

# Recovery

## What is recovery?

Recovery is a term that is used a lot in mental health but is not always well understood. Recovery does not mean cure, nor is it an end point. Recovery is a process people undertake to work out how to manage and live with mental illness. *“Recovery is happening when people can live well in the presence or absence of their mental illness and the many losses that may come in its wake, such as isolation, poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. Recovery does not always mean that people will return to full health or retrieve all their losses, but it does mean that people can live well in spite of them”* (Mental Health Commission, 1997)

## Essential elements of recovery

There are five essential elements to recovery – hope, personal responsibility, self advocacy, education and support.

- Hope – a sustainable belief in oneself and a willingness to persevere through uncertainty. When a person struggles with hope we believe our staff can hold hope for them.
- Personal responsibility – taking ownership for your own thoughts and actions. This doesn't necessarily mean control over all personal life circumstances, but it does mean you can control how you respond to situations.
- Self advocacy – effectively reaching out to others. Pathways can help you identify what you need and want, and support the process of having these needs met.
- Education - in order to make good decisions, people need knowledge about what they are experiencing. Pathways works to support people to develop knowledge and understanding of their experience.
- Support - Pathways provides support services for a period of time, during which staff work with people to identify their own supports in their own families and communities.

## The Recovery Process

Recovery is a highly individualised and ongoing process but it's important to remember:

- recovery can occur without professional intervention
- people with experience of mental illness need others who believe in them and will stand by them
- recovery can occur with recurrent symptoms
- recovery is not linear
- recovery from the stigma of mental illness is sometimes more difficult than recovering from the illness itself
- recovery is about regaining what has been lost – health, self-esteem, a sense of place in the world, family and friends, security, belief in a positive future, autonomy and control.

There are a number of tools Pathways uses and supports the use of. These include:

- exploring, identifying and implementing personal techniques for reducing symptoms
- creating and maintaining a personal support network
- addressing specific issues
- developing a lifestyle that enhances wellness
- healthy living - exercise, nutrition, social connectedness, meaningful activity and relationships.
- finding things to do and believe in that are important and meaningful
- crisis prevention/planning/advance directives.

## Contact Us

For more information please visit our website [www.pathways.co.nz](http://www.pathways.co.nz), phone 09 261 3401 or email [contactus@pathways.co.nz](mailto:contactus@pathways.co.nz)

