

Longitudinal study exploring the value of occupation in the recovery of mental health service users within the Kawa Model framework.

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This doctorate research seeks to explore the lived experiences of mental health service users as they journey through their personal recovery.

The study aims to explore:

What factors contribute or hinder their personal recovery.

The value of occupation in contributing to mental health recovery.

The utility of the Kawa model as a framework in assisting participants to explore and understand their personal journey of recovery.

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology with participants recruited via Hillingdon Mind, a local mental health charity. The ten participants involved in the research were interviewed a total of five times at three monthly intervals, throughout one year of their lives. The focus of the interviews were centred around their personal narratives, perspectives and experiences of mental health recovery. Participants were introduced to the Kawa 'River' Model and were guided in utilising the Kawa Model to examine and uncover their own recovery. Participants engaged with the researcher in mapping, visualising and exploring their personal recovery as a river journey, based on the framework of the Kawa Model. Participants were also encouraged to keep a personal journal recording and mapping their recovery journey throughout the year. The interview responses were analysed via Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Preliminary findings indicated that strong social networks, personal relationships, spiritual faith, creative expression, voluntary work and a sense of personal contribution, were key factors in promoting personal recovery. Factors such as isolation, family pressures, boredom, lost of hope, poor self worth and pressure to return to paid employment were identified as hindering their recovery. Participants also highlighted the value and importance of meaningful activities and occupations in promoting and supporting their mental health recovery.

Participants also indicated that the simplicity and visual qualities of the Kawa Model, were beneficial as a framework in assisting them to explore, reflect upon and gain insight into their personal recovery and in exploring their diverse life experiences.