



**What Recovery
means for people
from the Black and
Minority Ethnic
Communities**

About this project

This short project was started in December 2006 when it was identified that there was very little, if any, involvement in the local recovery networks by people from the Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

The main aim of this project was to explore the understanding of the concepts of recovery by people from the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.

The project was a partnership between women from the BME communities in Glasgow, Outside the Box, the Scottish Recovery Network, the National Resource Centre for Ethnic Minority Health and Glasgow Association for Mental Health. The information from the project is being used by the organisations to help them plan their future work.

This report has been put together by the women who took part in the project and Margaret Timoney from Outside the Box.

What we did

The project was based in Glasgow and met once a month from December 2006 to March 2007. The topics of the meetings were

- **What is Recovery?**
- **What would people need to aid them in Recovery?**
- **What would carers need to help them with Recovery?**

The second and third meetings focussed on the issues that were important for the people taking part. We decided that the last meeting should be an event which was held in March. We wanted to reach out to other members of the communities that had not been involved and would have an interest. At this event they had speakers from the main organisations who could give them additional information.

This booklet is a summary of the main issues that the group initially identified, points raised at the event that we held and our recommendations for the future.

How we came together

We first came together in December 2006. The staff from Glasgow Association for Mental Health and the National Resource Centre for Ethnic Minority Health knew some of us and they asked us to get involved. There were 8 of us, all of us women and our ages ranged from 20 – 60. Some of us use mental health services, both health services and voluntary services. Some of us are carers. Some members of staff came along with us for support.

Our first meeting

Learning about recovery

We heard about Recovery and what it means. Before this, we didn't really know much about the Scottish Recovery Network and what it does.

We felt that the information that was available about Recovery wasn't reaching the communities. It would help if there was more education and awareness training. Then people would know what was happening.



"Some people are afraid to admit that they are having problems, they don't want to be isolated."

"Sometimes people don't even go to the existing services, so they wouldn't know about recovery-- they need to find out more."

"We believe that people can recover from having a mental health problem. We know that it can happen."

What stops people being able to recover

We also talked about what stopped people from getting better. These are some of our views and experiences.

- ✿ There are not enough services that are appropriate for our communities.
- ✿ We don't know enough about the services that there are already.
- ✿ People are scared of the treatment and of being labelled.
- ✿ 'White people' think that working with us is complicated.
- ✿ Professional people should explain to us what they can and can't do.

"We don't want to be separated from our communities"

"We don't know about the Mental Health Act. What does it mean?"

What would make a difference?

We talked about what would help people to get better. These suggestions come from our experience.

- ✿ People should talk about their problems with other people.
- ✿ Support from other people who have had problems is important.
- ✿ Staying in touch with your community gives you choices.
- ✿ We should tackle the stigma about mental health problems within the communities.
- ✿ There are national campaigns to change attitudes about mental health, but they don't seem to include our communities. They should get the message to everyone.
- ✿ Families need to be involved.
- ✿ Sometimes people need to take medication; there should be more information about this.
- ✿ We need to have more information about the Mental Health Act.

“Everyone needs to learn how to manage their own mental health, learn how to keep well.”

“You need your family and friends around you, they shouldn’t be shut out.”

We all agreed to meet again. We wanted more information about the Mental Health Act and the anti stigma campaign. Margaret from Outside the Box agreed to get us this information for the next meetings, but found that it was not easy to get hold of copies of the information in the community languages.

The next two meetings

Information about the Mental Health Act

We talked about the Mental Health Act. We had some information now, but it wasn’t translated into our languages. Even the information that was available (the short guide) used phrases that did not mean much to us and was hard to understand.

“It would be more helpful if the documents were translated for us.”

“It would make it easier to understand what was happening to us.”

Telling more people about Recovery

We talked about how we could get more people to come to the group. What groups and communities are missing and who would be helpful?

Firstly we need to tell more people about recovery. We need to talk to family, friends and other members of our communities to tell them about recovery and what it means.



Learn how to
INVOLVE OTHERS
in the community...

We need to talk to the men and young people from our communities, and tell them that it's not only a woman's problem.

"If people know that you can get better from a mental health problem, maybe they wouldn't get isolated."

"People from the communities think that if you have a mental health problem that your life is over"

"People need to share their experiences, support each other"

Carers and Recovery

We also talked about carers.

- * Carers and families need to be supported, as they can help with someone's recovery.
- * Carers should have training in self management techniques.
- * Loneliness and isolation is a big problem for us.
- * Carers often need social support; other people can be quite judgemental.

"Sharing experiences can help carers too."



We decided to hold an event where we could invite more people to talk about recovery and to meet other people. Also, it would be an opportunity for us to get more information about recovery.

Our event

We held our event on 21st March 2007 in Glasgow. We invited some people that we know and some people from other organisations that work with the Ethnic Minority Communities. 37 people attended, including staff, service users and carers. Albi Taylor made a graphic record of the day. The illustrations in this report are by Albi and come from what we said.

In the morning we had presentations.

Simon Bradstreet from the Scottish Recovery Network. Simon told us about the work of the Scottish Recovery Network and talked about what recovery meant.

Dale Meller from the National Resource Centre for Ethnic Minority Health told us about the work of the Centre, especially the Mental Health programme.

Jenny Graydon from Glasgow Association for Mental Health told us about the role of peer support as one way of supporting people in their recovery.

Anne Connor from Outside the Box told us about the local recovery networks that already exist.

In the afternoon we had workshops. These are the main points we talked about in the workshops.

What groups of people need to be involved and how do we do it?

