

Supporting the Journey of Recovery in Mental Health A guide for support workers, family/whanau and friends

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Review by Carole Dallimore.

This book gives a comprehensive coverage of our mental health services in Aotearoa/New Zealand, beginning with changes that have taken place in mental health policy since the 1990's. These changes acknowledged the need for on-going support for the mentally ill and so the role of the mental health support worker evolved. The decision to adopt the view of Recovery in mental illness became fundamental to mental health services delivery. The meaning of what 'recovery' means is described in detail.

The chapter on de- institutionalisation describes the background to this policy which began after World War Two. This was followed by development of anti-psychotic drugs. The release of large numbers of patients into the community without sufficient support resulted in a period of neglect for the mentally ill which finally resulted in the Mason Report and the improvement in services today. The role of the mental health support worker is described in detail which also provides helpful information for family/whanau and friends.

Diagnoses on the categories of mental illness are described, as well as medication and community support services. I found the 'listening and talking' and 'responding to challenging behaviour' section which included examples to follow, useful. There is also a section on relevant legislation including service delivery quality as well as Human Rights in mental health.

Finally the chapter 'Through and beyond episodes of mental illness' covers wellness, becoming unwell and entering crisis. This is followed by the Wellness Action Plan which has its focus on a lifestyle plan. Again, examples of how the action plan develops and is implemented are very useful. Knowledge for supporting people within the bicultural and multicultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand is entwined within the chapters.

I found this book/textbook really interesting and an invaluable tool to refer to as a family member.