of stories and myth is a core of this philosophy, and forms a substantial pillar of Write To Freedom’s and practices towards transformational learning. It is recognisable here, under ‘Our Story’ on Write To Freedom’s website and it proclaims:

“ ...an urgent need for young men to experience contemporary rites of passage into adulthood. A creative programme was developed, working with old and new myths, encouraging a dialogue with the natural world and building a new kind of community or ‘village’. These villages are places in nature and in the wider community where staff and students are valued and respected, regardless of who they are or what they’ve done. (our story)...[...]...Our work goes from strength to strength. At its heart we help humans cross thresholds into sometimes challenging, often exciting new stages of life. How to share the road and the load. How to support each other in transforming old stories into new opportunities for healing and growth. The journey continues for us all. “

This metaphor-rich writing informs and defines structures and values within which Write to Freedom operates: a redefined learning environment towards transformational experience. Adaptations in relation to working with women rather than all male groups has been considered: reflected on, discussed, and adapted accordingly. Documentation of this considered adaptation was not provided for evaluation.

Tribe Warrior (Walsh, 2013) Walsh describes this aspect of the work as *“a central focus of all course delivery.”*

Participants’ personal narratives are imperative to their recovery: human society is defined by its myths. Elements of Tribe Warrior are interpreted into group activities of belonging, challenges, quest, transformation, and survival.

As with Bly’s Iron John, Walsh’s *Tribe Warrior* models a narrative for transformational learning but specifically, while building a sense of belonging with others and developing collective/‘tribal’ resources towards personal and shared Recovery Capital.

Immersed in the natural environment where kinaesthetic, sensory, visual, auditory, tactile and other modalities are significantly present, this learning environment contributes to events where participants reframe their own narratives within the context of personal and collective myth. This experience significantly contributes towards the *‘disorientating dilemma’* and the *‘perspective transformation’* elements of Mezirow’s Transformative Learning.

Walsh informed for this evaluation:

“ the core narrative device, Tribe warrior has been adapted over the last year to meet more of the clients stories and needs. We are now in the process of re writing/updating Tribe warrior to suit the core participant needs. I have asked the new and experienced staff to provide us with key story motifs and plot points that connect to the quality of the Acorn leader direction they have held (this request was from the last residential staff team). This feels a really powerful inclusion of new and experienced voices.”

Reflective Practice is ongoing at all levels of Write To Freedom’s work and interactions.

As demonstrated directly above, adaptations to operations in response to observed, stated, and deeply considered needs.

For example, it came to attention through participant and stakeholder sessions that **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** is a recurrent theme in addiction wounding: and so Write to Freedom now employ trauma-aware Psychotherapists on each residential group programmes.

A Culture of reflexivity is described through the statement below.

“ Write to Freedom offer one solution out of many available throughout the world. We are always open to new ideas and ways to bridge and build communities through activities, the power of personal story and discovering and building a belief in who we are and what we can offer the world.” (Write To Freedom website)

Personnel also communicate via email, in person, and using online media to maintain multi-level feedback, debriefs, and wider reflection leading towards appropriate repositioning of every detail that is raised. It is evident that 'being heard' is highly regarded.

Formal **Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health Wellbeing Scale** evaluations follow all participant events. As shown below, in the data interpretation section, this applies to staff feedback as well as to participant feedback.

The 8 Shields model has been a more recent adaptation across the organisation structure of Write To Freedom. Different to, and perhaps more suitably structured for organising information and relationships than preceding systems-in-development, this global 'training, mentoring, and leadership network' identifies with *"cultural repair and nature connection"* and *"...incorporates traditional mentoring and deep nature practices, fully supported through neurological, emotional, and physical connection to the natural world."*

Feedback - Data Interpretation

To present feedback data regarding quality of experiences, perennially poses the challenge of how to select material for evaluation or whether to present it all as such; whether to determine and therefore bias a narrative or whether to abandon that to the interpretation of others.

Evaluator bias, therefore, needs to be overt and in this situation I have selected three different styles of representing participant data by which:

- sections 1 and 2 indicate Transformative Learning in progress
- sections 2 (participant feedback) and 3 (stakeholder feedback*) demonstrate excerpts of high quality narratives (as opposed to those whose comments comprised 'yes' and 'no' to each question, or left sections unanswered).
- Sections 2 and 3 also demonstrate examples of constructive feedback to Write To Freedom, post event. This range of samples demonstrates the transparency of the organisation with regards criticisms of itself; and outside of the content, this demonstrates evidence that the organisation values reflection from those at all levels of involvement.

