

RECOVERY AND THE ARTS CONFERENCE

hosted by **Liverpool John Moores University**

3 SEPTEMBER 2019 || EVERYMAN THEATRE, LIVERPOOL



A WARM WELCOME



Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) welcomes you to our first Recovery and the Arts Conference. This one-day event is represented by a diverse range of stakeholders whose work will be showcased today, including arts practitioners, academics, students, performers, drug and alcohol providers and people engaged with services.

Today's conference recognises the need to explore and provide evidence-based solutions for people in recovery from drug and alcohol. It aims to explore approaches that not only help people recover, and become recovered, from addiction, but also offers to develop personal growth and enhance social and cultural capital. For too long, medicalised models based on abstinence, substitute prescription, harm reduction and criminal justice penalties have been the central mechanism when working with people in

recovery. Today's Recovery and the Arts Conference aims to present a viable alternative to this narrative.

In the first instance, the conference aims to provide a platform for community arts-based projects across the UK to present, display and discuss their latest work. It aims to enable those in recovery to share their experiences of art-based approaches; and for academics to present and discuss their research. This event, although only one day long, serves as a valuable knowledge exchange and networking opportunity. However, it also aims to provide an opportunity for delegates to explore the option of developing a Community of Practice.

We hope you enjoy the day and your time in Liverpool. Please do contribute to discussions and ideas in whatever way you feel able to. If you wish to continue discussing ideas or have feedback following the event, please email: recoveryandthearts@ljmu.ac.uk

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Society for the Study of Addiction for their contribution to funding the conference. Visit www.addiction-ssa.org for more information.

DR. STEPHANIE KEWLEY

Senior Lecturer,
Liverpool John Moores University

CONFERENCE AGENDA

TIME	WHAT	WHO
9:00 - 9:20	Registration and coffee	
9:20 - 9:30	Welcome	
9:30 - 10:30	Oral presentations	Sophie Wilsdon and Giuls Bianchini, Bristol Drugs Project, with group members Lorraine Fear (The Spider Project), Sara Baldwin (Our Space), Nicola Hollinshead, (Recoverist Theatre Project)

5 min set up

10:35 - 11:20	Performance	Fallen Angels
11:20 - 11:35	Coffee Break	
11:35 - 12:20	Oral presentations	Zoe Zontou (Liverpool Hope University), Cathy Sloan (Connected Recovery Community), Mark Prest, (Portraits of Recovery)
12:20 - 13:20	Workshops (delegates equally split into two groups)	Christopher Holt (Outside Edge Theatre Company), Kate McCoy (Small Performance Adventures)
13:20 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 14:45	Discussion/Focus Group	Whole conference split into smaller discussion groups, facilitator led discussion

5 min set up

14:50 - 15:35	Performance	Staging Recovery Geese Theatre
15:35 - 16:35	Oral presentation	Lyndsey Wilson-Hague, Together Project, Sarah Rumfitt, Night Light Creative Arts, Paula Simms, Transforming Choice, Stephanie Kewley, Liverpool John Moores University
16:35 - 16:45	Closing comments	

BRISTOL DRUGS PROJECT

SPEAKERS: Sophie Wilsdon, Giuls Bianchini and group members

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Bristol Drugs Project has delivered vibrant structured arts groups for 5 years – Rising Voices Recovery Choir, Stepladder Drama Group and this year, Bristol's Recovery Orchestra. Despite demonstrable benefits, arts-based recovery groups struggle to be recognised through local authority treatment budgets, where key performance indicators focus on cessation of substance use, rather than increased well-being.

AIM

To explore how sustained participation in creative arts can contribute to successful recovery.

EVALUATION: Outcomes for individuals are measured qualitatively through personal narrative and quantitatively through evidence-based tools; WEMWBs, Outcomes Stars and the HACT Social Value Calculator.

FINDINGS: Our data indicates that our arts groups: create healthy distractions and 'natural highs', foster a sense of belonging, establish positive relationships and build self-esteem amongst attendees. Group members describe how participation has reduced stigma associated with substance misuse. Group facilitators present issues around the experience of improving local and wider community relations, explore attachment and boundary issues in creative groups and the unintended consequence of their own enhanced well-being and motivation resulting from this work.

