

Taking Recovery Steps

Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time. - Og Mandino

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time. - Thomas Edison

Forget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget about everything except what you're going to do now – and do it. - William Durant

What Is Recovery?

- Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and change toward a meaningful life in a community of choice, while striving to achieve your full potential.
- Recovery happens when your illness stops getting in the way of your life
- You decide what recovery means to you

There are many things you can do to help yourself take charge:

- Believe that recovery is possible
- Set goals
- Use your coping plan
- Find a safe, quiet place
- Know the difference between your symptoms and your true self
- Educate your family and friends Work on healthy lifestyle choices
- Continue your treatment plan

Believe That Recovery is Possible

Discussion: Do you believe that recovery is possible for you? Why or why not?

Do you have people on your health care team that believe your recovery is possible? Why or why not?

Do you have friends or family members that believe your recovery is possible? Why or why not?

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Set Goals

- Ask yourself: What do I want?
- What do I care about, or what did I care about before my illness?
- Where do I want to be in life?

Start small and work up to larger goals - Make specific short-term goals like:

- To be out of bed by 9:00 AM every morning except Saturday
- To finish one household chore each day
- To call your friend by the end of this week

Small Goals Toward Long-term Goals - Break up larger goals into small steps, like:

To get training for a job, you could start with smaller goals:

- To look at school website by tomorrow night
- To send for application by the end of this week

To build a relationship with a friend, you could start with:

- To invite your friend to a movie
- To have coffee or a meal together
- Larger goals can take a lot longer to achieve, but enjoy reaching the small goals along the way

Use a Variety of Coping Skills

- Learn coping and relaxation skills and practice them
- They are like “tools” for your recovery
- Discuss your coping plan with your health care team at appointments

Find a Safe, Quiet Place

- In our psychiatric unit, we are creating a sensitive culture that recognizes many of us have had trauma and/or abuse in our past
- We want this to be a safe place - a sanctuary that does not tolerate violence
- Use your room or the Relaxation Room as your safe, quiet place to help you heal and start your recovery journey
- Consider how to continue “creating sanctuary” after discharge

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Other Ways to Take Charge

- Know the difference between your symptoms and your true self – Your health care team can help you understand your illness and help you to change unwanted behaviors
- Educate your family and friends about mental illness and involve them in your treatment when possible
- Work on healthy lifestyle choices – Get regular sleep, good nutrition, and avoid alcohol, drugs, and risky behavior
- Continue your treatment plan. Talk to your health care team if anything is bothering you. Don't stop your medicine or therapy unless your doctor is aware and is guiding the changes

Stages of Recovery

- **Stage 1** - Handling the impact of the illness
“I'm overwhelmed and confused about all of this”
- **Stage 2** - Feeling like life is limited
“My life will never be the same again”
- **Stage 3** - Realizing and believing change is possible
“This doesn't have to get me down. My life may be different, but it can still be good”
- **Stage 4** - Commitment to change
“What are my new possibilities? I am not going to be disabled by this illness”
- **Stage 5** - Actions for change
“I will move toward my goals by taking steps/taking action”

Discussion

What stage of recovery are you in? How do you get to the next stage?

Move toward Empowerment

- When someone learns how to turn “wanting to do something” into “doing something”, it increases self-confidence and feelings of hope
- Even unsuccessful efforts to change open up chances to explore other issues in your life

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- Once change starts, the process of rehabilitation is renewed and patients begin to regain control of their lives

Wallbridge, H.R., Furer, P. & Lionberg, C. (2008). Behavioral activation and rehabilitation. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing*. 46(3), 36-44.

Involve Your Family and Friends

- If someone feels hopeless during recovery, it may be a symptom of the illness that will improve with treatment
- Focus on strengths and skills of you and your family
- Identify any negative things you want to change, and things you want to do
- Keep expectations reachable without holding yourself back
- Keep health care appointments, and find additional resources and supports to help you step-by-step during recovery

Ask someone on your health care team to help you make a reachable, realistic, specific, and measurable goal for your recovery

Conclusion

- Ups and downs are to be expected - It is best to handle them as calmly as possible, using help and support to get back on track
- Take small steps – You will get to where you are going (no matter how long it takes) if you go in the right direction
- You feel more in control when you take the recovery steps at your own pace
- In life, there is always hope, but sometimes you have to change what you are hoping for.
- Be open to learning and change as you start your recovery journey

“I am not interested in the past. I am interested in the future, for that is where I expect to spend the rest of my life.” – Charles F. Kettering