All comments are presented anonymously. These few are examples amongst hundreds.

**stakeholder: i.e. includes new staff and established employees*

Section 1. To demonstrate personal engagement with transformational experience, the following are narratives derived from words selected from participants written evaluation responses. Words have been selected on the basis of evidencing and demonstrating the physical environment, sensory and physical sensations, and emotional/conceptual

realisations which comprise these. They are best interpreted by reading aloud and reflecting on each: analysing narrative for its experiential content is best considered when the interpreter is receptive to senses outside of his/herself, and to finding meaning in each narrative's intrinsic poetics.

- I. "Loved being surrounded/dubious but then at ease/achieved goals/want self-knowledge/emotions that I haven't felt for many years/Amazement/friendships/grateful." - Participant, 2016
- II. "Rejuvenated/comfortable/love wilderness/peace/invaluable/excellent/ enjoyed sharing and participating/pleasure/trust/hearing/reinforcement of what is achievable/engages self-belief/ hugely rewarding revelation/senses came alive/peace/gentleness/tranquillity/ lucky to receive/ spiritual as was needed/unwavering staff/ heaven sent/bonds with others." - Participant 2017
- III. "Connected/wellbeing/ environment enabled me to let go of fears/listening to birds, outdoors/immersed/gave 100% and met goals/enjoyed the challenge/curiosity/surprised/excited/exhilarated/moved to tears/release of tears/belonging to 'tribe'." - Participant 2017
- IV. "More grounded and connected surrounded by nature/inner peace and serenity/difficult at first/acceptance and belonging/weight lifted/understood and included/stronger in myself/more confident/who and what I am/enjoyed/just right/something new within myself." - Participant, 2018
- V. "My life's blood/nourishment and comfort/I feel at one/open hearted/willing/my trust has grown/deeply moved/greatly touched/the opportunity to grow/re-focusing my goal/I love the organic nature/overwhelming compassion/open and receptive to people's pain/balanced by the emerging hope/I would like to sing my gratitude out loud."

Section 2:

"Invaluable in supporting mindfulness and supporting wellbeing."

"I did have high hopes for the residential and this has exceeded beyond my imagination."

"I really didn't know what to expect. Any expectation I might have come up with, has been transcended."

“Most of the experiences I had this weekend fell ‘outside the box’ of what I normally do in life and the activities in which I engage. I think I was out of my comfort zone from the beginning.

I think at the end of the course, my learning zone is brimming.”

“I feel that I have started a new stage in my life journey, I feel I have come to a new level of acceptance of my past and feel excited and positive about my future. I have achieved in a few days, what I have been trying to get all my life and could have spent time trying to find. I cannot express in words, my thanks and gratitude to the staff other than they are truly exceptional souls and Caspar is an amazing human being. Course content and venue was perfect. Thank you”

“A tremendous distillation-of and drilling-down upon what I want with my life going forward.”

“I have found a real connection with nature, not just to walk over the land but to look around at the wildlife and beauty. Much more respect for the environment.”

“I am truly grateful to be part of a wonderful tribe or crew as I put it because I thought it was cool.”

“I love the 8 Shields model and would love to have some training around this.”

“I spent the night in the forest room which was great as negotiating the top bunk was not good for me and being in a tiny room with 5 of us was claustrophobic.”

“I didn’t expect the level of immersion that I did feel or the caring and love that was extended to me. It has touched me deeply.”

“I have set a goal to work towards. I feel I achieved my goals within the weekend. I feel confident in what I am going to achieve and continue a better future.”

“I loved it, especially the women’s group as I felt I really struggled with women in the past.”

Section 3

“The behind the scenes element is amazing and draining.”

“I feel blessed, lucky and moved to the point of extreme spiritual experience”

“I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to staff this residential. I feel a difference between this and the first residential I staffed and believe that the skills and confidence I have gained in the mentoring days have really supported my growth.”

“Extremely tight staff team being flexible for time and re-arranging schedule accordingly. It just flowed and felt right.”

“The sword ritual particularly, was incredibly powerful. Epic stuff. Weaving the nature games with the story went well too, when we did it. The content of Tribe Warrior touched a lot of people and brought up strong emotions.”

“I loved when Ben and Caspar played instruments together and think this could be really good to incorporate into the story. Very moving and powerful with the hang drum and bodhran combined.”

