

Recovery: Growing Beyond the Impact of Disability

Recovery: Definitions

- Recovery is the process of growing beyond the devastating effects of an illness, disability, or loss.
- Recovery refers to the process in which people live, learn, work, and participate fully in their communities (Hogan et al, 2003)

Recovery

- Recovery involves more than just symptom reduction or treatment outcome
- Recovery is not the same thing as cure
- Recovery is a complex and multidimensional process
- Recovery is a highly individualized process
- Recovery involves the resumption of valued roles (worker, friend, parent, lover, student, citizen, home owner, etc.)

What are people recovering from?

- Loss of self and future possible selves
- Loss hope and on-going grief
- Loss/lack of connection with friends and family
- Loss/lack of independence and choice
- Loss/lack of resources
- Loss/lack of roles and opportunities
- Multiple and recurring traumas
- Devaluing and disempowering programs, practices, and environments
- Negative attitudes, prejudice and discrimination in society

Examples of Recovery Outcomes

- Gaining/regaining a valued role, i.e. student, worker, family member, tenant, citizen, husband, girlfriend
- Experiencing increased success and satisfaction in these roles
- Reducing/controlling symptoms
- Increased sense of self-efficacy
- Increased feelings of well being
- Increased measures of physical health
- Increased sense of self-esteem

Barriers/Facilitators of Recovery

	Barriers	Facilitators
Internal	Lack of Confidence Lack of Experience Depression or hopelessness Persistent symptoms	Personal growth Goal-focus Self-care practices Determination
External	Lack of opportunities Lack of resources Lack of support Prejudice and discrimination	Opportunities Resources Support Justice

External Barrier: Lack of Transportation

May be caused by:

- Lack of money
- Lack of accessible vehicle
- Lack of access to public transportation
- Lack of access to accessible transportation
- Lack of support/assistance
- Lack of protection from crime
- Professionals or family members discourage independent travel

Example: Problems Caused by Lack of Transportation

- Loss of independence/increased dependence on others
- Loss of valued roles, i.e. worker, voter, friend, etc.
- Personal identity issues arise; self-esteem declines
- Life satisfaction decreases
- Social isolation increases
- Depression and ill health may result
- Medical care may be delayed, deferred, or done without
- Families and communities may incur extra efforts and costs that can be prevented
- Recovery process is frustrated

Recovery-Oriented Service Requirements

- Clinicians to change from “clinicians as experts” to “clinicians as partners”
- Focus on person’s goals
- Focus on desired roles in the community (i.e. worker, tenant, citizen)
- Focus on person’s critical skills and support needs
- Peers are uniquely situated to support a person’s recovery process

Values of Recovery-Oriented Services

- **Person Orientation:** focus on the person as an individual with strengths and preference
- **Person Involvement:** person has an active role in all aspects of the service
- **Self-Determination:** person has a right and responsibility to make choice regarding the service
- **Growth Potential:** a focus on the possibility for every person to increase his/her quality of life, a focus on the capabilities inherent in everyone.

Recovery Vision for People with Disabilities

- People have the services and resources they need to choose, get, and keep roles that are important to them
- People have opportunities for self-exploration
- People live in communities of their choice and have opportunities to form relationships that are meaningful to them.
- People have opportunities to contribute to their community
- People have opportunities to fall in love, have sex and marry, if they chose
- People have the opportunity and dignity to make mistakes and fail, for it is through these experiences that self-awareness grows

Recovery from Psychiatric Conditions

- Recovery is a highly individual and deeply personal non-linear process of growing beyond the impact of the psychiatric condition
- Different people experience recovery in different ways
- In general, people experience the following stages of recovery
 - Overwhelmed by the condition
 - Struggling with the condition
 - Living with the condition
 - Living beyond the condition
- These phases are not linear. A person may move back and forth between phases for a period of time

Overwhelmed by the Psychiatric Condition

Some, but not all people who have a psychiatric condition experience being overwhelmed by the symptoms and the experience of the psychiatric condition at one time or another.

