

SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Recovery Principles – Australian Mental Health Services and Programs

Submission Due: **COB Monday 15 March 2010**

Organisation: ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

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General Comments:

We value the initiative of putting together National Recovery Principles. Furthermore, we are interested to see more endorsement and implementation of the National Recovery Principles across all forms of Mental Health Services delivery in Australia, and in the ACT in particular.

We want to highlight our concern in the use of *measurable/ unmeasurable* words such as ability, can, meaningful, satisfying and positive – as these words are open to social expectation and norm and often conflict with the individual's understanding and expectation. Therefore there is a need to clarify the words further when using words such as these.

Our proposed change for the introductory paragraphs are:

Remove the word 'expect'

Reason: The word 'expect' reduces the emphasis on the statement that Australians have a right to a high standard of health care:

Australians have a right to ~~expect~~ a high standard of health care.

Replace the words 'both mental illness and physical illness' with 'any illness'.

Reason: The category promotes separation between physical and mental illness which contradicts the concept of recovery where both are interconnected. We prefer the term 'any illness' to indicate that illness represents the whole person including mental and physical aspects.

This principle applies to any illness.

Replace the words 'care' with 'service'.

Reason: The word 'services' is preferred over 'care' because care is only one type of service where the word 'service' provides broader coverage.

The principles of recovery oriented practice underpin all forms of mental health service.

Principles	Suggested Change(s)	Rationale for Change
<p>1. Individual uniqueness</p>	<p>a. Recognises that recovery is not necessarily about cure but is about living a life that is meaningful and satisfying <u>to the individual</u>.</p> <p>b. Accepts that the recovery <u>journey</u> and outcomes are personal and unique for each <u>individual</u> and go beyond an exclusive health focus to include an emphasis on social inclusion and quality of life.</p> <p>c. <u>Acknowledges that the individual recovery journey is not equal to stability, and fluctuation is acceptable and relapsing is part of the journey.</u></p> <p>d. Empowers individuals <u>to exercise responsibility in self-managing illnesses to the maximum extent possible.</u></p>	<p>a. Insert the words 'to the individual' to emphasise that the meaningful and satisfying life is measured according to the individual instead of based on societal norms or other people's expectations.</p> <p>b. Insert the word 'journey' to balance that the focus of recovery is not always on the outcomes but also the process.</p> <p>Replace the word 'person' with 'individual' for consistency purpose.</p> <p>c. Insert the whole sentence to highlight that recovery is a process, therefore fluctuation is acceptable and stability is not a solely target. Relapsing is part of the recovery.</p> <p>d. This is to highlight and individual's self responsibility in partnership with professionals, carers and personal supporters. The phrasing attempts to take away what could be regarded as a 'victim' mentality to one of proactively seeking to stay as well as possible.</p>

	<p>c. Supports individuals to build on their strengths and take as much responsibility for their lives as they <u>prefer</u> at any given time.</p> <p>d. Acknowledge that there is a <u>trade off</u> between duty of care and support for people to take positive risks and make the most of new opportunities.</p>	<p>Insert 'their recovery strategy' to make a clearer statement that the real choices include individual's choice about medication and other treatment for their recovery journey.</p> <p><i>'In the recovery scenario, medications are one of many options and choices for reducing symptoms. Others include the recovery skills, strategies and techniques listed above along with treatments that address health-related issues. Though medications are certainly a choice, we believe that medication compliance as the only strategy to control symptoms is not appropriate.'</i>²</p> <p>Replace the word 'creatively' with 'maximum possible extent' to provide more clarification and definition.</p> <p>c. The word 'can' opens a room for external interpretation of what the individual is able or not able to do. 'Prefer' gives more subjectivity and power to the individual to make decisions for him or herself.</p> <p>d. Replace the word 'balance' with 'trade off' because duty of care and support for people to take positive risks can conflict at times. It is important to state that duty of care and support for people does not work hand-in-hand at all times, and people need to make decisions about which one is more applicable on in each individual case.</p>
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² Mead, S. & Copeland, M. E. (2000) (Barton, 1998). What Recovery means to us: Consumers Perspectives. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 36, 323

