

Position Statement on Use of the Concept of Recovery

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Approved by the Assembly, May 2005

"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*.

The American Psychiatric Association endorses and strongly affirms the application of the concept of recovery to the comprehensive care of chronically and persistently mentally ill adults, including the concept of resilience in seriously emotionally disturbed children. The concept of recovery emphasizes a person's capacity to have hope and lead a meaningful life, and suggests that treatment can be guided by attention to life goals and ambitions. It recognizes that patients often feel powerless or disenfranchised, that these feelings can interfere with initiation and maintenance of mental health and medical care, and that the best results come when patients feel that treatment decisions are made in ways that suit their cultural, spiritual, and personal ideals. It focuses on wellness and resilience and encourages patients to participate actively in their care, particularly by enabling them to help define the goals of psychopharmacologic and psychosocial treatments.

The concept of recovery has a long history in medicine and its principles are important in the management of all chronic disorders. The concept of recovery enriches and supports medical and rehabilitation models. By applying the concept of recovery as well as rehabilitation techniques and by encouraging other mental health professionals to adopt the concept of recovery, psychiatrists can enhance the care of all clinical populations served within the community based and other public sector mental health and behavioral health systems.

The concept of recovery values include maximization of 1) each patient's autonomy based on that patient's desires and capabilities, 2) patient's dignity and self-respect, 3) patient's acceptance and integration into full community life, and 4) resumption of normal development. The concept of recovery focuses on increasing the patient's ability to successfully cope with life's challenges, and to successfully manage their symptoms. The application of the concept of recovery requires a commitment to a broad range of necessary services and should not be used to justify a retraction of resources.

The concept of recovery is predicated on a partnership between psychiatrist, other practitioners, and patient in the construction and direction of all services aimed at maximizing hope and quality of life.