

# Principles of recovery oriented mental health practice



The principles of recovery oriented mental health practice are relevant to all of the 10 National standards for Mental Health Services and apply to the whole mental health service system, including the non-government community mental health service sector.

*From the perspective of the individual with mental illness, recovery means gaining and retaining hope, understanding of one's abilities and disabilities, engagement in an active life, personal autonomy, social identity, meaning and purpose in life, and a positive sense of self.*

*It is important to remember that recovery is not synonymous with cure. Recovery refers to both internal conditions experienced by persons who describe themselves as being in recovery – hope, healing, empowerment and connection – and external conditions that facilitate recovery – implementation of human rights, a positive culture of healing, and recovery-oriented services.*

(Jacobson and Greenley, 2001 p.482)

The principles of recovery oriented mental health practice ensure that mental health services are delivered in a way that supports the recovery of mental health consumers.

They are:

## 1. Uniqueness of the individual

Recovery oriented mental health practice:

- recognises that recovery is not necessarily about cure but is about having opportunities for choices and living a meaningful, satisfying and purposeful life, and being a valued member of the community
- accepts that recovery outcomes are personal and unique for each individual and go beyond an exclusive health focus to include an emphasis on social inclusion and quality of life
- empowers individuals so they recognise that they are at the centre of the care they receive.

## 2. Real choices

Recovery oriented mental health practice:

- supports and empowers individuals to make their own choices about how they want to lead their lives and acknowledges choices need to be meaningful and creatively explored
- supports individuals to build on their strengths and take as much responsibility for their lives as they can
- ensures that there is a balance between duty of care and support for individuals to take positive risks and make the most of new opportunities.



# Info sheet 1: Principles of recovery oriented mental health practice



## 3. Attitudes and rights

Recovery oriented mental health practice:

- involves listening to, learning from and acting upon communications from the individual and their carers about what is important to the individual
- promotes and protects an individual's legal, citizenship and human rights
- supports individuals to maintain and develop social, recreational, occupational and vocational activities which are meaningful to them
- instils hope in an individual about their future and ability to live a meaningful life.

## 4. Dignity and respect

Recovery oriented mental health practice:

- involves being courteous, respectful and honest in all interactions
- involves sensitivity and respect for each individual, especially for their values, beliefs and culture
- challenges discrimination wherever it exists within our own services or the broader community.

## 5. Partnership and communication

Recovery oriented mental health practice:

- acknowledges that each individual is an expert on their own life and that recovery involves working in partnership with individuals and their carers to provide support in a way that makes sense to them
- values the importance of sharing relevant information and the need to communicate clearly
- involves working in positive and realistic ways with individuals and their carers to help them realise their own hopes, goals and aspirations.

## 6. Evaluating recovery

Recovery oriented mental health practice ensures and enables continuous evaluation at several levels:

- Individuals and their carers can track their own progress.
- Services demonstrate that they use the individual's experiences of care to inform quality improvement activities.
- The mental health system reports on key outcomes that indicate recovery. These outcomes include housing, employment, education, social and family relationships, health and wellbeing.

Source: Department of Health (2010)

[www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs-i-nongov-toc~mental-pubs-i-nongov-pri](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs-i-nongov-toc~mental-pubs-i-nongov-pri)

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