

# Netball as a meaningful occupation in recovery from mental illness

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Player of the season 2008

Marie

*"I love the Tuesday afternoon get together at the indoor netball stadium. It is the companionship of others in the same boat as myself and the sheer joy I get from getting on the court and having a non serious game with more laughter than something that you do by yourself. It is the teamwork and the friendship that I really enjoy and just for that hour I feel like a NORMAL person not someone with a mental health issue. I don't think I would cope as well with my illness if I didn't have netball to look forward to once a week. Roll on to next Tuesday." Avril*

Social exclusion and lack of opportunities to develop and practise skills continues to inhibit recovery from mental illness. Consumers of community mental health services, in particular women, would benefit from a meaningful occupation in an environment that enables them to experience success and belonging.

**Aim** To create an environment where participants are able to develop skills, a sense of wellness and inclusion, transferable into other areas of their life.

**Method** Identify and invite women with recovery goals that would be supported by joining a netball group e.g. communication skills and anxiety management. Care co-ordinators and community support worker's take part in process.

**Results** Gathered by informal feedback and discussion. Themes from participants included improved quality of life, belonging, and having something to look forward to. Feedback from care co-ordinators included value of netball in weekly routine, improved self-care, increased openness to change.

**Conclusion** Netball can provide a meaningful occupation for women, enabling positive change within their lives and supporting their recovery towards mental wellbeing.