- ✿ There are a lot of groups out there that we should talk to, including older people and young people.
- ✿ Carers and families need to be there.
- ✿ Deaf people need to be involved. They need to be able to access the information.
- ✿ We need to raise awareness of recovery, ensuring that everyone understands.

“Ask the communities what they want, let them lead the way”

“People should remember that different groups understand things in different ways”

“Give people time to understand”

What do people need to have in a local recovery network?

- ✿ We need to promote equality and diversity.
- ✿ Reach out to people who get forgotten about.
- ✿ We need to give people the opportunity to talk about recovery either in groups or with their peers. Especially at the beginning.
- ✿ We need lots of opportunities for people to meet and talk with their peers
- ✿ We need to engage with the community leaders,
- ✿ We need to create the opportunity to do more practical things that share skills and bring people together.

What connections do the BME communities need to make for Recovery

"We shouldn't be afraid"

People should participate more - in seminars and conferences.

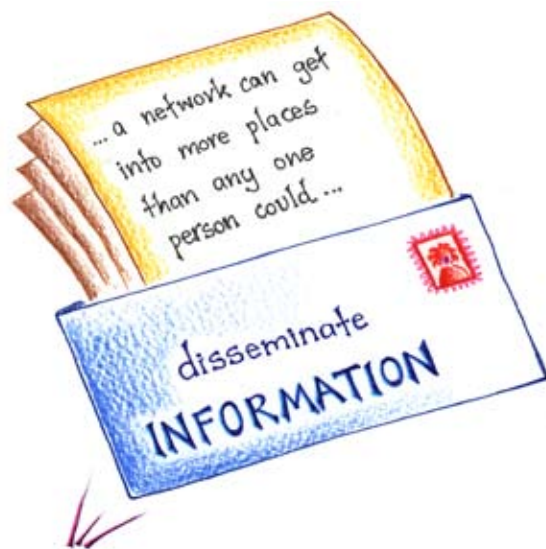
More information in community languages or easy English.

We need to educate families and other members of the community about mental health issues.

People have had bad experiences. Communities need to be more accepting of people with mental health difficulties

What could we do?

- ✿ Have smaller groups in local areas to tell people about recovery.
- ✿ Hold another event for more people who can then get to know about mental health and recovery.
- ✿ BME groups need to have links with other BME groups – so tell all of them about Recovery, not just the groups that are about 'health'.
- ✿ Distribute leaflets and posters in local shops and community centres – the ones from SRN and Outside the Box, and do our own.
- ✿ Give the person who has mental health difficulties respect. Remind everyone that they are human too.



What would help carers to be involved in recovery?

"Carers and people who use services can help each other on the path to recovery"

- ✿ Carers need to let go of their caring role and let the person make their own decisions
- ✿ Raise awareness about recovery amongst carers
- ✿ Producing information that carers understand is vital

"Carers are people too; they need a bit of time off."

"Carers need to recover as well."

What is the role of peer support in recovery?

It starts from what recovery means	It promotes recovery and brings benefits
Increased self awareness Acceptance of yourself Leads to being able to talk about your experience Acceptance of yourself leads to acceptance from other people Rediscovering self esteem Promotes interdependency	Empathy Not focussing on the illness Recovery is more than medication Brings a balanced view based on lived experience Ends isolation – not the only one Positive thoughts carry hope Role models Belief in recovery – raises expectations Drawing strengths from each other Recognises that people have good and less good times, recovery is not linear Helps you deals with stigma

These are the next steps forward

- * Training – people need training in peer support
- * Must be high quality training
- * Promote recovery more widely
- * Training must include supporting people in difficult times and crisis
- * Education on the role of peer support workers and the relation to other forms of support work
- * Ensure peer support workers have wider interests

What people said about our event

Everyone enjoyed the day. People also wanted to be part of what happens next. Here are some of the comments

"I enjoyed my day, it was good to meet new people and increase my knowledge"

"Interesting and informative day, what happens next"

"I was very impressed with all the new information on recovery"

"I really enjoyed today's seminar and can see huge possibilities (and some challenges)"

"We need to take this forward, who do we talk to?"

"I would like to be kept informed of more events"

"I really enjoyed today. I feel that I could help people"

"Everything that I heard to day I can pass onto other people"

Where we go from here?

We met again, to think about what we learned from the sessions and where we want to go from here.

We know that Scottish Recovery Network and the National Resource Centre for Ethnic Minority Health will be making their plans. We will help them with their plans. But we want to take responsibility for helping to make recovery a possibility for many more people in the ethnic minority communities.



*whatever folk
want it to be!*

We are going to keep on meeting as a group and be the start of the recovery network for people from the communities in Glasgow. We will need a bit of help to keep this going, at least at the start.

We are going to keep bringing people who use services and carers together, so we can support each of us in her recovery.

We need to get more people involved – the men from our communities and people from all the ethnic communities in Glasgow,

There were people from Edinburgh at our event. We are going to keep in touch with them. We would like to meet people from the ethnic minority communities in other places in Scotland, tell them what we discovered and learn about what they are doing.

We want to talk to the people from the other local recovery networks, find out what they are doing and how we can help each other.

“We need to encourage more people to be involved.”

“It’s good that service users and carers are working together, they’re learning about recovery at the same time. Starting the journey together.”

“We need to build up the network, get out and talk to more people, more communities.”

“We need support so that the network can keep meeting and help the network grow.”

“We will need funding to help us arrange more meetings in different parts of Glasgow.”

“The men from our communities should be involved; we need to look at ways of getting them involved.”

“The next time there is a big SRN conference we can do a workshop at it.”

“We really enjoyed meeting other people and talking freely about mental health problems. It was good to hear what it’s like for service users and carers.”

Contact details



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