

Proceedings.
Rangahau: Te Mana o te Mahi Kotahitanga
Research: The Power of Collaboration
Unitec/MIT Research Symposium 2022
December 8 and 9



Enhancing psychological safe spaces in mental health: Teaching undergraduate nurses recovery-oriented practice skills to support mental health service users

By Dr Bernadette Solomon

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<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2301006>

Abstract

Recovery-orientated practice is a challenge for nurses working within acute mental health wards (McKenna et al., 2014). Although the experience and meaning of recovery-focused care varied, there were common elements in the practice accounts. The undergraduate nurse's role in creating different therapeutic spaces to promote safety, relational commitment, and healing for service users was paramount to supporting the service user's recovery journey (Waldemar et al, 2016). The importance of building safe, committed and healing relationships to ensure the psychological safety of service users was highlighted within this study, and how worthwhile it is for nurses to let go, to a certain extent, of the traditional boundaries that may create barriers to building recovery. There has been growing concern that people accessing mental health services are not receiving an inclusive, recovery-focused service due to barriers that include health professionals' attitudes, skills and knowledge in practice. By exploring the experience and meaning of recovery-oriented practice for ten nurses working with service users in an acute mental health inpatient service in Aotearoa New Zealand, this study aimed to understand how nurses experience practising recovery in clinical practice, and to transfer the outcomes of the findings to enable lecturers to teach undergraduate nurses recovery-oriented practice skills to support mental health service users.

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This publication may be cited as:

Solomon, B. (2023). Enhancing psychological safe spaces in mental health: Teaching undergraduate nurses recovery-oriented practice skills to support mental health service users. In E. Papoutsaki & M. Shannon (eds.), *Proceedings. Rangahau: Te Mana o te Mahi Kotahitanga / Research: The Power of Collaboration. Unitec/MIT Research Symposium 2022, December 8 and 9* (pp. 50–62). ePress, Unitec | Te Pūkenga. <https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2301006>

An ePress publication

epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/

Unitec, Te Pūkenga, Private Bag 92025
Victoria Street West, Auckland 1010
Aotearoa New Zealand



ISBN 978-1-99-118342-2