

“OUR STORIES” MAKING RECOVERY VISIBLE

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Introduction / Issues: “The first essential factors for a person to be able to recover are hope and a sense of belonging” (David Best. 2015)
Addictions affect a significant number of New Zealanders, and contribute to bio/psycho/social harms to people, their families and whanau, and the wider community. Some of the people affected by addictions present at services. It is the last place they come to, not the first. People arrive at our doors and sit in our waiting rooms feeling out of place, feeling shame, disconnection, loss of hope and anxiety that recovery is not possible for them or their family members.

Approach: Story is a powerful means of hope and connection. The Matua Raki Consumer Leadership Group (MRCLG) has gathered a number of stories written by people with diverse recovery paths who have presented at AOD services.

The stories are to be published in a booklet titled “Our Stories” and will be freely available in the waiting rooms of AOD and Mental Health services throughout New Zealand from July 2016. People can read them whilst they wait and/or take them away.

It is our hope that people will identify with the stories and fan the flames of hope that recovery is possible.

We will design an evaluation tool to monitor the impact of the stories on people presenting at AOD services in New Zealand

Recovery Definition: “Recovery is about building a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by the person themselves”

Discussion: We will discuss the process of gathering, distributing and evaluating “Our Stories,” and the impact the stories are having on people presenting to AOD services in New Zealand