

What helps people in the process of recovery?

People use a variety of different strategies to help themselves in the recovery process, such as the following:

Becoming involved in self-help programs

"I belong to a support group which is part of a self-help program. Everyone in the group has experienced psychiatric symptoms. I feel very comfortable there. The other people understand what I am going through. They also have good ideas for solving certain problems."

(Contact information for a variety of self help programs and resources is provided in the Appendix to this handout).

Staying active

"I find that the more I do to stay active during the day, the better things go. I make a list each day of what I want to do. I try to list fun things as well as work things. Just being active makes me feel more confident."

Developing a support system

"It helps me to have friends and family I can do things with and talk things over with. Sometimes I have to work on these relationships and make sure I stay in touch. It's better for me not to rely on just one person."

Maintaining physical health

"When I've been eating junk food or not getting any exercise, it makes me feel sluggish, both physically and mentally. So I try to eat things that have decent nutrition and I try to get at least a little exercise every day. It makes a lot of difference."

Being aware of the environment and how it affects you

"I concentrate much better when I'm in a quiet environment. When things start to get noisy I get distracted and sometimes I get irritable. When I can, I seek out quieter places and situations with fewer people involved. It also upsets me to be around critical people. I avoid that kind of person when I can."

Making time for leisure and recreation

"I can't just work all the time. I need time for pleasure, too. My wife and I like to rent a video every Friday. We take turns picking out what we will watch."

Creativity

"I like to write poetry. It helps me to express my emotions and put my experiences into words. And sometimes I read other people's poems. It's very satisfying."

Spirituality

"Being in touch with my spirituality is essential to me. I belong to a church, but I also find spirituality in meditation and in nature."

Following through with treatment choices

"I have chosen treatment that includes a self-help group, a part-time job, and taking medication. I like to be pro-active. Following through with those things makes me feel strong, like I can handle my daily challenges."

"I'm in a peer support program, and I see a therapist once a week who helps me figure out how to deal with some of the problems in my life. Both things have been important to my recovery."

Strategies for recovery include:

- self-help programs
- staying active
- developing a support system
- maintaining physical health
- being aware of the environment
- making time for recreation
- expressing creativity
- seeking out spirituality
- following through with treatment choices.

Questions: Which of the strategies for recovery have you used?

Which of the strategies would you like to develop further or try out?

You can use the following chart to record your answers to these questions.

Strategies for Recovery

Strategy	I already use this strategy	I would like to try this strategy or develop it further
Self help programs		
Staying active		
Developing a support system		
Maintaining physical health		
Being aware of the environment		
Making time for recreation		
Expressing creativity		
Expressing spirituality		
Following through with my treatment choices (such as: _____)		
Other:		

What's important to you? What goals would you like to pursue?

Most people in the process of recovery report that it is important to establish and pursue goals, whether the goals are small or large. However, experiencing psychiatric symptoms can take up a great deal of your time and energy. Sometimes this can make it difficult to participate in activities or even to figure out what you would like to do.

It may be helpful to take some time to review what's important to you as an individual, what you want to accomplish and what you want your life to be like. The following questions may be helpful:

- ▶ What kind of friendships would you like to have?
- ▶ What would you like to do with your spare time?
- ▶ What kind of hobbies or sports or activities would you like to participate in?
- ▶ What kind of work (paid or volunteer) would you like to be doing?
- ▶ Are there any classes you would like to take?
- ▶ What kind of close relationship would you like to have?
- ▶ What kind of living situation would you like to have?
- ▶ Would you like to change your financial situation?
- ▶ How would you like to express your creativity?
- ▶ What kind of relationships would you like with your family?
- ▶ What kind of spiritual community would you like to belong to?

It may also be helpful to think about the following questions:

- ▶ Which areas of life do I feel most satisfied with?
- ▶ Which areas of life do I feel least satisfied with?
- ▶ What would I like to change?

The following chart may help you answer these questions:

Satisfaction with Areas of My life

Area of my life	I am not satisfied	I am moderately satisfied	I am very satisfied
Friendships			
Meaningful work (paid or unpaid)			
Enjoyable activities			
Family relationships			
Living situation			
Spirituality			
Finances			
Belonging to a community			
Intimate relationships			
Expressing creativity			
Hobbies or activities for fun			
Education			
Other area:			

You might find it helpful to set goals for yourself in one or two areas of your life that you are not satisfied with. For example, if you are not satisfied with having enough enjoyable activities, it might be a good idea to set a goal of identifying some activities and scheduling time to try them out.

*Identifying what you would like to improve in your life
will help you set goals.*

Question: What two areas of your life are you not satisfied with and would like to improve?

What goals would you like to set for yourself in these areas? You can use the following chart to record your goals. You can also refer back to the chart to record how you follow up on these goals.