

What is 'recovery' and what it is not?

Recovery is not about 'getting rid' of problems. It is about **seeing people beyond their problems** - their abilities, possibilities, interests and dreams - and **transforming their lives into valuable and meaningful social roles and relationships.**

Recovery is not the same as 'getting better': people are not recovering from illnesses, but **recovering meaningful and valuable lives** whether or not their problems can be eliminated.

What is valuable and meaningful **cannot be separated from the communities and societies** which we inhabit... meaning and value are socially related.

Recovery is not a professional intervention (like medicine/therapy), **in which mental health professionals hold the key.**

The multidimensionality of recovery

- ▶ Recovery can mean completely different things to different kinds of actors and persons.

Dimension

Means (principal aim)

- ▶ a) Clinical: control and getting rid of psychic symptoms - **Diagnostics (control)**
- ▶ b) Psychological: psychic healing - **Dialogue (psychic well-being)**
- ▶ c) Welfare political: living independently - **Demarginalization ("normal life")**
- ▶ d) Politics of experience: "mastering a life of my own" - **Dignity (empowerment)**
- ▶ e) Systemic/Societal: citizens aspiring sustainable future - **Deinstitutionalization (transformation)**

Deinstitutionalisation of mental health: Some historically significant outcomes

Social enterprises:

- products and services for the market (economy) and
- collective production of mental health.
- through the lense of collective selling of labour (Italy 1973->

▶ **Expertise by experience (UK/USA/New Zealand 1980->):**

- assessment of mental and other social-health services
- research by experience
- user-led and co-led service provision (crises houses, UK)
- participation to decision making (in all levels of service organizations)

▶ **Art and mental health:**

- Projects (theatre, music, visual arts...) co-created, co-produced and co-promoted with professional artists and cultural/health organizations
- "My mental illness means I am in touch with my creativity."

Outline for the transformative model of mental health

1. Values: democracy, social justice, dignity, respect & solidarity.
2. Basic societal means: participatory democracy; welfare economics and politics.
3. The unity of: redistribution - recognition - representation
4. Transformation of mental health puts major effort on realization of human needs (self-realization, communal belonging, meaningful experiences, work, decision making, social activism...)
5. It is wrong to search for the Solution, or the Cure for mental disturbances. It is better to focus survivalism, coping, empowerment, co-production and the gradual "deinstitutionalization" of mental health ghettos.

Task for the group discussion

- ▶ Envision and outline **a developmental project in a rural community** on:
 - a) **Social enterprise (GROUP ONE)**
 - b) **Expertise by experience (GROUP TWO)**
 - c) **Art and mental health (GROUP THREE)**

Orientation:

- **Where?** (geographically)
- **Who?** (done by whom?; to whom?)
- **What?** (contents, aims and **outcomes**)
- **How?** (methods/ways of working)
- **When?** (timeline, how long?)