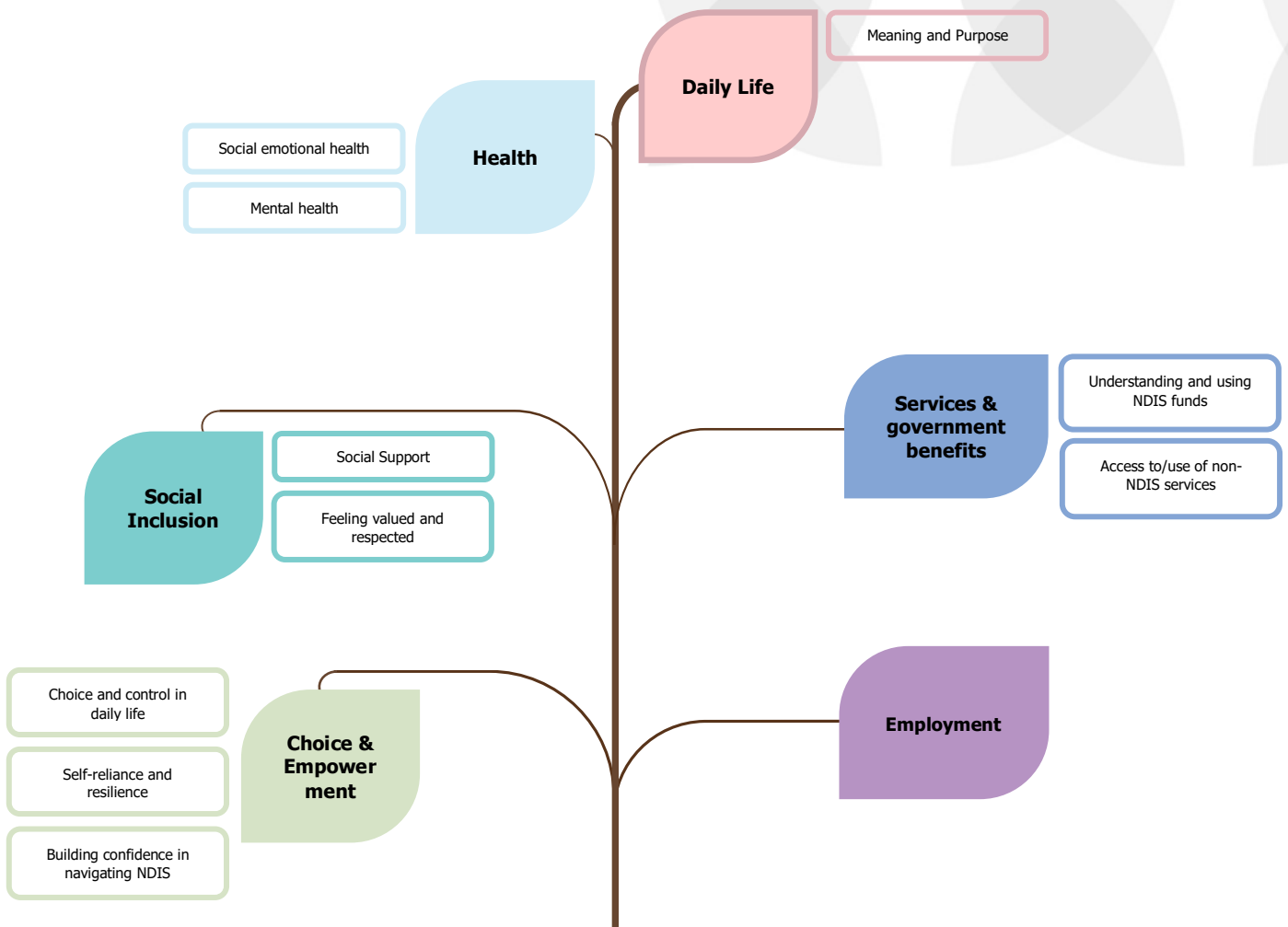


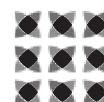
Psychosocial Recovery Coaching: Client outcomes and experiences

July 2023



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Publication details

Citation

Elmes, A., Campain, R., Wilson, E., Brown, C., Kelly, J. and Campbell, P. (2023). *Psychosocial Recovery Coaching: Client outcomes and experiences*, July 2023, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia. <https://doi.org/10.26185/apjw-6x94>

Publisher: Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology.

DOI: 10.26185/apjw-6x94

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Acknowledgment

We would like to thank those clients of One Good* Day who agreed to take part in this research, and the One Good* Day team for your support of this research.

