



From the CEO



Tony Stevenson, CEO

The Mental Illness

Fellowship of Queensland uses a recovery framework for our work.

The following summary of the recovery framework comes from the ideas and practices generated from Chantelle Ritchie, Gold Coast Regional Manager.

A recovery-orientation supports people to gain access to environments that enable them to engage with

their *sense of hope, active sense of self, connectedness, discovery and ability to respond*.¹

Hope is about an individual having access to an environment that allows them to hold onto their dreams and aspirations, to believe that there is a life outside of services, and that distress is not permanent.

Active sense of self is about environments that help a person to identify that they have personal qualities that contribute to their wellness, that they can make active choices in their life, and that they are able to gain mastery over their distress.

Connectedness is about environments that invite individuals to engage in activities through their personal identity, rather than their illness, enable people to contribute, not just receive, and utilise the community as a resource.

Discovery is about an environment which invites individuals to learn more about themselves, their illness, relationships and roles with other people, working out what works and what doesn't, and allowing the person to be the author of their experience.

Ability to respond is about environments that support individuals to gain control in areas of their life, recognise that they are responsible for their own thoughts, feelings and actions, and finding a way to communicate about what their needs are to live the life they want to live.

What is recovery?

The term recovery is usually associated with physical illnesses, which implies the absence of illness or a return to pre-injury functioning. Recovery in the context of mental health, is seen as living a life of a person's choosing, with or without symptoms. Recovery involves developing new meaning and purpose in life, as much as it involves determining how to manage mental illnesses within that life. Individuals who identify as being 'in recovery' see the process as 'a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and roles and as a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life'².

What recovery means to the Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland

The Fellowship is committed to providing quality support that enables each individual to reclaim their lives within the community. We believe recovery is an individual process and that our role as a support service is to provide individuals with opportunities, information and resources that will assist them to live the life they choose, in the community of their

choice. We cannot recover for individuals - we can only walk alongside people during their time within our service, and assist individuals to develop skills and abilities to continue along their recovery journey.

Individual recovery outcomes are different for each individual, however broadly, these can be categorised in the following ways:

- Self mastery - through learning about their distress and their ability to manage this, to self manage their medical assistance through collaboration with medical practitioners
- Ability to respond - to de-stress and manage their own behaviours, to form relationships, and develop the capacity to tackle challenges
- Future capacity - belief in their ability to contribute to their own future.
- Learning and discovery - lifelong learning.
- Citizenship - maintaining roles and responsibilities within their communities, and having meaningful daily activities.

A recovery framework

The service framework adopted by the Fellowship, utilises evidence-based research³ at its heart, as well as information and experience from working with individuals in our services, through participation in sector-wide service transformation projects, and from continuous service improvement and feedback from individuals working for the Fellowship in the field. It is built on the Fellowship's core values.

The framework has three key components:

Personal resource base - identification of the individual's strengths and abilities that are already in existence, for example, what the person is already doing to contribute to their community and stay well in their community.

Natural resource base - identification of the existing relationships that are already supporting the individual in their community. For example, mother, father, brother, sister, friends, neighbours, shop keeper down the road etc.

Community resource base - identification of the community connections that are already in existence within the individual's life. For example, their local library, dentist, shopping centre, TAFE, employment agency.

The framework is underpinned by the concept that natural, community and family relationships enrich people's lives, and service responses should be a last resort. The challenge is to resist plugging a person's perceived needs with paid services. We talk with the person, to assist them to explore what other available resources are in their life, before providing a service. This doesn't mean that a person may not need a service at that time, or indefinitely, it just means that the person has been invited to engage in their own future orientation, to assess what they can do without paid support, using resources that everyone in the community relies upon to live their lives. Not one of us lives totally independently from every other person in our lives. ✨

Tony Stevenson
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1. Glover, H., (2004) Star of Recovery
2. Trainor, J., Pomeroy, E. & Pape, B. Canadian Framework of Support, 3rd Edition (2004)
3. Trainor, J., Pomeroy, E. & Pape, B. Canadian Framework of Support, 3rd Edition (2004)