

Older people and recovery

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Does recovery apply to older people?

How can services support recovery and social inclusion for older people with mental health needs? A chance to put forward ideas, and to learn what services are currently doing.

The main aim of this workshop was to discuss what recovery is and what it means for older people.

A quiz got everyone thinking about the significant affect and impact of mental health problems on older people. However, we were reminded that not everyone over 65, or older, is affected by dementia. While the numbers are significant, the percentage is relatively low.

The proportion of older people affected by depression is twice as high as for the rest of the population: 20% compared with 10%. This figure doubles again when we look at older people in care: 40% are affected by depression.

Older people with mental health problems are one of the most socially excluded groups, especially those on benefits / low income, those who can't use public transport and have no access to a car, people living in rented accommodation, and those who also have poor physical health.

We thought recovery was

- being in control and being confident about this
- having potential and viewed as having potential
- other people having an understanding of an older person's life story, and the roles they have had
- respect and feeling respect
- not being written off – by yourself and others
- challenging expectations that the current situation for someone is the end of the journey
- feeling better about life.

We discussed the difficulties of measuring outcomes relating to recovery, but agreed that these should be based on a person's own definition of recovery and meaningful occupation.

We also challenged the assumption that there's no value in depression. People might learn something from the experience that can help them in the rest of their lives.