

The Vermont Recovery Education Project

Examples from a Survey

For the Vermont Recovery Education Project, recovery has meant finding hope, developing a personal understanding of the experience of mental health challenges in one's life, and developing the skills and knowledge to support one's own wellness. The Vermont Recovery Education Project has designed and implemented a program to teach recovery skills and practices to citizens with mental health challenges, family and friends.

Designed by Mary Ellen Copeland in coordination with other people who have experienced mental health challenges, as well as health care professionals and related organizations, the educational program has maintained two objectives:

To teach individuals who experience mental health challenges, their family members, supporters and health care professionals

how to reduce or eliminate psychiatric symptoms safely, simply, and effectively on a daily basis

- how to get well and stay well.

Participants reported developing the following skills:

- recognized their own early warning signs/symptoms
- identified specific skills and tools to cope with these symptoms
- created a crisis plan (WRAP) that listed their supporters, expressed their needs and wishes, and explained their symptoms and early warning signs
- incorporated tools for staying well into their daily routine
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QUOTES

“WRAP has kept me out of crisis. This course reminded me that I did have a choice and I could use what I learned here to relieve my symptoms.”

“I feel I can take control over my life after drawing up a WRAP and putting it to use.”

“I feel I am on the way to healing my emotional problems, [and that] I am able to deal better with symptoms so I do not go into a serious crisis.”

“[The course] has given me tools to use on a daily basis to improve my life.”

“It has given me support and a place to go to interact with people who have also experienced illnesses and get guidelines and assistance on how to recover.”

Finding Hope

A significant number of participants reported feeling more hopeful about their own recovery process. Hope is perhaps the most important of concept of recovery. Recovery has been described as a process, an attitude, and a way of life in which the goal “is to meet the challenge and to re-establish a new and valued sense of integrity and purpose; the aspiration to live, work, and love in a community in which one makes a significant contribution”

Here are some quotes about hope taken from the post-surveys:

“I can now see that recovery is possible.”

“It has helped me realize that I am not alone in my situation.

“This course gave me positive proof I am getting better. Hope is possible.”

Leadership and Empowerment

WRAP has also provided opportunities for participants to be trained to facilitate workshops with their peers, and to reinforce the concept that everyone has skills, ideas and insights to contribute that can be helpful to others.