“Ben and I suggested an initial go-through of the programme with new recruits(2 hrs) to avoid potential time in staff meetings being used up with Qs we can answer ahead of the residential.”

“I heard again and again in check-ins and sharing, the following words from the participants – humbled, grateful, connected, moved, joyful, love. It’s clear that this course definitely did deliver on the aims named in the question.”

“It provides a varied and comprehensive means of experiencing nature and formulating and working on personal goals that either are not provided by any other organisations or not with the same mix and thoroughness, It is a powerful support for participants in recovery and already supported by 12 Step fellowships or local drug and alcohol services as it provides opportunities beyond what the latter can provide and which are in no way inconsistent with them.”

“I’ve been reminded of the power of leading from a place of vulnerability.”

Re improvements:

“Timekeeping. Clearly defined roles/people. Use an actual model like the 12 shields N/S/E/W.

More time for final meal/paperwork, etc. some sections felt rushed.”

“Perhaps not being so rushed at the closing? More coherent weaving between nature activities and story.”

“More time would be great as everyone seemed to take time to get the best out of the programme.”

“I felt we spent too much time in staff meetings. I really appreciated the regular checking and wouldn’t change that but I wonder in more of the planning could fit into the first day and less as we go, apart from tweaks and changes. I felt conscious of the participants sitting waiting, especially in the first meeting, for us to be ready.”

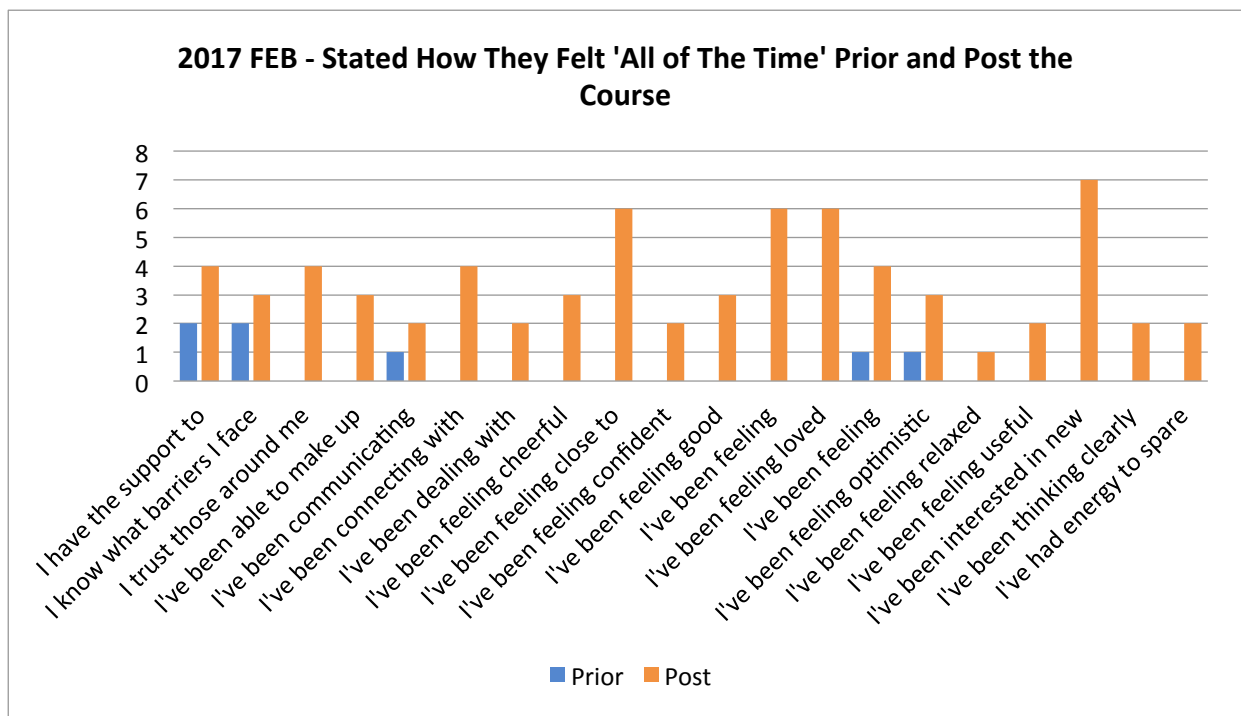
“I believe a little bit of general info at the recruitment stage is needed. Not about the course, but more around the general ‘lifestyle’ whilst at (the venue.)”

