

Center for Behavioral Health Studies



RIMROCK FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY BULLETIN

What About Successful Recovery

Recovery Happens!

Many individuals diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and co-occurring mental health disorders are recovering and living meaningful and satisfying lives.

In his landmark Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health, David Satcher addressed the reality of recovery from serious mental illness. The notion of recovery reflects renewed optimism about the positive outcomes of mental illness. It includes those outcomes achieved through an individual's own self-care efforts.

New treatment advances are opening the doors to persons with mental illness to participate to the fullest extent of their interests in their community's social, recreational, and employment opportunities.

Defining Recovery

It is generally agreed that recovery means much more than treatment or the absence of symptoms and improvement in functioning. It is also commonly understood that recovery does not always mean that all suffering and symptoms are gone or that all functioning has been restored.

While the definitions differ slightly, there is agreement in the mental health field that **recovery includes hope, empowerment, taking personal responsibility, building on strengths, and perseverance over time.**

The process of recovery also typically includes biological, environmental, psychological and often spiritual elements.

Although similar shared experiences can be found, it is important to remember that

no two people recover from mental health problems in exactly the same way.

Barriers to Recovery

In spite of the evidence, many people still believe that recovery is not possible. All too often it is due to stigma and a sense of hopelessness that creates barriers to recovery. Discrimination associated with mental illness still remains the greatest barrier to successful recovery.

Often the labeling of individuals as "mentally ill" by many in our communities and by some providers can itself be a dehumanizing practice. This is psychologically damaging to those patients and their families who are working toward recovery.



Additionally, the lack of access to and reimbursement for a wide range of community-based services and supports, such as employment and housing, create barriers for persons with psychiatric disabilities and prevents their successful recovery.

Self-Help Aids Recovery!

Comprehensive care for severe and persistent mental disorders also includes the need for ancillary services—those above and beyond symptom management and rehabilitation. They include consumer self-help and advocacy, consumer-operated programs, family self-help and advocacy, and human services.

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Consumer Self Help

Consumer-operated programs include drop-in centers; case management and outreach programs; business, employment and housing programs, and crisis services.

Consumer Advocacy

Consumers have been playing increasingly visible roles in advo-

cacy. Advocacy enables consumer groups to shape policy and to reform health and mental health care financing.

Family advocacy on a local level can include organizing to improve local mental health services or to redress grievances with service providers. On the national level, consumer groups work to influence legislation and to support research and education initiatives.

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For information on Rimrock Foundation's treatment services, call Jen Porter, Admissions Supervisor, at 1-800-227-3953 or 1-406-248-3175, or visit our Web site at www.rimrock.org. For more educational information on successful recovery, contact the Rimrock Foundation Library at 1-800-227-3953 or 1-406-248-3175.