<p>3. Attitudes and Rights</p>	<p>a. Involves listening to, learning from and <u>responding to</u> the individual, their relatives and others about what is important to <u>the individual's recovery journey when it is appropriate</u>.</p> <p>b. Promotes and protects people's <u>human</u> rights.</p> <p>c. Supports people to maintain and develop meaningful <u>personal</u>, social, recreational, <u>and/or</u> occupational and vocational activities which enhance mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>a. Replace the word 'acting upon communications from' with 'responding to' and replace the word 'each person' with 'the individual's recovery journey when it is appropriate' to emphasise individual's self-responsibility which is in line with the concept of recovery, as described by Richard Barton:</p> <p><i>'Recovery is more than regaining external roles and functional skills, although these are certainly important; it is also about restoring the self.'</i>³</p> <p>b. We prefer human rights instead of legal and citizenship rights because human rights covers broader rights including the rights of people with mental illness and how the services should be delivered in less restrictive environments which support the recovery journey.</p> <p>c. Insert the word 'personal' to cover any personal activities that need to be carried on as an important aspect of well being.</p> <p>Insert the words 'and/or' to reflect that not all people with mental illnesses are well enough to work all of the time.</p>
<p>4. Dignity and Respect</p>	<p>Involves sensitivity and respect for each individual's own <u>beliefs</u>, values and culture.</p>	<p>This recognises that each individual brings with them their history, their beliefs, their values and their cultural background.</p>

³ Barton, R. (1998). The Rehabilitation - Recovery Paradigm: A Statement of Philosophy for a Public Mental Health System. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills* , 2, 171-187.

		<p>Sensitivity to an individual's beliefs, albeit religious or perceptions of what is right for their recovery journey is crucial to maintaining mental well being and encouraging a journey of recovery.</p>
<p>5. Partnership and Communication</p>	<p>a. Acknowledges each person is an expert on their own life and that recovery involves working in partnership with individuals <u>and their nominated personal supporters</u>, which may for example include friends, clergy or relatives and carers, to <u>offer</u> support in a way that <u>is most meaningful</u> to them.</p> <p>b. Values the importance of sharing appropriate information and the need to communicate clearly <u>with individuals and their nominated personal supporters</u>.</p> <p>c. Involves working in positive <u>and respectful</u> ways with individuals <u>and their nominated personal supporters</u> to help them realise their own hopes, goals and aspirations.</p>	<p>a. We prefer 'nominated/personal supporters' instead of 'relatives and carers' to highlight individuals' capacity in identifying people and services that will be valuable in their recovery journey.</p> <p><i>'I don't relate to the language of having a family or a carer. I live alone with no relatives in Canberra. I find personal supporters more meaningful. In the last ten years my help has come more from what I may relate to as friends or personal supporters.'</i> Consumer</p> <p>We also prefer 'offer' than 'provide' because it is less patronising.</p> <p>b. Gives clarity to who the mental health practice should share information with and emphasise the importance of clear communication with individuals and their nominated supporters, which might be different to that of relatives or carers.</p> <p>c. Replace the word 'realistic' with 'respectful' so as to emphasise the need to maintain the dignity of each individual.</p> <p>The word 'realistic' is open to too many interpretations and there is concern that it may emphasise what could be seen as an unequal relationship between mental health</p>

		practitioners and individuals rather than creating a sense of partnership where both parties are working towards a goal of achieving the individual's hopes, goals and aspirations as they relate to their recovery journey.
6. Evaluating Recovery	<p>Ensures and enables evaluation of recovery at several levels –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individuals and <u>carers and/or nominated personal supporters can track the progress of the individual's recovery journey</u>; - services are seen to use the individual's experiences of <u>services</u> to inform quality improvement activities; - The mental health system reports on key outcomes that indicate recovery including (but not limited to) housing, <u>engagement in the community, social inclusion</u> and education as well as health and well being measures. 	<p>Replace the word 'their own progress' with 'the progress of the individual's recovery journey' to provide more clarity on who 'they' are.</p> <p>The word 'services' is preferred over 'care' because care is only one type of service and the word 'services' provides broader coverage.</p> <p>We acknowledge that employment may play great role for some individual's recovery journey. However, the word employment can be easily translated into full-time paid work which is not suitable for some people. So instead of 'employment', we prefer 'engagement in the community and social inclusion'.</p> <p><i>'Returning to paid employment is not a part of my recovery journey. I have always found being in the workplace to be more damaging than helpful.'</i> Consumer</p>

Please forward comments to:

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