

Wellness Recovery



Workbook

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Class Overview

The wellness recovery class is designed to work with individuals that have mental health issues and is based on the recovery model of working with mental illness. The class is designed to help individuals with mental illnesses recognize and be aware of both their strengths and weaknesses in order to prepare for a possible mental health crisis.

The class includes information on specific mental illnesses, recovery, and personal wellness. The class works with participants to identifying triggers and early warning signs and specific activities to deal with them. Lastly, the class focuses on creating a crisis plan with participants. This crisis plan is specific to each participant and can be used as a tool for participants in the event of a mental health crisis.

Class Rules

1. Respect everyone and what they have to say.
2. Let others finish what they are saying before you begin talking.
3. What is shared in class stays in class.
4. Cell phones are allowed for emergency use only.
5. Respect others belongings.

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Mental Health Recovery

For those living with a mental illness, a “normal” life may seem unachievable. In the past, it was believed that mental illnesses were untreatable and that individuals living with mental illnesses would be suffering for the duration of their life. Today, thinking is very different and living with or overcoming a mental illness through recovery is possible. Recovery is living a full life and managing your mental illness through various self help strategies. Today, programs continue to be developed with the goal of helping individuals with mental illness live independent and full lives.

How individuals with a mental illness are perceived began to change in the 1980’s when people began to discuss their illness, how it affected them, and how they were living with it. The recovery philosophy was started and emphasized that individuals with mental illness can live their life to the fullest at all times and when well, prepare themselves for times of relapse or crisis. The more knowledgeable and prepared a person is, the more likely they are to handle crisis situations.

Recovery, however, is not something that just happens; it is attained through hard work, self awareness and knowledge. Recovery recognizes that everyone has different needs and ways of dealing with their mental illness. Recovery focuses on self sufficiency and on identifying ways to maintain a feeling of well being on a daily basis. Small steps can be taken to help improve their lives. Steps include maintaining personal wellness both physical and mental, identifying triggers and early warning signs, and creating a crisis plan.

Triggers are events or circumstances that may cause symptoms of a mental illness to begin or make symptoms worse. Early warning signs are subtle internal signs that indicate things are changing or that things are out of the ordinary. Knowing personal triggers and early warning signs prepares a person to identify these signs and to take action to reduce the signs of their mental illness.

Identifying resources and supporters plays a large role in the recovery philosophy and is useful in crisis situations. It is important for the wellness of those diagnosed with a mental illness to find a doctor that they can trust and that can relate to them. Mental health consumers should be knowledgeable about their diagnosis, the symptoms that go along with their diagnosis, the impact their symptoms may have on others, the prescription medication that they are taking, and what side effects may occur due to the medication. Family and friends can also be a great support. Making a contact list for support can insure the necessary people are involved should the individual have a crisis situation.

The last step in recovery after identifying triggers, early warning signs, and a support system is to create a plan of action for times of crisis. Having a plan for when things are breaking down is a key. Remember, relapses are likely to occur and recovery emphasizes that individuals be prepared for these situations. It is important for mental health

consumers to identify what things are like when their illness is stable versus unstable. This awareness keeps the consumer more in touch with when life is normal or abnormal. Gathering information and a plan of what to do when the individual is ill is also useful and gives them some control of the crisis situation even though they feel they are not in control of themselves. This information should be gathered together in an organized manner.

Overall, recovery is about maintaining a healthy and full lifestyle while at the same time being prepared for when things go wrong. When you are working with people that have a mental illness, the best time to prepare for a crisis situation is when they are stable. Creating a plan and having a structure can help to reduce or eliminate mental health symptoms. The crisis plan can also reduce the amount of disruption that could be caused when mental health symptoms are active. Wellness is then maintained through the self awareness, knowledge, and information of clients.

Identifying Triggers and Early Warning Signs

TRIGGERS -- Triggers are any event or circumstance that may cause symptoms of a mental illness to begin or make symptoms worse.

List Your Personal Triggers

Examples: A traumatic event, lack of sleep, life changes, an anniversary, excessive stress, an argument with friends or family, or something not going your way.

1.	13.
2.	14.
3.	15.
4.	16.
5.	17.
6.	18.
7.	19.
8.	20.
9.	21.
10.	22.
11.	23.
12.	24.

Write down activities that you can do when you notice triggers to keep things from getting worse.

<u>Activities</u> Examples: Call a friend for support, get more sleep, go for a walk, improve my diet, make an appointment with my doctor or therapist, take some deep breaths to calm down, meditation/relaxation skills, get out of the house, ask for help, and/or prayer. You could also take your kids to the playground or play a game with the family.	Have Tried	Have Not Tried	This Activity has Worked

EARLY WARNING SIGNS -- Early warning signs are subtle internal signs that indicate things are changing or that things are out of the ordinary.