CONCLUSION

Our qualitative evidence, quantitative outcome data, video clips and personal stories demonstrate the transformative impact of art-based recovery groups and highlight why funding for creative arts groups is so crucial. This project reveals some of the magic and positivity that these groups create, especially through offering an inspiring alternative to those 'tired of treatment'.

BIOGRAPHY

Sophie Wilsdon co-founded Rising Voices Recovery Choir, Stepladder Drama Group and Bristol's Recovery Orchestra. She has worked at Bristol Drugs Project for 11 years, as a group worker, now managing volunteers and creative groups. She is passionate about using the arts to support people who have problematic relationships with drugs and alcohol.

Giulia Bianchini (freelance Arts Practitioner, Producer), has delivered Bristol Drugs Project's drama group since 2015. Giulia's experience of participatory projects includes specialist work within areas of disability, recovery, mental health, children/young people and intergenerational working. Giulia's practice invites participants to discover shared joy and understanding using arts and creativity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

BRISTOL DRUGS PROJECT: bdp.org.uk and www.facebook.com/bristoldrugproject
RISING VOICES: risingvoiceschoir.co.uk and www.facebook.com/RisingVoicesUK
BBC SHORT FILM ABOUT OUR RECOVERY ORCHESTRA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiOAgHS42R0>

THE SPIDER PROJECT

SPEAKER: Lorraine Fear

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to follow up on my MA dissertation where I posed the question: *'To what extent does drama impact on the well-being of marginalized groups?'*. This presentation will discuss the wide range of creative arts courses including drama, art, music, creative writing and photography that the spider project has on offer.

I will be identifying how wellbeing is framed in relation to this project and how we apply it (Bowen, 2018). I will also be discussing the area of social prescribing which has been a part of subsequent governments health programmes since 2006 (Department of Health) and its relevance to our members. I will also be exploring whether being in active addiction and partaking in creative activities releases the same hormones naturally and therefore produces similar effects on the brain. I will reflect on some of the finding from my MA dissertation and produce data and discuss accordingly. Further research in this area will aim to explore, investigate and analyse whether participating in a variety of creative activities has made an impact on the Spider Project members' recovery and overall wellbeing. I will unpack the following question *'How important is creativity in the lives of those in recovery from drugs/ and or alcohol and those who have mild to moderate health issues?'*.

BIOGRAPHY

Lorraine works at The Spider Project in Birkenhead, which is a creativity community and well-being hub supporting people who have previously been in addiction and those who have mental health issues. I run the drama sessions at spider as well as deliver complementary therapies to our members. I have a FD and BSc in Complementary Therapies and have just completed an MA in Making Performance. I am really interested in research, in particular how creativity can help those in recovery, as well as whether being creative and being in active addiction produce similar effects within the brain.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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OUR SPACE

SPEAKERS: Sara Baldwin, Jason Brownlee and Clive Rowe from Theatre Royal Plymouth

ABSTRACT

In the year that the Our Space project celebrates its tenth anniversary, Sara, Jason and Clive will present on how participation in Our Space and the Theatre more broadly has profoundly impacted people's lives in Plymouth and the surrounding areas.

The presentation will examine our person-centred and co-created approach, offering an insight into the diversity of individual cases, celebrating the progress and achievements of project members such as Jason and Clive and unpicking how and why drama and performance can be so transformative.

Sara will provide insight into the development of the project over 10 years and how building and maintaining strong partnerships with external organisations, clinical agencies and service providers has been key and led to the programme becoming a social prescription for 26 primary care services within Plymouth.

Jason will talk about his recovery journey with the project which, amongst many achievements, has led to him becoming a programmed artist on the stage at Theatre Royal Plymouth. We will also hear from Clive, a Big Issue seller, who has built his life around the theatre since joining Our Space in Autumn 2016.

BIOGRAPHY

Sara Baldwin is the Engagement Manager at the Theatre Royal Plymouth and is responsible for heading up and developing the strategy for the theatre's community engagement programme. Sara specialises in work with complex needs and is passionate about inclusion and the co-creation of community arts projects.

Jason Brownlee is an artist with lived experience who has been a member of Our Space since spring 2015. Jason is currently studying for a degree in Fine Art and is the writer and performer of his debut play *Today I Killed My Very First Bird*.

