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RECOVERY COLLEGE

WESTERN SYDNEY RECOVERY COLLEGE

The Western Sydney Recovery College was developed to co-design and build the capacity of people with lived experience of mental health concerns through a series of courses, training sessions, and workshops. These courses assist clients on their recovery journeys while also increasing carers, friends, family, mental health staff and service providers' knowledge, skills, and awareness of mental health so they are better able to support the Western Sydney community. Western Sydney Recovery College is a One Door Mental Health service, funded by the Western Sydney Primary Health Network.

Ishmael* has been receiving treatment at a Western Sydney hospital for his mental distress related to trauma when fleeing from his homeland. He was very unwell when he first started receiving treatment, as his immediate community was wary of what it would mean for him if his condition became widely known. He felt ashamed of his mental distress and felt isolated by the language and cultural barriers at the hospital, as he only spoke Arabic and very limited English.

The Occupational Therapist at the hospital became aware of Arabic-speaking courses offered at Western Sydney's Recovery College, and contacted them for more information that might help Ishmael. With support from the Bilingual Hospital to Home program, a Bilingual Educator followed up with Ishmael and spoke to him in his own language. She explained what Recovery College does, who attended the classes and the topics the classes covered. Ishmael was very nervous about attending the first course, and the Educator let him know that she would be there to meet him and introduce him to the class.

Ishmael enjoyed the class and found it ok to talk about mental distress, its symptoms, and the recovery journey. He felt accepted and less alone. Since then, he has enrolled in a number of Arabic-speaking courses and has begun joining in class discussions and sharing his experiences more openly. He shared that he now feels more optimistic about the future.

For more information about how WentWest supports Western Sydney, visit www.wentwest.com.au.