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# Promoting epistemic justice through kindness and reflective practice

Towards recovery-oriented practice in general emergency care  
for people with mental ill-health

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## Akademisk avhandling

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Promoting epistemic justice through kindness and reflective practice – Towards recovery-oriented practice in general emergency care for people with mental ill-health

**Abstract**

**Background:** Negative experiences and inadequate treatment in general emergency care (GEC) can hinder the well-being and recovery of people with mental ill-health. People with mental ill-health report unmet physical and mental health needs in GEC, while nursing staff cite insufficient knowledge and training regarding mental ill-health. Although person-centred, recovery-oriented practices are advocated for in mental health care, their application in GEC remains unexplored, highlighting the need for research in this area.

**Aim:** The overall aim of this thesis is to generate knowledge on how nursing staff in GEC can support mental health recovery, with a focus on recovery-oriented practices.

**Methods:** Studies **I** and **II** used a qualitative design to describe the experiences of people with mental ill-health in GEC (**I**) and the nursing staff caring for them in general emergency departments (EDs) (**II**). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using qualitative content analysis. Study **III** used a modified Delphi technique with a 24-member expert panel, comprising people with lived experience of mental ill-health, registered nurses in emergency and psychiatric care, and mental health recovery researchers, with the goal of reaching consensus on key aspects of recovery-oriented practices in ED care.

**Results:** The findings from these studies (**I**, **II**, **III**) suggest three values as central to guiding nursing staff in supporting mental health recovery through recovery-oriented practices in GEC. First, the *recognition* of patients' experiences and self-knowledge is vital, requiring active listening and acknowledgment of patients as capable persons with valuable perspectives into their health. Second, *kindness*, manifested through small caring actions, can affect interactions between ED nursing staff and patients with mental ill-health, emphasizing the significance of personal connections alongside technical care. Third, *knowledge-sharing* which prioritises the integration of ED nursing staff's experience-based and practical knowledge, alongside the opportunities to learn from patient encounters.

**Conclusion:** By prioritising recognition, kindness, and knowledge-sharing, ED nursing staff can support the mental health recovery of people with mental ill-health through recovery-oriented practices. Such practices can promote epistemic justice and underscores the importance of a deeper understanding of kindness and the necessity for reflective practice. In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that discussing mental health recovery is meaningful within the context of GEC.

**Keywords**

Delphi technique, epistemic justice, general emergency care, general emergency department, kindness, mental health care, mental health recovery, mental ill-health, person-centred practice, qualitative content analysis, recovery-oriented practice, reflective practice,

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