

Book review

Wellbeing, Recovery and Mental Health

Category: Book Reviews / Non-fiction

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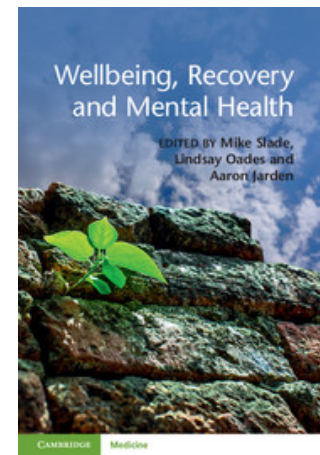
Year: 2017

Publisher: Cambridge University Press, UK

ISBN: 9781316339275

Audience: For Mental Health Workforce

Summary: An overview of current research into wellbeing for mental health which shows the benefits of positive mental health approaches becoming part of mainstream policy and services



In recent years interest has been growing in how positive human traits and environments can be an intervention for creating better personal and population mental health. Despite this, relevant theory, models and evidence have been limited. This is probably largely due to wellbeing interventions in mental health being a new field, and the inertia of current research agendas focussing on deficit approaches to mental distress.

The area of wellbeing for mental health research is gaining momentum however, and *Wellbeing, Recovery and Mental Health* provides a good overview of areas of current inquiry. For wellbeing enthusiasts who are excited about the possibility of wellbeing and positive mental health approaches becoming part of mainstream mental health policy and services, this volume will be a useful resource providing up-to-date evidence and thinking on the benefits of approaching mental health holistically.

Wide range of topics

The book also gives a good sense of the diversity of research and inquiry around mental wellbeing being an agent in reducing mental illness and assisting in recovery from mental illness. The range of topic areas covered across the 26 chapters includes:

- Improving wellbeing and mental illness recovery definitions to assist future research and understanding
- The current wellbeing science and what it tells us
- Examining wellbeing in current social policy
- Mental health frameworks that integrate mental illness and mental wellbeing into an overall theory

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- How wellbeing (mainly positive psychology approaches) is being used to help respond to severe mental illness, treatment and recovery
- Wellbeing in non-Western cultures
- How wellbeing is being understood, practiced and promoted across different environments

There are many examples of Australian and New Zealand wellbeing research in the book, reflecting the location of the editors, and this should make the text more attractive to readers in this country.

Overall this volume provides good rationale and evidence that positive psychology based approaches are not just for “the worried well”, but can be used effectively in the therapeutic alliances with even the most unwell and distressed.

Wellbeing, Recovery and Mental Health shows that incorporating wellbeing and positive mental health into mental health policy and future service design will continue to provide opportunities for more engaging and strength-based mental health service practice. As a result there will be challenges for the mental health system as wellbeing broadens the scope of how we view mental health in our public health service systems.

Reviewed by Hugh Norriss, Wellbeing Programme Consultant

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