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Further information about this research, the outcomes measurement methods of the Community Services Outcomes Tree (CSOT), or data collection instruments can be obtained by contacting:

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Summary

Centre for Social Impact (CSI) Swinburne researchers conducted 10 interviews and surveyed 49 Recovery Coaching clients to explore clients' experiences and outcomes of Recovery Coaching. A summary of findings is provided here.

Feeling and actually being supported to achieve my NDIS goals has changed my entire outlook on life. My suicidal ideations have stopped, because I finally have the right supports in place. I cannot emphasize this enough, but having a Recovery Coach and caring supports has saved my life.

Recovery Coaching generated positive outcomes

Overall, surveyed clients described positive experiences of Recovery Coaching, and improved outcomes in:

- **Feeling valued and respected** – 79% of respondents;
- **Meaning and purpose** - 74% of respondents;
- **Understanding and using the NDIS funds I have** - 73% of respondents;
- **Social support** - 70% of respondents; and
- **Choice and control in daily life** - 66% of respondents.

My Recovery Coach has been amazing. Helpful and fast with responses and organising supports and researching anything I want to look into such as activities and other supports both NDIS and non-NDIS related. I am so grateful to have my Recovery Coach's support. She has her own lived experience and really understands my needs and gets me.

Barriers to achieving outcomes

Personal Issues (80%) and **Money issues** (62%) were the two most dominant barriers to outcomes with **Lack of family/community support** indicated as a barrier by 40% of respondents. One client's survey response describes how barriers (including the ongoing effects of trauma) impact them:

Although I am making positive changes, there have definitely been barriers along the way which my Recovery Coach has been supporting me to address. However, the biggest barrier for me is my history of trauma and the psychosocial disabilities that I live with.

Recovery Coaching aligns with NDIA and Recovery frameworks

Clients' experiences align with what is set out in NDIA Recovery Coaching guidelines (NDIA, 2020), and with many aspects of the CHIME-D mental health recovery framework (van Weeghel et al. 2019) – most notably connectedness, empowerment, hope and optimism, and coping with difficulties and trauma.

Conclusion

The evidence presented here shows people largely experienced positive outcomes from Recovery Coaching. Central to positive outcomes was the relationship with the Recovery Coach - one based on trust and understanding of individual need.

Recovery Coaching

Introduction of Recovery Coaching through the NDIS

Psychosocial Recovery Coaching was introduced under the NDIS in July 2020 as a 'Recovery Oriented' support intended for people with psychosocial disability (disability related to mental health). The aim of Recovery Coaching is to support people with psychosocial disability in working toward their own goals for wellbeing and life. Participants can choose a Recovery Coach with lived experience related to mental health if they wish (NDIA 2020).

Recovery Coaching role and responsibilities

Recovery Coaching will look different for each person depending on individual requirements and can be varied/tailored for each person as needed over time. The goals of Recovery Coaching participants might include things like building a coordinated support network, taking part in community activities, or managing challenges in life. While coordination of supports is part of what a Recovery Coach does, the NDIS Psychosocial Recovery Coach guide describes a key difference:

Psychosocial recovery coaches are different from support coordinators in that they bring knowledge and skills in psychosocial recovery, mental health and service navigation within the mental health system (NDIA 2020, p.10).

NDIS guidelines on Recovery Coaching outline a Recovery Coach's role and responsibilities as follows (NDIA 2020, p.5):

Subject to the preferences of the person, the responsibilities of the recovery coach should include:

- *developing recovery-enabling relationships, based on hope;*
- *supporting the person with their recovery planning;*
- *coaching to increase recovery skills and personal capacity, including motivation, strengths, resilience and decision-making;*
- *collaborating with the broader system of supports to ensure supports are recovery-oriented;*
- *supporting engagement with the NDIS, including support with plan implementation; and*
- *documentation and reporting.*

Psychosocial Recovery Coach competencies include being able to draw on lived (and/or learned) experience and knowledge to support and enable people in their recovery journey (NDIA 2020, p.12). As Recovery Coaching is such a new service, evaluation of outcomes to date have been limited (Hamilton et al. 2020). Our research provides some evidence about client outcomes of Recovery Coaching, and the experiences of clients accessing this service through Psychosocial Recovery Coaching provider One Good* Day.

