

Development of an innovative and comprehensive allied health program in an adult mental health extended care unit.

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Monash Mental Health Extended Care Unit provides medium to long-term treatment and care in a secure environment within a recovery-oriented model. Consumers are aged between 18 and 64 years with severe and prolonged mental disorders and accompanying behavioural disturbances who pose a significant risk to themselves or others in the community and cannot be treated effectively in any of the available alternative settings.

A broad allied health team was developed to provide contemporary, high quality, multidisciplinary extended care and treatment services. This team includes some allied health disciplines not traditionally represented in adult mental health services, including Speech Pathology, Dietetics, Music Therapy, Exercise Physiology, and Family Therapy. Establishment of these allied health roles has brought many challenges and opportunities for the development of collaborative and innovative inter-disciplinary approaches to service delivery.

The provision of a broad multi-disciplinary approach to treatment in a recovery-oriented model has resulted in many positive outcomes for this population. The model of care includes provision of individualised assessment, targeted treatment and rehabilitation programs, care planning, regular review of suitability for referral to less restrictive treatment and care options and return to community living.

The outcomes from the first 12 to 18 months of development and implementation of this innovative model for allied health services in an inpatient adult Mental Health facility has potential for development of similar service delivery models for this population in Australia.