- Person experiences intense symptoms
- Person experiences confusion, distress, shock, disbelief
- Person feels hopeless and powerless
- Person is disconnected to self, others, and environments

Struggling with the Psychiatric Condition

Some people begin their recovery process in this phase. Person is trying to find his/her way back and make sense of the experience

- Person questions, “How can I have a life with this disability and psychiatric condition?”
- Person sometimes feels hopeful, but other times feels doubtful
- Person is developing active coping
- Person is rebuilding a sense of self and efficacy
- Person struggles with lack of confidence and efficacy
- Person and others feel afraid that the person may get overwhelmed again
- Person may have to deal with the low expectations of others

Living with the Psychiatric Condition

- Person feels more confident in managing the psychiatric condition-lots of strategies that work
- Person has a strengthened sense of self
- Person knows his/her strengths and limitations
- Person has made important connections to people, places and roles
- Person may still be limited by the condition but has found a niche in which he/she experiences success and satisfaction

Living Beyond the Psychiatric Condition

- The psychiatric condition plays a small role in the person’s life
- Person is well connected to others and valued roles
- Person expresses talents and abilities in living, learning, and working environments
- Person feels confident in testing his/her capacities
- Person discovers new meaning and purpose in life

Peer’s Role in Assisting a Person Who is Overwhelmed by a Psychiatric Condition

- Peer needs to be present, listen, and demonstrate understanding of the person’s experience
- Sometimes physical presence is the most powerful statement of acceptance that the person needs and wants
- Peer needs to be compassionate and let the person know that he/she cares
- Peer can share his/her honest perspective about what he/she observes, but does not need to confront the person about the behavior
- Peer uses the skill of engagement-that is connecting with the person in a manner that matches the person’s preferences and comfort
- Sometimes the person will have to hear about limits that he/she does not want to hear. For example:

“You cannot come to the Center intoxicated.” or “You must be respectful of all the people who are here. Your comments might bother others who are here.”

- Peer may need support from the agency when setting these limits

- Even when the peer needs to set limits, he/she should demonstrate respect for the person
- Peer should meet with the person in a place where there is support and resources, for example in the CIL with other people present
- Peer helps get the person linked to basic support services and good and effective treatment

Peer's Role in Assisting a Person Who is Struggling with a Psychiatric Condition

- It is very common for a person who is struggling to seek peer support
- Peers use all the skills that he/she used with people who are overwhelmed in addition to ones described here
- Peer learns more about the person's strengths and resources so that he/she can use the skill of inspiring
- Peer asks about the person's coping strategies
- Peer encourages some risk-taking
- Peer encourages connection to people, places, and meaningful activities
- Peer talks about personal values and life mission
- Peer gives honest and accurate feedback to the person
- Peer praises the person's efforts and commitment to participating in activities
- Peer may teach about the process of recovery
- Peer shares his/her experience of struggling, even if the circumstances are different
- Peer may share other stories of recovery
- Peer helps the person get linked to rehabilitation services
- Peer helps person get linked to supports that help with grief, trauma, and other "therapeutic" issues that may be barriers to recovery

Peer's Role in Assisting a Person Who is Living with a Psychiatric Condition

- Peers use all the skills that he/she used with people who are struggling in addition to ones described here
- Peer recognizes that the person continues to be limited by issues of stigma (prejudice and discrimination and shame)
- Peer uses self-disclosure to talk about issues of friendship and intimacy
- Peer may teach self-advocacy skills and/or link to advocacy agencies

Peer Specialist and Phases of Recovery

Summary

- A peer's role depends on the person's phase of recovery from the psychiatric condition
- A person who is living with or living beyond the psychiatric condition is a peer in the true sense of the word and maybe someone who could be a peer support specialist
- Peers may need to access additional treatment and support service for people who are overwhelmed or struggling with a psychiatric condition.