

Mental health recovery influenced by workplace values, new research finds

June 19 2018, by Lauren Sydoruk

Mental health law centres and advocates who uphold values of connectedness, hope, empowerment and identity can positively influence people with mental health issues, new research led by Curtin University has found.

The research, published in the journal *Advances in Mental Health*, found that [mental health](#) law centres and advocates who implemented the CHIME (connectedness, hope, identity, meaning and empowerment) recovery framework directly influenced someone's personal recovery journey.

Lead author Dr. Ben Milbourn, from the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Speech Pathology at Curtin University, said the research uncovered potential links between legal representation and personal recovery.

"Mental [health](#) legal advocacy services play a pivotal role in promoting the legal and social rights and increased participation in decision making for people diagnosed with a mental illness, which is especially important if the person is unaware of their legal rights," Dr. Milbourn said.

"The aim of our study was to determine if key values found in the CHIME recovery framework could be reflected in activities such as legal representation and advocacy delivered by mental health law advocates.

"We found that four out of the five values from the CHIME recovery

framework impacted people with mental health. These included connectedness with law centre staff, messages of hope from staff, experiences of empowerment and validation which informed a positive sense of identity."

Dr. Milbourn explained that the research uncovered how businesses and professionals who interact with mental health consumers can contribute to their personal recovery.

"Mental health law centres aren't necessarily required to do 'recovery work', but by taking the stance of listening, believing and positioning consumers as credible authorities on their experiences, it can greatly assist with personal [recovery](#) processes," Dr. Milbourn said.

"Our findings suggest that the stance and values adopted and enacted by health, human service and legal advocacy programs can create spaces which offer forms of connection, the conditions for empowerment, hope and, exploration of identities beyond 'mental illness'."

The research was co-authored by researchers from the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology at Curtin University, and the Mental Health Law Centre in Perth.

More information: Ben Milbourn et al. Can mental health legal representation and advocacy contribute to personal recovery?, *Advances in Mental Health* (2018). [DOI: 10.1080/18387357.2018.1480397](https://doi.org/10.1080/18387357.2018.1480397)

Provided by Curtin University

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