This book addresses an international challenge in relation to recovery: how to bring empirical investigation to the consumer-developed understanding of recovery. The authors rise to this challenge superbly. They rightly position recovery as arising from the lived experience of people who use mental health services, and then develop an empirically-based understanding of the stages and processes of recovery. This empirical work has been internationally influential and the detailed description will be of wide interest. The authors then contextualise their work within the field of positive psychology and well-being research – areas which will directly inform the evolution of mental health services in the 21st century. I recommend this book, and hope it is widely read.

Mike Slade, Researcher (researchintorecovery.com) and Author of ‘Personal Recovery and Mental Illness’

This book begins by examining the history of schizophrenia, and discerning the roots of pessimism in its outlook. The authors then introduce the concept of recovery, and their own model of its process, which is via a series of stages, which they show can be measured and used in treatment. One great value of a work such as this is that it injects factors that are often lacking in treatment environments, and sometimes in the minds of service providers, namely hope and optimism. As such, this book will be, or should be, of interest to all those who work with people with serious mental illnesses.

Tom Trauer, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne, Australia

This exciting and important book is sure to stimulate dialogue and debate within the rapidly growing international recovery movement. Based on many personal stories analysed by leading recovery researchers in Australia, this book offers the beginning of a road map for the recovery journey for people with serious mental illnesses, their loved ones and mental health practitioners alike.

Larry Davidson, Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University, USA

Many countries have introduced policies that stipulate mental health services be ‘recovery-oriented’. However, there is no widely accepted definition of recovery, understanding of the process and how services are to become recovery-oriented, or consensus on how recovery should be assessed. Where conceptual models have been proposed, they have tended to be complex and do not lend themselves readily to routine use and research purposes.

This book presents a consumer-orientated, stage-based model of psychological recovery from serious mental illness, utilising stories of lived experience to provide a framework for clinical work and research in the field of recovery. Each stage of the recovery process is illustrated with mental health consumers’ experiences, which are then placed in the context of existing theory in fields such as trauma, hope, self-determination, identity and wellbeing. Three measures of recovery are also introduced, adding recovery-based options to the range of clinical outcome measures commonly used in mental health settings.

Placing recovery within the growing field of positive psychology, this book fills a need in the mental health professional community for a succinct, yet flexible, model of recovery from mental illness. It offers a thorough grounding in the history of the concept of recovery, a deep appreciation of the mental health consumer’s experience of psychological recovery, an understanding of the conceptual model and an awareness of the issues surrounding recovery measurement.

Retta Andresen is a Research Fellow at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Her research into the process of recovery and its measurement has received national and international recognition and interest.

Lindsay Oades is a Clinical and Health Psychologist and Director of the Australian Institute of Business Wellbeing at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He has been awarded numerous national awards for his mental health research.

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Psychological Recovery
Psychological Recovery

Beyond Mental Illness

Retta Andresen
Lindsay G. Oades
Peter Caputi
Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those people who have experienced mental illness and have generously shared their stories in print or taken part in research in order to further the understanding of mental illness and recovery.
## Contents

About the authors xi  
Foreword by Jon Strang xiii  
Preface xvii  
Acknowledgements xix  

### Part I Recovery in Historical Context

1 Introduction: Recovery from schizophrenia  
   Overview 3  
   Early conceptualizations of schizophrenia 4  
   Diagnostic systems and prognostic pessimism 6  
   Empirical evidence for recovery 7  
   The persistence of a pessimistic prognosis 13  
   The real possibility of recovery 17  
   The emergence of the ‘recovery’ movement 18  
   What do we mean by ‘recovery’? 20  
   Conclusion 22  
   Summary 22  

2 Conceptualizing recovery: A consumer-oriented approach 23  
   Overview 23  
   Developing a consumer-oriented model of recovery 24  
   The search for common ground 25  
   Meanings of recovery in the literature 25  
   Consumer descriptions – psychological recovery 28  
   Diverse opinions on some aspects of recovery 31  
   Four component processes of recovery 34  
   A definition of psychological recovery 40  
   Steps along the journey of recovery 41  
   Five stages of psychological recovery 45  
   Conclusion 45  
   Summary 48  
   Appendices 48
Part II Elaboration of the Model: From Hopelessness to Flourishing

3 Moratorium: The first stage of psychological recovery

Overview
Negative symptoms or psychological sequelae?
Hope in the Moratorium stage: Hopelessness
Responsibility in the Moratorium stage: Powerlessness
Identity in the Moratorium stage: Loss of sense of self
Meaning in the Moratorium stage: Loss of purpose in life
Conclusion
Summary

4 Awareness: The second stage of psychological recovery

Overview
Hope in the Awareness stage: The dawn of hope
Responsibility in the Awareness stage: The need to take control
Identity in the Awareness stage: I am not the illness
Meaning in the Awareness stage: Need for a purpose in life
Conclusion
Summary

5 Preparation: The third stage of psychological recovery

Overview
Hope in the Preparation stage: Mobilizing resources
Responsibility in the Preparation stage: Taking autonomous steps
Identity in the Preparation stage: Taking an internal inventory
Meaning in the Preparation stage: Reassessing goals
Conclusion
Summary

6 Rebuilding: The fourth stage of psychological recovery

Overview
Hard work and hopefulness
Hope in the Rebuilding stage: Active pursuit of personal goals
Responsibility in the Rebuilding stage: Taking control
Identity in the Rebuilding stage: Self-redefinition
Meaning in the Rebuilding stage: Valued goals
Risk-taking, perseverance and resilience
Conclusion
Summary