“Perhaps we could reflect as a team on what might be happening for participants in that space? My suggestion would be to have some kind of policy/intention to create more space for them.”

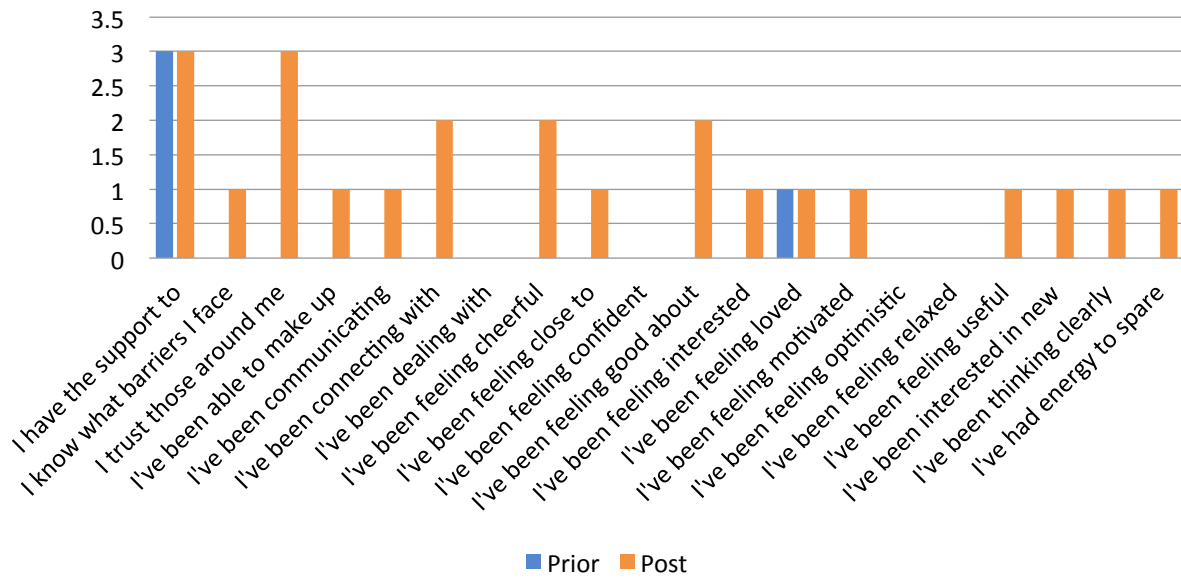
Quantitative data, represented as a series of charts.

These data sets were compiled in relation to matched pair (before and after) evaluation forms only, and so indicate the trend of each group.

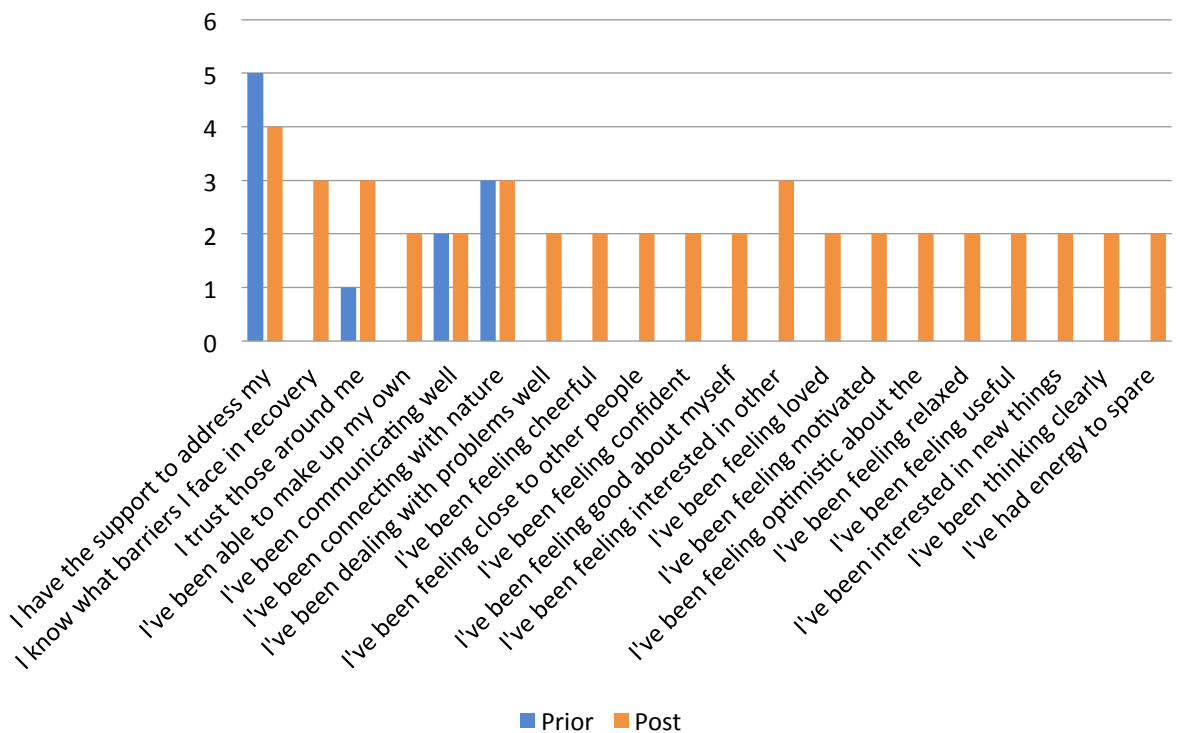
Variations of pre-course, post course and percentage improvement data inevitably reflect the differences in cohorts age, ability, personal issues, etcetera.



