



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

**Unit code:** F9DW 34

**Superclass:** PH

**Publication date:** August 2010

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is aimed primarily at individuals who have personal experience of mental health issues. It may also be of value to those with an interest in mental health recovery. It is designed to provide candidates with the underpinning knowledge, skills and values to understand recovery and peer support. The candidate will understand the development of the recovery approach and learn and understand the concepts of empowerment and mutuality. The candidate will develop their understanding of peer support and its role in recovery.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health.
- 2 Define and understand peer support and its role in recovery.
- 3 Describe and explain the key concepts of formalised peer support.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

To enable candidates to complete this Unit they should be able to demonstrate active involvement in mental health support and awareness. This can be within the capacity of paid employment or as a volunteer. It is preferred that the individual providing the peer support has a personal experience of mental health problems.

It is recommended that candidates have good written and oral communication skills. This can be evidenced by a qualification at SCQF level 5 or above. The skills to undertake this Unit could also be demonstrated by the process of application and interview in the absence of certificated learning.

## **General information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### **Core Skills**

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills and Core Skills components of *Communication, Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

### **Context for delivery**

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of this Unit should be carried out in an integrated fashion with other Units in the Group Award wherever possible. The recommended assessment for Outcome 1 is an assignment of approximately 1,000 words and the assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 is a portfolio of evidence prepared by the candidate which covers the Evidence Requirements of both Outcomes. This portfolio should be no more than 1,500 words. Portfolio evidence should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### Outcome 1

Explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Mental health recovery and the recovery approach
- ◆ Key concepts of recovery
- ◆ Factors which can impact personal recovery
- ◆ Societal influences
- ◆ Effects of force and trauma

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe and explain personal recovery and the recovery approach
- ◆ examine two key concepts in relation to recovery
- ◆ analyse two societal influences which impact mental health recovery
- ◆ explain two possible effects of force and trauma on mental health
- ◆ describe and explain two factors which support recovery

#### Assessment Guidelines

Candidates will produce an assignment of approximately 1,000 words presented in essay format which demonstrates the candidate's ability to meet the Evidence Requirements presented above.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

### Outcome 2

Define and understand peer support and its role in recovery.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Peer support through relationships
- ◆ Types of peer support
- ◆ Peer support and recovery
- ◆ How and why communicating experiences matters
- ◆ Self help and self management tools

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ define and explain the peer relationship
- ◆ explore the relationship between peer support and recovery
- ◆ analyse the implications of formalising peer support
- ◆ describe the use of self help and self management tools

#### Assessment Guidelines

**The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3** is a portfolio of evidence prepared by the candidate which covers the Evidence Requirements of both Outcomes. This portfolio should be no more than 1,500 words. Portfolio evidence should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

### Outcome 3

Describe and explain the key concepts of formalised peer support.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Hope and belief and their contribution to recovery
- ◆ Empowerment, control and self advocacy
- ◆ Choice and opportunity
- ◆ Mutuality and empathy
- ◆ Strengths Based Approach to validating experience
- ◆ Positive risk taking and moving forward

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain how hope and belief underpin recovery
- ◆ explain the inter-relationship between three key concepts of peer support
- ◆ describe how a strengths based approach may validate and reframe experience
- ◆ reflect on a personal experience and describe how it relates to the key concepts of peer support including aspects of positive risk taking

#### Assessment Guidelines

**The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3** is a portfolio of evidence prepared by the candidate which covers the Evidence Requirements of both Outcomes. This portfolio should be no more than 1,500 words. Portfolio evidence should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding of mental health recovery and the specific role of peer support within recovery. Candidates consider the recovery approach and the experience of personal recovery, examining factors that may help or hinder that process.

In considering the various forms of peer support, candidates will develop their understanding of the unique role that peer support can play in promoting recovery and develop their learning of the underlying key concepts of formalised peer support roles within mental health support.

**Outcome 1:** Explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health. Candidates should explore the development of the recovery approach, describing the factors and influences that supported its development internationally. These should include the sharing of first person narratives, service user activism and a variety of other contributory factors including long-term outcome studies, the disability rights movement and social models of mental health. Candidates will understand how international influences and initiatives, Government policy and the development of the Scottish Recovery Network supported the promotion of a recovery approach in Scotland. They should understand that recovery approach is based on the personal experience of mental health recovery.

