

2 About the framework



The National recovery-oriented mental health practice framework is a vital new policy direction to enhance and improve mental health service delivery in Australia.

It brings together a range of recovery-oriented approaches developed in Australia's states and territories and draws on national and international research to provide a national understanding about what constitutes recovery-oriented practice and service delivery, and how recovery-oriented models can be translated into practice. It complements existing professional standards and competency frameworks.

It is important to recognise the significant investment that Australian mental health services have already made over the last thirty years in the delivery and improvement of mental health services. This framework benefits considerably from this investment. It was developed from an extensive consultation process involving individuals and organisations across Australia through online surveys, written submissions and consultative forums.

The framework is presented in two documents:

- This document, *A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Guide for practitioners and providers*, gives guidance to mental health practitioners and services on recovery-oriented practice and service delivery.
- A companion document entitled *A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Policy and theory* provides background on the research and policy underpinnings of the framework.

Additional resources for practitioners, services, carers and consumers to help in the implementation of the framework are available at www.health.gov.au/mentalhealth.

Lived experience—the heart of the framework

The lived experience and insights of people with mental health issues and their families are at the heart of this framework. Like all members of the community, people with experience of mental health issues desire sustaining relationships, meaningful occupations, and safety and respect in their lives. The focus on people's lived experience, and on their needs rather than on organisational priorities offers a new and transformative conceptual framework for practice and service delivery.

Bringing lived experience together with the expertise, knowledge and skills of mental health practitioners offers opportunities for profound cultural change in the way it challenges traditional notions of professional power and expertise. Given that a significant proportion of the mental health workforce has lived experience of mental health issues either in their own lives or in their close relationships, recovery paradigms help to break down the conventional demarcation between staff and people who use services. Within recovery paradigms all people are respected for the experience, expertise and strengths they contribute.

...people with lived experience are considered experts on their lives and experiences while mental health professionals are considered experts on available treatment services.

Victorian Department of Health (2011).



Purpose of the framework

The framework will help mental health professionals in a range of settings—hospitals, community mental health services and other public, private and non-government health and human service settings—to align their practice with recovery principles.

The framework will encourage a fundamental review of skill mix within the mental health workforce. As services heighten their value of lived experience, the balance in the workforce between experts by training and experts by experience will continue to shift, and there will be an expanded role for peer practitioners—people in recovery, their families and their carers.

The framework will influence the design and development of innovative service models and systems of care such as trauma-informed approaches and services designed and operated by people with a lived experience.

The ultimate goal of the framework is to improve outcomes and quality of life for people experiencing mental health issues.

The language of recovery

Consistent with the language of recovery, the terms 'person', 'person in recovery', 'person with lived experience', 'lived expertise' and 'expert by experience/training' are used wherever possible rather than the terms 'clients', 'service users' or 'patients', which focus on deficits or relationships to services (Recovery Devon 2012). For similar reasons, the framework uses the term 'family and support people,' which includes family members, partners, friends or anyone whose primary relationship with the person concerned is a personal, supportive and caring one.

Many people prefer the words 'consumers' and 'carers', and this is acknowledged in the framework.

Relationship to Australia's mental health service standards

Australia's *National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010* underpin this framework. Of particular importance are the 'Principles of recovery oriented mental health practice' and the 'Supporting recovery' standard (Standard 10.1). The mental health system reports on key outcomes that indicate recovery including (but not limited to) housing, employment, education and social and family relationships as well as health and wellbeing measures. The 'Principles of recovery oriented mental health practice' are intended to inform and overarch all ten standards.

Organisations that provide mental health or allied services can use the national mental health standards to assess the recovery orientation of their services. A number of other tools that assess an organisation's recovery orientation are identified in the section entitled 'Recovery-oriented service delivery'.

More detail on the relationship between the national mental health standards and the framework can be found in the companion to this document, *A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Policy and theory* available at www.health.gov.au/mentalhealth.



Who is this Framework intended for?

This framework is for anyone who is interested in embedding recovery-oriented care into their practice.

How to use this guide

The guide covers many areas of practice with detailed suggestions about how to achieve recovery-oriented practice. Some practitioners and providers may find it helpful to concentrate on particular areas of interest as well as viewing the framework as a whole.

Section 9 and the Appendix contain detailed information on each of the practice domains and key capabilities required.

A diagram representing the national recovery framework at a glance is at Figure 1.



Figure 1: The national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: at a glance

Australia's national recovery-oriented mental health practice framework provides concepts and definitions of recovery, describes the practice domains and key capabilities necessary for the mental health workforce to function in accordance with recovery-oriented principles and provides guidance on tailoring recovery-oriented approaches to respond to the diversity of people with mental health issues, to people in different life circumstances and at different ages and stages of life.