Research method

Participant recruitment

Psychosocial Recovery Coaching clients were recruited for participation in this research through One Good* Day (OG*D). This organisation provides psychosocial Recovery Coaching to people with a psychosocial disability who have a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan enabling access to this support. OG*D have a sole focus of providing Recovery Coaching services and their team are specialised in mental health. OG*D employs Recovery Coaches with lived experience related to mental health, alongside learned expertise that has been obtained through working histories in the sector and/or mental health qualifications. Approximately 75% of One Good* Day team members identify and talk about their own lived experience of mental health and recovery.

Centre for Social Impact (CSI) Swinburne researchers conducted 10 interviews and surveyed 49 Recovery Coaching clients to explore experiences and outcomes of Recovery Coaching.

Recovery Coaching client interviews

The CSI Swinburne research team conducted the client interviews between October and November 2022 via phone-call or online meeting. Interview questions asked about: clients' experience of OG*D Recovery Coaching; what difference Recovery Coaching had made for clients; how Recovery Coaching had supported clients' recovery; what had been particularly helpful or unhelpful; and what questions should be asked to understand whether Recovery Coaching is working. Interviews were analysed by themes, drawing on the NDIS Recovery Coaching guidelines and the CHIME-D Recovery Framework (van Weeghel et al. 2019).

Recovery Coaching client outcomes survey

The [Community Services Outcomes Tree \(CSOT\)](#)¹ was used as the outcomes framework for this study. The CSOT is a framework of 12 domains and related outcomes for capturing the outcomes individuals experience as a result of community services. Drawing on the themes raised in the above-mentioned client interviews, the CSI Swinburne research team collaborated with the two Co-founders of OG*D to determine the outcomes and questions that were used in a client survey.

Eleven outcomes were included in the survey. These outcomes came from 6 of the 12 CSOT domains². The survey asked about: outcomes (changes in areas of life); the contribution of the OG*D Recovery Coaching service to outcomes; barriers to outcomes; Recovery Coach match and relationship; the experience of Recovery Coaching; service improvements; basic demographics and information on length of service provision.

The survey was distributed to OG*D Recovery Coaching clients in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, via a survey link.

Participant characteristics

Over half of survey respondents were from Victoria (55%). Half (50%) of participants were female, 39% were male, 7% used another gender descriptor and about 5% were non-binary. Most participants (80%) were aged 36 or older; with the largest proportions of participants aged between

¹ See; <https://communityservicesoutcomestree.com>

² Note: Some outcomes have utilised wording customised to Recovery Coaching within the NDIS but continue to align to established CSOT outcomes.

36-45 (30%) and 46-55 (27%). About 20% were aged 35 or less. Two percent of survey respondents identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Findings

This report summarises our research findings and provides a brief snapshot and indication of Recovery Coaching clients’ outcomes and experiences.

Outcomes of Recovery Coaching

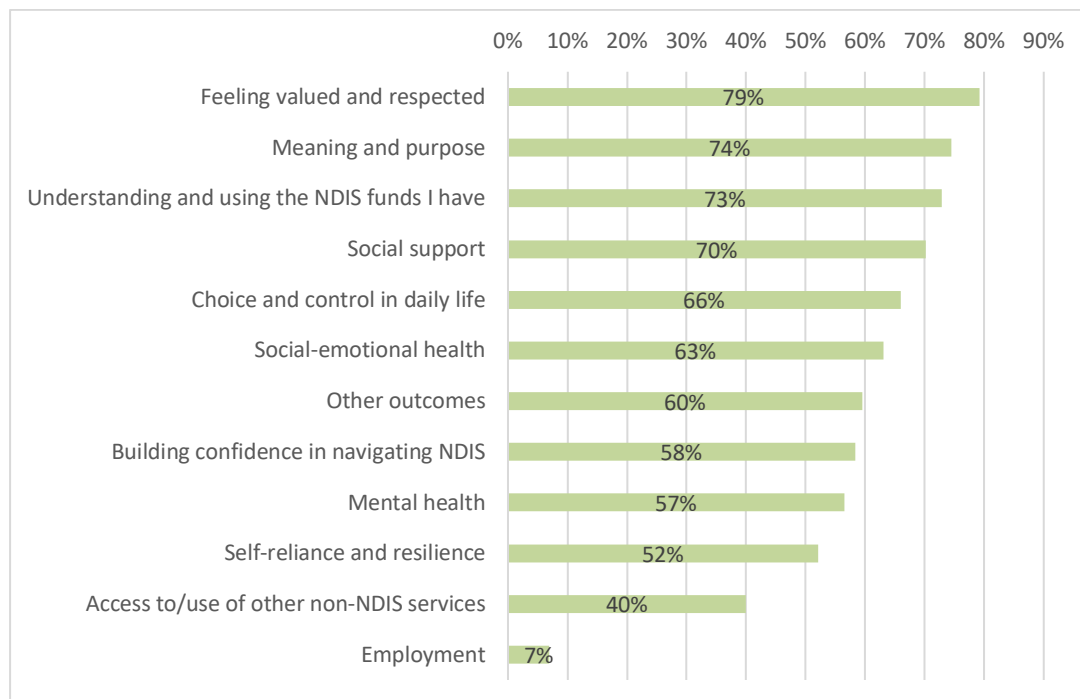
This section presents the findings of the interviews and survey of Recovery Coaching clients. Clients reported on areas of their lives (outcomes) that had changed since receiving Recovery Coaching. Survey responses for outcomes were based on a scale ranging from:

- Got a lot worse;
- Got a bit worse;
- Not changed;
- Got a bit better;
- Got a lot better; and
- Not relevant.

Positive outcomes of Recovery Coaching

‘Positive’ outcomes were calculated as a combined total of ‘got a bit better’ and ‘got a lot better’.

Figure 1: Respondents who reported positive outcomes after receiving Recovery Coaching from OG*D



Total responses = 49

Figure 1 shows the most frequently reported improved outcomes from Recovery Coaching:

- **Feeling valued and respected** (79%);
- **Meaning and purpose** (74%);
- **Understanding and using the NDIS funds I have** (73%);
- **Social support** (70%); and
- **Choice and control in daily life** (66%).

Table 1 shows examples of reported positive outcomes mapped alongside the NDIA Recovery Coaching guidelines (NDIA, 2020) and CHIME-D Recovery Framework (van Weeghel et al. 2019), with illustrative client outcomes data from interviews and surveys.

Table 1: Selection of outcomes from interviews and survey of Recovery Coaching clients mapped to frameworks

| 1) Outcomes | 2) NDIA activities of Recovery Coaching | 3) CHIME-D Recovery framework domain |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Feeling valued and respected</p> <p>Social support</p> | <p>Raising the expectations held by the person that their values, strengths and goals will be prioritised</p> <p>Developing recovery-enabling relationships, based on hope</p> <p>Supporting connections</p> | <p>Connectedness; Hope and Optimism</p> |
| <p><u>Illustrative data from surveys and interviews</u></p> <p>79% of surveyed clients had improvements in feeling valued and respected; and 70% had improved social support.</p> <p><i>It's good to hear from [my Recovery Coach] as well that they're proud of me with my progress and stuff like that... To hear them good comments from them... means a lot. – Client interview</i></p> <p><i>Massive decrease in my feelings / experience of isolation - having one person with whom I can speak with every week, feel encouraged and can trust. – Client survey comment.</i></p> <p><i>They have organised meaningful activities and arranged assistance for community participation. – Client survey comment.</i></p> | | |
| <p>Meaning and purpose</p> | <p>Supporting people to articulate what a meaningful life means for them and make decisions</p> | <p>Meaning in life; Identity</p> |
| <p><u>Illustrative data from surveys and interviews</u></p> <p>74% of surveyed clients reported improved meaning and purpose; and 60% reported other positive outcomes, often related to participating in meaningful activities.</p> <p><i>I have got a lot more support and am able to access some recreational activities that really help my wellbeing and I feel less alone. – Client survey comment</i></p> | | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p><i>They put in supports for me that I did not have before, they encouraged me to do the things that will bring meaning to my life and gave me hope that I can still live a meaningful life despite my challenges with my health. – Client survey comment</i></p> | | |
| <p>Understanding and using the NDIS funds I have</p> | <p>Supporting engagement with the NDIS, including support with plan implementation</p> | <p>Empowerment</p> |
| <p><u>Illustrative data from surveys and interviews</u></p> <p>73% of surveyed clients reported improvement in ‘Understanding and using the NDIS funds they have’.</p> <p><i>I've been getting so much help in terms of the services that they've set up for me. And there's been times where my [Recovery Coach] would say look, these are all the different ways, all the different things that they say could benefit me, and that's been really helpful. – Client interview</i></p> <p><i>My Recovery Coach, is fantastic in the work she does and the supports she provides. [She] gets me and understands my support needs and does an amazing job linking me with supports that are helping work toward achieving my goals and making improvements in my life. -Client survey comment</i></p> | | |
| <p>Choice and control in daily life Self-reliance and resilience Building confidence in navigating NDIS</p> | <p>Coaching to increase recovery skills and personal capacity, including motivation, strengths, resilience and decision-making</p> <p>Supporting the person to develop skills in navigating the NDIS</p> | <p>Empowerment</p> |
| <p><u>Illustrative data from surveys and interviews</u></p> <p>66% of surveyed clients reported improvements in choice and control in daily life; 58% of surveyed clients had improved confidence in navigating the NDIS; 52% reported improvements in self-reliance and resilience.</p> <p><i>It's sort of boosted my confidence a lot... you could be having a bad day, and you're sort of saying to yourself, "Well, I'm not going to sit here, and I'm not going to let this beat me." – Client interview</i></p> <p><i>They've helped me navigate the NDIS and my illness. They've put in a lot of supports that have improved my quality of life. – Client survey comment</i></p> | | |
| <p>Social emotional health Mental health</p> | <p>Maximising self-management of mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Collaborating with the broader system of supports to ensure supports are recovery-oriented</p> | <p>Hope and optimism</p> <p>Coping with difficulties and trauma</p> |