Candidates will explore the underlying concepts of the recovery approach including hope, choice and control, participation and relationships. They will understand the unique and individual nature of personal recovery and that recovery is characterised by living a satisfying and fulfilling life in the presence or absence of symptoms. They will understand that the recovery process may not necessarily be linear and that apparent slips or periods of illness may be part of, and contribute to, a longer term recovery process.

Expanding on the underlying principles of recovery, candidates will explore the key elements that support personal recovery considering a variety of information sources including personal narratives and research findings.

Candidates should be aware of the societal issues which may impact on the individual and/or the recovery context. These can include issues of stigma which can be associated with individuals with Mental Health problems both within society and within organisations. Issues of equality/diversity/discrimination should be considered in relation to access to services and resources in general and the workplace specifically. Issues of social inclusion/exclusion can be discussed within the wider context of community integration.

They will go on to develop an understanding of the relationships between trauma, force, mental health and recovery with particular reference to how they relate to the underlying principles of recovery.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

**Outcome 2:** Define and understand peer support and its role in recovery.

Candidates will examine the concept of peer support, identifying peer relationships and considering the unique contribution of shared experiences to the development of reciprocally beneficial relationships. They will go on to examine different forms of peer support and different potential settings for peer support and consider how the role may differ between those settings. They will develop an understanding that peer support may be informal or formal in nature and potential settings for peer support.

Candidates are required to have a good understanding of the implications of formalised peer support, to include issues such as:

- ◆ Boundary setting
- ◆ Team working
- ◆ Understanding the process of change
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Legislation
- ◆ Risk
- ◆ The use and misuse of power

Candidates will consider the unique contribution of peer relationships to recovery being introduced to concepts like mutuality, empathy, hope in peer relationships and the modelling of recovery, including self management of their own wellbeing. They will consider the role of communicating shared experiences in recovery and peer relationships. They will be able to communicate their own story in an appropriate and inspiring way and recognise the power in disclosure. Candidates will understand the role of shared experiences in helping people reframe negative experiences and discover inner personal strengths.

Candidates will understand the importance of the use of recovery language in peer relationships and how it relates to recovery concepts, like hope and strengths based approaches. They will understand that recovery focused language is based on:

- ◆ Validation of experiences
- ◆ The promotion of self direction as opposed to problem solving
- ◆ Being non-judgemental, respectful and empathetic
- ◆ Active listening

Candidates will understand the role of self help and self management in recovery. This will include an examination of tools and approaches including Wellness Recovery Action Planning, educational and psychosocial models, self help groups and the use of advanced statements.

**Outcome 3:** Describe and explain the key concepts of formalised peer support. Candidates will expand upon many of the themes and issues raised in the first two Outcomes with an emphasis upon their application in formal peer support roles.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

Candidates will understand how hope and self belief promote recovery. They will consider the role of formal peer support in promoting hope and examine the consequences of the absence of hope. They will consider how sharing experiences in peer relationships can engender hope and how goal setting and planning can support a more hopeful future.

They will go on to examine how peer support approaches can be used to enhance empowerment, control and self advocacy. They will understand why people with experience of mental health problems can become disempowered. They will consider concepts such as stigma (including self stigma), self esteem, discrimination, compulsory treatment and the role strengths based peer relationships can have in supporting empowerment. They will additionally recognise the contribution of choice and opportunity to self directed recovery and consider factors that may promote or diminish choice and opportunity.

Candidates will understand that peer support is underpinned by the concepts of mutuality and empathy and will consider how they may be fostered or diminished. They will understand that mutual peer relationships are based on shared experiences and reciprocal support in the recovery journey of both peers in a relationship.

Candidates will understand the theoretical underpinning of a strengths based approach. Building on earlier learning in relation to the key concepts of recovery and communicating experiences candidates will:

- ◆ understand the relationships between a strengths based approach and the key concepts of recovery
- ◆ understand why the majority of existing supports and services are characterised by a deficits based approach
- ◆ develop an awareness of their own strengths and how these may be built on in peer relationships and in personal recovery
- ◆ understand how a strengths based approach may be used to reframe and validate experiences
- ◆ be introduced to formal strengths based tools and approaches including the Strengths Model and Solution Focused therapy

Candidates will understand that risk is a key issue in mental health and recovery. They learn that risk taking may be positive or negative and understand the role of positive risk taking in the recovery process. They will understand that positive risk taking allows people to take incremental steps and learn and grow through experience. They will also understand that balancing risk, both positive and negative, is a complex process and that positive risk taking is supported by shared decision making, being well informed and having good quality relationships and trust. They will understand that there may be points in the process of moving forward when setbacks may occur. They will also understand the importance of celebrating success and the value of planning for sustained recovery.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

