

## APA Official Actions

# Position Statement on Use of the Principles of Recovery

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2018

Approved by the Assembly, November 2018

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

### APA Position:

The American Psychiatric Association endorses and strongly affirms the application of the principles of recovery to the comprehensive care and treatment of individuals with mental illness across the lifespan. Recovery emphasizes a person's capacity to have hope and lead a meaningful life and suggests treatment be guided by attention to life goals and ambitions. Recovery recognizes that individuals with mental illness often feel powerless or disenfranchised, that these feelings can interfere with initiation and maintenance of psychiatric and medical care, and the best results come when individuals feel treatment decisions are made in ways that are collaborative and consistent with their cultural, spiritual, and personal ideals. Recovery should include the following elements: communicating hope; treating individuals with respect; meeting them where they are in awareness and readiness; sharing information and ensuring decision-making with individuals; using a strengths-based approach to assessment and treatment; shaping treatment, services and supports around life goals and interests and providing opportunities to include family and other close supporters as essential partners in recovery.<sup>1</sup> For children, these principles are adapted to place priority on building capacity for healthy development and resilience, and to provide treatment that is family-centered.

Recovery enriches and supports medical and rehabilitation models. By applying the principles of recovery and encouraging others who treat mental illness to adopt these principles, psychiatrists can enhance the care of individuals served in all settings where psychiatric services are provided.

These principles value and maximize the individual's autonomy, dignity and self-respect, integration into full community life, and full development. They focus on increasing the individual's ability to successfully adapt to life's challenges, and to collaborate with the psychiatrist to optimally manage symptoms, improve functioning, and improve health. Recovery requires a commitment to a broad range of necessary medical and mental health services. It should not be used to justify retraction of resources or reduction in access to skilled professionals and high-quality care. Recovery is predicated on the partnership between the individual, psychiatrist, and other practitioners in constructing and directing all services aimed at maximizing hope and quality of life.

Original Author: Council on Research

(revisions: Assembly Committee of Public and Community Psychiatry, Council on Quality Care)

<sup>1</sup> Engagement: A New Standard for Mental Health Care, National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2016.