Illustrative data from surveys and interviews

57% of surveyed clients reported improvements in mental health

I'm doing much better in all areas especially mental health - Client survey comment.

[My Recovery Coach] gives me the hope and the reassurance that, you know, if today isn't a great day, tomorrow can be better. – Client interview

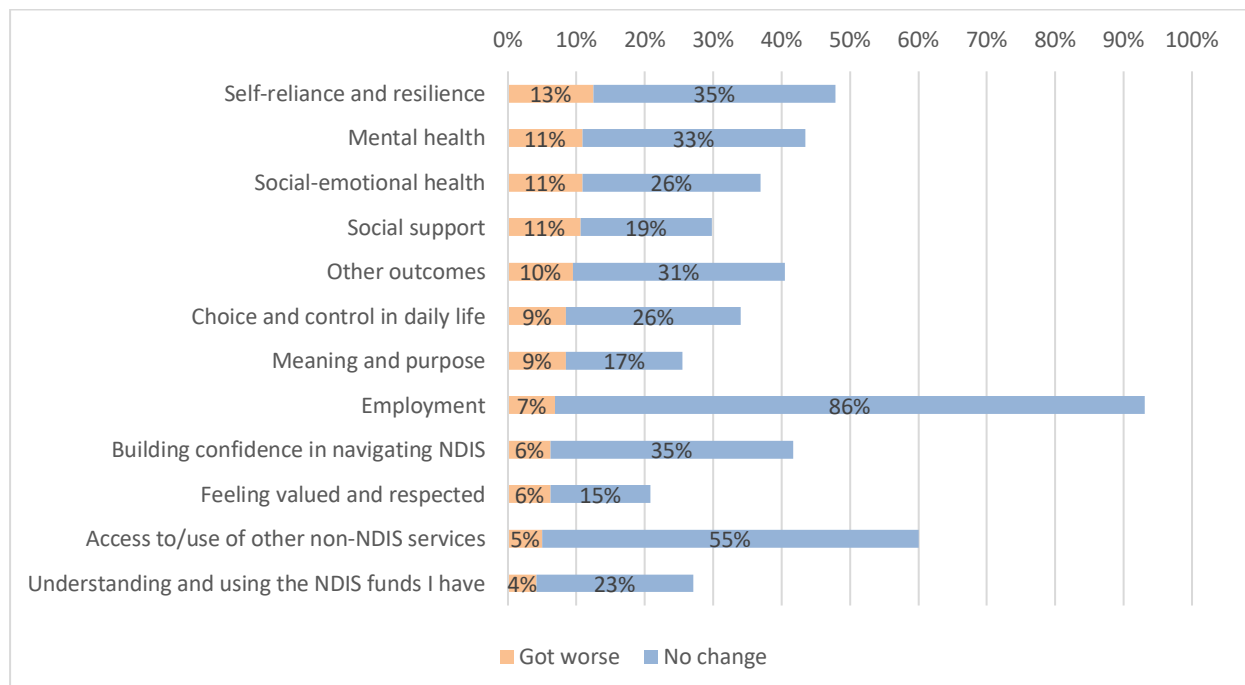
For someone like me, having someone to help me whilst my mental and physical health tanked has just been the help I needed. I was close to dying from just stress alone, and having someone take some of my burden off me has just helped immensely. Not just me, but my mum too. – Client survey comment

The positive outcomes identified by clients suggest that Recovery Coaching is meeting many key aims of Recovery Coaching as set out by the NDIA (2020) and is well-aligned with the CHIME-D mental health recovery framework (van Weeghel et al. 2019).

