



**Private Mental Health
Consumer Carer Network (Australia)**

engage, empower, enable choice in private mental health

SUBMISSION

RECOVERY PRINCIPLES – AUSTRALIAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

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Contact person: Ms Janne McMahon OAM

Contact details:

PO Box 542, MARDEN SA 5070

Telephone: 1300 820 042

General Comments:

The Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia) (hereafter The Network) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the recovery principles, as part of the recovery standard in the National Standards for Mental Health Services. The Network supports the development of recovery principles and believes that they will assist in the development of mental health services that support both the recovery journey of mental health consumers and the role of carers in this process.

It is essential that consumer and carer feedback is taken on board in this consultation process, to ensure that the concept of recovery that is adopted as part of the standards is well understood and accepted in the Australian context. Recovery is a term that means different things to different people with many reacting positively but others not always finding it a helpful or accurate term to describe their experience.

The Network believes that the realisation of recovery oriented service provision will require a change in attitudes and culture by those who deliver services. This will require the principles of recovery being incorporated into all applicable mental health standards, and not treated only as a stand alone standard. Also, the standard will need to show well developed implementation strategies (guidelines) to support the implementation of these principles and values by mental health services.

The Network makes the following general recommendations about the recovery principles:

- The principles should use consistent terminology in referring to the families/relatives and carers of consumers. The current references in the

principles are not consistent and may create confusion. The term ‘carer’ should be used where appropriate, as it is a well understood concept.

- The description of recovery in the preamble to the principles should include reference to recovery as an ongoing process or ‘journey’ and acknowledgement of the tension between this process and traditional clinical service delivery.
- The principles should include clearer acknowledgement of the role of carers in the recovery process and the journey that this involves both in their relationship with consumers as well as with their own quality of life.
- The principles should include acknowledgement of the challenges for mental health services to implement the cultural change that recovery requires.
- The principles should include a commitment to consumer participation in service planning, implementation and evaluation as part of a recovery approach to service delivery.

Principles	Suggested change(s)	Rationale for change
1. Individual uniqueness	Recognises that recovery is not necessarily about cure but is about living a meaningful and satisfying life. Change to: Recognises that recovery is not necessarily about cure but is about living a meaningful and satisfying life <i>as determined by each individual</i> .	Each individual will have a different view on what a meaningful and satisfying life looks like for them, and it is important that assumptions are not made and that this individual perspective forms the basis of the recovery process.
2. Real choices		
3. Attitudes and Rights	This principle should also include reference to ‘Putting consumers and carers at the centre of the recovery process’.	This change ensures consistency with Principle 1: ‘Empowers individuals so they recognise that they are at the centre of the care they receive’.
4. Dignity and Respect	Consists of being courteous, respectful and honest in all interactions. Change to: Consists of being <i>empathetic</i> , courteous, respectful and honest in all interactions.	The capacity of mental health workers to communicate with empathy is identified by many consumers and carers as a significant positive factor in their experience of care.
5. Partnership and Communication	1. Values the importance of sharing appropriate information and the need to communicate clearly to enable effective engagement. Change to:	The Network believes that the presumption should always be that information will be shared with consumers and

	<p>Values the importance of <i>sharing information to the greatest extent possible</i> and the need to communicate clearly and <i>empathetically</i> to enable effective engagement <i>and to facilitate effective choice</i>.</p> <p>2. Involves working in positive and realistic ways with individuals, their families and carers to help them realise their own hopes, goals and aspirations. Change to: Involves working in <i>hopeful</i>, positive, and realistic ways with individuals, their families and carers to help them realise their own hopes, goals and aspirations.</p>	<p>carers to the greatest extent possible, while recognizing that there are circumstances in which full information sharing may not be appropriate.</p> <p>2. Consumers and carers identify a sense of hope as an essential part of the recovery process. This sense of hope needs to be grounded in reality i.e. a ‘cure’ may not be possible, but it is important for mental health services to actively support a ‘realistically optimistic’ sense of what is possible and in doing so, support hope as an essential part of the recovery process.</p>
<p>6. Evaluating Recovery</p>	<p>1. Individuals and their families can track their own progress. Change to: Individuals and their families and <i>carers</i> can track their own progress.</p> <p>2. Services are seen to use the individual’s experiences of care to inform quality improvement activities. Change to: Services are seen to use the individual’s experiences of care <i>as the primary driver</i> to inform quality improvement activities.</p> <p>3. This principle should include reference to self-assessment measures as an essential part of</p>	<p>1. This change recognizes that not all carers are family members.</p> <p>2. The Network believes that consumers and carers experiences of care should be the primary driver of quality improvement, rather than just one of many considerations. Further the Network supports the roll out and implementation of a nationally consistent and routinely collected <i>Consumer Perspectives of Care</i> measure throughout public and private mental health sectors.</p> <p>3. This is consistent with principle that recovery is unique for each person and</p>

	evaluating recovery.	determined by them.
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