



Developing Research Capacity in a Community Based Mental Health Agency

Neami Research Framework

Presentation Overview

- This presentation has three broad aims:
 - Provide an outline of the key areas included as part of the Neami Research Framework.
 - Provide an outline of the processes involved in developing the Neami Research Framework.
 - Discuss the methods in place to embed research activities into a practice-based service.

Content - What is in the Framework?

Process – How was it developed?

Implications/Future Directions – What does this mean for Neami and the sector in general?

This presentation aims to answer:

Why the framework was developed?

What is a Research Framework?

How the framework was developed?

What we hope for now the framework is in place

Why conduct research?

- Research enables mental health organisations to build a more robust and comprehensive evidence base to inform the planned development of effective service interventions.

This is in line with many government and funding providers directions which call for the PDRSS sector to continue to build a sound evidence base for the provision of effective services.

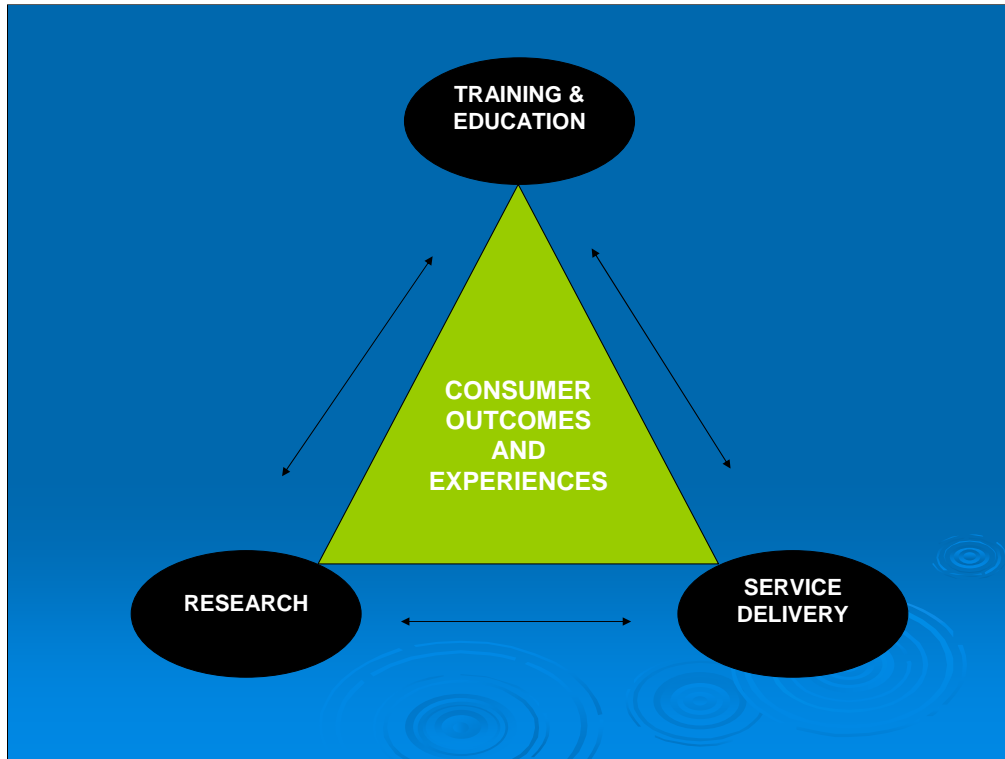
Research involves the creation of new knowledge to inform the delivery and improvement of services.

Research can involve elements of risk which need to be mitigated. Part of mitigating this risk is to ensure there are proper safe guards and practices in place to ensure effective conduct of research. This involves transparent decision making processes, clear allocation of responsibilities and robust monitoring arrangements.

No research can begin without a perspective on the broad issue for study and deliberation.

Strategic Direction 1

Improve consumer outcomes by improving evaluation, research and the transfer of training into practice.



Research is essential to the successful promotion and protection of health and well-being, and also to modern, effective health and social care services.

As demonstrated all three components are interrelated and cannot operate in isolation. For example, research provides a source of information to develop staff training which impacts on the services provided to consumers by staff.

Diagram adapted from DHS Mental Health Research and Evaluation Framework.

Neami Research History

- While a reasonable alignment existed between previous Neami research efforts and organisational strategic directions and consumer priorities, it had not occurred within a systemic framework.

As a result of this realisation and in recognition of the importance of research in facilitating practice change and enhancing outcomes for people with a serious mental illness the Neami Research Framework was developed.

Previous research includes:

Outcome measurement tools

Smoking rates among vic consumers

Supported housing (tracking consumers following their move from institutions to the community)

We have a good history of conducting research which had been done in a previously ad-hoc type manner. The research provided us with valuable insight and enabled us to learn a great deal from our consumers but wanted to think about the long term and how this would look. The Framework assists the organisation in this process.

