

Research and Evaluation at Neami National **Information for consumers**

What is research?

Research covers the process of finding, selecting, using and producing evidence to support decision making related to our service provision.

What is evaluation?

Evaluations are aimed at identifying where changes could be made to specific programs. They ask questions like:

- Does it work?
- · How well does it work?
- · What could be done to make it work better?

Why do we carry out research and evaluation?

We carry out research and evaluation projects to improve our understanding of mental illness and recovery so we can provide better support to individuals and their carers

Our goal is to help you to achieve the best possible outcomes based on your values, strengths and goals in life.

How can people be involved?

People who use our services play a key role in our research and evaluation work. They have input at every stage of the process.

Here are some examples:

Helping to design projects

We consult with people who use our services on the design and methods used in projects. Consumer representatives sit on the Research and Evaluation Committee, which also has staff, academics and research professionals. This group guides this area of work at a high level.

Participating in projects

People who use our services are often involved in ways that include telephone surveys, face-to-face interviews or questionnaires.

· Carrying out research

We sometimes hire people with a personal experience of recovery to conduct research together with our staff.



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How do we do research?

We carry out research and evaluation in an ethical and sensitive way that respects participants and directly links to consumer needs and ways to improve our services.

We have a research and evaluation team that leads this area of work. We also receive proposals from other researchers and these go through the same process.

We require all projects to align with our vision, mission, strategic directions, research principles and our research focus areas and criteria.

Research project approval process

Potential project

Proposed project is submitted to the Research and Evaluation Committee

Research and Evaluation Committee

The project meets the required assessment criteria

No

If the Committee says no, the project will not begin.

Yes

If the Committee says yes, the project can begin

Diagram 1. The approval process for all research projects.

Consumer perspectives

'On the whole, it took very little effort on my part to be involved in the research, but I got a sense that Neami was [committed] to conducting the research.'

'I'm really glad to have been involved - it gives me confidence that my voice will always be heard.'

- David, Neami Research Committee Consumer Representative

'I provide advice and suggestions to the committee on improvements.'

'I suggest ways to promote consumer voices, opinions, perspectives and lived experiences.'

'I have had the opportunity to make real life changes to peoples' lives.'

'In a room full of people from the academic world, practitioners and Neami staff I have grown more confident to represent consumers.'

'I have walked away from the meetings more passionate, committed and informed, with a deeper understanding of the diversity of consumers and the mental health system.'

- Consumer comment

'There has also been personal growth for me... It's built confidence to sit in a room with academic people and not feel lost, to feel confident enough I can say something.'

- William, former Neami Research Committee Consumer Representative

Where can I get more information?

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www.neaminational.org.au/research