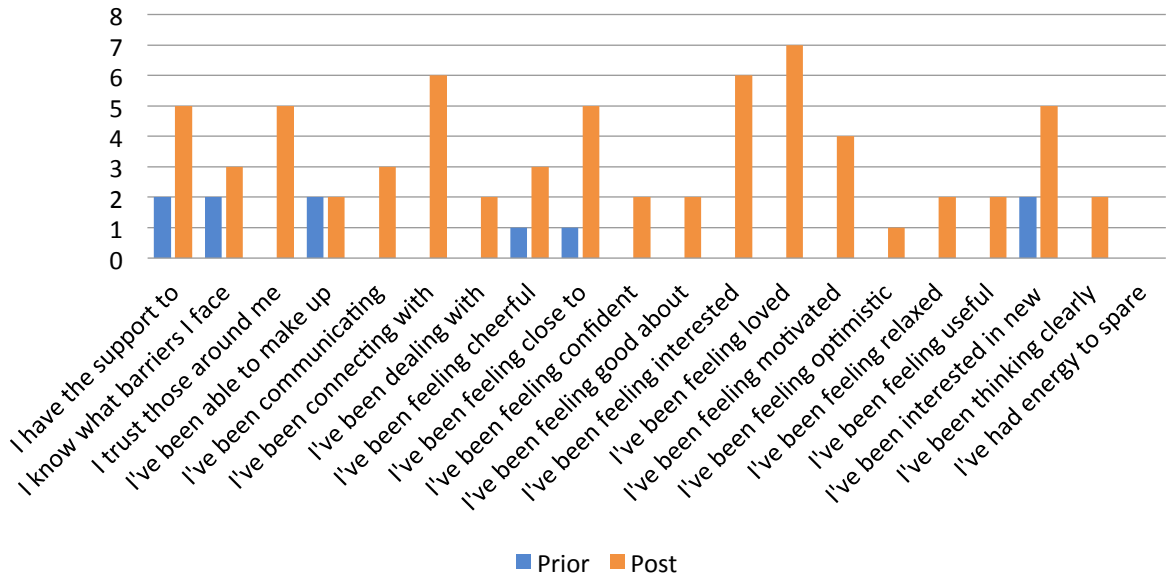
2017 APRIL - Stated How They Felt 'All of The Time' Prior and Post the Course