Outcomes that didn't change as much or had negative ratings

'Negative' outcomes were calculated as a combined total of the outcome ratings: 'got a bit worse' and 'got a lot worse'. While outcomes were positive overall, a minimal number of participants reported negative outcomes, while some respondents also identified 'no change' across outcomes (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Respondents who reported negative outcomes or no change since accessing Recovery Coaching



Total responses = 49

Self-reliance and resilience was noted as having been negatively impacted by Recovery Coaching for 13% of respondents, along with **Mental health** and **Social-emotional health** (for 11%).

Employment had a 'no change' rating for 86% of survey respondents. For **Access to/use of other non-NDIS services**, 55% reported 'no change'. Approximately a third of respondents indicated 'no change' for **Self-reliance and resilience** (35%) and **Mental health** (33%).

Around a quarter to a third of participants reported 'no change' for two outcomes associated with the NDIS - including: **Building confidence in navigating NDIS** (35%) and **Understanding and using the NDIS funds I have** (23%).

Client interview findings indicated that experiencing no change or negative change sometimes related to transitional periods such as changes in Recovery Coach; or to delays in receiving access to other needed services. Survey respondents also identified a range of broader personal and systemic barriers to positive outcomes, reported in the Barriers to outcomes section later in this report.

Biggest change in clients' lives as a result of Recovery Coaching

Survey respondents were invited to further explain a major outcome in their life by answering the question: 'Please tell us about the biggest change in your life as a result of your involvement with Recovery Coaching provided by One Good* Day'.

The biggest change identified by the majority of Recovery Coaching clients was around feeling and being supported, as illustrated by this client survey comment:

Just support, trust, and sanity. I feel like I have someone to talk to that I can trust, in a world designed to destroy my sanity, safety, and spirit.

This and other survey responses described feelings of connectedness, and a supportive, recovery-enabling relationship with the Recovery Coach.

Contribution of Recovery Coaching to outcomes

Survey respondents were asked to consider the level of contribution Recovery Coaching made to the outcomes they had experienced. This question was answered by 48 people. Overall, most people (85%) identified Recovery Coaching as having made a positive contribution to outcomes.

Survey respondents were asked through an open-text question to 'Please explain how Recovery Coaching contributed to the change you achieved? (e.g. what did Recovery Coaching do that helped you achieve your outcomes?)'. The role of the Recovery Coach in supporting people in ways specific to the person's needs was highlighted - most commonly through listening and providing emotional support, as well as assisting people with organising other services and supports, and working with the person on meaningful goals and interests. Overall, survey responses indicated Recovery Coaching had contributed positively to many of the client outcomes listed above.

The value of Recovery Coaching as governed by an individual's needs was evident in responses. One person clearly outlined what they deemed the four most significant points of positive contribution:

- 1) Helped connect me with support services as outlines in my NDIS plan.*
- 2) Provided support with a coach that had personal experience of mental health issues & recovery - could relate to my experiences and offer encouragement.*
- 3) Non-judgmental & could provide support outside of the medical model/framework.*

4) *I think the most beneficial aspect is having a support worker who "feels like a friend", respectful and with professional boundaries, but a close and meaningful relationship.*

This comment also specifically identifies the value of having a Recovery Coach with lived experience, who can relate to their own experiences and offer encouragement supported by a degree of shared understanding. Clients noted that these Recovery Coaching actions contributed to their ability to cope with stressors, difficulties or trauma. Some clients specifically mentioned improvements in mental health, or Recovery Coaching as a stabilising factor that helped prevent more severe episodes of illness. Some clients described how the supportive Recovery Coaching relationship shifted their perspective and ability to remain hopeful and focused on moving forward, despite ups and downs or setbacks:

When you've got [a mental health condition], you're up and down, and you just need that little bit of a string or rope, or what have you, to guide you and... it's the trust that you have in [the Recovery Coach] too, and we have got a good bond there, and she's just so good... There's been times I haven't been able to go out the front door, but now I feel more confident in more or less doing that... Even going – doing simple chores, or like things that you would normally do yourself, that you don't even think about. But when you've got [a mental health condition] ... it's not that easy, and it's because you have down days. Well now, I feel as though I've got the power to overcome it, and reverse it back to positivity and not so much negativity. – Client interview

...it's like having a bit of a safety net... just to know that, okay, just because I've gone backwards in one aspect, or something's happened and I feel like I've gone backwards, to have her reassurance to go, 'no, that's okay. It's very normal, you can't be climbing straight up all the time. Things will happen and that's just life. It happens to everybody, but it's how we deal with it, and now it's happened. We'll deal with it, and then we'll keep on the upward curve'. Yeah. I don't want to overstate it, but sound a bit corny, but she's been a godsend. – Client interview

