

NSW Community Mental Health Strategy 2007–2012

From Prevention and Early Intervention to Recovery

Summary

What is the *NSW Community Mental Health Strategy 2007–2012*?

The *NSW Community Mental Health Strategy 2007–2012* (the *Strategy*) describes the future model for community mental health services in NSW. This model provides a framework for improving responses to the needs of people with a mental illness or disorder and their families and carers. It covers services delivered across NSW, across the age range, across diverse communities and in collaboration with service partners.

The purpose of this *Strategy* is to guide NSW Health, NSW Area Mental Health Services and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of this model. The *Strategy* is underpinned by significant investment from the NSW Government – over \$939 million over five years will be spent on the initiatives outlined in the *Strategy*.

"Strong community mental health services are critical to delivering effective mental health services for people of all ages with mental illnesses and disorders, their families and carers"

*NSW Health, NSW Community Mental Health Strategy 2007–2012
– From Prevention and Early Intervention to Recovery, p 1.*



What does the *Strategy* aim to achieve?

The *Strategy* aims to achieve improved outcomes in mental health by delivering comprehensive recovery oriented community mental health services across NSW. These services will:

- Promote mental health and well being
- Embed a recovery approach to service delivery
- Prevent and/or intervene early in the onset or recurrence of mental illness
- Improve evidence based practice in community supports and services
- Enhance community responses to mental health emergencies and acute care needs.

The *Strategy* renews a focus on community mental health and highlights a reform of mental health services to strengthen and develop the capacity of the mental health workforce (public and NGO) and key service partners, GPs, other primary health care services and other government agencies.

Rehabilitation is positioned as a core program for all public sector and NGO mental health services. Access to rehabilitation from the earliest point of contact with services will assist to promote the recovery of people with a mental illness or disorder.



Principles of community mental health care diagram

Principles of Community Mental Health Care

All of the community mental health services outlined in the model apply **recovery focused** service principles. This is supported through applying **evidence-based practices**, ensuring **service integration** and providing **individualised care** to encourage consumers' **community participation**.

Promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives are also essential to enhance the well being of the overall community and ensure early access to treatment. Each of these latter five principles are inter related, as they are all aspects of providing recovery focused care. The service is also supported by underlying frameworks to ensure the quality and safety of care.

What is the NSW Community Mental Health Service Model?

The *Strategy* outlines a community mental health service model comprising two key components:

- Specialist Community Mental Health Services
- Community Mental Health Partnerships.

Specialist Community Mental Health Services

Specialist Community Mental Health Services are delivered by the public and NGO sectors. They comprise the following:

Core programs for people of all ages, and across all service settings, including:

- Mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention programs
- Consumer, family and carer participation strategies
- The NSW Family and Carer Mental Health Program
- Specific strategies and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from CALD backgrounds, and people from rural and remote communities.

Core services for people of all ages, and across all service settings, including:

- Emergency response and acute care services
- Rehabilitation services and forensic mental health services
- Specialist community services for particular age groups including: children, adolescents and youth, adults and older people.

Psychological services underpin the above programs and services.

"Intervening early is critical in achieving good outcomes across the service spectrum. By providing treatment at the earliest possible time, we can greatly reduce the burden of mental illness on individuals and their families"

*NSW Health, NSW Community Mental Health Strategy 2007–2012
– From Prevention and Early Intervention to Recovery, p 1.*

Community Mental Health Partnerships

People with a mental illness or disorder may need more than quality mental health care to support their recovery. Secure accommodation, community participation, education, employment and good physical health all have a role to play in protecting mental well being.

Mental health services are working in partnership with other health services (eg consultation-liaison services) and other key agencies to promote coordinated responses to the broader needs of people with a mental illness or disorder.

To that end, this *Strategy* maps a range of Community Mental Health Partnerships. These programs are supported by funding from NSW Health, and/or other State or Australian Government agencies. They are delivered in collaboration with other government agencies and NGOs.

Service partners include:

- GPs, other primary health care providers and private practitioners
- Emergency services
- Aged care services
- Employment services
- Vocational, education and training services
- Housing and supported accommodation providers
- Residential aged care providers.



How does the *Strategy* align with the NSW State Plan?

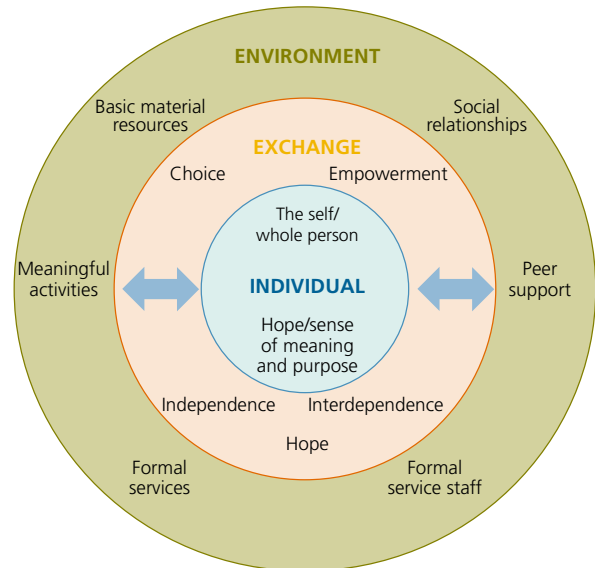
The *Strategy*'s focus on rehabilitation and recovery, promotion, prevention and early intervention, workforce development and working in partnership with both NGOs and other Commonwealth and State departments, directly aligns with *A New Direction for NSW: The State Plan*, and the three mental health key performance indicators in the Plan:

- Reduce readmissions within 28 days to the same facility
- Increase the percentage of people with a mental illness aged 15-64 who are employed to 34 per cent by 2016
- Increase the community participation rates of people with a mental illness by 40 per cent by 2016.

Recovery focus

Recovery from mental illness or disorder is best described as a process, sometimes life-long, defined and led by the person with a mental illness or disorder, through which they achieve independence, self-esteem and a meaningful life in the community.

The role of community mental health services is to support the recovery of people with a mental illness or disorder. Community mental health services can fulfil this role by assisting people to access the internal resources they need in their recovery (eg hope, resilience, coping skills, self-acceptance and physical health) and the external services and supports that will support their recovery and independence (eg stable accommodation, education, vocational support, and family and community connections).



The Dynamic of Recovery: adapted from *Mental health recovery: What helps and what hinders?* Onken SJ, Dumont JM et al 2002

Community participation

Community participation is an important protective factor for mental health. It is promoted through equitable access to housing, employment, social services, education and other community facilities. Reducing stigma and discrimination in the community also enhances social inclusion for people with a mental illness or disorder.

Where can I access the Strategy?

The *Strategy* can be downloaded from the NSW Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au

To obtain a hard copy of the Strategy, contact:
Better Health Care – Publications Warehouse
Locked Mail Bag 5003
Gladesville NSW 2111
Tel (02) 9816 0452
Fax 902) 9816 0492

"Recovery is a process of adjusting one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, roles and goals in life. It is a process of self-discovery, self-renewal and transformation"

L Spaniol, M Koehler, D Hutchinson, The Recovery Workbook: Practical Coping And Empowerment Strategies For People With Psychiatric Disability, Boston University Centre for Psychiatric Rehabilitation: Boston MA, 1994, p. 1.