

# Mind's approach to recovery oriented practice





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# Objectives of this document

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**This document explains Mind's approach to its practice and describes the six core principles that guide it.**

The objectives are to:

- guide the implementation of our approach to recovery oriented practice at both an organisational and individual worker level, providing a communication tool for promoting best practice across the organisation
- promote a shared understanding of the practice across the organisation
- describe the principles that will underpin relevant service development priorities over the next five years
- provide an opportunity to communicate to clients, their families and carers what they can expect from Mind
- raise the benchmark for recovery oriented practice among community managed mental health services in Australia.

# About Mind

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Mind Australia Limited is a community managed specialist mental health service. We have been supporting people with mental ill-health, as well as their families, friends and carers, for 40 years. Mind's most recent strategy plan, covering the period of 2016–2020, confirms our commitment to reaching more people with a broad range of services that are nuanced and tailored to diverse needs and designed in partnership with consumers, mental health families and carers, and their communities. Mind has also committed to pursuing an advocacy agenda that seeks to influence social change in ways that will further help people achieve a better quality of life, not limited to their use of support services.

We support a diverse range of people, including young people, people from linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer or questioning

(LGBTIQ) people, and families and carers. Lived experience of mental ill-health and related disability, as well as the specific knowledge that a person brings from their particular community is respected as providing expertise alongside of that provided by mental health workers. Everything we do is directed by the overall values of the organisation: client focus, making a difference, integrity, hope, creativity and innovation. Our approach is fundamentally person-centred.

Mind is committed to working with people with psychosocial disabilities. Many of our clients have experienced the negative and disabling impacts of persistent mental ill-health. They may have been incarcerated, homeless or had long periods of institutionalisation. They may have become alienated from friends and family. They may have experienced economic disadvantage, trauma, forced migration and limited educational opportunities. They

may also have been stigmatised and devalued.

Mind aims to work with people early in their illness so that we can address it as soon as possible, reduce its impact and enhance recovery and wellbeing. Some of our services run for a set length of time while others are provided over a longer period. Sometimes former clients will have moved on with their lives, but need some more support so re-engage with us.

As one of the largest specialist providers of community managed mental health services in Australia, we have an important leadership role. It is our responsibility to ensure that our practice continues to be innovative, responsive to consumer, family and carer requirements and leads contemporary practice. We take this responsibility seriously, and ensure our services are flexible and responsive to people's individual needs.



It is our belief that people can and do recover from their experience of mental ill-health and go on to have purposeful and productive lives of their choosing.

## Mind's approach to recovery

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Recovery is a core concept of mental health policies and practice. We believe the approach is applicable in the context of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and disability support in that it values progression towards a better life.

At Mind, we use the term 'personal recovery' as everybody's experience of – and definition of – recovery is unique. Personal recovery has been described as 'reclaiming... his or her right to a safe, dignified and personally meaningful and gratifying life in the community...'<sup>1</sup> *with or without symptoms of mental ill-health*. We have emphasised those words because they illustrate a key difference between personal recovery and clinical recovery, which is usually defined as a reduction of, or end to symptoms and a repairing

(or regaining) of functioning. Clinical treatment can contribute to personal recovery, and we actively support clients to access all treatment and other interventions that are relevant to them.

Personal recovery supports people to build and sustain lives that are purposeful to themselves. Only the individual can define what recovery means to them. We at Mind focus on people's individual strengths, values and preferences rather than on the presence or absence of the symptoms of mental ill-health.

Our focus on personal recovery is matched by our focus on social and emotional wellbeing. We prioritise fostering the things that make individuals feel strong and healthy,

such as being in control of their life, being resilient and participating in their community. We also prioritise addressing barriers to wellbeing, such as poverty and lack of access to housing, education and employment opportunities.

As personal recovery is defined by the client, our services are individually tailored, person-centred and responsive to their changing needs and aspirations. Recovery is a journey and the things that affect people's sense of social and emotional wellbeing will change as their journey progresses. This means that their needs will fluctuate. At Mind, our approach is to be sensitive to how different factors affect individual clients at different times and to be responsive in terms of the person-centred support we provide.

