

Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership

Definition of Recovery

"[Recovery is] a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life, even with the limitations caused by illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness..."

(Anthony, 1993 – From the Sainsbury Centre (2008): Making Recovery a Reality)

Recovery is not a model, it is a philosophy. To change services we need to embed this philosophy into everything we do.

Initial Meeting of the Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership Programme

On the 7th May the first meeting of the Recovery Partnership Board took place. The partnership board was jointly chaired by Phil Morgan from NHS Dorset Community Mental Services and Becky Aldridge from the Dorset Mental Health Forum. There were approximately 20 attendees with representatives from NHS Dorset, the Mental Health Forum and Rethink.

The purpose of the meeting was to embed Recovery as the central approach to both the provision of mental health services and the promotion of mental wellbeing of the general population in this part of Dorset. This is to ensure we are able to offer the most effective mental health services possible.



The meeting aimed to establish a shared understanding and commitment to working in partnership and integrating recovery into practice.

It was acknowledged that we have already made a good start and have some effective partnership working and recovery orientated practice and are keen to build on this.

The meeting was informal and lively and it was clear that there is a strong commitment to build on the excellent work that is already taking place. It is anticipated that the Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership will grow and evolve. This meeting should therefore be seen as a starting point rather than the finished article.

WELLBEING AND RECOVERY

You may be wondering why we have called it the Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership and not just Recovery. We see the principles of wellbeing as essential to understanding recovery as a philosophy. Our understanding of wellbeing is that a person's overall health is influenced by them experiencing balance and meaning across a range of areas in their life (for example: spiritual; physical; social; emotional health) as well as feeling connected to their community.

People with mental health problems experience significant levels of disadvantage and exclusion from their communities which, among other things, can stem from ignorance or a misguided desire to help. People who experience longstanding symptoms, which people describe as mental illness, experience disproportionate chronic and disabling physical health conditions and live shorter lives.

It is therefore our task to support the wellbeing of individuals, to tackle discrimination and to reduce the impact of these health inequalities. Through the use of the Recovery principles to empower individuals and communities, we seek to ensure that health and wellbeing is within everyone's reach.

Principles of Recovery

Our services need to be shaped by the principles of Recovery. We all need to be thinking critically about our practice and asking the question, is what we are doing in line with these principles and if not what could we do to make it more Recovery focused?

- Recovery is about building a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by the person themselves, whether or not there are ongoing or recurring symptoms or problems.
- Recovery represents a movement away from pathology, illness and symptoms to health, strengths and wellness.
- Hope is central to recovery and can be enhanced by each person seeing how they can have more active control over their lives ('agency') and by seeing how others have found a way forward.
- Self-management is encouraged and facilitated. The processes of self-management are similar, but what works may be very different for each individual. No 'one size fits all'.
- The helping relationship between clinicians and patients moves away from being expert / patient to being 'coaches' or 'partners' on a journey of discovery. Clinicians are there to be "on tap, not on top".
- People do not recover in isolation. Recovery is closely associated with social inclusion and being able to take on meaningful and satisfying social roles within local communities, rather than in segregated services.
- Recovery is about discovering – or rediscovering – a sense of personal identity, separate from illness or disability.
- The language used and the stories and meanings that are constructed have great significance as mediators of the recovery process. These shared meanings either support a sense of hope and possibility, or invite pessimism and chronicity.
- The development of recovery-based services emphasises the personal qualities of staff as much as their formal qualifications. It seeks to cultivate their capacity for hope, creativity, care, compassion, realism and resilience.
- Family and other supporters are often crucial to recovery and they should be included as partners wherever possible. However, peer support is central for many people in their recovery.

SCMH (2008) Adapted from *Recovery – Concepts and Application* by Laurie Davidson, the Devon Recovery Group

THE WAY FORWARD

A wellbeing and recovery project plan is currently under development and a summary of the key action points will be out for consultation shortly. The project plan will provide a framework within which further developments can take place and will address issues such as: Crisis Response, Inpatient Provision, and Community Alternatives to Hospital; Risk management and Safety Planning; Workforce Culture; Language and stigma; Support from Peers and Staff Support in Assisting Recovery; Spirituality; Promotion of Wellbeing and Strengths Based Approaches; Engagement with the Wider Community; and the development of a communications strategy.



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Getting Involved

We are looking to set up a meeting to discuss the project plan, build on the initial ideas that have been generated. We are also looking to set up some working groups to address specific issues. If you would like to attend the meeting, participate in our working groups, be put on our mailing list or get involved in any other way please contact either:

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