



# **Creativity and Social Support in Mental Health: Service Users' Perspectives**

*Roberta McDonnell*

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*Creativity and Social Support in Mental Health* explores service users' lived experiences of mental health recovery within a day-centre setting where creative activity and social support were key aspects of the service. These two facets, creative activity and social support are established as conducive to mental health, particularly when in partnership with one another and when there is a venue in which to gather on a regular and frequent basis. McDonnell argues that the uplifting effects of creative activities such as art, music, and creative reading and writing (bibliotherapy), alongside the communality incorporated into the general ethos and social setting of many of the projects cited, are a positive force for change and that resource allocation and integrated care models should reflect this new paradigm. These findings are situated within a framework that takes into account current publicised debates on the nature of psychiatry and mental health care and suggests that creativity and social support are at least as important as mainstream medical treatment, especially within a recovery and health promotion model.

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