



Newsletter

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The Recovery Context Inventory

- an innovative response to mapping mental health recovery

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An exciting and innovative mental health recovery profiling tool is being developed by EVE, a programme within the Health Service Executive (HSE). Known as the Recovery Context Inventory (RCI), this new web-based questionnaire allows people to measure the presence of contextual factors in their lives which they believe are important to their wellbeing and recovery.

While traditionally the term recovery has been used to denote 'cure' and people being 'symptom-free', in more recent years an alternative understanding of recovery has been proposed by people with lived experience of mental health recovery. Recovery in this sense is a universal human experience involving the creation of a fulfilling and meaningful life, sometimes in the face of ongoing challenges. Mental health difficulties are viewed as one part of a person's overall life and the person is not defined by them.

From sharing their experiences, it is becoming clearer that whilst recovery is a deeply personal and unique process common themes have emerged.

In particular, we have learnt that people who experience mental health difficulties (i.e. all of us at different times in our lives)

Recovery Context Inventory (RCI)



use both personal resources and strengths (e.g. hope, resilience, etc.) and other environmental resources (e.g. positive relationships, good housing, supportive services, etc.) in their lives to develop and sustain a positive identity and a satisfying life.

RECOVERY CHALLENGE

This 'new' understanding of recovery is beginning to have an impact on mental health service delivery and now underpins mental health policy in Ireland and internationally.

Our services are now challenged to transition from a model focussed on "treating symptoms" to one which supports people in a far more holistic way, taking account of all aspects of a person's life. When we in EVE sought to commence this transformative process, we identified a lack of well-tested models and tools to assist services to make this transition.

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To meet our strategic vision in EVE – to **create contexts for recovery** – the idea was born to develop our own questionnaire which would not only assist respondents to engage in recovery planning if they wished, but would also support services to respond to each individual, based on all those aspects of their life which they believe have the greatest impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Key Features of the RCI

- Designed in a user-friendly web-based format.
- Provides a personalised profile of mental health recovery factors and priorities.
- Supports services to become more responsive and effective in meeting service user needs.
- Offers a unique rating system consistent with recovery ethos.
- Based on consensus from service users, providers, family and other key stakeholders.
- Fully developed in Ireland and the UK.
- Underpinned by a rigorous, scientific development process.

THE RCI

In answering the RCI, respondents consider areas of life relating to **Personal Supports** (comprising *Personal Resources, Personal Growth, Personal Skills, My Community and Personal Relationships*), and **Service Supports** (*Help With My Goals, Help With Jobs And Money, Help With My Personal Life and Recovery Values In Practice*). The questions contained within the RCI therefore address a broad range of life circumstances and respondents are invited to make judgements on each of these areas.

The respondent is invited to rate how often each factor occurs in his/her life and also critically to rate the relative importance of each factor to their mental health recovery, as they see it, thereby taking account of the unique nature of recovery.

For the individual who chooses to complete the RCI, it is hoped that the experience and resulting profile will support an increase in self-awareness, aid personal reflection and encourage action in those areas, which in their view, can support their mental health recovery.

For service providers, the requirement to develop personalised and targeted supports to individuals who experience mental health difficulties is a critical component of *A Vision for Change*. The RCI offers a potentially highly effective solution to address this need by assisting with the accurate identification and measurement of service user priorities.

At a time when we are conscious of the need to target limited resources in mental health services, the RCI provides an opportunity to gather good quality data on service users needs and aspirations which can ultimately guide effective person-centred resource allocation and service design. To this end, consideration is being given to an online facility to aggregate service user data, in order to improve a service's capacity to respond to the particular needs of those who use the service.

A recent report on Patient Outcomes (Donnelly et al, 2011) commissioned by the Bamford Implementation Rapid Review Scheme has recommended that the RCI is considered for use

in Northern Ireland as a service-user rated measure of recovery-orientation.

RCI BACKGROUND

The development of the RCI has involved a rigorous, scientific development process spanning six years with an extensive literature review and consensus building with a range of stakeholder groups in both Ireland and the UK, underpinned by support from the School of Psychology, University College Dublin and the University of Ulster.

Representatives from service users, family members, policy makers, mental health professionals and community-based service providers have contributed to the development of the questionnaire, which has received a Plain English Mark.

CURRENT STAGE

Funded by Genio, recent research on the RCI conducted with over two hundred people has both increased its quality and shortened its length.

A high quality manualised RCI Facilitator training programme was developed and successfully delivered to over fifty service staff, as part of the recent testing phase. In addition, a personal recovery planning workbook to support those who wish to reflect on their RCI profile and develop a personal recovery plan has also been developed.

In EVE, we believe the RCI can positively change the way service users and providers engage by introducing a solid platform from which the development of a personal recovery plan can be a truly collaborative and effective process. We are currently exploring the best approach to quality assure the roll-out of the RCI.

EVE is a programme within the HSE which provides community-based and recovery-oriented supports for people experiencing mental health difficulties, intellectual disabilities and those with a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome in Dublin, Kildare and North Wicklow.

For more information on the RCI contact Tom O'Brien, Principal Psychologist and RCI Project Director, EVE (tobrien@eve.ie).

Ref: Donnelly et al (2011). Patient outcomes: what are the best methods for measuring recovery from mental illness and capturing feedback from patients in order to inform service improvement?

A report commissioned by the Bamford Implementation Rapid Review Scheme.

