



NHS

**Surrey and Borders
Partnership**
NHS Foundation Trust

Recovery College Newsletter

Week 3: Recovery

8th April 2020



OUR MESSAGE FOR THIS WEEK

In this week's newsletter we will look at different ways to think about **RECOVERY**. The models we've included are; the Recovery Star, the concept of CHIME and The 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

There is no single definition of the concept of recovery for people with mental health problems. Recovery means different things to different people – it is very personal.

In mental health, recovery does not always refer to the process of complete recovery from a mental health problem in the way that we may recover from a physical health problem. Personal recovery is a process that allows us to manage symptoms and improve the quality of our lives whether or not we are able to fully rid ourselves of the difficulties.

The essence of personal recovery is living the life we really want. It is all about bringing meaning back to life and seeking out the things that give us value and purpose. This may mean rebuilding a life we previously had (with extra understanding to support us) or taking ourselves in a completely new direction with our goals, skills, roles or outlook.

Recovery is often described as a “journey”; the process involves developing a sense of purpose, hope and empowerment along with the development of practical coping skills.

Recovery happens in 'fits and starts' and, like life, has many ups and downs.

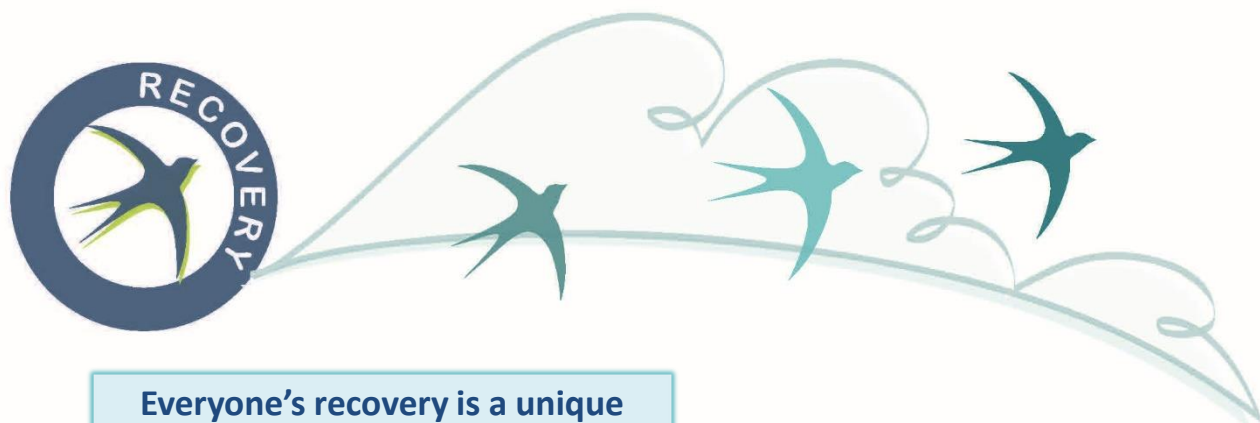
The Recovery College can support students to find their own way in their recovery journey. There are no defined steps or processes to personal recovery; it is up to us to seek out and utilise what is helpful to our own unique journey. This is an opportunity for us to become an expert on ourselves. Being open to new experiences and new ways of learning will help us to develop the skills we need. Recovery is something you achieve for yourself. It is not something that someone else does for you but others may be able to help if you wish.

Best Wishes

India (Senior Clinician) and Wendy (Senior Recovery Coach)

“Recovery is not about ‘getting rid’ of problems. It is about seeing ourselves beyond our problems - our abilities, possibilities, interests and dreams - and recovering the social roles and relationships that give life value and meaning.”

Julie Repper and Rachel Perkins, 2003



Everyone's recovery is a unique and personal journey

Each of us will find our own way, no-one else can do it for us. It's an ongoing journey, rather than a destination.

Recovery is about regaining control of our lives

It's about being able to make informed decisions for ourselves. We can choose to redefine our identity in a way that may include our diagnoses and struggles, or in a way that moves beyond them.

