

What is Recovery?

Definitions of 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)

“Recovery is an on-going journey of healing and transformation. It involves reclaiming hope and a positive sense of self, despite the experience of psychiatric disability, self-managing one’s life and mental health to reduce psychiatric symptoms and achieve higher levels of wellness, and reclaiming a life and roles beyond being a consumer in the mental health system.” (Ridgway, 1999)

“Recovery focused services identify and build upon each individual’s assets, strengths, and areas of health and competence to support the person in managing his or her condition while regaining a meaningful, constructive, sense of membership in the broader community” (Davidson et al, 2006)

Essential elements of recovery:

- **Hope.** Finding and nurturing hope has been described as the key to recovery. It involves a sustainable belief in oneself and a willingness to persevere through uncertainty and setbacks. Pathways believes that when a person struggles with hope our staff can be there to hold the hope for them.
- **Personal responsibility.** This is about taking ownership for your own thoughts and actions. It doesn’t necessarily mean control over all personal life circumstances or environmental conditions, but it does mean people can control how they respond to situations. Pathways works towards supporting people using our services to take as much personal responsibility as possible.
- **Self advocacy.** This is about taking control of your own life to effectively reach out to others. It helps people get what is needed, wanted and deserved in order to support wellness and recovery. Pathways can help people identify what they need and want, and support the process of having these needs met.
- **Education.** In order to make good decisions, people with experience of mental illness need knowledge and education about what they are experiencing, Pathways believes people are the experts of their own lives, and works to support people to develop knowledge and understanding of their experience.
- **Support.** Although recovery is a personal and individual process, receiving and giving support is important in feeling better and enhancing quality of life. Pathways provides support services for a period of time, during which staff work to support people to identify their own supports in their own families and communities.

Contact Us

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