



What is “Recovery” in Mental Health?

What does “Recovery” Mean?

Many of us have heard the term “recovery” when talking about mental health . Recovery often refers to people like us who are living *with* a mental health disability and living the life we want rather than being overcome by our disability. Recovery is a journey of transformation, healing and change that leads us to find our own path to health and wellness. It is usually a process that evolves over time, with continual growth and occasional setbacks that help us learn from experience. Its focus is on strengths, talents and coping abilities and setting and achieving goals towards recovery.

What does Recovery “Look” Like?

We may have different ideas or beliefs about recovery and what it “looks” like. We define what recovery means for ourselves. For some of us, recovery may mean living independently in the community. It may mean going to school, having a job and being financially independent. It may mean raising a family or participating in community and social activities. Recovery embraces all aspects of life, including housing, employment, education, mental health and healthcare treatment and services, recreation, creativity, spirituality, and a strong network of social supports.¹

¹ See SAMHSA Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery at <http://www.power2u.org/downloads/SAMHSA%20Recovery%20Statement.pdf>

What is the “Recovery Model?”

The “Recovery Model” in mental health services focuses on the fact that, with appropriate and sufficient support, we can and do take responsibility for our health and wellness. With the Recovery Model, a mental health diagnosis is a “guide for treatment” rather than an identity – disability may shape or affect who we are as people, but we are not defined by our disability. In fact, we are much more than our disability – we are individuals with unique experiences, talents and strengths.

Principles of the “Recovery Model”

The philosophy, principles and practices of the Recovery Model for providing mental health services were first introduced by the state legislature in 1996 and have been adopted and implemented by California under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in 2004. A key to the Recovery Model is the provision of voluntary services instead of forced treatment as a way to help us realize our full potential. With information and guidance, we can make decisions about what we want and need, rather than be subject to what others view is in our own “best interest.”

The Fundamental Components to Recovery

The Recovery Model emphasizes the following components:

- *Hope*: This is the driving force of recovery. Hope that wellness and recovery can be achieved.
- *Personal Empowerment*. Building confidence by advocating for our needs, wants, desires and aspirations. Controlling our destiny by taking an active role in treatment and other aspects of our lives.
- *Respect*. Gaining respect from others by protecting our rights and fighting against stigma and discrimination. Respect comes with self-acceptance and full participation in all aspects of life.
- *Social Connections*: A strong network of social support is essential to living “in recovery.” Social connections provide a

support system to help face stressful or challenging situations. We encourage one another by sharing experiences, knowledge and learning skills. Through support from our peers, families, friends and providers, we gain confidence and a sense of belonging, value and community.

- *Self-Responsibility*: Taking responsibility for self-care, decisions and actions by identifying strategies and healing processes. By using strengths and actively participating in treatment, we can take ownership of our recovery.

It's important to decide what recovery means for us. Know that we can and do get better.

We want to hear from you! After reading this fact sheet please take this short survey and give us your feedback.

English version: <http://fs12.formsite.com/disabilityrightsca/form54/index.html>

Spanish version: <http://fs12.formsite.com/disabilityrightsca/form55/index.html>

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The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention programs implemented by CalMHSA are funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63). Prop. 63 provides the funding and framework needed to expand mental health services to previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.



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