Clive Rowe is a Big Issue seller and upcoming performer with lived experience in Plymouth. Clive has been a member of Our Space since autumn 2016, is currently a peer mentor on the Our Voice project working with prisoners in HMP Exeter and recently performed in the Theatre Royal Plymouth's People's Company production *CITIZEN*.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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RECOVERIST THEATRE PROJECT

SPEAKER: Nicola Hollinshead

ABSTRACT

Recoverist Theatre Project is an applied theatre-based project, which aims to give a platform to participants to voice experiences of addiction and recovery. Inspired by The Recoverist Manifesto, which reframes addiction as a 'health issue and recovery as a civil rights concern' (Dibbitts 2015), RTP marks the transition of refocusing recovery using an activist lens – actively engaging with theatre to explore and challenge the social justice issues relating to addiction and recovery.

The original project based at Action on Addiction Liverpool, used practices such as improvisation, devising and writing techniques to enable participants to creatively explore issues they faced during addiction and in their subsequent recovery journey. This culminated in a devised performance piece, 'Who Am I', shown to a small invited audience at The Florrie. The participants were subsequently invited to join 'Transitions' group' with Collective Encounters and within six months performed with the company in 'Cracked' at Liverpool Everyman. My paper explores the project as an example of the transformational potential inherent in applied theatre-based projects, enabling the recovery community to explore their experiences creatively and challenge the societal prejudices associated with addiction – thereby marking the transition from 'being in recovery' to becoming a 'recoverist'.

BIOGRAPHY

Applied Theatre Practitioner and Drama Facilitator with over ten years work in participatory arts. Graduated with an MA in Applied Theatre at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2017. Recent work with Reading Rep as Community Participation Officer engaging adults in recovery and addiction at Iris Treatment Centre and women on parole at Elizabeth Fry AP. Other work includes a violence/drug reduction programme with inmates at HMP Hull, adults in recovery at Outside Edge Theatre and with RTP at Action on Addiction, Liverpool. Recently set up a new applied theatre-based company.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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<https://hes32-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=www.act%2dproject.co.uk&umid=f94472f3-1837-4530-b6f0-ea6e5b926da7&auth=768f192bba830b801fed4f40fb360f4d1374fa7c-5a7a77a68e8f3e731a3d1807fdca1debc25139d9www.activecitizenstheatreproject.co.uk>

RITUALS, FALLEN ANGELS

PERFORMANCE

This powerful and emotive piece of dance theatre is performed by Fallen Angels Dance Theatre Community Recovery group. It is based on each of the dancer's experiences of the rituals that they use to support their well-being and recovery.

Fallen Angels Dance Theatre (FADT) is company-in residence at Storyhouse. FADT exists to support people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction – through dance, performance and creativity.

BIOGRAPHY

Fallen Angels Dance Theatre (FADT) reaches and connects people in recovery from addiction through dance theatre. Our projects empower people to think big, to find a new healthier identity in order to bring about life change.

FADT started through our Artistic Director Paul Bayes Kitcher's exploration of his own journey of addiction into recovery through dance theatre. This received such an overwhelming response that continues to drive the organisation to develop, gain partners and drive the work forwards to share and support more.

We have developed participation activities to enhance recovery through creativity that are powerful engagement tools that promote the well-being and social inclusion of people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. We are passionate about high quality creativity being something that we can all share. We place this at the heart of our work. We have developed a participant-led practice which means that participants in recovery are our collaborators and are involved in the creation of our professional dance performances at every stage, from R&D to final performance.

Since 2014 we have performed at prestigious venues such as: The Lowry, Salford Quays, and Royal Opera House London. We have completed a year of organisational development support from Royal Opera House on the ROH links programme and have performed at UK Recovery Walk annually since 2015. We met and performed for Her Majesty the Queen and HRH Duchess of Sussex at the Official Opening of Storyhouse Theatre in Chester where we are Company in Residence.

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.fallenangelsdancetheatre.co.uk

DARK NIGHT ENDS

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION IN APPLIED PERFORMANCE

SPEAKER: Dr Zoe Zontou

ABSTRACT

This presentation aims to explore the complex relationship between working artistically with personal narratives of addiction recovery and the politics of representation. In particular, it attempts to critically interrogate the possibilities and pitfalls of using applied performance as a platform to challenge the cultural narratives of addiction.

