

**An Evaluation of Services provided by Network for Change
Leicester July 2006**

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

I have been involved with Network for Change for three years in a number of roles, including delivery of training to staff and workshops / training to service users, as well as attending various social functions. Recently, I was invited to conduct an evaluation of service user satisfaction with the service. The positive views reflected by the service users interviewed certainly reflect my own views and reinforce my regard for the organisation as being an excellent illustration of good Recovery practice.

My training and consultancy work takes me to a variety of projects around the country, but I would consider Network for Change to be quite unique in many ways. The values and principles of Recovery are not just spoken about, nor do they remain in the background but are put into action every day in a natural, unassuming way. This was backed up by the findings in my report. The main essence of Network and the impact it has on clients is because of its ability to “normalise” experiences and to “include” people and “meet them where they are at”. People derive much pleasure and satisfaction from their involvement with the organisation, and this has been true of my own visits to Network. Without exception, I have found all staff to be friendly and welcoming, helpful and caring.

Also, because many staff acknowledge their own mental health problems and because of the person centred way that all staff work there also exists a vast expertise of knowledge on a wide range of mental health issues, which in turn creates confidence for the clients. This is also reflected in the variety of activities and learning programmes that Network offers. In my experience, Network for Change successfully facilitate events, talks and activities, however challenging, in response to client need, where other organisations might veer away rather than meet the challenges.

More than 100 questionnaires were sent out to clients of Network for Change's Outreach, Supported Housing and Resource Centre services, with an explanation of who we were and why we were asking for information. If people preferred, there was no need to give a name and contact details, though only 2 people chose not to.

29 (25 by closing date and 4 after which have been included in this summary) questionnaires were completed and returned, and the full evaluation is available on request.

Using the DREEM (**D**eveloping **R**ecovery **E**nhancing **E**nvironment **M**easure, Ridgeway and Press, 2004) Model as a basis for the questioners, but presented in a more 'user friendly' format, service users were asked 18 questions directly related to some of the core components of Recovery. This enabled an

assessment of how Network for Change is performing according to those who use the service. The last question is open to the service user to give a summary of their personal views on Network for Change.

We felt it was a small enough sample not to have to utilize the complex DREEM rating scale, opting instead for a YES/NO and Comments reply.

Questions:

- 1. Does the service you receive make you feel valued and respected?**
YES 28 NO 1 NO COMMENT 0
- 2. Do you feel that individual workers understand and respond well to your needs?**
YES 27 NO 1 NO COMMENT 1
- 3. Would you say that the service provides a hopeful and positive support for you?**
YES 25 NO 1 NO COMMENT 3
- 4. Do you feel included in all decisions relating to your support?**
YES 21 NO 4 NO COMMENT 4
- 5. Are you offered choices relating to your support?**
YES 23 NO 1 NO COMMENT 5
- 6. Do staff involve family / friends as you would wish them to be included?**
YES 16 NO 5 NO COMMENT 8
- 7. Do you feel that your care is holistic i.e. that all aspects are taken into account, e.g. physical illness, cultural needs, spiritual needs?**
YES 24 NO 4 NO COMMENT 1
- 8. Do you feel supported in taking risks, e.g. doing voluntary work, starting a college course?**
YES 24 NO 2 NO COMMENT 3
- 9. Does the service enable you to connect with other people / groups outside of Network?**
YES 23 NO 3 NO COMMENT 3
- 10. Do you feel you have made new friendships or received support from other people you have met through Network?**
YES 26 NO 1 NO COMMENT 2

11. Do you feel staff are willing to help you access ordinary community activities, e.g. cinema, cafes, pubs, swimming etc?

YES 24 NO 3 NO COMMENT 2

12. Have you ever suggested or asked for activities or groups at Network, which have not been able to run?

YES 22 NO 2 NO COMMENT 5

13. Are you kept well informed of upcoming events / activities at Network?

YES 27 NO 0 NO COMMENT 2

14. Do you feel Network for Change is driven by the views of service users?

YES 20 NO 1 NO COMMENT 8

15. Would you say the service has helped move you on in your recovery?

YES 27 NO 0 NO COMMENT 2

16. Do you think the service delivered by Network for Change is inspirational and encouraging?

YES 25 NO 0 NO COMMENT 4

17. Do your workers know your hopes / dreams / plans for the future?

YES 21 NO 2 NO COMMENT 6

18. What do you think, generally, about the service offered by Network for Change?

A small selection of comments:

- **“It is a model that can be held up as a good example of how to support people along the road of recovery. If progress continues at the present rate a bigger building will be required. Many thanks”**
- **“Given the vast array of varying types and extents of mental illnesses the varying personal need of readapting is “normality”. NRC appears to take these extremes in their stride. Perhaps more resources could be added i.e. funding / staff to augment and further develop an already admirable / useful service provision to clients getting away from the everyday “hell” of acute and chronic mental illness”**
- **“I think no other service is like it because they turned my life around and there is so much choice and activities to take part in”**

- **“Network has most certainly challenged my mind, a real eye opener in enjoying myself tremendously – having an awful lot of good fun and copious amounts of laughter all the way. It’s mainly all down to co-operation of service user and service provider alike – make it a joy to be a part of what’s happening at Network for Change”**

In addition to the questionnaires a full afternoon discussion took place capturing the views of a further 11 service users.

Constructive criticism

Some clients who were perhaps new to Network and, despite their praise, commented on a lack of knowledge of the wider organization. Suggestions for change included a monthly bulletin or newsletter.

Whereas Outreach and Supported Housing clients have a named Keyworker, as well as access to other support workers, NRC clients have limited 1 – 1 support. Some NRC clients commented that they would benefit from more 1 – 1 support, whereas others recognized that many groups and activities are facilitated by service users and therefore welcomed the space to develop peer support without staff involvement. Several clients commented on difficulties in getting through to the office by phone and didn’t like the current voicemail system, a concern echoed by staff who find the current system unreliable. The phone system is currently under review.

The over all feeling from service users is that Network deliver a service of exceptionally high quality and what shines through again and again is their commitment to recovery and person centered values and a very real human approach.

Thanks to the inspiring leadership of Gabby and the dedication of all her staff, Network for Change is an innovative example of how a Social model of care can really work to help individuals through their difficulties, support, enable and move people on.