The following websites give access to further information in support of this Unit:

Scottish Recovery Network: [www.scottishrecovery.net](http://www.scottishrecovery.net)

Mental Health Recovery and WRAP: [www.mentalhealthrecovery.com](http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.com)

Shery Mead Consulting: [www.mentalhealthpeers.com](http://www.mentalhealthpeers.com)

Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health: [www.scmh.org.uk/across\\_mh/recovery.aspx](http://www.scmh.org.uk/across_mh/recovery.aspx)

Mental Health Foundation: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Voices of experience: [www.voxscotland.org.uk](http://www.voxscotland.org.uk)

Scottish Association for Mental Health: [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

Boston Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation: [www.bu.edu/cpr](http://www.bu.edu/cpr)

Strengths Institute: [www.socwel.ku.edu/Strengths/](http://www.socwel.ku.edu/Strengths/)

Accurate as at August 2010.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is being offered as part of the PDA Mental Health Peer Support at SCQF level 7.

This Unit can be delivered separately to the other Unit; Mental Health Peer Support:

Developing Practice within the PDA process or there is opportunity for integration across the Units.

This Unit can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit for candidates who wish to gain or increase their knowledge of recovery and peer support.

Given the Evidence Requirements and the assessment process it is preferred that the candidate has a personal experience of mental health challenges and is able to share personal experience to promote recovery.

#### Assessment

Assessment of this Unit should be carried out in an integrated fashion with other Units in the Group Award wherever possible. The recommended assessment for Outcome 1 is an assignment of approximately 1,000 words and the assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 is a portfolio of evidence prepared by the candidate which covers the Evidence Requirements of both Outcomes. This portfolio should be no more than 1,500 words. Portfolio evidence should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in the Unit, although there is no certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

**Communication (at SCQF level 6)** — this can be evidenced through written and oral presentation of assessments and observed practice. An emphasis on effective listening, mutually empowering dialogue and telling of ‘your story’ is important.

**Working with Others (at SCQF level 6)** — this is a key element to the role of peer support. This can be evidenced through observation of mutuality with individuals.

***Problem Solving (at SCQF level 6)*** — this can be evidenced through planning, critical thinking and evaluation of issues as they arise within the peer support role.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

### **Open learning**

This Unit would lend itself to some form of distance learning. However, this would require to be managed effectively with the organisation to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work. The portfolio would require to be supervised by a responsible person. The evidence must be clearly recorded (by use of checklists) for the assessor so that sufficiency and authenticity can be assured.

### **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

This Unit is designed to enable you to understand mental health recovery and the specific role of peer support within recovery. It is intended for people with experience of mental health problems as there is an expectation that you will share experiences and role model a peer support approach. You should also be actively involved in mental health support and awareness in a paid or voluntary capacity.

On completion of this Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health.
- 2 Define and understand peer support and its role in recovery.
- 3 Describe and explain the key concepts of formalised peer support.

The tutor will use a variety of methods to ensure you understand these learning Outcomes. This will include presentation of knowledge, use of case study material, individual and group work.

You will examine factors that led to the development of the recovery approach in mental health and will consider the experience of personal recovery, including factors that help or hinder recovery. You will also look at wider societal issues that impact on mental health and recovery including inequality, discrimination and the impact of trauma.

You will be introduced to the various forms of peer support and to consider its relationship to personal recovery. You will also learn about the role of communication and sharing experiences in peer relationships and will be introduced to self help and self management tools and approaches.

In the final part of this Unit you will look in more detail at the underlying concepts of formal peer support. This will include an examination of the following key concepts:

- ◆ Hope and belief and their contribution to recovery
- ◆ Empowerment, control and self advocacy
- ◆ Choice and opportunity
- ◆ Mutuality and empathy
- ◆ Strengths Based Approach to validating experience
- ◆ Positive risk taking and moving forward

#### Outcome 1

You will be assessed by an assignment of approximately 1,000 words presented in essay format which demonstrates your ability to meet the Evidence Requirements

#### Outcomes 2 and 3

You will produce a portfolio of evidence which covers the Evidence Requirements of both Outcomes. This portfolio should be no more than 1,500 words. Portfolio evidence should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

## General information for candidates (cont)

**Unit title:** Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context

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Scottish Association for Mental Health: [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

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