Following up from previous research (Zontou, 2014, 2017, 2018) I aim to relocate my argument in regards to the prominent ethical considerations of staging autobiographical experiences of pain and stigma in applied performance in order to pose the following questions: What happens when drug addicts perform their stories on stage? Do we create a "politically risky metaphor"? What is the role of 'critical vulnerabilities' (O'Grady 2017) and relational ethics (Bannon 2018), in disrupting pre-established cultural narratives of addiction, and ultimately our abilities to perceive the world differently? To evidence the arguments, the work of Fallen Angels Dance Theatre will be examined as a case study. Fallen Angels is a professional dance theatre working with addicts, people in recovery, and the wider community. I have worked with Fallen Angels since 2012 as a theatre practitioner and researcher. For the purpose of this presentation, I am going to draw from my experiences in co-creating and evaluating their artistic projects, and relate them to the ethics and politics of applied performance.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Zoe Zontou is a Senior Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Liverpool Hope University. Her research over the last decade has opened up new understandings of the role of applied theatre in assisting people in recovery from alcohol and other drug dependencies to socially reintegrate. She has worked as a practitioner and researcher in a number of organisations, and has published in the area of applied theatre research and practice.

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‘LIFE-LIVING’:

HOW THE COLLABORATIVE ARTS EVENT PERFORMS POSSIBILITIES FOR A MORE VISIBLE AND CONNECTED RECOVERY COMMUNITY

SPEAKER: Cathy Sloan

ABSTRACT

Recognising that recovery is an ongoing practice, enhanced by peer support, I argue that recovery arts have a vital role to play in forging connections to recovery community. My research examines the affective – social and emotional – dimension of recovery arts practices. To theorise these practices, I examine how they operate as a relational force. Engaging with fellow recovery arts practitioners, I have identified patterns of practice and attachments to recovery community. Despite limitations imposed by austerity conditions that increase the economic precarity of these practices, their potential to facilitate relational encounters with others in recovery holds the key to their survival and growth.

This paper analyses Humourisk Collective’s performance of Brown Bread in Shine recovery cafe, London, November 2018 to argue that the growth of recovery arts practices, like recovery, occurs through collaboration. Through the collective encounter of a performance, they build connections to, and potentially grow, recovery communities. By embracing interdependency as a strength, what Erin Manning termed ‘life-living’ (2013), I propose that the future growth of recovery arts is supported by how they collaborate with networks of recovery community. Also, approaches to addiction treatment might further embrace the intrinsic role arts can perform in generating vibrant recovery communities.

BIOGRAPHY

Cathy Sloan is a socially-engaged theatre-maker, teacher and performance researcher. She was Associate and later Artistic Director of Outside Edge Theatre Company. Working with its founder, Phil Fox, she developed a recovery-orientated approach to devising performances with, by and for people in recovery from addiction. Her PhD research, at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, proposes a recovery-engaged ethical and political orientation for performance practice that operates as an ‘affective ecology’ which is attuned to the contextual experiences of recovery. Her social media platform, messyconnections, seeks to connect those interested in recovery arts practice and highlight recovery communities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WEB PROFILE:
RCSSD:
www.cssd.ac.uk/student/cathy-sloan-ba-med-ma-pgce-thea
Messy Connections:
www.messyconnections.co.uk

PORTRAITS OF RECOVERY

SPEAKER: Mark Prest

ABSTRACT

“Shame and guilt: academics, smackheads, crackheads and drunks”

To anyone who has been involved in, or around, addictive behaviours there is the recognisable cycle of relapse, self-flagellation and repentance. Add to that the conflicted heady mix of guilt and shame, of what we should be as ‘normal’ gendered sexual human beings, as sons and daughters, as high-flying academics, and the scene for a bloody battle is set. Unless and until we understand that recovery is a non-binary process, fluid and person centred, rather than abstinent and shame based. Don’t frame us within sickness – we are greater than our stories of recovery:

“Art is my higher power, the reason for getting up in the morning and a strategy for living.”

“Art is recovery. Recovery is art. Art is how it is felt and told - guilt and shame weaponized for compassion.”