List Your Early Warning Signs

Examples: Fatigue, forgetfulness, irritability, crying a lot, lack of motivation, anxiety, irrational thoughts, negativity, or missed appointments.

1.	13.
2.	14.
3.	15.
4.	16.
5.	17.
6.	18.
7.	19.
8.	20.
9.	21.
10.	22.
11.	23.
12.	24.

Parent Information

Provided is information regarding my children, who will be responsible for them in the event that I am unable and any special needs that each child may have.

Child	Date of Birth	School	Caretaker	Special Needs

If I am unable to care for my children the following plan regarding my children should be implemented along with my crisis plan...

Crisis Plan

Below are two lists, one of how I look when I am well and stable without symptoms. The second is how I look when I am not well and unstable, and my mental illness has taken over.

How do things look when I am well? Below, describe how you are when you are feeling well or stable.	How do things look when I am not well? Below, describe how you are when you are not feeling well or when you are unstable.

The following is a crisis plan developed as a tool for when I am not well. When I am not well, I will look and act like what I have described in the right hand column. This plan should be followed until I am able to care for myself. You will know that I am able to care for myself when I look and act as I do in the left hand column. Please use this crisis plan as a tool to insure that myself and obligations are taken care of if I am unable to do so myself. Thank you.

Crisis Plan

Support System – Your support system includes family, care providers, and/or friends that are there for you in times of need. Identify these individuals as well as who will provide respite or care for your children.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	PHONE NUMBER
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:
		Home: Cell:

In an emergency or crisis situation where I am unable to or not competent to make decisions regarding my health and/or mental health I appoint the following supportive individual(s) to make decisions or care for my children on my behalf (in order of preference):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I DO NOT want the following individual(s) to make decisions regarding my health and/or mental health in the situation where I am unable:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Crisis Plan

Medical Information

The following is a list of doctors and therapists that I currently see.

Name of the Doctor or therapist	Phone Number	Why I am Seeing the Doctor or therapist

In a crisis situation, I want to **AVOID** the following treatments and/or medications.

Treatment/Medication to Avoid	Why

Crisis Plan

I am currently taking the following medications (prescribed and not prescribed).

Medication	What I am Taking It For	Dosage

The following are medications that I have been prescribed but I am NOT currently taking.

Medication	What for	Dosage	Why Not Taking It

Crisis Plan

My pharmacy:

Name	Location	Phone Number

My allergies include:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In the past, the following activities have helped in reducing symptoms of my mental illness:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Crisis Plan

Parent Information

Provided is information regarding my children, who will be responsible for them in the event that I am unable and any special needs that each child may have.

Child	Date of Birth	School	Caretaker	Special Needs

If I am unable to care for my children the following plan regarding my children should be implemented along with my crisis plan:

Crisis Plan

If my condition requires hospitalization:

I would prefer to be treated at the following hospitals (in order of preference)	I would prefer to AVOID the following hospitals
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

I _____ have put together this plan as a tool that should be used when I am unable to care for myself due to my current health and/or mental health issues. Included is information on what I look like when I am well compared to what I look like when I am not well. This plan should be implemented at times when I am not well.

I have also included medical information, information on my support system and their contact information, how I would want my children to be cared for, a list of my obligations that need to be completed, and activities to help reduce my mental health symptoms. I have also developed a care strategy to be implemented in a crisis situation.

I thank all of my supporters for your time and efforts in helping me to get back on my feet. I hope that this crisis plan will be as useful to you as it is for me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Attorney: _____ Date: _____

Definitions

Mental Illness -- Mental illnesses are health conditions that are characterized by changes in thinking, mood, behavior, or a combination of thinking, mood or behavior. These changes in thinking, mood, or behavior are often associated with distress and/or impaired functioning

Depression -- when a person feels sad for a very long time and they do not know what to do to not feel sad

Anxiety -- when a person worries or panics for most or all of the time

Phobias – a type of anxiety disorder defined as an irrational fear of something, for example fearing birds for no reason

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – stress following a traumatic and/or terrifying event

General Anxiety Disorder – chronic exaggerated worry or tension

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder – having anxious thoughts (obsessions) and rituals (compulsions)

Panic Disorder – an anxiety disorder defined by feelings of terror that strike suddenly and repeatedly without warning

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) -- when a person has a hard time focusing or staying still, or inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity

Bipolar Disorder -- when a person experiences mood swings from feeling good/high to feeling low

Schizophrenia -- a brain disorder that makes it difficult to distinguish what is real and not real

Postpartum Depression -- depression that occurs in women after giving birth

