

Recovery after Release: Signs of hope for a new future for people with mental illness leaving Correctional Facilities in Queensland

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Part of the ‘unfinished business’ of de-institutionalisation is that fact that people with mental illness are imprisoned more often than others. For example the prevalence rate of psychosis in the prison population is 30 times higher than the non-prison population. Upon release from prison the experience of people with mental illness has been characterised as “extreme social disadvantage”. People are seen to be at an increased risk of premature death and often face significant difficulties accessing community resources and having their basic rights respected.

Richmond Fellowship Queensland’s (RFQ) Transition Support Service assists people with pre-release planning and post release support. Grounded in a collaborative recovery approach, this service has engendered hope for a new future for people living with mental illness who are being released from correctional facilities in South East Queensland.

This paper reflects on Richmond Fellowship Queensland’s experience over the past three years of rolling out this ground breaking service. This paper will describe the structure of the service, the service model, and how the service relates to its key stakeholders. It will also provide an analysis of referral patterns, the demographic and diagnostic profile of the clients of the service as well as the services provided to people. A critical look at the outcomes achieved is taken by identifying the strengths and key challenges for service provision. The presentation will provide some comments on the issues and implications for best practice service delivery and invite the audience to participate in a discussion around the key issues.

Key Words

Prison transition support, collaborative recovery,