

Research Update Two: Staff perception of recovery in older adult recovery services (The Retreat, York)

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LE BOUTILLIER et al. (2011) states that 'a key challenge for mental health services is the lack of clarity about what constitutes recovery-orientated practice' (p.1470). Prompted by Government policies, services are increasingly identifying themselves as being 'recovery-orientated'. Older adult mental health services are no exception (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2008). The role of the staff in supporting recovery in older adults with severe mental health difficulties has not been studied in any detail, yet staff culture and attitude towards recovery is seen as a vital component of recovery-orientated services and has an impact on the recovery path of people who use our services (Schoeder, 2012). Bonney and Stickley (2008) refer to staff supporting recovery as helping to hold hope and to empower individuals.

At The Retreat, York, we are implementing a qualitative study to explore staff perceptions of recovery when working in a recovery and rehabilitation unit within a specialist older adult mental health service. Identifying common themes in staff perceptions of recovery will allow us to identify areas of need for further training, support or supervision for staff. It is a further aim that the final report will promote a coherent and structured guideline for how the units promote and encourage recovery and aid in the creation of a shared goal for the staff team (West, 2012).

Six to 12 multidisciplinary staff members will partake in semi-structured interviews. The content of the interviews will be

analysed using thematic analysis. Early results highlight the distinction between 'clinical' recovery and 'personal' recovery (Collier, 2010; Slade, 2009): the removal of symptoms and restoration to previous states of functioning versus improvement in well-being. Staff discussed the stuckness of the former, when recovery is viewed as 'independence', 'doing more', 'moving on', 'getting back to', 'when the patient is well enough'. This viewpoint caused frustration and hopelessness. Staff discussed seeking expertise, requesting 'what to do', needing new resources and knowledge.

In contrast, staff also spoke about recovery as 'respecting each individual and their needs and what they actually need you for' with particular reference to the importance of relationships for improving well-being. 'Formulation meetings – I think that is the most important thing in a person's recovery plan... we look back into the person's history, what they have been through why they are actually here and what things we can do to help them.' Staff recognised recovery as 'progression forwards with their health and well-being'. Importantly, this shared goal invites hopefulness, creativity, sharing of multidisciplinary knowledge and utilising the existing skill set of the staff team.

We continue to seek the perceptions of the staff team and acknowledge their importance in promoting and aiding in recovery.

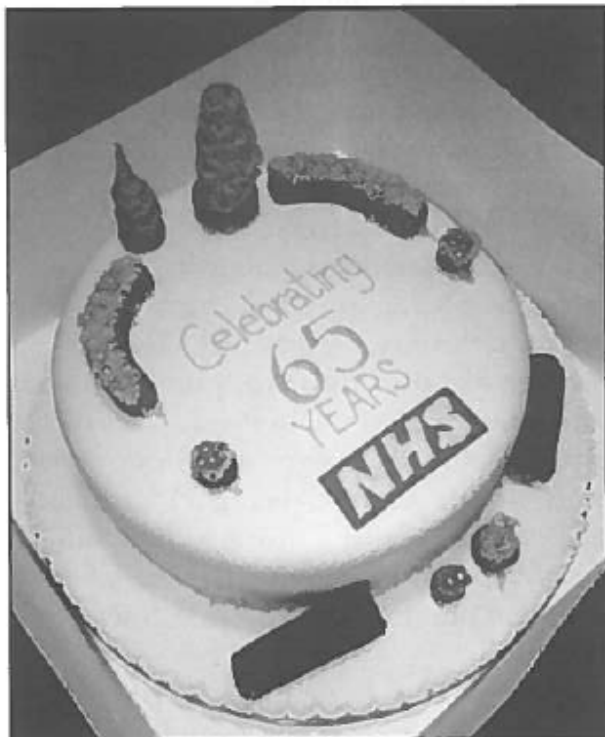
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A cake made for a garden party at The Mount to commemorate the 65th birthday of the NHS.



One of the famous four lions, 'Peace'. These were initially intended to rest at the base of Nelson's Column in London, but were later brought to Victoria Square in Saltire by Sir Titus Salt.