

***Peer support workers in substance misuse treatment services:
The challenges to recovery***

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, I pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

Who was interviewed

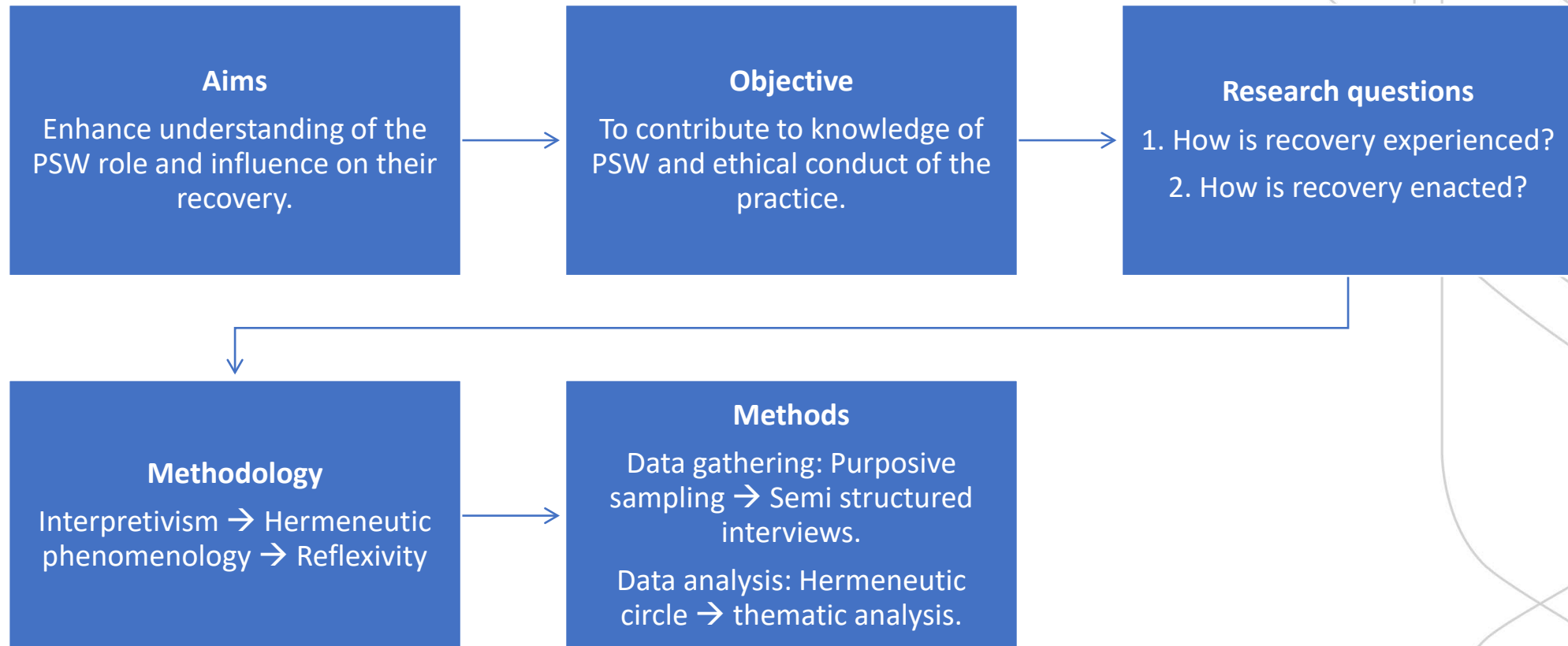
To participate in the capacity of a PSW, participants were required to;

- self-identify as being in recovery from substance misuse, substance dependence or addiction?
- be currently working in the role of PSW or similar role of different title using your experiences of recovery to help others entering their recovery?

To participate in the capacity of a PSW supervisor, participants were required to;

- be currently working in the role of PSW supervisor or similar role of different title in which you oversee and/or support PSW in the workplace?

Research overview



Why?

What is recovery?

Holistic... encompassing all areas of life

Living and managing life without substances... that is reclaimed and chosen

Is (or is not) abstinence... vary among definitions

Recovery is unique... in approach and meaning

Constant and requires maintenance... even when feeling settled in recovery

Evolving... in management and meaning

Solving the underlying problem... uncovering the reasons for substance misuse

Potential challenges to recovery



Job related

RP 9 – PSW: *“Then, even sometimes challenging things can be - it’s my own mental health, where I feel like I haven’t done enough for them, you know what I mean?”*

Crossover between personal and professional

RP 6 - Supervisor: *“...there would be some meetings that she would choose not to go to she knew that there were a number of clients that she knew through her paid role. And the other lived experience worker said if there are my own clients at the same meeting I won't share. So, I think. Does that have an impact on their recovery? I think probably, it does to an extent,”*

Triggers

RP 11 - PSW: *“...if you do hear clients talking about their stories and stuff like that, and before you can shut it down, it still can trigger things that have happened to you in your history, and so it can still – it can have that effect on you... So, it can impact your recovery in the sense that if you’re not strong enough, I guess, to work through those emotions and stuff, it could be a very daunting thing.”*

Potential burnout

RP 3 - Supervisor: *“Cos burnout in this industry. Could, could lead to relapse, you know, in some way. So, you know, the internal battle as much as what you're doing is wholesome pure and healing to others as it heals you. You're still battling,”*

Protective factors (resources)

Support

RP 3 – Supervisor: *“And so that internal recovery, I'm afraid, comes with a lot of slips and mistakes, but as long as you're supportive with the right mentors and people when you slip, you'll get back up and you just get stronger every time.”*

Recovery

RP 5 - PSW: *“...if I'd done it any sooner in my recovery it wouldn't have worked... I don't think my foundation that I have built in my own recovery would have been able to handle the challenges that it brings.”*

What does this mean?

Questions