Involving service users in Recovery Programme Research

by Liz Pitt

The NIHR Recovery Programme Recovery involves five research projects in Greater Manchester focusing on psychological approaches to understanding and promoting recovery from psychosis. It was inspired by a piece of research on the experience of service user-led research looking at service users’ experiences of recovery from psychosis. The work within the programme was initiated by academics and clinical psychologists led by Professor Tony Morrison, including Professor Christine Barrowclough, Professor Richard Bentall, Professor Gillian Haddock, Professor Stephen Jones and Professor Pavilion.

Service users were involved in the Recovery Programme in March 2008. They were involved at project level, according to the stages of the research including consultation, recruitment, interviewing and dissemination. Service users were made at three stages of the research involving consultation, recruitment, interviewing and dissemination. Service users were involved in a diverse range of activities, including input into the development of a measure of symptom recovery, input into the design of a Recovery Guide, feedback on the measures being used in research and feedback on the measures being used in research and feedback on the measures being used in research. The experience indicates the benefits of involving service users as early as possible in the research process and the need to ensure that funding is available to enable this to happen.

Involving service users in the Recovery Programme Research were made at the full stages. Firstly, the employment of service user researchers who would be involved in all stages of the research including consultation, recruitment, interviewing and dissemination. Secondly, the involvement of service user researchers in the project level, according to the needs of the research projects. And thirdly, the establishment of a Service User Reference Group (SURG) to meet bi-monthly in order to maintain that the launch event was accessible to a diverse range of service user researchers. The service user researchers were also involved in a diverse range of activities, including input into the development of a measure of symptom recovery, input into the design of a Recovery Guide, feedback on the measures being used in research and feedback on service users’ experiences of recovery from psychosis. The programme was initiated by academics and clinical psychologists led by Professor Tony Morrison, including Professor Christine Barrowclough, Professor Richard Bentall, Professor Gillian Haddock, Professor Stephen Jones and Professor Pavilion.

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Experience indicates the benefits of involving service users as early as possible in the research process and the need to ensure that funding is available nationally to enable this to happen.

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2. Project 3 in the Recovery Programme Recovery involved developing and testing a self-help guide for psychosis. It was awarded the Gold Award from the MHRN for the Best Example of Service User Involvement in a Portfolio Project.

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There are currently grounds for cautious optimism with respect to service user involvement in mental health research in the North West. On page 6, Liz Ripley describes the Recovery Programme, a four-year work programme which is on and parallel can be drawn with the current work around psychosocial research into bipolar disorder.

made up almost exclusively of service users. The MHRN Coordinating Centre is now based and chaired, in part by the University of Manchester. Service Users in Research is recruiting an administrator who will also work with carers with an interest in mental health research.

Service Users in Research, People and Structure

Service Users in Research in the North West Hub

by Tim Rawcliffe