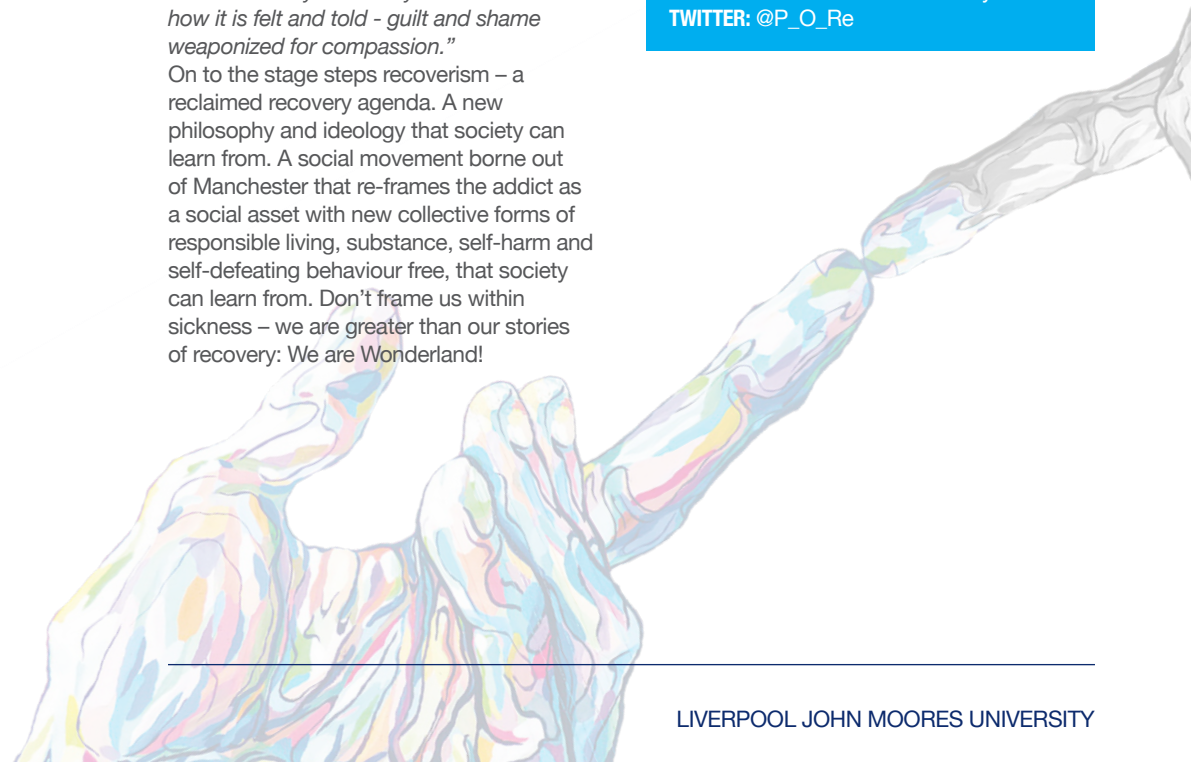
On to the stage steps recoverism – a reclaimed recovery agenda. A new philosophy and ideology that society can learn from. A social movement borne out of Manchester that re-frames the addict as a social asset with new collective forms of responsible living, substance, self-harm and self-defeating behaviour free, that society can learn from. Don’t frame us within sickness – we are greater than our stories of recovery: We are Wonderland!

BIOGRAPHY

Portraits of Recovery is a UK-based, international visual arts charity. Founded in 2011 by Mark Prest, the organisation’s work supports people and communities affected by and in recovery from substance misuse to open up new ways of knowing and looking at the subject by working with contemporary visual art and artists. PORE believes that arts and culture can be transformational in and of themselves. Its vision and intent is to improve the lives of people and communities in recovery by increasing access to cultural opportunity. A central aim is to facilitate contribution to an emergent cultural identity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.portraitsofrecovery.org.uk
FACEBOOK: @Portraits.of.Recovery1
TWITTER: @P_O_Re



OUTSIDE EDGE THEATRE COMPANY

SPEAKER: Matt Steinberg and Christopher Holt

ABSTRACT

OETC's Drama Taster Sessions for drug and alcohol treatment and mental health recovery settings demonstrate the Five Ways to Wellbeing through fast, fun and physical drama games. Engaging the creativity and imagination of the group, this workshop is specifically designed to promote feelings associated with good mental health and recovery. OETC's drama exercises offer participants an embodied experience of connecting to other people, learning a new skill, taking notice of the world around them, being active and giving support to others.

