INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Mission
We seek to develop a research environment in which researchers can engage in research with involvement of and contacts with services users and mental health/social service practitioners.

Our mission is to contribution to the development of knowledge at the national and international levels in the areas of mental health and substance abuse with the following specific foci:

- Subjective experiences of mental health problems and ‘helpful’ help
- Individual and contextual approaches of help and support in mental health care
- Family and network perspectives in studies of mental health problems and substance abuse
- Innovations in mental health service organisation, practice, and evaluation
- Participatory action research involving mental health service providers and service users

In addition, the Institute will offer:

- Consultations to user organisations, communities, systems of care, and political authorities
- Support in development and delivery of educational programs in the areas of expertise
- An arena for visiting scholars and partners
- Support in developing research projects
- Assistance in promoting and expanding research activities in the Department of Health Sciences

Research Profile
The Institute is established with specific assumptions regarding mental health and mental health services. It is believed that mental health problems and substance abuse need to be understood from the contextual perspective rather than from the purely individualistic or internalistic orientation. It is also believed that the most desirable mode of mental health care is through collaborative processes and is one developed within local communities. Mental health care must encompass commitment and support related to home, school, work, personal economy, and social situations. Public health perspectives valuing health promotion and social welfare at individual, group and societal levels are also emphasised as crucial for studying and understanding people’s mental health and mental health care.

The Institute’s research activities will be oriented to exploring and examining environmental conditions and practices that support the process of recovery as well as that are barriers to staying well in relation to mental health and substance abuse. In such research, cultural, social, and material contexts will be emphasized.

Researchers at the Institute have interdisciplinary background and orientation, and have expertise in a variety of research methodologies including quantitative, qualitative, triangulation, and mixed methods. User involvement in research projects as consultants, co-researchers, or advisors are greatly encouraged.

The founding researchers of the Institute include those with educational, professional, and research backgrounds in nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, philosophy, medicine, and social work. The group has an extensive clinical and research experiences in mental health care and substance abuse services, including in working with children, adolescents, and adults as well as in family and network oriented practices. In addition, some members have experiences in management, administration, and quality development.
Research Areas and Services Offered

1. Research and Evaluation
   a. Crisis resolution and home treatment
   b. Action research/ cooperative inquiry in various contexts
   c. Personal experiences of mental health problems and helpful help
   d. User involvement in research and health service evaluation
   e. Client Directed Outcome Informed therapy (CDOI).
   f. Service user feedback and surveys
   g. Training and education program evaluation
   h. Substance abuse

2. Supervision and Research & development work
   a. Supervision of doctoral and master’s theses
   b. Supervision of individual or group research projects
   c. General project supervision
   d. Supervision of user involved collaborative research and development projects
   e. Supervision in scientific writing
   f. Clinical supervision in groups and individually
   g. Writing groups for popular or scientific writing

3. Education
   a. Curriculum development in the area of mental health
   b. Development and delivery of educational and training programs in mental health
   c. Program evaluation

National and International Partners
The researchers of the Institute have developed a wide circle of collaborators that includes researchers, scholars, and practitioners at the national and international levels who have interest and expertise in the areas of the Institute’s research focus.

Visiting Researchers and Colleagues
Researchers and colleagues from local, national, and international communities are welcome to make a short or long term visit at the Institute. A program for a visit can be developed by contacting a specific researcher at the Institute or the Director.

Institute Organisation
Director
Professor Bengt Karlsson

Scientific reference group has been established

The Institute’s researchers are:
Associate professor and nurse Stian Biong, professor and occupational therapist Marit Borg, senior lecturer and nurse Martthe Eklund, associate professor and philosopher Henning Herrestad, social worker and experience-expert Reidun Jonassen, professor and nurse Bengt Karlsson, research fellow and nurse Siren E. Kouwenhoven, professor og nurse Brendan McCormack, research fellow and family therapist Ottar Ness, research fellow and sociologist Hege Sjølie, associate professor and psychology specialist Rolf Sundet, research fellow and sociologist Monika Winness.