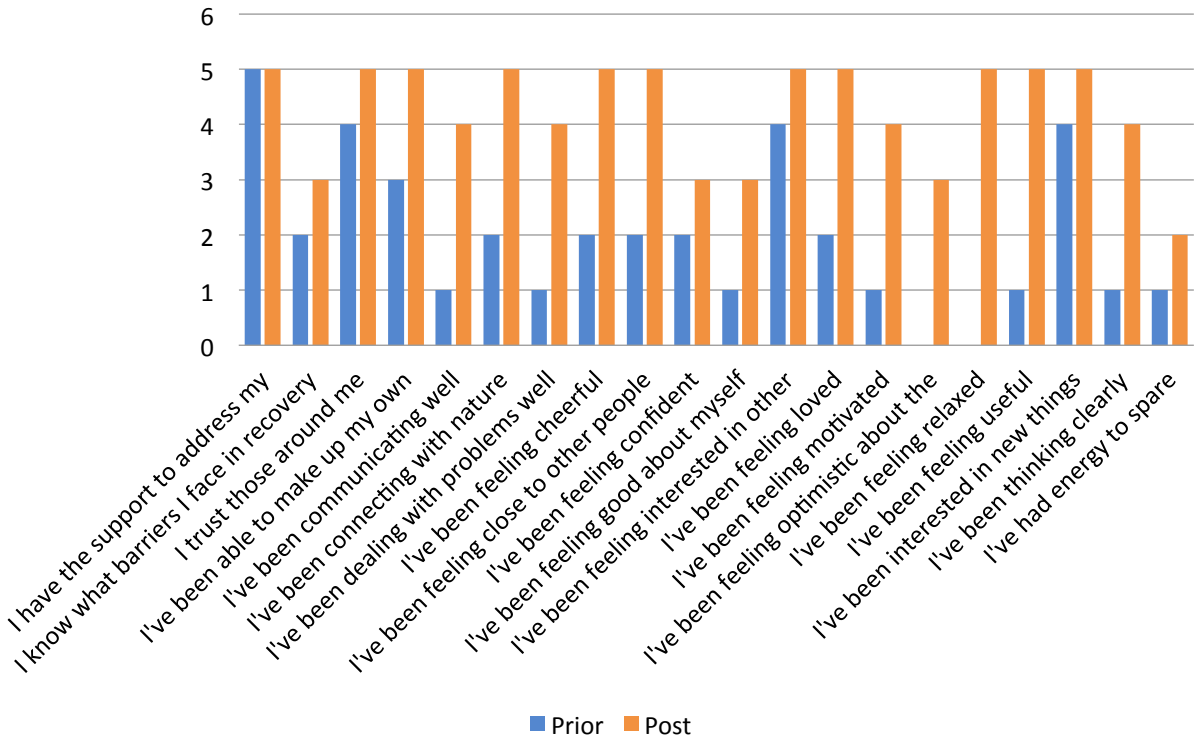
2017 JUNE - Stated How They Felt 'All of The Time' Prior and Post the Course



2017 SEPT - Stated How They Felt 'All of The Time' Prior and Post the Course



2018 - Stated How They Felt 'All of The Time' Prior and Post the Course



Interpretation of data:

Interestingly, most respondents felt that they had the support to address recovery both prior and post the course for all courses, which could be due to the fact that they saw their enrolment as a step towards recovery in the first instance. The exception is June 2017 which I expect is an anomaly (user error).

The trends shown above suggests a significant increase in how the respondents stated they felt 'all of the time' following each course, and without exception.

This measures a significant improvement of mental health, according to the Warwick Edinburgh Scale.

To leave this statement as the sole result of what this represents, is to overlook the nuance of those areas of wellbeing most affected as a result of the course; but this was not the specific brief of this evaluation . **Data does affirm and triangulate the immense positivity expressed in written narratives so frequently.**

Mentor weekends:

Post-course debriefs/written feedback demonstrate a highly positive experience of transformational learning and further acquisition of practical skills and knowledge. Four long-term participants now working as staff members, and with the status of website visibility in that role, implies further gains in elements of recovery capital through this long term, goal oriented process.

However; the majority of quantitative data for this cohort was incomplete due to management both in planning and in the field, and due to staff changeovers, and has resulted in the collection of a very small sample of viable data sheets. Therefore, I have determined that this sample does not fairly represent quantitative measures (of those events and experiences) in relation to mental health and wellbeing on the Warwick Edinburgh Scale.

It is not unreasonable to assume the data 'would have' correlated and therefore triangulated written narratives; however, evaluative evidence is not as thorough as for other elements.

Conclusion

In response to the body of evaluative material and sources, this evaluation finds that Write To Freedom offers a reliable and highly effective service; that it upholds its vision and values, and delivers a vibrant, pioneering model for change. Write To Freedom carries out its operations effectively, holistically and reflectively, and with reference to the collective wisdom, skills and experience of its staff, as well as drawing on a range of appropriate, sustaining models and theories.

It is holistic in the sense of providing key aspects of Recovery Capital, both through its delivered programmes and longer term mentoring contact; and also with consideration for the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of participants .

A key strength of Write To Freedom's activities is client engagement: where the pragmatic and the phenomenological meet in a unique cultural/geographical setting and establish effective change. It offers a unique opportunity for both actual and metaphorical 'stepping up' into new found, grounded, status. Progression of former participant to positions of leadership, models the most effective changes that any society can ask of an addiction-recovery organisation. Client-led activity enables those participants to extend recovery beyond desistance and further towards improved quality of life; including the furthering of personal development and maturation towards creativity and generativity.