The Taster Sessions are led by members of OETC's trained drama facilitators, all of who have experience of addiction and substance misuse. Sessions begin with a brief warm-up, followed by a series of icebreakers, before moving on to improvisation games. No previous experience of drama is required.

One recent Taster Session participant said: *"I enjoyed connecting with new people. The session gave me an outlook on how life can be."* Other participants have commented on how much they enjoy the fun, silly and entertaining atmosphere of the workshop, along with the laughter and energy of OETC's activities. By the end of the Taster Session participants overwhelmingly feedback improved self-confidence and increased understanding of how to support those around them.

BIOGRAPHY

For the past 20 years, Outside Edge Theatre Company has delivered free drama workshops for people affected by substance misuse that help improve health and wellbeing, reduce loneliness and support recovery maintenance. OETC's productions about addiction have toured across the UK and been produced at major off-West End theatres. OETC was runner-up for the 2019 Centre for Social Justice Maxie Richards Addiction Award.

OETC's Artistic Director Matt Steinberg and OETC's Associate Theatre Facilitator Christopher Holt (BA Hons Middlesex Poly, MA Hons Royal Holloway, Senior Lecturer London Met, ex-OETC service user) will facilitate the Five Ways to Wellbeing Drama Taster Session.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SMALL PERFORMANCE ADVENTURES

SPEAKER: Kate McCoy

ABSTRACT

The Washing UP is a project that has brought together artists and participants in addiction recovery to create a performance about the everyday activity of washing up. This approach is about disrupting narratives of addiction and finding joy, and sometimes sorrow, in the mundane. The show includes, poetry, songs, movement, rituals, stories and a little bit of audience participation. Every kitchen sink has a story to tell, of power struggles and pots and pans, of greasy plates and moments of quiet contemplation...

It was premiered at Brighton Festival in 2018 and toured nationally to Manchester, Liverpool and London in 2019. *"A generous, ego-free ensemble performance, and the best of people's theatre"* – Colin Grant, Guardian.

The workshop will offer participants an opportunity to look beneath the surface bubbles and see what lies beneath, through a playful workshop exploring the creative methodology used throughout the project. The workshop will bring participants together as equals and encourage connection and reflection. Please come prepared to talk about tea towels.

The Washing Up is a project by small performance adventures, an organisation creating performance and events with people who have been affected by life, created in partnership with Cascade Creative Recovery, a peer led creative recovery organisation in Brighton.

BIOGRAPHY

Kate McCoy is the artistic director of small performance adventures. She is a participatory performance maker who has worked in prisons, universities and many other places for over 285 years. Her most recent project "The Washing Up" culminated in a national tour with 15 performers and artists in recovery. She was founder member and artistic director of The Men's Room Manchester, an arts and social care agency working with young men with experience of sex work, homelessness and the criminal justice system. Recent work includes: UK lead artist for PORE on a European Project focussing on the arts in recovery, Brighton Festival/Brighton People's Theatre's artist in residence working with residents to deliver an exhibition "Random Acts of Neighbourliness" and in August 2019, she co-delivered a flashmob for International Overdose Awareness Day with cascade creative recovery and Bristol Drug Project. She teaches Applied Theatre at Manchester University, Central School of Speech and Drama and earlier this decade was Connecticut's Department of Correction's artist in residence for two years.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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THE TOGETHER PROJECT

SPEAKER: Lyndsey Wilson-Hague

ABSTRACT

The Together Project is an established performing arts group by Phoenix Futures Scotland. The group is delivered as part of the Scottish Residential service programme and supports individuals in increasing confidence and self-esteem through the arts. The group perform on a range of topics to promote visible recovery across Scotland and to challenge stigma. They also perform annual theatre productions for the local community. The performance today is an excerpt from a larger play that the group have been working on which raises the awareness of hidden harms.

BIOGRAPHY

The Together Project performance will be written and conducted by current service users and graduates of Phoenix Futures Scottish Residential Service. Lyndsey Wilson-Hague is the Head of Operations for Phoenix Scotland; working in the addiction field for over 12 years in a range of settings including residential, community, housing and prisons.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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NIGHT-LIGHT CREATIVE ARTS

SPEAKERS: Sarah Rumfitt, Jessica Robson, Stu Clark

ABSTRACT

"The thrill of the moment"
Drawing on observations and conversations with service users and service professionals, Night-Light Creative Arts examine the use of theatrical improvisation, not only as a beneficial tool in targeting and developing participants healthy coping strategies, resilience and capacity for uncertainty, but also as a key component in all arts-based recovery work.