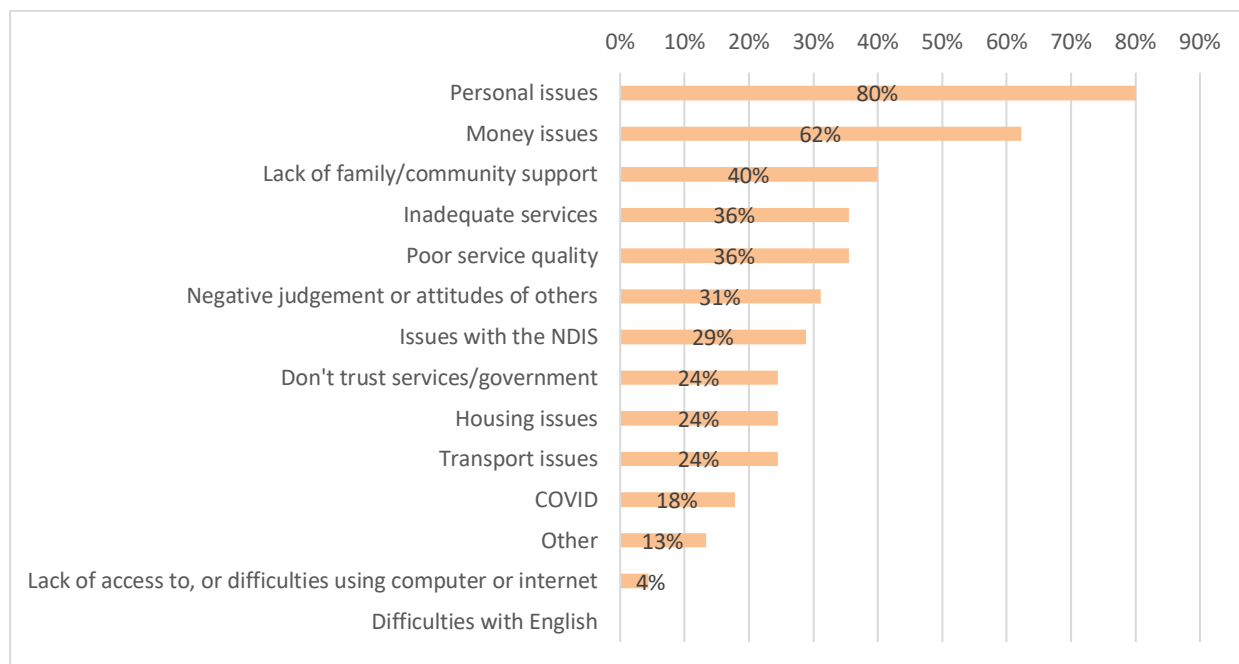
However, a few respondents did not feel that Recovery Coaching had contributed as much to their lives and the changes they hoped for. A small number found little of value from Recovery Coaching provision. Negative feedback across the survey appeared to be linked to how closely clients' experiences of Recovery Coaching matched what they were hoping for. In some cases, clients wanted more contact with their Recovery Coach, or a greater focus on Recovery-oriented support rather than support coordination, while others were uncertain of the extent to which their Recovery Coach could support them through mental health challenges.

This kind of feedback suggests the need for more clarity around Recovery Coaching and what clients can expect.

Barriers to outcomes

Not all potential outcomes can be achieved with the support of services. Outcomes attainment can be thwarted when ongoing personal, service or structural barriers prevail. Respondents indicated from a list of barriers which ones they identified as the biggest barriers to achieving positive change/outcomes. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Barriers to positive outcomes



Total responses = 45

Personal Issues (80%) and **Money issues (62%)** were the two most dominant barriers with **Lack of family/community support** indicated as a barrier by 40% of survey respondents. Issues to do with services were indicated as a barrier by approximately a third of respondents (**Inadequate services, Poor service quality** or **Issues with the NDIS**). Equally, approximately a third (31%) indicated **Negative judgement or attitudes of others**.

An open-text response question asked survey respondents to further discuss the biggest barrier to outcomes ('Please tell us about the biggest barrier that prevented you from achieving positive change / outcomes'). A common response was in relation to Personal Issues with nearly a half (49%) of respondents outlining their mental health and lack of confidence as the biggest barrier (noting that these are compounded by other systemic barriers – i.e. inadequate support with mental health concerns).