Participants' feedback of their experiences, demonstrate these factors strongly. Positive changes to mental health and wellbeing, via measurements on the Warwick Edinburgh model are stated soundly. Both quantitative and qualitative data, located from all sources, and in conjunction with post-event forms, written testimony from post course feedback, from linked blogs and website narratives/comments, are consistently positive, enthusiastic, and sometimes to the extent of quoting 'life-changing'.

Leaders actively seek to connect with co-workers, to revise the effectiveness and quality standards both with regard to the needs of participants and to wider reflective processes for the benefit of the organisation. Safety is at all times paramount.

Organisational changes that have taken place, can be traced to responses to minutiae on feedback forms, and to wider philosophical discussion, and other events or observations that have been stated to have taken place.

Adopting the 8 Shields model appears to be well received and effective, but there is little evaluation evidence of this other than spoken testimony, which is positive, in that it is "helping to organise everything better."

I have not read Caspar's Walsh's published novel *Tribe Warrior*, prior to this evaluation.

Alternative forms of data collection should be considered to monitor with more specificity, the progression of participants on longer term programmes. For example, embedding a Theory of Change framework into mentoring weekend programme activities; and/or presenting participants creative work derived from the powerful narrative/creative writing element of the activities, alongside ongoing debriefs/written feedback. These, and other arts-informed evaluation evidence such as journal keeping, should be investigated. This would allow a broader body of data for the purposes of more robust evaluation data.

However, it has been expressed clearly that monitoring and developing long-term programmes/long term participant development support, is a key intention regarding future directions of Write To Freedom's work in addition to current programmes. As mentioned in the body of this evaluation, such monitoring and development has been ongoing. For Walsh and his colleagues, the vision is both mission and vocation.

No statistics nor policy regarding BAME or LGBTQI have been made available for this evaluation but intra-organisation discussion has arisen and is scheduled to continue. At all times, Write To Freedom is attentive to and committed to Equality and Diversity.

It is commendable that blocks to client recovery such as PTSD have been considered and provided for. Some further reference to the success of providing this additional service to support those with PTSD, would be valuable, especially with view to securing further funding. The pioneering approach of Write To Freedom's work with transformative learning in relation to Recovery Capital has raised this important issue and needs must ensure it can be integral to future practice. Neither should Write To Freedom be overlooked as a resource for policy development, and should consider to make itself known as potentially thus, when seeking further funding.

Write To Freedom raises the bar for holistic and Gestalt learning styles as effective models and environments for recovery, change, and personal development.

Its leadership offers the strength of team working, reflectivity, and pioneering approaches. It is a vibrant, radical, social-initiatory intervention which effectively utilises the shoulders-of-giants; and from that robust position, enables a growing community towards positive role modelling, active leadership, and resilient citizens.

Further reading

Write To Freedom <https://www.writetofreedom.org.uk/>

Jack Mezirow's conceptualisation of adult transformative learning: A review
<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/handle/123456789/20999/OA%20-%20%20Jack%20Mezirow%E2%80%99s%20conceptualisation%20of%20Adult%20transformative%20Learning.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Mezirow quote by Dean Elias sourced from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformative_learning (April 2018)

Rat Park: <https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/371/ille/presentation/alexander-e.htm>

Robert Bly: <http://www.robertbly.com/>

Tribe Warrior: <https://www.writetofreedom.org.uk/tribe-warrior-1/>

12 Steps: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve-step_program

8 shields: <http://8shields.org/>

ACMD Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs Recovery from drug and alcohol dependence: an overview of the evidence

<https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/19311/1/acmdrecovery.pdf>

Conceptualizing Recovery Capital: Expansion of a Theoretical Construct:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19016174>

Recovery Capital as Prospective Predictor of Sustained Recovery, Life satisfaction and Stress among former poly-substance users :

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10826080701681473?src=recsys>

Recovery capital pathways: Modelling the components of recovery wellbeing

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0376871617304830>

The Potential of Recovery Capital <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/blogs/a4-recovery-capital-230710-v5.pdf>

Recovery and Straw Men: An Analysis of the Objections Raised to the Transition to a Recovery Model in UK Addiction Services

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1556035X.2010.523362?needAccess=true>

