Editorial

Let the Journey Begin

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KEYWORDS
recovery, mental health, practice, research

The Journal of Recovery in Mental Health is the first of its kind; and its establishment marks an important milestone in the evolution of recovery-related research, theory, and practice in mental health care. Mental health recovery has been gaining momentum over the last two decades; and this journal will provide a platform to showcase important advancements in the field. Both recovery-oriented theory and practice will be highlighted by publishing the latest recovery-related research, policy development, debates, technical and methodological advances, leading practices, and perspectives. The collection of articles in this journal, reflecting both professional and lived experience, will guide researchers, policy makers, services users, and practitioners alike in new directions of enquiry and innovation.

Recovery in mental health involves a shift in focus from pathology and illness to one of hope, strength, and purpose, despite the challenges associated with mental illness.¹, ² Enhancing recovery has become an overall goal of the World Health Organization’s Mental Action Plan;³ and this philosophy is now shaping the mental healthcare landscape in several countries including Canada,⁴ the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and in the United Kingdom.² Given its prominence in the transformation of mental health services, recovery has become widely studied in order to better understand its impact and how to effectively incorporate its principles into practice.

Since the recovery movement began to gain traction about two decades ago, much research has examined recovery as both a process and outcome. The advances made over this short period of time are truly remarkable. New conceptual models and frameworks of recovery have been proposed, studied, and refined.⁵, ⁶ The measurement of recovery is an emerging field of research, which has sparked lively debates regarding whether or not the experience can in fact be measured. If recovery is a deeply personal experience, can it realistically be assessed and reassessed for change? Many researchers have certainly endeavoured to find out. As a result, the field of measurement in recovery has grown fairly rapidly. This avenue of study has emerged
as quite promising and certainly will be an area of focus for mental health researchers and practitioners in the years to come.

Along with evolving frameworks, models, and measures, recovery-oriented research processes are also important in mental health research. To understand the recovery journey, it is of utmost importance to engage those with lived experience, not only as research participants, but also in the planning and dissemination of research. A recent call to action has prompted investigators to increase the research value with meaningful collaboration and partnerships between academics, practitioners, service users, and their families. This new research agenda acknowledges “experts by experience” and ensures that key stakeholders are involved in shaping the research landscape; this will ultimately improve the quality of the research questions, leading to applicable evidence that better informs program and service development and refinement.

As a research scientist studying factors associated with both individual recovery and the recovery-related environment in a healthcare institution, it is apparent to me how much research can meaningfully influence practice and the development of innovative programming and service delivery. The applied work of those launching recovery colleges, patient education, and engagement initiatives continues to inform the evolution of mental health treatment and services.

Due to the interprofessional nature of recovery-oriented practice, recovery-related theory has developed to reflect a comprehensive field of study that encompasses many perspectives including psychology, sociology, psychiatry, nursing, social work, occupational therapy, social justice, and human rights. This richness in diversity can undoubtedly be a driving factor in the advancement of recovery-related theory and practice; however, the meaningful integration of the learning that is gained in these different branches is paramount. The Journal of Recovery in Mental Health integrates and disseminates information across disciplines and across the globe to help further advance and shape the emerging knowledge base of recovery in mental health.

**Introducing the Journal of Recovery in Mental Health**

I am thrilled to embark on this journey of discovery as the first managing editor of the Journal of Recovery in Mental Health. I am even more pleased to do so with such a renowned group of editorial advisors who bring a wealth of knowledge and passion regarding recovery and mental health. They are international champions for positive change in treatment services and recovery-oriented practice. I am honoured to leverage the insight and perspective of such a diverse cross section of professionals including: Dr. Larry Davidson of Yale University; Christine Holland of the Ontario Family Caregivers’ Advisory Network; Linda Gravel of Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Dr. Kwame McKenzie of the Wellesley Institute Toronto; Dr. Lindsay Oades of the University of Melbourne; Glenna Raymond of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology; and Nicholas Watters of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The Journal of Recovery in Mental Health is a double-blind peer-reviewed open access journal that will be published three times per year. The aim of the journal is to integrate
professional and lived experience manuscripts in order to become a valuable resource for a variety of stakeholders. Therefore, the editorial team welcomes articles from a range of disciplines and points of view. Manuscript categories include Original Research, Brief Reports, Perspectives, Opinions and Viewpoints, Lived Experience Editorials, and Letters to the Editor. It should also be noted that The Journal of Recovery in Mental Health does not charge any article processing fees or submission charges. In addition to accepting a variety of manuscripts related to mental health recovery, each issue of the Journal of Recovery in Mental Health will also be associated with a theme that highlights key topics for recovery-related research, policy, and practice. Although primarily a themed issue journal, we will accept submissions at any time on topics related to recovery in mental health.

Call for Papers

We are pleased to announce a call for papers for our first themed issue regarding Recovery in Mental Health: Global Perspectives. Mental health issues are not exclusive to any one nation or culture; and, as such, much can be learned by sharing the recovery-related insights gained across the globe. We encourage submissions from international authors representing a diverse range of recovery-related research, practice, ideas, and perspectives. Showcasing international practices, research policies, and viewpoints provides the opportunity to build on the work of others and broaden our understanding of the recovery experience for different populations and mental health initiatives world-wide. Therefore, such a collection of work provides the opportunity to examine recovery and mental health services in context – including social, economic, and political systems that may influence mental health services, stigma, and recovery. This themed issue related to global perspectives of recovery in mental health will, no doubt, demonstrate that, when it comes to understanding mental health and recovery, there is always something more to learn. Let the journey begin!
References


