

Research Project

Name of Project

Measuring the therapeutic optimism of mental health nurses

Research Team

Associate Professor Stephen Elsom
Kay McCauley-Elsom (Monash University)

Funding Body

Centre for Psychiatric Nursing

Project Summary

The need for health professionals to have an optimistic clinical stance when working with people who have mental illness has been recognised in the clinical practice guidelines developed by the UK-based National Institute of Clinical Excellence and by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. Therapeutic optimism is defined as the clinician's expectation of a positive outcome for the consumer. To date, little work has been conducted to determine whether mental health professionals do have an optimistic approach to their patients. Delegates to two large mental health nursing conferences in 2007 were invited to participate in a study designed to measure therapeutic optimism. A total of 256 mental health nurses completed a previously developed survey instrument, the Elsom Therapeutic Optimism Scale (ETOS).

Progress

Completed

Summary of Findings

Significant differences were measured in the optimism scores of nurses attending the two conferences. These differences correlated with age and years of experience in mental health nursing. The delegates to the two conferences also differed in whether they were practising in clinical roles or in education, academic or management positions.

Publications

Under review