

Different understandings of the Mind Recovery College shape how people engage with the service





## ...As an education service

People as students mean that together in new and interesting ways

### *Students view*

- as a “*stepping stone*” to other options ie employment, volunteering, education

*“at the moment...I don’t have the confidence to be in a so called normal classroom environment and university setup. So I sort of feel this will be a good stepping stone until I get into that university sort of set up”*

- as a source of knowledge; to gain new perspectives (“*knowledge is power*”)

*“I’m getting more knowledge and learning skills and getting information and resources... And also access to people who expertise in certain areas.”*

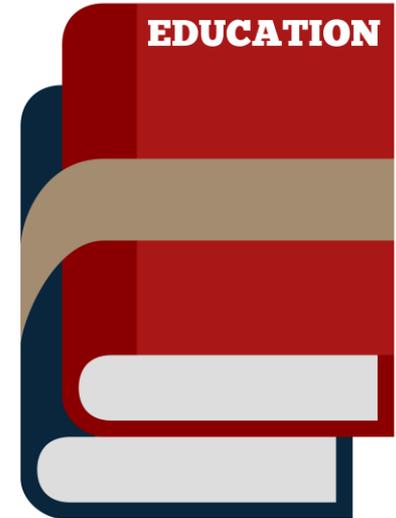




## Carer views

- Empowerment through learning

*“And it could be just anybody just wanting to learn about something else...turning it into that classroom environment rather than just group activity run by a mental health organisation breaks down some of that stigma, which is really important.”*



## Staff views

- Recovery oriented

*“it's just an education based facility for people to come and learn about recovery principles and self-development skills and strategies to help with living with mental illness”*





## ...As a hybrid therapeutic and educational service

### *Students view*

- Therapeutic value of courses through process of learning

*“What really attracted me to this was that it was led by people with lived experience and people willing share about their experience in a setting that was different to what I’d experienced before, it was not necessarily therapeutic or straight out educational information it was a hybrid ...it’s not therapy but people still share their experiences which can have that value. So I really like that mix”*

*“[it has] therapeutic value but it may not be therapy – that’s the point”* (focus group)

- Lived experience as an asset (“mental skillness”)

*“So it’s around actually then empowering...being able to share people’s stories and using that to help educate others”*



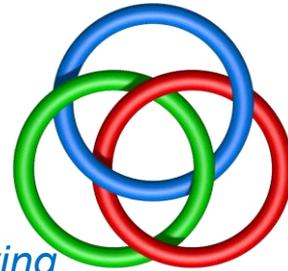


## ...As a hybrid therapeutic and educational service

### **Carer view**

- therapeutic changes from educational goal

*“having [family member] actually focussed on a goal...it kind of influenced the whole household because ... now there’s hope of achieving a better future with her having that life goal of going to university, doing other stuff...has just really brightened the whole house and made it a much better environment”*



### **Staff view**

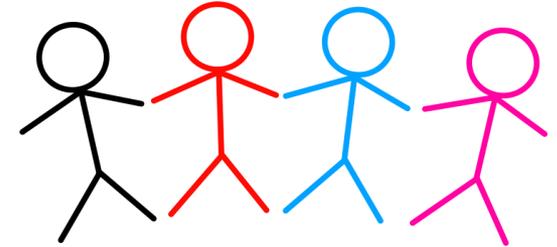
- Education within the boundaries of a mental health service provider

*“the example someone gave me was like I needed to think of it as a TAFE course and not as a mental health service. Which although I could appreciate where they're coming from, the end of the day it's a mental health provider that's providing the course, and it's provided as a service of here, so therefore it comes with those same operational expectations.”*



## ...As a “safe haven”

### **Student view**



- Emphasis on social interaction; structure to life

*“this has given me an outlet to meet and to interact with people ...and getting out from the isolation...it gives me something to look forward to and I think a lot of people would say that – it gives them something to look forward to”*

*“it gave me something to do because sometimes I just feel bored”*

- desire for more social aspects of the college

*“Perhaps like a drop in centre they can come in and there’s other people and even like some kind of recreation, watch a movie...So more like a drop in centre that would be good for me”*

## Staff view

- Social aspects important for combating isolation

*“I think one of the biggest things is the socialiser... just feeling comfortable in a social setting because instead of isolating themselves...so just being in that social group is really, really important I think. And that’s the main thing people have gotten out of it so far.”*

- Scope of Mind Recovery College

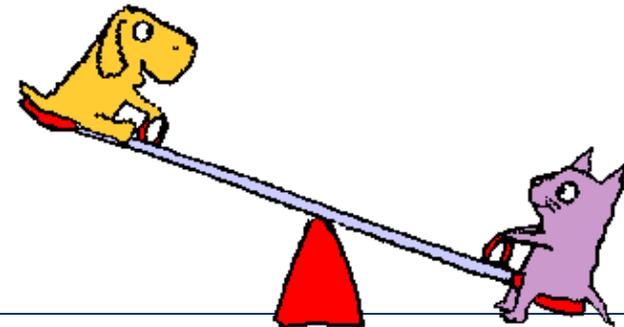
*“We have a small part now of our student base who still have an experience of when Mind was operating a drop in service...and I sense that at times those people are dependent upon the recovery college in a similar way as they might’ve been on drop in centres in the past, and it’s clearly not that, its aim is not that, and its intention is not that. But we haven’t yet gotten to the point where those people are across that difference”*





# Inclusivity vs. challenge

- Everyone emphasized importance of inclusivity of College
- However, some students expressed a desire to be further challenged
  - different levels for courses to more fully explore ideas
  - more structure around attendance
  - Homework as a way of introducing self to education/workforce requirements outside of the MRC





# Preliminary recommendations

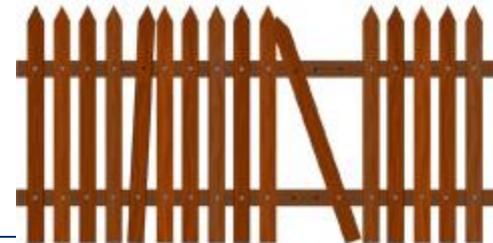


- More clear linkages with educational expectations
- Different levels of courses are possible
- “Homework” and non-graded assessment for those who **opt in**
- Potential harms: divisions based on perceived ability may threaten core MRC principle of inclusiveness



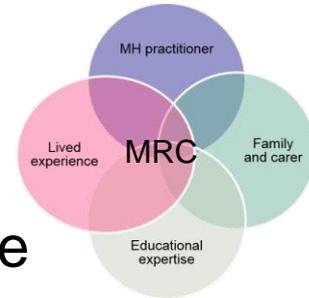
## Limitations of the evaluation

- Limited MH practitioner perspective – impacted by separation between MRC and other Mind services in main campus
- Limited carer perspective – learnings for next time on alternative ways to source
- Limited role of consumer researcher (Buckley, 2012)





# Summary



- Co-designed evaluation is important and possible
- Mind Recovery College has negotiated a new ‘space’
- Process evaluation important for highlighting ways that people are engaging with the Mind Recovery College
- When these assumptions are made explicit, can help to shape the direction and scope of the MRC
- Ensure that service responding to needs of all stakeholders



# Acknowledgments

## Participants



## University of Melbourne

- Lennart Reifels

## Mind Recovery College

- Suzanne Turner
- Sue Belmore
- Amy Scott

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- Jenny Franklin





# References

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# Any questions?





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