<sup>1</sup> Davidson, L, Tondara, J, Staeheli Lawless, M, O'Connell, M & Rowe, M 2008 *A Practical Guide to Recovery-Oriented Practice: Tools for Transforming Mental Health Care*, Oxford University Press, New York.

# Our principles and practice

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Mind's approach to recovery oriented practice is guided by six core principles. It is also guided by our recognition that supporting recovery includes supporting a person to realise their human rights. This involves respecting and promoting:

- the inherent dignity of the individual
- privacy
- freedom from discrimination and the equal enjoyment of citizenship
- autonomy, including supporting decision making where necessary.

Mind staff training reaffirms human rights values in which the client is seen as a whole person, neither defined by nor diminished by their illness. We incorporate these rights into all aspects of our service delivery.

## **There are six core principles that guide our recovery oriented practice:**

1. Support personal recovery and promote wellbeing.
2. Take a person centred approach to development of clients' support plans.
3. Deliver services informed by evidence and consistent with a social model of health.
4. Build trusting relationships.
5. Ensure our practice is sensitive to the needs of families and carers.
6. Work in partnership and collaborate with other organisations.

We implement these principles in the following way.

### Support personal recovery and promote wellbeing

Mind staff support personal recovery and promote wellbeing through:

- promoting the knowledge and hope that people can and do recover a better life despite the experience of significant challenges or disability arising from mental ill-health
- promoting the importance of self-care and taking personal responsibility for one's life
- developing trust and acceptance of diversity in our relationships with clients, their families and carers
- providing individually tailored support and services that are responsive to each client's preferences, values and needs
- building on people's strengths and capabilities.

The creation of an individualised recovery plan is central to our practice. Where a client does not already have a support plan (such as would be developed for those participating in the NDIS), or where we think more can be done to extend an existing plan, we work collaboratively with them, identifying their individual goals and the support required to reach those goals.

### Take a person-centred approach to development of support plans

The recovery plan is inherently person-centred and puts the client in control of their recovery. It recognises and reflects the client's individual preferences, strengths and aspirations. It also identifies areas where they may need specific support, or may need to acquire particular skills or knowledge and outlines the responsibilities that both the worker and client commit to in working towards achievement of the client's goals.

The development of the plan considers issues and concerns raised by families and carers, as well as the need to include any other organisations involved with the client.

The approach of developing a recovery plan aligns with the objectives of the NDIS in that it provides an individual with a roadmap to a better life as expressed under the Scheme.

A recovery plan may include actions to:

- promote self-care and responsibility
- improve physical health and emotional, social and social wellbeing
- provide practical assistance, information, resources and links to other services and community opportunities
- build skills to enhance practical capacity and gain or regain valued roles in the client's chosen communities
- increase involvement in meaningful and pleasurable activities to help develop a positive identity and improve self-confidence
- increase the quality and number of connections in a client's social circle
- build skills to form and maintain personal relationships, including with families and carers
- support the client both to identify and address the impact of any past traumas
- enhance the client's ability to participate in society through identifying preferred options for housing support, education and training, employment, voluntary work and playing a part in the community
- identify and deal with any stigma, discrimination and prejudice that the client may have experienced
- support safe and positive risk-taking such as trying out new experiences or taking up new opportunities
- support clients both to achieve success and to make their own mistakes (which helps build resilience)
- support informed decision making
- reduce the impact of harmful behaviours, such as substance use, self-harm and self-neglect by supporting the client to develop appropriate personal safety plans.

## Deliver services informed by evidence and consistent with a social model of health

The evidence that informs our delivery of recovery oriented practice includes:

- narratives of personal recovery
- expert consensus
- formal research
- internal evaluation data such as client satisfaction and feedback
- surveys of people with lived experience of recovery (including families and carers) who have used our services
- monitoring outcomes for clients, families and carers who use our services.

Our practice and services are consistent with a social model of health, which recognises that broader social, economic, cultural and political factors affect health and wellbeing and that the burden of ill-health falls disproportionately on those groups who experience greater discrimination and exclusion. It emphasises the importance of promotion and prevention, community participation and the role of sectors outside health.

