American Psychological Association

Recovery to Practice Initiative Curriculum: Reframing Psychology for the Emerging Health Care Environment

Instructions for Delivering the Curriculum

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Overview

This curriculum has been designed to train psychologists in the principles associated with helping individuals achieve recovery from serious mental illnesses and in the practices and interventions of psychosocial or psychiatric rehabilitation. The content is broad however and can be used to train other mental health professionals.

The curriculum consists of this Instruction module, fifteen modules on topics of importance for psychologists and other mental health professionals working with persons with serious mental illnesses, and power point presentations that are designed to accompany each of the modules.

Within each of the topical modules, learning objectives, required readings, a sample activity pertaining to the content of the module, and sample evaluation questions are given in addition to the substantive content of the module. Instructors are encouraged to make use of these teaching resources.

Each of the modules in APA’s Recovery to Practice Curriculum is based on the most recent scientific literature. In its entirety, the Curriculum presents a comprehensive training program in recovery oriented principles and practices to help people with serious mental health disorders recover and achieve their full functional capability.

The overarching goal of the APA Recovery to Practice Curriculum is to provide doctoral level psychology students with:

- Knowledge of the concept of recovery from severe mental illness and
- Knowledge of rehabilitation assessments and evidence based and emerging practices to assist individuals with severe mental illnesses to achieve their goals and full potential. These are known as psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR) interventions.

The APA Curriculum modules

1. Introduction to Recovery Based Psychological Practice

This module introduces the recovery model applied to behavioral health. Characteristics and fundamental components of recovery are defined.

2. Role of Psychologists and Health Care Reform

This module provides a historical overview of the concept of recovery as applied to mental health and describes its evolution. An understanding of the role of psychologists and how health care reform is shaping the future of recovery is explored.
3. Assessment
This module discusses clinical assessment methodologies consistent with a recovery framework that are strengths-based and focused on the functional capabilities of the individual.

4. Partnership and Engagement
This module examines the importance of engaging people in the service delivery process and presents some of the impediments that keep people from becoming partners in this process. A discussion of how to successfully engage and involve individuals is presented.

5. Person-Centered Planning
This module provides an overview of person-centered planning in recovery-oriented care. At its core, person-centered planning is a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to treatment in which individuals are empowered to find their own path to recovery.

6. Health Disparities
This module provides an overview of the causes of the premature death experienced by people with serious mental illnesses and includes a discussion of the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and culture related to these causes.

7. Interventions I: Guiding Principles and Integrated Framework
This module is the first in a series of three intervention modules designed to be used together. Guiding principles that underlie the provision of all psychosocial rehabilitation services (PSR) are discussed, and an integrative framework is presented.

8. Interventions II: Evidence Based Practices
This module is the second in a series of three intervention modules designed to be used together. The evidence based practices developed, researched, and found to help people achieve their desired outcomes are presented.

9. Interventions III: Promising or Emerging Practices and Supporting Services
This module is the third in the series of intervention modules, and describes services that have shown promise of achieving specified outcomes. Supporting services that are widely acknowledged as essential services for helping people recover from the effects of serious mental illness are also highlighted.

10. Issues in Forensic Settings
This module is the first of two forensics modules designed to be used together. This first module highlights the many issues and impediments people with serious mental health disorders face in the justice system.
11. Interventions in Forensic Settings

This is the second in the series of two forensics modules designed to be used together. This module presents information about the interventions currently recommended to help people in the system avoid re-incarceration and achieve a stable and satisfying life in the community.

12. Community Inclusion

This module presents an overview of the issues that serve to exclude people with mental health disorders from participation in their communities. These include stigma, discrimination, poverty, and vulnerability. The circular and detrimental impact of social isolation and exclusion on an individual’s mental health are explored.

13. Peer Delivered Services

This module focuses on the role of peers in helping individuals recover and achieve a satisfying and productive life in the community. Peer support as an integral component of the mental health service delivery system is presented.

14. Systems Transformation

Transforming a mental health system or an organization to one that is focused on helping people recover requires a fundamental paradigm shift from a system that is provider driven to one that is driven by the individuals who use the system and their families. This module presents key ingredients, challenges, successes and the role of psychologists in systems change.

15. Scientific Foundations

This module provides the empirical basis for recovery, and presents the pros and cons of using quantitative versus qualitative methods to study interventions for people with serious mental illnesses. An introduction to mixed methods research, which offers a solution to the problems of using either quantitative or qualitative methods, is presented.

Redundancy of Some Important Concepts

Users of the curriculum may notice that there is some redundancy in some of the modules, i.e., in a few instances, information contained in one module is repeated, or partially repeated in another module. This is because some instructors may choose to emphasize some sections of a module more so than other sections. While the authors of the curriculum do not recommend this, and indeed recommend that every section of all modules be utilized completely, it is recognized that this may not always be possible and relevant information may not be thoroughly covered in a particular module. By repeating certain information where relevant in other modules, it is hoped that all important concepts will be conveyed.
A Word about Terminology

There are several words and phrases that are often used interchangeably. In an effort to simplify use of various terms, the following conventions are used:

The terms psychosocial rehabilitation and psychiatric rehabilitation are used interchangeably in the literature. In this curriculum, the phrase psychosocial rehabilitation is used.

Consumer is (sometimes) used to indicate a person with a serious mental illness, also known as a person with lived experience, a service user, a client, a recipient of services, and primarily in medical circles, a patient or ex-patient.

Incorporating Consumers into the Design, Delivery and Evaluation of the Curriculum

In order to ensure that the perspectives of people with lived experience of serious mental illness are conveyed, it is important that individuals who have experienced serious mental illness are incorporated into the delivery of each of the curriculum modules. It is strongly encouraged that consumers be an integral part of the teaching experience. This can be accomplished through:

- Having consumers serve as co-trainers
- Inviting consumers to classes to be guest speakers
- Showing films or other media that have been produced for teaching the experiences of consumers

In order to ensure adequate preparation and support for those who are asked to take part in the discussion, it may be important to provide advance training and after class debriefing, especially where issues related to trauma have been raised and discussed. See Bassman, 2000 for a full discussion of this issue.

All participants should note the importance of establishing an environment where everyone feels comfortable and safe sharing information. It is important that confidentiality is assured for all information that is shared and any discussions that take place. Information that is shared should never be used to affect an individual’s status in the program. No personal information should be shared with anyone who is not part of the class and discussions about personal information that may have been disclosed in the class should not occur outside the classroom.

APA is considering ways to include people with lived experience of serious mental illness, including psychologists, in the delivery of portions of the curriculum via video and other media. When available, these media would be released with future versions of the curriculum.
Learning about recovery from serious mental illness is intended to occur throughout doctoral training. As such, educational experiences are intended to occur in courses, discussions, and other educational fora – wherever opportunities can be made available.

Reference


Additional Resources

American Psychological Association Recovery to Practice Initiative.  
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Citing the Curriculum

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Citation for the full Curriculum:

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