Recovery is for everyone

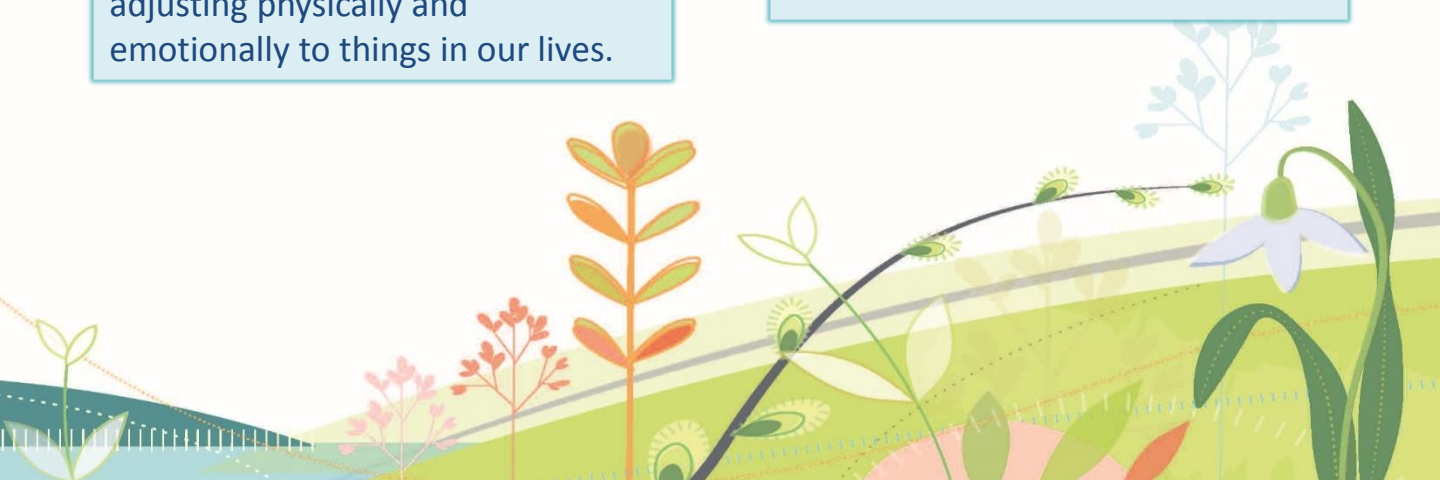
It's not just for people with mental health issues. It's about healing and adjusting physically and emotionally to things in our lives.

Recovery is not a cure

It doesn't mean we'll be "fixed", that our symptoms will disappear, or that we'll be back to exactly how we used to be. It's about getting to a point where our remaining symptoms and problems interfere less with our lives.