"In that moment, we exist"
(Participant, Nightlight Creative Arts, 2019)

BIOGRAPHY

Night-Light Creative Arts believe in the power and potential of 'Theatre' and 'Creativity' to make a positive impact on people's lives and their communities. Since we began in 2017, we have researched, created and delivered 'Theatre for Wellbeing' programmes and 'Drama Therapy' sessions with/and for hard to reach audiences throughout the North of England; in forensic mental health settings, prisons, hospitals, pupil referral units, rehabilitation centres and within the community.

Through our creative practice, we hope to: break down barriers, build healthy relationships, connect, inspire and promote hope and positive change through creative writing, storytelling, role-play, improvisation and performance.

Sarah Rumfitt (Dramatherapist and Director of Night Light Creative Arts)

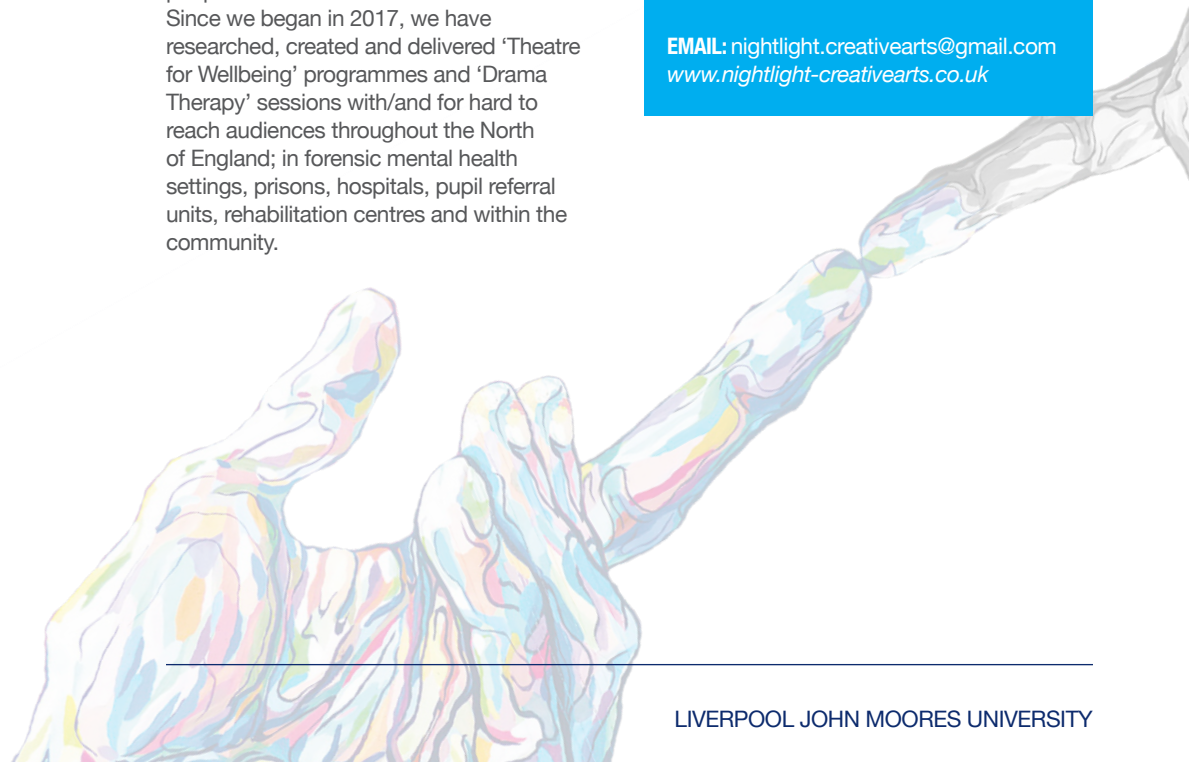
Jessica Robson (Theatre Maker and Creative Arts Practitioner)

Stu Clark (PadB Company Director)

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you'd like to find out more about Night-Light Creative Arts, including our current and upcoming projects, please get in touch.