Development of a Research Framework

- To ensure continued delivery of quality mental health services during periods of growth and expansion.
- To increase Neami's research capacity and profile.
- To continually refine Neami service provision in a way which reflects the changing needs of consumers.
- To further develop and implement evidence-based practices within the Community Mental Health sector.

Developed in consideration of the following organisational aims

Framework Development

- Comprehensive literature review.
- Consulting with various researchers and other mental health agency representatives.
- Utilising internal Neami research expertise.

Lit review – background research into community mental health sector in general, various research frameworks, government directives and policy papers, strategic papers, etc. A lot of good information came out of Canada.

Consulted with university of wollongong, university of melbourne, vicserv, doutta ghala, mental illness fellowship, sane, snap gippsland, mind - to gather ideas and to get an indication of where the sector is at and the overall directions of organisations in the way of research activity. (Consultations indicated that many organisations have (or plan to) develop a similar document and begin to further develop existing research activity and mechanisms)

Neami Research Framework

- The Framework is intended to provide consumers, staff and other service providers with a clear understanding of the **how, what and why** of research at Neami.
- The Framework highlights the central role that research can play in **improving services** and **consumer outcomes**.

As well as outlining how we will be pursuing the increase in research activity the framework simply acts to advise staff and consumers of the components (and potentially almost reduce some of the stigma) associated with research. It aims to clearly explain all of the related research processes and influences to develop staff knowledge and expertise.

A clear Research and Evaluation Framework is a vital tool for guiding, facilitating and integrating research and evaluation activities. It provides Neami with an opportunity to develop and promote our knowledge and understanding of effective mental health services by highlighting the central role that research and evaluation can play in improving services and consumer outcomes

Have highlighted consumer outcomes to reinforce that anything done in the research world in Neami is done so with the consumer in mind at all times. Important not to lose sight of this important factor.

Neami Research Framework

- The Research Framework is in place to ensure there is **a coordinated and strategic approach** to Neami research activity.
- Sets **strategic directions** and **priorities** related to the Neami research agenda to maximise the value of Neami's investment in research.

The Framework ensures that Neami is able to achieve its aim for research and service delivery to occur in a formally planned and coordinated manner.

Neami Research Framework

- The Framework aims to **promote the development and provision of evidence-based practices** throughout Neami by encouraging and supporting research.

Key Components

- **Neami Research Committee**
- **Generating Research Ideas**
- **Guiding Principles**
- **Neami Research Directions**
- **Research Partnerships**
- **Ethical Conduct of Neami Research**
- **Consumer/Staff Involvement in Research Activity**
- **Dissemination and Knowledge Transfer**
- **Communicating Research Activities**

Neami Research Committee

- We are forming a research committee comprised of representatives from throughout Neami and also external academics to oversee Neami research activity.
- Have a role below our NLT to consider and refer suitable potential research projects for the NLT to approve.

Generating Research Ideas & Decision Making Process

All Neami staff and consumers are encouraged to contribute to generating research ideas and to take active roles in research activity.

As a committed learning organisation we encourage all staff to be involved in generating research ideas and in taking active roles in research activity. Active roles for staff include data collection in study, contributing to sharing findings, using findings to inform the way they work.

Consumers are encouraged and supported to contribute to development of research ideas and methods.

Guiding principles include:

- Research priorities: Ensuring research activity is based on relevant consumer needs that will bring maximum benefit to consumers.
- Transparent and Inclusive: Maintain an open and participatory process throughout. Stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to design and conduct of research.
- Maintaining high ethical standards (All research activity conducted in accordance with Code and National Statement)
- Consumer involvement: Consumers to play an active role in our research activity. (Take roles involved in the development, design and implementation of research activity).
- Effective dissemination: We are committed to ensuring all findings are disseminated throughout Neami and the sector.
- Research partnerships: Utilising the research expertise of universities/research institutions and also forming collaborative working relationships with other mental health agencies.

Initial research directions:

- Bridging current evidence and practice gaps by building on existing knowledge of psychosocial rehabilitation in a recovery-oriented framework;
- Building new evidence for treatment approaches which can be integrated into a recovery orientated framework;
- Developing and promoting more effective and innovative approaches to research which are practice-based and offer measurable outcomes for consumers and carers;
- Further developing existing services and trialling new approaches to working with our consumers.