7 Growth: The fifth stage of psychological recovery

Overview
Hope in the Growth stage: Optimism about the future
Responsibility in the Growth stage: In control of life and wellbeing
Identity in the Growth stage: An authentic self
Contents

Meaning in the Growth stage: Living a meaningful life 109
Resilience, personal growth and wisdom 111
Conclusion 113
Retrospective overview 114
Summary 114

8 Common questions regarding the stage model of psychological recovery 115
Overview 115
Ten questions that have been raised about the model 115
Conclusion 120
Summary 120

Part III Measuring Recovery

9 Recovery-oriented outcome measurement 123
Overview 123
Why the need for measures of recovery? 123
Approaches to operationalizing recovery in research 125
Assessing outcomes in routine clinical practice 126
Outcome measurement from the consumer perspective 127
Measuring consumer-defined recovery 128
Measures based on the stage model of psychological recovery 129
Concluding comment 135
Summary 135

Part IV Towards a Positive Future

10 Psychological recovery and positive psychology 139
Overview 139
A scientific approach to recovery 139
Hope 140
Meaning and purpose 140
Responsibility 141
Identity 142
Resilience 142
Strengths 143
Values 143
Autonomous goals 144
Growth 144
Wellbeing 145
Living with illness and flourishing 145
Summary 146

11 Reflections and future directions 147
From wellness to wellbeing 147
Applications of the model 148
Recovery measures in clinical work, evaluation and research 151
Contents

Current and future research directions 152
A word about words 153

Afterword 155
References 157
Index 179
About the Authors

Retta Andresen
Dr Retta Andresen is a Research Fellow at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Her research interests were inspired by personal accounts of the experience of schizophrenia, which led to the development of the stage model of psychological recovery. She is committed to the use of the recovery model in mental health services. To that end, she has developed outcome measures to reflect the consumer recovery experience that have received international attention. Retta is a strong believer in positive psychological approaches in mental health, and worked to develop *Flourish*, a self-development programme of recovery. She is currently working on a project which trains mental health practitioners in the use of a recovery model that focuses on the identification of core values as the basis for a meaningful life.

Lindsay Oades
Dr Lindsay Oades is a Clinical and Health Psychologist and Director of the Australian Institute of Business Wellbeing, Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong, Australia. Lindsay works to combine principles of mental health recovery with positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship in order to develop approaches to recovery oriented services, including measurement of psychological recovery, the development of the Collaborative Recovery Model (CRM) and the *Flourish* self-development programme. During his career Lindsay has worked as a practitioner, manager, researcher, trainer and coach in the service of mental health. Lindsay currently chairs the Serious Mental Disorders Panel at the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute, and is on the Board of Directors of Neami, a major Australian mental health non-government organization.

Peter Caputi
Associate Professor Caputi’s expertise is in the area of measurement, with particular interest in outcome measurement. His innovative work on measuring recovery from serious mental illness, in collaboration with Drs Retta Andresen and Lindsay Oades, has received national and international recognition. Peter is an active reviewer for *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, Personal Construct Theory and Practice, Personality and Individual Differences, Australian Journal of Psychology, Clinical Schizophrenia & Related Psychoses*. He is also a consulting editor for the *Journal of Constructivist*
Psychology and The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied. Since 2000, he has published over 100 peer-reviewed conference papers, journal articles, and book chapters and is currently teaching several statistics based subjects at the University of Wollongong.
This book is written in the context of the consumer movement dating back to the 1960s. Alongside that movement, an evolving recovery movement specifically emphasised the empowerment of consumers to get on with their lives and to achieve the goals they choose to pursue and that they value. Some observers of history say that themes and principles of the recovery movement are more than 160 years old but have come to the fore only relatively recently.

My credentials are that I have experienced three mental illnesses since 1984 – paranoid schizophrenia, anxiety attacks and major depression – and have been involved with a modern day mental health service since 1988. I have lived in group homes, being case managed and encouraged to work on my recovery journey since then. My last hospital admission was in 1990. I have developed my role with the mental health service, initially as a Consumer Representative (both unpaid and paid), then as Coordinator of Consumer Initiatives, as a Community Development Officer and now as a Consumer Advocate working in hospital and community settings. I became aware of and exposed to recovery philosophy in the late 1990s.

Consumer workers can be great role models, and I had a good positive group of people around me who encouraged me in the early days after diagnosis. None of them told me I could not recover (unlike the experience of some of my friends). This gave me immense hope. But, like many people, after my diagnosis I reassessed my life and lowered my expectations of and for myself – in a very big way. My identity had taken a huge beating, and only after a long struggle (recovery is hard work) did I rebuild it. The core of this is a very strong world view based on our place in the universe and caring for our planet and all living things on it (live in harmony with the universe).

My job – I have the best job in the world – is now a big part of my identity and gives me a huge sense of meaning; but it is my interest and active participation in philosophy, science, astronomy, scrabble, my housing community and my local mental health fellowship that give me the greatest meaning. I have accepted that I have a mental illness and am moving on with my life and working on my recovery journey. I give back to my local community by doing a range of voluntary community development activities, and this is one way in which I have taken responsibility for my life. Working on my spiritual development (not to be confused with religious beliefs) by taking an interest in everything around me, and respecting and appreciating it, I try to be the best human being I can be in a rapidly changing technological world.