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TRANSFORMING CHOICE

TRANSFORM THEATRE COMPANY

SPEAKER: Paula Simms

ABSTRACT

The presentation will explain the process undertaken to develop the piece “The Clearing, Research In Action” created by Paula Simms (Director) from conception to performance. The piece was a verbatim performance based on the research (Ethnographic Study) for the book *The Clearing* by Christina Ashworth. The research and performance attempt to illustrate the unique recovery process, which takes place at Transforming Choice in Aigburth Liverpool. This 12 week residential programme offers people the opportunity to address their drinking problem.

The presentation will include two short abstracts from the piece itself, as Paula speaks about the creative journey and the impact of the resulting work. Created and performed by members of the Transforming Community, the majority of the performers had never performed before, and through the composite character voices created this powerful verbatim piece had a unique impact on both performers and audience alike. The performers had the opportunity to revisit their own journeys and those of their peers and through this the work offers an authentic glimpse into the work of the organisation. Additionally, the work has afforded some of the participants the opportunity to find a new creative voice and we envisage that the company will go on to produce more work that is new in the future.

BIOGRAPHY

Paula Simms is a lecturer in the LJMU Drama Dept, she is also an award-winning performer and freelance Theatre Director, working Nationally and Internationally. She is Artistic Director of Zho Visual Theatre and has recently formed Transform Theatre Company to host and facilitate creative work with the Organisation Transforming Choice. Past directing credits include *The Return of Colmcille for Walk the Plank* (voted Best Outdoor Event). Paula has also worked in Zambia creating *The Chief of Chimbombobombo* for Barefeet International.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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“SWITCHED ON”

STAGING RECOVERY GEESE THEATRE

ABSTRACT

This is a unique opportunity to experience the ensemble’s latest piece entitled *Switched On* which they devised during May 2019.

Switched On is an amusing, satirical and poignant exploration of the relationship between the media, addiction and recovery. The ensemble invite you to reflect on your own perceptions of people who are affected by addiction, and will leave you with a lot to think about the next time you switch on your TV.

BIOGRAPHY

“A beautiful coming together of different people finding a common ground.”

Staging Recovery is an ensemble of people from the West Midlands community, exploring their individual and collective recovery journeys through theatre and drama. This includes all kinds of recovery, from substance misuse, mental health issues and trauma, through to experiences with criminal justice or homelessness. Geese Theatre Company facilitate a number of projects throughout the year with the ensemble and support them to perform at venues across the region. Staging Recovery is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

GEESE THEATRE COMPANY

Geese Theatre Company uses theatre and drama-based techniques within criminal justice and social welfare settings, delivering projects that support the process of positive change. They also work in community settings, reaching people with multiple and complex needs, either by engaging with service users directly or with the professionals who work with them. Over more than 30 years, Geese have developed a range of training courses, interactive issue-based performances, groupwork programmes and creative projects to address complex and challenging issues in a safe, active and accessible way. The company’s vision is to create safe, crime-free communities and for the arts to be recognised as a powerful vehicle for individual and social change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Geese Theatre Company
TEL: 0121 449 6222
www.geese.co.uk
 @geesetheatre (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY THEATRE IN THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY

SPEAKER: Dr Stephanie Kewley

ABSTRACT

This presentation reports on the lived experiences of participants in recovery from drugs and alcohol during their engagement in a community arts intervention called Staging Recovery. The longitudinal study used a mixed method approach, including Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI).

This presentation will include discussion regarding the strengths and benefits of this approach, as well as some of its challenges and limitations. Several themes have developed throughout this evaluation, indeed, evaluation is ongoing, but, for the purpose of this presentation, discussion will centre on one theme: A Changed Identity is experienced through Staging Recovery, but the Addicted Self is ever present. This theme highlights the encouraging psychological identity transformation made by participants as a result of engaging in Staging Recovery; however it also provides a spotlight on the inequalities, challenges, and social barriers experienced by participants that thwart their efforts to become recovered.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Stephanie Kewley is a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology at LJMU. Dr Kewley's expertise and research interests are in the exploration and application of strengths-based approaches when working with marginalised populations, such as those with criminal convictions or recovering from drug and alcohol misuse. She has had the privilege of working with the Geese Theatre Company, evaluating the experiences and outcomes of their Staging Recovery project. This work inspired today's conference and she hopes to support the development of a Recovery Community of Practice.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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With thanks to