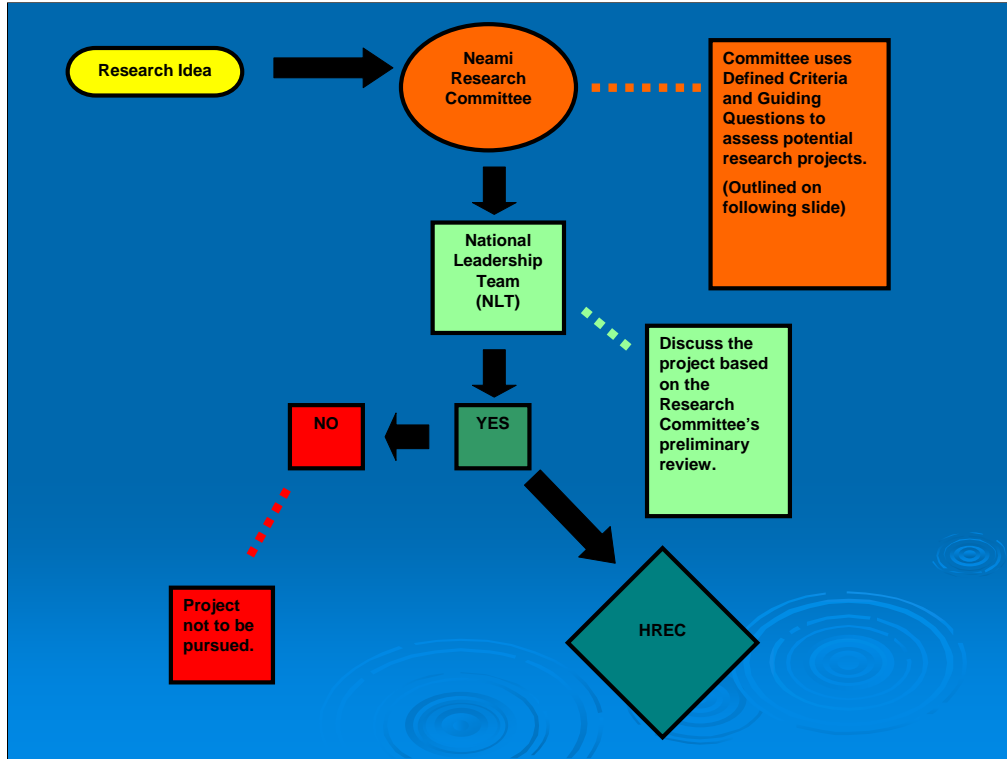
Research Partnerships

- We understand that as with the delivery of effective services research requires partnerships. Looking to further pursue existing links and develop further links with both universities and academic institutions and other mental health agencies.

Ethical Conduct of Neami Research

- Informed consent is at the heart of ethical research. Specifics of consent process will change depending on particular research but process is core component of any research.

All research is designed and conducted in accordance with the NIMRC guiding documents – National Statement on Ethical



Research assessment flow-chart.

Decision Making Process

- The development of a structured decision making process to assess potential research projects within Neami is essential to a strategic approach to research. Criteria include:
 - Why/How is this project relevant to Neami's research priorities?
 - How will the research findings enhance our knowledge?
 - How will this research project impact on Neami consumers?
 - Who will this research project benefit?

The Committee use the following criteria to assess the potential research project:

Why is this project relevant to Neami's research priorities?

Is the research aligned with Neami's vision, mission and strategic directions?

How will the project impact on Neami consumers?

How will the research findings enhance our knowledge?

Who will this project benefit?

How will this research be of benefit?

Has anyone else already answered this research question?

In addition to the above assessment criteria the Committee uses the following questions as a guide to assist in the decision making process:

What is the aim/purpose of the project?

What costs are involved?

What role will Neami staff have in the project? Will they require any specific training?

What impact will the project implementation have on current staff arrangements? (Is the project feasible?)

If the Committee is satisfied the project meets the required assessment criteria it is then referred to the National Leadership Team for the final decision to be made as to whether Neami will pursue or not.

Benefits of Neami Research Framework

- Ensures evidence-based practices are informing Neami services.
- Ensures research is conducted in accordance with relevant ethical guidelines and procedures.
- Ensures processes are in place for communication of research and transferring findings into practice.
- Provides staff with a better understanding of the relationship between research and service delivery.

Benefits of Neami Research Framework

- Provides staff with a working environment focussed on learning and development.
- Encourages consumers to contribute and add perspectives to Neami research activity which can offer further insight and understanding.
- Enables consumers to develop research knowledge and skills.

Priorities from here...

- Developing Neami Research Committee.
- Finalising research agenda.
- Further developing existing and forming new collaborative research partnerships with universities, research institutions and other mental health agencies.
- Supporting the development of a culture of research and enquiry amongst Neami staff and consumers.
- **Long Term:** Developing standards of excellence and innovation in practice-based mental health research.

Comments/Questions

- For any further information please don't hesitate to contact Neami:
 - (03) 9481 3277
 - adam.zimmermann@neami.org.au