



Mental Health Recovery: What is the role for Families?

Karyn Baker

Paddy McGowan

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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



What is Hope?

Why is it important?



What takes hope from families?

How do you rekindle your hope?

Hope Inspiring Strategies

- Attitudes/Beliefs
- Actions

Families, Choices and Decision-Making

- Remain engaged
- Avoid either/or thinking such as “rescue” or “abandon”
- Find solutions that maintain your relationship with the relative. Relationship is our most important tool in supporting your relative

Families, Choices and Decision-Making

- Do not pathologize poor choices that your relative makes. Poor choices, mistaken judgments, lack of insight, repeated mistakes and self-defeating choices are not necessarily a reflection of mental health issues. They are ways that most of us grow and learn!

Exercise

- Turn to the person next to you and do the following:
- Tell them about a time when you did something or made a choice that was self-defeating, dumb, uninsightful, foolish or that others warned you about but you did not heed their warning.
- If you had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, how might your family respond to your choice.

Family Outreach and Response Program

- www.familymentalhealthrecovery.org

Thanks!!