## Build trusting relationships

Mind staff focus on proactive and purposeful engagement. We build collaborative relationships with our clients that support personal recovery and promote wellbeing. These relationships grow out of trust and respect, so the client feels accepted and valued for who they are. Our workers take responsibility for maintaining contact during difficult times, including when the client is in hospital, and persist in raising challenging issues when doing so is appropriate and beneficial to the client. Workers ensure that interactions have a useful purpose, and that the client is empowered to manage their own life and decisions.

In order to achieve proactive and purposeful engagement that builds trusting relationships, Mind workers:

- maintain a hopeful outlook for the client, to promote a platform for change
- believe that change is possible, and communicate this to the client, families, carers and others
- look for and promote strengths and capacities in the client

- value the client for who they are
- promote hope, trust, belief in and a positive sense of self
- are reliable and honest in their dealings with the client
- listen carefully to what the client says, and avoid using stigmatising jargon when communicating
- maintain a non-judgmental attitude
- respect the views and wishes of the client.

## Ensure our practice is sensitive to the needs of families and carers

Mind's recovery oriented practice recognises that families, friends and carers are important partners in supporting personal recovery. It also recognises that families and carers are affected by their experience of their loved one's mental ill-health. We understand that they may experience their own mental health issues as a result of the stress of supporting a person who is ill or navigating a complex service system.





Families, friends and carers may undertake their own personal recovery journey. We seek to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed by focusing on:

- promoting family-sensitive practice to ensure families and carers are included as part of our services to clients
- providing short-term, targeted services for families and carers
- providing specialist family and carer support services.

### **Work in partnership and collaborate with other organisations**

Organisations achieve better results when they work together. We have established a broad network of partnerships and collaborations

with other health professionals and community organisations, building a network of support to assist clients in their recovery and life management. Partnerships provide clients with improved access to services and information and increase our ability to ensure that they receive individually tailored support.

Specialist clinical mental health services are key partners. We support clients' clinical care by developing an effective partnership with the clinician who is treating them.

The range of the other collaborative relationships that we form reflects the holistic nature of the support we give to clients' personal recovery. Mental ill-health can affect every area of a person's life, and their recovery from it

may require support from a wide range of organisations. To ensure that our clients receive that support, we have built collaborative relationships with:

- general practitioners, psychiatrists and other allied health practitioners
- local area mental health services and hospital networks
- housing services
- employment services and agencies
- training organisations, including the TAFE and university sector
- Commonwealth and state government agencies such as Centrelink and the Department of Human Services
- recreation and sporting organisations
- local government.

# Moving forward

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**Mind is committed to continually developing and evaluating our approach to recovery and wellbeing focused services.**

**We have the following priorities:**

1. Sustain our organisation-wide education program to embed key elements of recovery oriented practice.
2. Continually refine our service models so that they better reflect contemporary understanding of recovery, especially personal recovery and social and emotional wellbeing and how these concepts relate to psychosocial disability support services and the attainment of 'a better life'.
3. Provide information and resources on recovery and wellbeing that strengthen people's ability to take responsibility for managing their mental health.
4. Attract staff with the required attitudes, values and knowledge to be effective deliverers of our model of recovery oriented practice.
5. Increase recognition of the importance of people's lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery in informing service planning, design, practice and evaluation.
6. Expand the peer mental health workforce and invest in the training and resourcing of the peer workforce within Mind.
7. Expand our communication with current and potential clients and their families and carers and with potential referrers.
8. Expand our research and evaluation work to monitor the responsiveness and effectiveness of our services, using this research to inform a program of continuous quality improvement.
9. Develop core family and carer-specific services.

Achieving and maintaining the priorities outlined above requires the commitment of the whole organisation. We thank you for your support and encouragement in implementing *Mind's approach to recovery oriented practice*.





## Acknowledgements

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## References

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1 Davidson, L, Tondara, J, Staeheli Lawless, M, O'Connell, M & Rowe, M 2008 *A Practical Guide to Recovery-Oriented Practice: Tools for Transforming Mental Health Care*, Oxford University Press, New York.



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