

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Recovering Creativity: understanding the role of art in mental health recovery

Dr Sheridan Linnell and Associate Professor Debbie Horsfall of the School of Social Sciences and Psychology have received UWS Partnership funding to investigate the role of art in mental health recovery. The project, which is a partnership with RichmondPRA, will explore how art making within a supportive context influences the recovery, identity and social inclusion of people living with a major mental health issue.

'Almost half of the Australian population will experience a major mental illness in their lifetime, and around forty per cent of Australian adults identify that one or more immediate family members have a current mental disorder,' explains Dr Linnell. 'Yet, while best-practice policy frameworks emphasise prevention, early intervention, self-determination and community-based approaches, Australia relies more strongly on acute, hospital-based care for the treatment of people with mental illness than similar countries such as New Zealand. Evidence shows, however, that arts-based interventions can play an important role in promoting mental health recovery.'

Research groups, consisting of people with lived experience of mental health issues will meet once a week for ten weeks to make artworks and exchange stories of recovery. The emphasis will be on discovering how each participant's relationship to creativity informs the recovery process, and discovering what relationships, ideas, values and practices sustain and assist participants during recovery.

A small exhibition of works and stories will be co-curated with research participants and exhibited for invited family, supporters and friends. An exhibition catalogue will include findings from the group



research process as well as the artworks on display and will accompany the exhibition.

This project aims to make a significant contribution to the evidence for arts-based recovery and to innovation in methodological approaches to this area of research.

Project Title: Recovering Creativity: understanding the role of art in mental health recovery, through the voices and images of people with lived experience of a major mental illness

Total funding received: \$50,000

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