



Recovery means having choices and being able to make important decisions. It means, being:

**EMPOWERED**—gaining control over your life.

**INFORMED**—knowing about your illness, about the medications you are prescribed, and about the treatment options available to you and how to access them.

**PROACTIVE**—becoming more assertive, collaborating with your treatment team, and developing positive partnerships with your support team.

Family and professional systems that promote the individual's ability to make decisions and the individual's self-responsibility support Recovery!

Help the systems you are involved with understand what Recovery is!

# RECOVERY



“Recovery is a process, an outlook, a vision, a guiding principle. The overarching message is that hope and restoration of a meaningful life are possible, despite serious mental illness.” (Deegan, 1988)

Recovery is a process, not a destination.

*the Advocacy Alliance*

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## What is Recovery?

Recovery is a way of living your life. Living with mental illness is one part of your life, and as you begin to include mental illness as a part of your personal experience, you begin living in recovery. Those who live in a recovery program begin to overcome the negative impact of a psychiatric disability.

Recovery is a process of building on small successes. It includes enduring setbacks, but acknowledges that everything that happens to us in life, helps us to grow. *Recovery is an individual experience. It is different for everyone. It is long term. It is not something you do, rather it is something you live.*

Recovery is not a cure for a mental illness. Recovery is acceptance of your illness and working to improve your health by taking responsibility for your life.

Recovery involves the whole person, including the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Recovery is believing that managing the “illness part of your life” is possible, and it is having that belief supported by others, including your friends, family, peers and staff.

*Recovery includes taking responsibility for your own life. It requires you to pay attention to your symptoms as soon as you start to not do or feel well, to recognize and understand these symptoms, and to know what to do to get better. It requires living in the present and taking care of yourself.*

Recovery means different things to different people. It may be staying out of the hospital for one month or for one year. It may mean volunteering at a soup kitchen, working part-time or working full-time.

Recovery includes:

- ◆ Learning how to manage the disturbing side effects of medication. Having more active role in your treatment.
- ◆ Avoiding street drugs and alcohol or any medication that you think may serve as a “quick fix”.
- ◆ Having supportive relationships.
- ◆ Finding productive and meaningful work, including volunteering.
- ◆ Learning and practicing individual “coping skills”.
- ◆ Recognizing your own “warning signs of relapse”.
- ◆ Having the ability to self-manage your care.

## Recovery means not giving up.

### RECOVERY: WHAT HELPS AND WHAT HINDERS?

#### Helps:

Self-Reliance  
Personal Goals  
Self-Advocacy  
Resourcefulness  
Self-Care  
Self-Determination  
Friends/Supports

#### Hinders:

Not taking personal responsibility  
Shame  
Fear  
Self-Loathing  
Pessimistic Staff  
Lack of Information  
Stigma