

## **Chy's RAFT (Recovery Aftercare For Formative Trauma) Programme:**

We Are With You Chy is a residential rehabilitation centre in Truro, Cornwall. Set in a historic building and gardens, we offer you guidance, support and encouragement from the moment you step through the door.

Our dedicated, committed and experienced team puts together tailor-made programmes to support people with addiction issues. The building houses 17 beds for men and women, with expert support available 24 hours a day.

RAFT (Recovery Aftercare For Formative Trauma) is a 8 week integrative arts psychotherapy programme, which was designed specifically for Chy rehab to support dual diagnosis clients who have experienced complex trauma, PTSD and other mental health conditions including schizophrenia and bipolar.

Its name is an acronym for 'Recovery and Aftercare for Formative Trauma', and the programme has been developed in response to the extensive challenges traumatised people face in overcoming difficulties including addiction, which has often developed as a coping strategy for surviving trauma. Indeed, Giordana et al (2014) and others have cited the extensive research that acknowledges that childhood trauma (including abuse, neglect and parental illness or death) is a salient risk factor for substance misuse. The programme therefore seeks to reduce the impact of early years trauma such as abuse, neglect or loss of primary caregivers, with the intention of supporting long term recovery and preventing relapse.

RAFT is an evidenced based model and has been evaluated over a 2 year period by independent researchers at the University of Bath. The research outcomes are impressive and include the following statistics:

- At the start of the programme, the majority of residents experienced symptoms associated with clinical depression (91%) and clinical anxiety (95%).
- There was greater change where mental well-being was more problematic at the start of RAFT. The majority of residents experienced an increase in mental wellbeing over time (73%).
- For the majority of residents, the outcomes were positive, indicating improvement in self-efficacy scores.
- In addition to improvements in self-efficacy and mental well-being, significant change also occurred with the reduction of the severity of depression and anxiety symptoms.
- Overall, the greatest changes occurred in relation to participants knowing when to ask for help, feeling that they could handle life, learning to like themselves, experiencing a reduction in issues and shorter-lived periods when issues did arise and being aware that other people had belief in them.

RAFT is aligned to the concept that people become dependent on substances because their ability to develop self-care functions is compromised (Khantzian, 1999). When engaging with the RAFT programme, recovery becomes the process of re-establishing the natural cycle of growth and self-care in relation to those developmental issues that have been most affected by traumatic experiences. This model of addiction therefore relates to problems of self-control and emotional struggle in four key domains. These are:

- Feeling emotionally unstable and inconsistent
- Experiencing reduced confidence
- Problematic relationships
- Not having the ability to develop healthy self-care skills.

RAFT seeks to address this by supporting traumatised clients to better understand and manage self-care functions by prioritising self-care (including coping strategies), relationship management (especially of conflict), self efficacy and emotional understanding and regulation in order to achieve the following outcomes:

- Promote abstinence and increase a person's focus on their recovery.
- Maintain or increase positive psychosocial outcomes, where these are problematic, specifically mental well-being and self-efficacy.
- Decrease negative psychosocial outcomes, where these are problematic, specifically symptoms associated with depression and anxiety and/or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Facilitate a sense of confidence, where people feel able to tackle any housing difficulties and to maintain a tenancy and/or stable housing.
- Facilitate a sense of confidence, where people feel ready to engage with volunteering, education, training or employment.

The 16 workshop sessions which are 1 ½ hrs long are delivered in a group format twice weekly. A highly qualified psychotherapist specialising in trauma treatment and PTSD facilitates all sessions, supported by key workers at the rehab to ensure continuity of care between sessions.