On Erikson and maturation

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>

On Gestalt Learning

<http://hci.liacs.nl/files/gestalt-excerpt.pdf>

Appendix: data breakdown

YEAR	2017 FEB		
Sum of All of the time		Column Labels	
Row Labels	Prior	Post	
I have the support to address my recovery	2	4	
I know what barriers I face in recovery	2	3	
I trust those around me		4	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things		3	
I've been communicating well	1	2	
I've been connecting with nature		4	
I've been dealing with problems well		2	
I've been feeling cheerful		3	
I've been feeling close to other people		6	
I've been feeling confident		2	
I've been feeling good about myself		3	
I've been feeling interested in other people		6	
I've been feeling loved		6	
I've been feeling motivated	1	4	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	3	
I've been feeling relaxed		1	
I've been feeling useful		2	
I've been interested in new things		7	
I've been thinking clearly		2	
I've had energy to spare		2	
Grand Total	7	69	

Feb 2017: The sample data below shows that the respondents were more than 886% more likely to select 'All of The Time' when completing the questionnaire.

YEAR	2017 APRIL		
Sum of All of the time		Column Labels	
Row Labels	Prior	Post	
I have the support to address my recovery	3	3	
I know what barriers I face in recovery		1	
I trust those around me		3	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things		1	
I've been communicating well		1	
I've been connecting with nature		2	
I've been dealing with problems well			
I've been feeling cheerful		2	
I've been feeling close to other people		1	
I've been feeling confident			
I've been feeling good about myself		2	
I've been feeling interested in other people		1	
I've been feeling loved	1	1	
I've been feeling motivated		1	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future			
I've been feeling relaxed			
I've been feeling useful		1	
I've been interested in new things		1	
I've been thinking clearly		1	
I've had energy to spare		1	
Grand Total	4	23	

The sample data below shows that the respondents were more than 475% more likely to select 'All of The Time' when completing the questionnaire.

YEAR	2017 JUNE		
Sum of All of the time		Column Labels	
Row Labels	Prior	Post	
I have the support to address my recovery	5	4	
I know what barriers I face in recovery		3	
I trust those around me	1	3	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things		2	
I've been communicating well	2	2	
I've been connecting with nature	3	3	
I've been dealing with problems well		2	
I've been feeling cheerful		2	
I've been feeling close to other people		2	
I've been feeling confident		2	
I've been feeling good about myself		2	
I've been feeling interested in other people		3	
I've been feeling loved		2	
I've been feeling motivated		2	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future		2	
I've been feeling relaxed		2	
I've been feeling useful		2	
I've been interested in new things		2	
I've been thinking clearly		2	
I've had energy to spare		2	
Grand Total	11	46	

The sample data shows that the respondents were more than 318% more likely to select 'All of The Time' when completing the questionnaire.

YEAR	2017 SEPT		
Sum of All of the time		Column Labels	
Row Labels	Prior	Post	
I have the support to address my recovery	2	5	
I know what barriers I face in recovery	2	3	
I trust those around me		5	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	2	2	
I've been communicating well		3	
I've been connecting with nature		6	
I've been dealing with problems well		2	
I've been feeling cheerful	1	3	
I've been feeling close to other people	1	5	
I've been feeling confident		2	
I've been feeling good about myself		2	
I've been feeling interested in other people		6	
I've been feeling loved		7	
I've been feeling motivated		4	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future		1	
I've been feeling relaxed		2	
I've been feeling useful		2	
I've been interested in new things	2	5	
I've been thinking clearly		2	
I've had energy to spare			
Grand Total	10	67	

The sample data shows that the respondents were more than 570% more likely to select 'All of The Time' when completing the questionnaire.

Sum of All of the time		Column Labels	
Row Labels	Prior	Post	
I have the support to address my recovery	5	5	
I know what barriers I face in recovery	2	3	
I trust those around me	4	5	
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	3	5	
I've been communicating well	1	4	
I've been connecting with nature	2	5	
I've been dealing with problems well	1	4	
I've been feeling cheerful	2	5	
I've been feeling close to other people	2	5	
I've been feeling confident	2	3	
I've been feeling good about myself	1	3	
I've been feeling interested in other people	4	5	
I've been feeling loved	2	5	
I've been feeling motivated	1	4	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future		3	
I've been feeling relaxed		5	
I've been feeling useful	1	5	
I've been interested in new things	4	5	
I've been thinking clearly	1	4	
I've had energy to spare	1	2	
Grand Total	39	85	

The sample data below shows that the respondents were more than 118% more likely to select 'All of The Time' when completing the questionnaire.
