

Working with Families Using a Recovery Approach

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Eastern Ontario Summer Institute in Mental
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June 16, 2006

Why was a family program interested in Recovery?

- Our program believes that families are essential to the recovery process
- Mental health recovery was a good fit with our program's values – we believe people can and do recover
- It gives us a framework to work with families that does not alienate the experience of consumer/survivors or their right to self-determination
- Mental Health Recovery works well with diverse families

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?

Family Recovery Principles

Education/Empowerment

Hope

Responsibility/Letting Go

Self-Care

Support/Connection

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

How did FOR incorporate Recovery into its program?

- Individual approach when working with families
- Development of the Family Mental Health Recovery Series
- Alumni Group and Train-the-Facilitators Program
- Family Recovery Website
- Involvement in Education, Training and Community Development

Family Mental Health Recovery Series

- An eight week series which welcomes any family member or friend no matter what the diagnosis or family relationship
- Small groups between 12 people
- Based on adult learning/education principles
- Facilitated by a Recovery Family Educator and trained family members

Purpose of the Series:

- To educate families about Mental Health Recovery
- To understand their role in the Recovery process
- To develop skills which nurture a recovery environment
- To receive support from other families

Series Outline

- Week 1 – Introduce Concept of Recovery
- Week 2 – What are the Pathways and Barriers to Recovery?
- Week 3 – The Power of Hope - Handout
- Week 4 – Family Resilience

Series Outline

- Week 5 – The Concept of Power, Choice and Decision-Making within a Family
- Week 6 – Relationship Building using a Strengths Approach - Handout
- Week 7 – Boundaries and Letting Go/Self Care
- Week 8 – Family Recovery Action Planning

Family Outreach and Response Program

- www.familymentalhealthrecovery.org

Thanks!!