

Recovery-oriented service delivery

About recovery

Most people who experience mental illness recover well, with appropriate ongoing treatment and support¹. 'Recovery' and 'cure' do not mean the same thing. People can and do live well with the presence of symptoms of mental illness.

The concept of personal recovery has been developed by people with lived experience of mental health issues. Whilst there isn't a single definition or description of recovery, it has been defined within the National Framework for Recovery-oriented Mental Health Services as 'being able to create and live a meaningful and contributing life in a community of choice with or without the presence of mental health issues'².

Intrinsic to the concept of personal recovery is the notion that every individual's experience of their mental health issues, is unique and personal.

Other definitions of personal recovery include:

- "...the establishment of a fulfilling, meaningful life and a positive sense of identity founded on hopefulness and self-determination."³
- "...a unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feeling, goals, skills and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with limitations caused by the illness."⁴
- "...a process, a way of life, an attitude, and a way of

approaching the day's challenges. It is not a perfectly linear process."⁵

- "...the process of regaining valued social roles."⁶

About recovery-oriented service delivery

Whilst recovery itself is not an intervention (i.e. services don't provide recovery), there are distinct ways in which mental health services can be delivered to support and enhance recovery.

Recovery-oriented service delivery is centered on and adapts to people's aspirations and needs, rather than people having to adapt to the requirements and priorities of services⁷.

Recovery-oriented approaches are holistic and build on individual strengths. They constitute more than a primarily biomedical view of mental illness⁸.

The Australian Department of Health has outlined six principles that support recovery-orientated service delivery :

1. Uniqueness of the individual
2. Real choices
3. Attitudes and rights
4. Dignity and respect
5. Partnership and communication
6. Evaluating recovery

- 1 SANE Australia. *Facts Vs myth: Treatment and Recovery*. SANE Australia. 2016. Accessed at: <https://www.sane.org/information-stories/facts-and-guides/fvm-treatment-and-recovery> Accessed 2 April 2020.
- 2 Australian Department of Health, *A National framework for recovery-oriented mental health services*. Commonwealth of Australia. Canberra 2013, Chapter 3.
- 3 Andresen R, Oades LG & Caputi P. *The experience of recovery from schizophrenia: towards an empirically validated stage model*. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 37, pp586-59. 2003
- 4 Anthony, W.A. *Recovery from Mental Illness: the guiding vision of the mental health service system in the 1990s*, *Psychological Rehabilitation Journal*, vol 16, no 4, pp 11-23. 1993.
- 5 Deegan, P. *Recovery: the lived experience of rehabilitation*, *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal*, volume 11 (4). 1988
- 6 Glover, H. *Do the concepts align? Consumer Participation in the era of recovery-oriented service delivery*. *Altering states creating futures conference*. Queensland Alliance, Brisbane. 2007.
- 7 Australian Department of Health, *A National framework for recovery-oriented mental health services – Policy and theory*. Commonwealth of Australia. Canberra. 2013
- 8 Davidson L. *Recovery: concepts and application*, Recovery Devon Group, UK. 2008.

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is committed to incorporating recovery principles in the design of service models, procedures, protocols, and commissioning practices.

Aboriginal mental health

Recovery-oriented mental health services in Western Australia have a responsibility to be responsive to the mental health needs of Aboriginal people and their families and communities. Services are required to provide culturally appropriate support to individuals, families, carers and communities experiencing mental health issues, within a social and emotional wellbeing framework.

For more information, please refer to the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023.

Peer workers

The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan suggests peer workers, or workers with a lived experience of mental health recovery, play an important role in recovery-oriented service delivery. Peer workers draw on their lived experience to support people experiencing mental health issues, on their recovery journey.

WAPHA is looking at ways to support the development of the peer workforce within primary care settings.



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This is one of a series of factsheets regarding mental health and primary health care, developed by WAPHA. Further factsheets and other resources can be found at www.wapha.org.au/mental-health-framework. The information in this factsheet was accurate at December 2020.