

# Mental Health Recovery Scoping Review

Julia Weisser, MSW  
June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



**GENDER  
SOCIAL INEQUITIES  
AND MENTAL HEALTH**



# Mental Health Recovery:

## An overview of the literature

1. What models/frameworks for mental health recovery exist currently?
  - a) How do existing models/frameworks and conceptualizations of mental health recovery address social and structural inequities? What are the gaps in the literature?

Specifically, how does the literature address:

- i) Class/poverty/homelessness/etc.
- ii) Race/ethnicity/immigration/culture/etc.
- iii) Sex/gender/gender identity
- iv) Dis/ability
- v) Sexual orientation/homophobia/heterosexism
- vi) Effects of colonialism
- vii) Stigma/discrimination against PWLE .... etc. ?

b) How have the lived experiences of individuals informed the development of current and past models of recovery?

c) What opportunities are taking place regionally and nationally that are relevant to developing recovery models (that address social inequities and/or citizen engagement)?

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF

# Mental Health Recovery: An overview of the literature

Scope of research:

Canada, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand;  
1980 to the present

Peer reviewed articles, grey literature.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



GENDER  
SOCIAL INEQUITIES  
AND MENTAL HEALTH

# Current Models and Frameworks

- ▶ i) Focus on the individual/internal conditions
- ▶ ii) Focus on structural barriers/external conditions
- ▶ iii) Recovery “as” critique  
(Wellesley Institute, 2009)

Very little mention of social/structural inequities; some attempts made to fill this gap, or to at least to address it

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



GENDER  
SOCIAL INEQUITIES  
AND MENTAL HEALTH

# Social inequities in the mental health recovery literature

- ▶ **Class / poverty / homelessness / etc.** : Quite a bit
- ▶ **Race / ethnicity / immigration / culture / etc.** : Somewhat
- ▶ **Sex / gender / gender identity**: Somewhat
- ▶ **Dis / ability**: Only in terms of “psychiatric disability”
- ▶ **Sexual orientation / homophobia / heterosexism**: Hardly at all
- ▶ **Colonialism**: Rarely, with the exception of New Zealand
- ▶ **Stigma against PWLE**: Quite a bit

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



# Lived experience of individuals

Q: How have the lived experiences of individuals informed the development of current and past models of recovery? How is the idea of citizen engagement taken up?

A: Depending on the origin of the piece of literature, either a lot or a little. The idea of citizen engagement is often linked to specific recovery concepts such as “empowerment and inclusion.”

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



# Summary

- ▶ Difficulties conceptualizing the idea of “recovery”; trend is towards an individual notion that may or may not take structural/ external factors into account.
- ▶ When social inequities are mentioned, some are privileged more than others.
- ▶ The knowledge of people with lived experience (PWLE) and the concept of citizen engagement may or may not be taken up in the literature, but again largely within an individualistic framework.

# Next Steps

- ▶ Continue scoping review; focus more on grey literature
- ▶ Incorporate any suggestions from the group today
- ▶ Think about policy implications and opportunities for knowledge exchange

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF



# Contact

**Julia Weisser**

Centre for the Study of Gender,  
Social Inequities and Mental Health (CGSM)  
SFU Harbour Centre  
515 West Hastings, Suite 3277

**[jweisser@sfu.ca](mailto:jweisser@sfu.ca)**

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF

