



What Is Recovery?

An ongoing search to recover hidden treasure from the ocean of life

Recovery is what we call wellness for people who have experienced mental disorder or unwellness. Mental disorder diagnoses are labels for clusters of responses that together work to keep us stuck in distressing or unhelpful experiences. There are heaps of ways to change these experiences. Recovery is the journey to find those ways. Just as mental disorder involves our environments, behaviour, thoughts, bodies and emotions, recovery involves all of these things too. Recovery isn't a fixed state of being because mental health isn't a fixed state of being; mental health is a series of practices that allow us to cope well with life. There isn't just one answer for everyone, because we are all different.

Rather than being about going back to a previous state of wellbeing, recovery is about moving forward. This is an ongoing journey to recover hidden treasure (skills, resources and insights) from the ocean of life. Sometimes the treasure was hidden within us all along and sometimes we need to search out new treasures in unexplored territories.

Learning to Value Ourselves in the Presence of Stress and Distress

Recovery means that we are trying to make effective choices and value ourselves, even in the presence of stress and distress. This involves learning how to cope with our responses to life, so that they do not overwhelm us or disrupt our ability to engage with the world and our potential.

Recovery also involves doing things to make your *body* resilient to distress and engaging with *environments* that build us up to deal with distress. For some people, medication is a helpful way of controlling symptoms so they can address the underlying environments, thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical responses.

How Do I Get There?

Start with the basics; make a commitment to nurture yourself for a while. Spend the next couple of weeks making sure you've got all the nutrients in your diet you need to be resilient to stress, ensuring you are moving around enough and getting just the right amount of sleep (6-8 hours a night).

Another way to speed your recovery is to link in with your communities. People who have social support networks (**& use them**) tend to have better mental health than people who do not. When we don't have social connections our minds automatically fall into survival mode when we encounter stress and this puts us at risk of a whole host of difficulties. It is very important to get connected – with family, friends, support workers, counsellors, psychologists, doctors, nutritionists, community groups, social groups and any other kind of support you can find.

As you become more and more skilled at effective communication, balanced thinking, pro-active problem-solving, accessing support and repairing your moods, you will experience more and more wellness and less and less unwellness.