



2 About the framework

The national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services provides 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 and approach to recovery-oriented mental health practice and service delivery.

The framework was developed through an extensive consultation process involving individuals and organisations across Australia through online surveys, written submissions and consultative forums. The framework:

- supports cultural and attitudinal change
- complements existing professional standards and competency frameworks
- encourages a fundamental review of skill mix within the workforce of mental health services, including increased input from those with expertise through experience.

The framework is for all people employed in the mental health service system² regardless of role, profession, discipline, seniority or degree of contact with people accessing services. It is also for people in administration, policy development, research, program management and service planning.

The framework is presented in two documents:

- A guide for mental health practitioners and services in recovery-oriented practice and service delivery entitled *A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Guide for practitioners and providers* is the main document in the suite of resources about the framework.
- This background paper, *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.

Australian mental health services have made a significant investment over the last thirty years in the delivery and improvement of rehabilitation and other services that address the psychosocial needs of people experiencing mental illness. The framework benefits considerably from this investment.

2 The mental health service system comprises services and programs in which the primary function is to provide promotion, prevention, early intervention, medical and psychiatric treatments and recovery support for people who experience mental health issues or mental illness, their families, carers and support networks.



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 experiencing mental health issues desire sustaining relationships, meaningful occupation, and safety and respect in their lives. The focus on people's lived experience, and on the needs of people who use services 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. Recovery paradigms recognise that a significant proportion of the mental health service workforce has lived experience of mental health issues, either in their own lives or in close relationships. Acknowledging lived experience helps to break down the conventional demarcation between consumers and staff. All people are respected for the experience, expertise and strengths they contribute.

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.