Mental illness and lack of motivation and organisational skills due to mental illness. Not having supports in place or people around me that were understanding of my mental illness.

Although I am making positive changes, there have definitely been barriers along the way which my Recovery Coach has been supporting me to address. However, the biggest barrier for me is my history of trauma and the psychosocial disabilities that I live with.

The NDIS was noted as the biggest barrier to positive change by 29% of respondents.

NDIS inflexibility, doesn't understand impact of all my health conditions, only some, doesn't understand how physical and mental health issues affect and reinforce each other.

Respondents highlighted the complexity of the NDIS and the concern that the appropriate supports are not provided. Respondents suggested that more autonomy in spending funds would ensure the

appropriate support was given – including providing choice for participants to access Recovery Coaching or other services. Recovery Coaching was identified as a valued support in navigating a complex system.

I think definitely [a benefit of Recovery Coaching was helping me to] navigate my funds... and put them in order and to understand it, break it all down to understand exactly what I have for the whole two years. You know how many hours I have. So I'm not gonna go over my budget... So I'm really grateful for that, because I may have gone "Oh, this is too hard", (which I did in the beginning), "I don't wanna navigate this because I really don't know how", and I may have lost the opportunity that I've had... So that is really, really, really, really helpful because they kind of... you get the NDIS and then unless you're... managed by someone... I still think you're out there on your own to sort of figure it out by yourself. – Client interview

The process of Recovery Coaching

Survey respondents were asked to consider the suitability of the match between them and their Recovery Coach and the quality of the relationship. In total, 87% said their Recovery Coach was a good match (71% noting this to be to a large extent) and 91% said that the Recovery Coach built a good relationship with them. In addition, 93% felt that OG*D's Recovery Coaching service was accessible and inclusive of diverse identities and needs (61% to a large extent).

Client interviews also reflected positive experiences of feeling respected and included by Recovery Coaches, whether this related to understanding of mental health and person-centred service, peer support, or other aspects of identity.

Yeah, I feel like [my Recovery Coach], he's got – it's different, because he's... open to improving his life and... he came from a place where he was taking drugs and all that, and around the wrong people, and then he came out of that. And now I could relate to him more. So he got out of that situation as well. – Client interview

Comments demonstrated some of the differential factors between Recovery Coaches and Support Coordinators – including:

- Recovery Coaches having specialist knowledge of mental health, and
- The option of receiving support from a Recovery Coach with lived experience.

Client interviews also suggested that factors affecting the development of good Recovery Coaching relationships could include things like the extent to which clients' communication needs are met – both in terms of the amount of information, and the way this is communicated. Other factors affecting the relationship included how well the Recovery Coach was able to respond to the client and what they hoped for from Recovery Coaching.

A further survey question focused on client expectations of Recovery Coaching. In total, 84% of respondents affirmed they got what they hoped for from Recovery Coaching (61% to a large extent).

Limitations of this research

The data presented in this report comes from a small sample of Recovery Coaching clients supported by a single organisation (One Good* Day). As a result, some caution must be exercised when considering these results and their reflection of the outcomes/experience of other Recovery Coaching clients.

Conclusion

The evidence presented here shows people largely experienced positive outcomes from Recovery Coaching. Outcomes such as feeling valued and respected, increased meaning and purpose, access to the NDIS and relevant services, and increased social support rate highly. Central to positive outcomes was the relationship with the Recovery Coach - one based on trust and understanding of individual needs – often underpinned by a shared lived experience of mental health issues.

In addition to the majority of participants who had positive experiences and outcomes, there were those who expressed criticism of Recovery Coaching. This seemed to reflect a lack of clarity as to what the role of a Recovery Coach is, and therefore unfulfilled expectations. Such challenges, in part, reflect the newness of Recovery Coaching as a developing practice that is continuing to evolve.

Our client interviews and outcomes survey provide evidence that One Good* Day's services align with the intended role and responsibilities of Recovery Coaching (NDIA 2020, p.5), in particular:

- *developing recovery-enabling relationships, based on hope;*
- *supporting the person with their recovery planning;*
- *supporting engagement with the NDIS, including support with plan implementation; and*
- *coaching to increase recovery skills and personal capacity, including motivation, strengths, resilience and decision-making.*

Recovery Coaching is a relatively new service type and will continue to evolve. In the context of this evolution, this report provides evidence to attest to the overall value of Recovery Coaching and the positive outcomes experienced by most participants - alongside a few areas for further refinement.

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