
Older People Do Recover

Initiative Type

Service Improvement

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Close

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Summary

Hope is crucial to recovery of mental illness, and peer-to-peer shared experiences are beneficial in supporting recovery. However, there is a lack of peer led, recovery focused resources for older people and the wider community to access. A video was developed in collaboration with three Gold Coast Mental Health consumers who shared their experiences of living with mental illness. Their

hope is to shift the misconceptions related to mental illness, as well as provide hope to others. The variety of formats developed included a 3 minute video, a 10 minute video and access through different social media to the general public.

Key dates

Jun 2016

Aug 2017

Implementation sites

Robina Hospital

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Aim

To develop a resource to facilitate the sharing of older peoples experiences of living with mental

illness.

Benefits

- Breaks down the stigma related to mental illness through the sharing of stories.
- Empowers people to seek help.

Background

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are as important in older age as at any other time of life. Mental illness in older people can be misunderstood as an inherent and inevitable aspect of ageing, which is not the case. For older people ageing with a mental illness and those experiencing the first onset of mental illness in old age, co-occurring chronic physical health problems and disease will become more prevalent.

Solutions Implemented

Face to face individual interviews were conducted with three older people who experience mental illness, and one carer. The consumer stories were developed into a video format. The videos were successfully launched in March 2017.

Evaluation and Results

The consumers, their families, GCHHS executives, staff and related non-government organisations were invited to attend. Feedback from all involved was positive.

- The videos were also shown at the “Carer and Consumer Information Day”. Feedback from consumers and families was positive. They identified that they would like these videos to be replicated with other age groups and different populations. This demonstrates the need for consumer stories.
- The consumers who participated felt that their experience was valued. They now feel more able to confidently share their story with others.
- The video is being used as a tool to provide education to students and other staff (within universities and within the health service).

Lessons Learnt

The videos are to be used widely within the service, including the acute Older Persons Mental Health Inpatient Unit, to give hope to consumers as well as carers and significant others. It is believed the videos will instill the message that it is possible to recover and live a meaningful life with a mental illness. The broader value to the general public is to reduce the stigma attached to mental illness within the older population. Implications:

- Develop a tool to measure the outcomes of the video, within a GCHHS older persons mental health inpatient ward setting.
- Expand this to other older persons mental health inpatient units and community teams across Queensland and beyond

Further Reading

[Gold Coast Health Older Persons Mental Health Services](#) [Gold Coast Health YouTube Video: Older persons mental health - Melvin](#)

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