



Recovery Principles Training - 25 May

with Helen Glover

On 25 May, the MHACA team participated in 'Recovery Principles' training with Helen Glover. As always, it was great to have Helen back for her annual visit to Alice Springs, and her workshop helped us to refocus and recommit to our work. Rita Riedel reports ...

On a big picture level, Helen got us thinking about our values and practices in working alongside people with a mental illness on their recovery journey. How do we understand our role? What are the boundaries? How do we best support people who appear 'stuck'?

Not someone afraid to get us out of our comfort zone, Helen encouraged us to reflect on our personal attitudes and values and how we can be more effective by remembering some key principles –

- ◆ To help empower someone is not about 'giving' them the power back—the power is already their's. To empower = to help someone recognise their own power.
- ◆ *Don't* assume we have another person's answers. *Do* assume others have the knowledge of what is best for them.
- ◆ Keep being curious without having an agenda. It's vital to stay curious about all the ordinary small things, to recognise how well someone is doing in their everyday effort to stay well, no matter how small that effort may seem.
- ◆ Remain non-judgemental. We are naturally meaning-making beings, and rather than interpret or jump to conclusions, suspend our own agenda and ask — 'What does this mean for you?'
- ◆ In times of unwellness our role is to be a healthy sounding board. Rather than try to fix people's problems offer people an objective reality to help them stay focused. Keep honouring their efforts.
- ◆ Humans are naturally 'self-righting'. We are never not meeting our needs. People are always doing the best with what they know how.

◆ Our aim is not to make someone's goals happen but to instead ask, 'What's stopping you from achieving your goal?' What are the obstacles—the boulders in the way? Boulders are often our own beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. These can be: self or anticipatory stigma, illness-saturated beliefs and/or low self-esteem. Boulders can also be limited experience or skills, fear of failure or success, structural barriers and/or limited resources and support.

If a person could have achieved their goal—no matter how small—they would have already done it. What is getting in the way? Assist people to remove the boulders.

- ◆ It's vital to honour people's self-determining skills, not deny them—to not substitute a client's personal resources. Our aim is to help others build and extend their own abilities and resources, to help them find their own answers (rather than 'give them' independence).
- ◆ Keep supporting someone to drive their own journey rather than take over. Our aim is to support self-management, self-determination and self-direction: to help someone reclaim their own authorship over their lives.
- ◆ Change only happens in relationship. Our level of care, support and understanding is more therapeutic than any technique or treatment. Be professional but be human.

In summary – Keep being curious: What does this mean for you? How does this make sense for you? Keep asking: What would you like to do differently? Keep recognising and appreciating: the wonder and strength of everyday effort. ✕

Core Beliefs that Underpin Recovery-Based Practice & Recovery-Based Service Delivery

1. Recovery is a natural process – We constantly seek to self right
2. People constantly seek to meet their own needs – We don't try to make things worse for ourselves
3. We are always changing – There are windows of opportunity (even in every 24 hours)
4. We are meaning making beings – Our journey gives us a unique wisdom
5. Our recovery journey is a contributing factor to our life experience
6. We each are responsible for our own lives – and recovery
7. Recovery is a common experience – We have all overcome something. We are joined more through our sameness than our difference.
8. Recovery cannot happen without the person – Others cannot manufacture 'recovery' for another. It cannot be forced or willed.
9. We are individuals – not the same in our experience or destinations
10. Contributing is as important as receiving – It doesn't feel good just to receive (and makes us dependent on others).
11. Recovery is more about the process that the destination

Reprinted from "Reclaiming Our Lives Back Beyond Mental Illness" by Helen Glover, Enlightened Consultants



For more information on Helen Glover and her work visit - www.enlightened.com.