Recovery is about growth

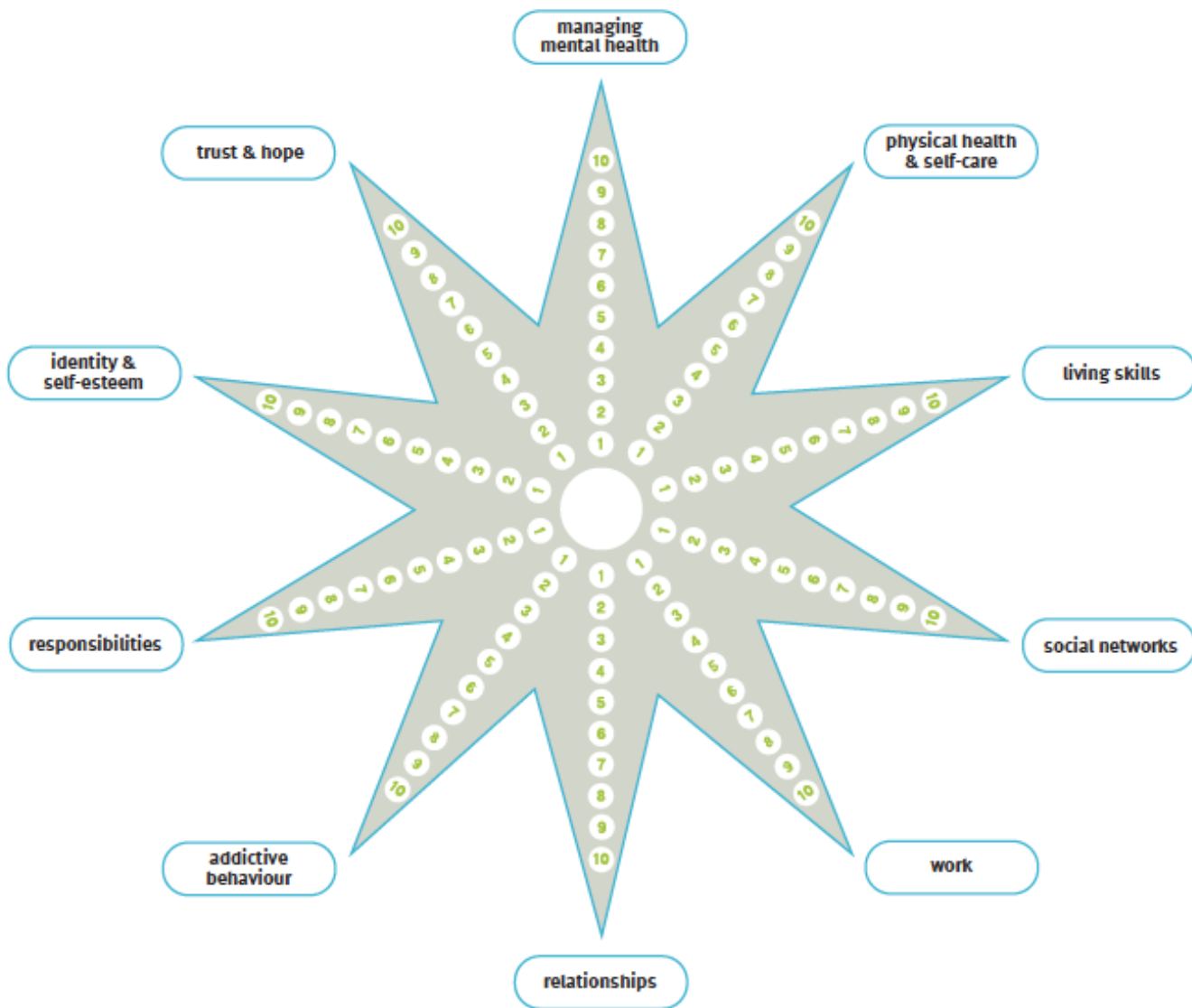
It's about learning as we go, even when it feels like we're going in circles, or taking 2 steps backwards. We continue to pick ourselves up and keep moving forward, learning from each set back. If we relapse, although it may feel disappointing, it gives us an opportunity to re-evaluate and problem solve our difficulties.





THE RECOVERY STAR

The Recovery Star has been developed to help people to understand and plot their progress in their recovery.



The Recovery Star has ten points, describing the main aspects of people's lives.

What would rate yourself out of ten in each area, with 10 being fantastic?

Pick one or two areas that feel relevant to you, and have a go at making some small changes. Trying to make too many changes as once can slow us down and overwhelm us. Think about what you've tried before. Was it helpful? What could you do differently this time? Is there anyone who could help you with it? Remember how far you've come, and know that we continue to move forwards, even when our mental health doesn't want us to see that.

Five elements that are known to support recovery
make up the concept **CHIME**.



CONNECTEDNESS

- Having peer support
- Engaging in social groups
- Having healthy, supportive relationships
- Being involved and engaged with the community



HOPE AND OPTIMISM

- Belief in recovery and motivation for change
- Having hope-inspiring relationships
- Positive thinking, valuing effort and success
- Having dreams, aspirations and goals



IDENTITY

- Building positive sense of self and identity
- Overcoming stigma
- Being recognised as a whole person, not as an illness or diagnosis
- Having well defined personal boundaries



MEANING

- Having a sense of purpose
- Living a meaningful life
- Having social roles
- Having and achieving personal goals



EMPOWERMENT

- Focus on strengths and skills
- Taking personal responsibility
- Feeling and being in control of your life
- Making informed decisions about your life, treatment and recovery

Like the funky letters? They are Zentangles, a type of meditative “doodle art”. They are a brilliant, relaxing way to express creativity, increase your focus and challenge perfectionism. Learn more at <https://zentangle.com/pages/get-started>





5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

Another recovery model is about learning to focus on wellness instead of illness. It can help to think about the 5 ways to wellbeing. These steps have been proven to boost mental health and wellbeing, by helping us find balance and build resilience. We looked at **CONNECT** in our first newsletter, and we'll explore other topics in future issues.

