

Role of Social Work in Recovery

Karyn Baker

Family Outreach and
Response Program

Presentation Outline

- What do we mean by mental health recovery?
- How do social work values and mental health recovery principles intersect?
- What are the challenges facing social workers practicing a recovery approach at CAMH?
- What are the strategies for overcoming these challenges?

Warm-Up Exercise

- Think of a time when you needed to recover from something e.g. an illness, a death, a job loss, a break-up, emigrating etc.
- Q. What was it like mentally/ and physically for you?
- Q. What did you need from others and from within to recover?

What is Mental Health Recovery?

“Recovery is a ***process***, not a place. It is about recovering what was lost: ***rights, roles, responsibilities, decisions, potential and support***. It is ***not*** about ***symptom elimination*** but about what an individual, wants, how s/he can get there, and how others can help/support them to get there. It is about ***rekindling hope*** for a productive present and a rewarding future – and believing that one deserves it.

What is Mental Health Recovery?

Recovery involves people having a personal vision of the life they wasn't to live, ***seeing and changing patterns, discovering symptoms can be managed and doing it***, finding new ways and reasons, doing more of what works and less of what doesn't. Recovery is about ***reclaiming the roles*** of a 'healthy' person, rather than a 'sick' person, Recovery is about getting there". Laurie Curtis 1998

Where does the Recovery Movement come from?

- Writings of Consumer/Survivors telling their recovery stories
- Researching Recovery Stories
- Advocacy efforts of Consumer/Survivors
- Longitudinal Studies
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation
- Holistic Approach to Physical Health
- Anti-oppression work and the Disability Movement

What are the key concepts of Recovery?

- A process, not a cure
- The cornerstone is hope
- Personal responsibility
- Education and resources
- Self-Advocacy
- Support/Connection

Social Work Values and Recovery Principles

Social Work Value:

- ❖ SELF-DETERMINATION

Recovery Principles:

- ❖ EMPOWERMENT
- ❖ CHOICE
- ❖ SHARING POWER
- ❖ SELF-RESPONSIBILITY
- ❖ SELF-MANAGEMENT

Social Work Values and Recovery Principles

Social Work Value:

- ❖ SELF-WORTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL

Recovery Principles:

- ❖ RECOVERY IS A HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED PROCESS
- ❖ BASED ON STRENGTHS
- ❖ APPRECIATE THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH PERSON

Social Work Values and Recovery Principles

Social Work Value:

- ❖ People Can Grow and Change

Recovery Principles:

- ❖ People can and do recover
- ❖ Hope is Key
- ❖ People are resilient
- ❖ Growth is self-defined

Social Work Values and Recovery Principles

Social Work Value:

- ❖ The Environment of the Person is Important

Recovery Principles:

- ❖ Opportunities for social connection with peers, friends and family
- ❖ People may be recovering from many things e.g. trauma, poverty, discrimination, losses, physical health
- ❖ Determinants of Health are Crucial to recovery

Social Work Values and Recovery Principles

Social Work Value:

- ❖ Social injustices and oppression must be addressed

Recovery Principles:

- ❖ Recovering from the diagnosis, internalized oppression, social exclusion, mentalisms and other forms of oppression
- ❖ Recovering from the symptoms is often the easy part

What are the challenges for embracing recovery?

- Not our experience to see people recover
- Most of our knowledge is based on a medical model that believes in poor prognosis and low expectations
- Our own feelings of hopelessness
- Our own mentalisms/discrimination
- The lack of clarity about our role in recovery

What are the challenges at CAMH for social workers to practice mental health recovery?



Building Momentum for Recovery at CAMH

- Empowerment Council
- Family Council
- Recovery Committee
- Commitment from Senior Management
- Bill of Rights
- IPPC
- Family Mental Health Recovery Series

What can we do as social workers to overcome the barriers of practicing OUR PROFESSION!

- Believe that people can and do recover
- Practice hope-inspiring strategies
- Learn as much as possible about mental health recovery
- Share information and resources about mental health recovery with your clients, families and colleagues
- Address Oppression and Mentalisms
- Use your existing toolbox
- Get involved in Recovery Events and Activities
- Believe in your power as a worker to make a difference!

Social Workers leading the Recovery Movement at CAMH!

