

Participant Testimonials

My Recovery, August 2019

"My experience of the My Recovery program was quite profound. I left carrying with me a renewed sense of hope for the possibilities of my recovery and my future. I experienced a real sense of alliance with the other participants and the facilitators - that we are all in this 'thing' together.

Through the model and mode of delivery as lived experience and peer-led, we were able to recognise the positives and the strengths in each other and subsequently, ourselves. As someone that lives with complex and enduring mental illness, I have suffered a great deal and my experience of the mental health system has been mostly pathologised, deficits-focused and stigmatising; further contributing to my personal pain. My sense of isolation, disconnection and hopelessness has been paralysing. Whilst I have recently had some relief and improvement, I feel like I have done the majority of the hard work and survival on my own. I had been unable to access lived experience knowledge and the real empathy that comes with it - from mental health services or my community. To restore hope and to heal we need connectedness.

My Recovery facilitated connectedness with a diversity of others with similar experiences and wisdom to share. I truly believe in the personal recovery and peer-led model because it honours our journey and reimagines us as a community of active, capable and knowledgeable individuals. The course was structured so that it was experiential - meaning that WE were focalised, engaged and doing the teaching and learning. We were practising the concepts and skills in real-time.

Everyone that I spoke to commented positively on the course and came away with something to take home with them. I really hope that I and others can contribute to something like My Recovery within the Darwin community so we can reclaim ourselves. We can change from passive and ill subjects of medicine and treatment - to knowledgeable, empowered and contributing members of our community. Holding space for others in this way makes our experiences meaningful and less redundant."

Participant Number 1 (September 2019)

"I participated in the Wellways My Recovery Program in Darwin in August 2019.

I have actively resisted attending previous mental health recovery programs offered to me for a range of reasons including considering them to be unsafe environments. I agreed to participate in this program because it sounded different as it was a peer led program which included the understanding that no support workers or case managers would be able to attend unless they identified as having a lived experience of mental health challenges and that they would be attending the program as a participant.

Participating in the program allowed me time and space to think about events that I don't usually want to think about as they are very painful and traumatic experiences in a safe way. The time and space enabled me to reflect on how I could better manage and respond to difficult and troubling feelings associated with those experiences. It was important for me to reflect on how I was managing my feelings as I not able to control when memories from past events will occur and what level of impact they will have on me and my life. When this occurs it is hard for me to care for myself and others or adequately function in daily life activities.

I have already implemented some of the things I learned through the program around goal setting to help me to achieve some small personal goals. This gives me hope that I have a method to help me to achieve some of my bigger goals.

Why this program worked for me was because it was a peer led program. The program facilitators were excellent and were able to share their experiences authentically to engage me and other participants in a meaningful and effective way through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment.

I would recommend the Wellways My Recovery Program to anyone who has experienced mental health challenges and is thinking about working on improving their health and wellbeing."

Participant Number 2 (September 2019)

"Wellways – My Recovery, Darwin Urban Pilot Program is very excellent. Charlie and Xenia made people think about the problems and they helped reason way out of problems and even showed purpose of exercise and how related to real Mental Health. They always made sure everyone understand explanations.

Good individual help and giving personal attention. I was never afraid to ask a question because I know they'd explain it to my understanding and never make me feel stupid. I really enjoyed Wellways – My Recovery with Charlie and Xenia, they really helped in understanding the material as well as being nice and friendly to all students."

Participant Number 3 (August 2019)

"I have been living with my depression for over 6 years.

I was attended to Wellways - My Recovery, Darwin Urban Pilot, organised and support by the Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition. I have learnt about mental health and recovery.

This course have diversity and individual for participants to understand and recognized themselves and their own Mental Health.

My Recovery has give me knowledge such a good and suit me CHIME and Communication Skills and Smart Goals. My Recovery is excellent and good experience from other Mental Health Education. This program is supporting me and everyone to learn and living with their own mental in comfortable and make their future better with Smart Goals plan."

Participant Number 3 (September 2019)

"When I commenced the My Recovery I was in a cage. During the two weeks the cage door opened. Slowly. Enough for me to realise I now have a choice. To stay in the cage, in the dark. Or leave. And become the person I have always known I could be,"

Participant Number 4 (August 2019)