1. Connect

Developing and maintaining good relationships is really important for our mental wellbeing. Positive relationships make us feel valued and help us to develop a sense of belonging and worth. They can offer us emotional support and allow us to share our positive and negative experiences. Connecting with people reduces our sense of social isolation, which is especially important at a time when we are physically distancing ourselves from other people.

2. Be Active

Staying physically active might seem tricky if you're stuck at home, but it's just about sitting down less, and moving your body more. This could include following a YouTube yoga video, dancing to your favourite songs, or even vigorous housework!

Studies have shown physical activity can improve mental health, releasing feel-good hormones to make you feel brighter and more energised, managing stress and anxiety, reducing the risk of depression, increasing self-esteem, and providing a good distraction from unwanted thoughts.

We'll look at ways to **BE ACTIVE** in next week's newsletter.





3. Take Notice/Mindfulness

Taking notice of what's going on around you and recognising how you're thinking and feeling in the present moment is called mindfulness. It's a mental state of awareness and focus that can reduce the impact of painful thoughts and feelings.

There are lots of ways to be mindful, from listening to a mindfulness exercise, to carrying out daily tasks with more focus and awareness.

4. Learn

Time at home is a great opportunity to learn something new. Consider taking an online course, reading through your notes from a previous Recovery College course, watching a documentary, or reading a book.

Developing new skills or knowledge is a great way to boost your confidence and get a real sense of achievement.

5. Give

Generosity and kindness create positive feelings for the person giving as well as the one receiving. You can feel a sense of purpose and self worth, and it can help you connect with people.

There are many ways to help other people. Perhaps you could call someone who you know is self isolating to check how they're getting on. Display supportive messages in your window, share something you found interesting or that will make people laugh, or make a housemate a cup of tea.

You can find out more at this website -

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>





MAINTAINING RECOVERY

Would you notice if your mental health was starting to get worse? Being aware of your early warning signs can help you recognise if you're becoming unwell or having trouble coping and need help.

If you're feeling overwhelmed it can really help to talk to someone about how you're feeling, or if you prefer, try writing your thoughts and feelings down in a journal.

Sticking to a daily routine can help, but don't be too hard on yourself if you can't manage everything (or anything!) you had planned each day.

Remember it's a difficult time for everyone right now, so be kind to yourself, take time out and give yourself a treat. Try distracting yourself with a fun or comforting activity, or by using mindfulness.

Remind yourself that you have got through tough times before. How did you do it? Think about what helped you in the past and see if you can use those same strategies now.

OUR COURSES

Courses are not currently running, but we are looking at new exciting ways to run courses remotely if the current situation continues for an extended period of time.

As we are built on the principles of recovery, all of our courses are recovery-focused to support you in your journey. These are some of our top picks for learning about recovery:

- Introduction to Recovery and Wellbeing
- Discovering Self Compassion
- Confidence and Self Esteem
- Introduction to Crisis Planning
- Positive Changes to Improve Wellbeing
- Sustaining Meaningful Relationships

We'll let you know as soon as we have dates for running these courses again.

Our Recovery Colleges in Surrey and North East Hampshire & Farnham help people improve their health and wellbeing through courses on a range of mental and physical health conditions.

You don't have to be referred to become a student at the Recovery Colleges. We are open to everyone and all you need to do is enrol, which is really easy to do.

To become a student simply complete and return an enrolment form which you can get by contacting us.

We would be delighted to see you at one of our courses and look forward to meeting you.

If you have any questions or need guidance on completing the enrolment form please get in touch and one of our team will be happy to help.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

Webpage <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/recovery/recovery-college/>

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