

# Families: A Critical Role in Recovery

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# What is Mental Health Recovery?

- A journey – a process, ongoing, one step at a time, not an end result
- It is unique, personal experience – can only be done by the individual recovering
- It involves hope, personal empowerment, connection, meaning and purpose
- It means living well in the absence or presence of distress

# Where does mental health recovery come from?

- People have always recovered
- Consumer/Survivors telling their recovery stories
- Longitudinal research studies

# Exercise: Your Recovery

- Think of a time in your life when you had to recover from something. E.g. death of a loved one, divorce, loss of job etc...
- What did you need from within yourself to recover?
- What did you need from others?
- What did your recovery process look like?

# Why is it challenging for families to embrace mental health recovery?

- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Not their lived experience
- Education and Information for families is primarily medical model – poor prognosis and low expectations
- Confront hostility if family disagrees with treatment approaches
- Internalized stigma

# Why is it important for families to embrace a recovery approach?

- Many (up to 70%) consumer/survivor live with family
- Recovery research shows that a supportive family can be a major attribute in the recovery process
- Improved quality of life for families
- The recovery approach works with diverse families and communities

# Role of Family: What Helps and What Hinders

## What Helps

- Being Present - listen and support
- Treating relative as a whole human being
- Accepting the mental health issues and believing they can RECOVER-HOPE

## What Hinders

- Avoiding
- Seeing relative as a diagnosis
- Feelings of hopelessness and despair

# Role of Family: What Helps and What Hinders

## What Helps

- Fostering interdependence within family
- Giving relative choices and letting go - it is *his/her* journey
- Building on their strengths

## What Hinders

- Fostering dependence and helplessness due to over responsibility and involvement
- Controlling relative's decisions
- Focusing on Problems

# Role of Family: What Helps and What Hinders

## What Helps

- Support risk-taking and freedom to fail – Challenge in a Supportive Way
- Explore Alternatives and prepare Advance Directives
- Take care of Yourself

## What Hinders

- Overprotecting due to fear and guilt
- Coercion and Forced Treatment
- Letting the mental health issue consume your life

# Family Outreach and Response Program

- [www.familymentalhealthrecovery.org](http://www.familymentalhealthrecovery.org)

Thanks!!