


PSYCHOSIS: THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

A NEWSLETTER FROM EASA'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



Recovery is a
pathway into
the life I want
Pat Deegan

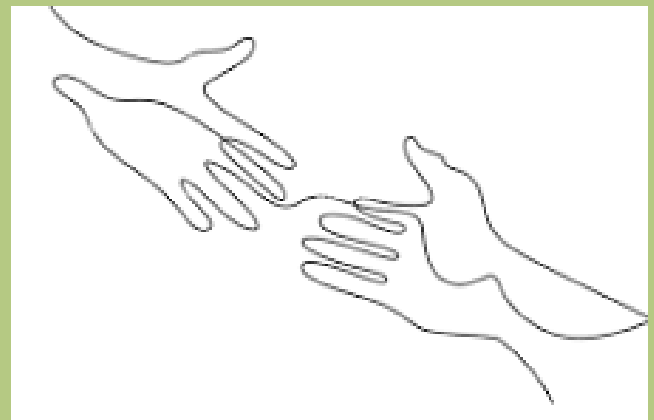
What the Research Says About Recovery

Authors of a study from 2022 examining recovery after first-episode psychosis found that although psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, continue to be viewed as chronic, **it has been firmly established that many will fully recover.** In the study they note that "most of our participants were in psychotic symptom remission, (and) psychosis appears well managed for most." [American Psychiatric Association, May 31, 2022.](#)

You may not be able to imagine it right now, but recovery from psychosis, especially when you get help early, is expected. Recovery is a gradual process that is unique for each person. It can be slow though, and will require lots of patience from both your loved one and from you.



"I had lost a big part of him for a while and it could happen again, but for now I see more of him returning, and more and more good days than bad, which wasn't the case not so many months ago. I remember when I heard him singing one day, and I knew that things were changing." **Parent of a young person recovering from First Episode Psychosis**



"I thought for a while that he was gone forever. But today he's back. He's totally capable. His goals have changed. His life is different than it might have been, but he is with us again." **EASA Parent**

What Is Happening? Navigating Grief and Loss in Real Time

Finding out that your loved one has psychosis is a shock and can unleash intense emotions that wash over you like waves in a storm. Common reactions include:

Sadness and grief: "It's like my son is gone. The person living with us now is a stranger."

Fear and anxiety: "What kind of life will she be able to have now?"

Shame and guilt: "I don't want to tell our family or friends about their illness."

Denial: "She just needs to pull herself together and everything will be fine again."

Overwhelmed and/or depressed: "I don't know what to do. I can't get through to him. It feels hopeless."

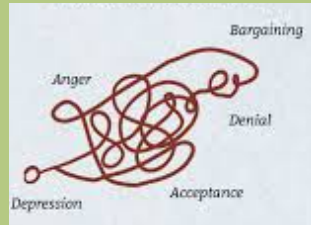
Remorse, blaming yourself: "Why didn't we realize that there was something wrong and get help earlier?"

Anger and blame: "He brought it on himself by taking drugs."

Acceptance: "Through that whole process, I kind of had to let go of my expectations."

Relief: "Now that we've found EASA, he can finally get help."

Wherever you are on this roller coaster ride, you are entitled to your feelings, no matter what they are. Try to be accepting and forgiving toward yourself. Talk about your feelings with a trusted friend, family member or professional. Just being aware of your feelings without trying to fight them or give them too much power can help keep them from running away with you. It is natural to be fearful and anxious about the future. Try to put your energy into the here and now and to take things one step at a time.



This situation you're in isn't just going to challenge your loved one. It's going to challenge YOU to change and grow. You'll be stuck doing things the way you always have for a while. You'll try different things, have many missteps, and feel like you're not getting anywhere. But you will learn. You will change, and most importantly, things will get better. Something about the poem below captured this learning experience for me:

There's a Hole in My Sidewalk

*I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.*

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But, it isn't my fault.
It still takes me a long time to get out.*

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in. It's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault. I get out immediately.*

*I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.*

I walk down another street.

— Portia Nelson, The Romance of Self-Discovery

Parent Picks

When
Life
Hits
Hard

How to
Transcend
Grief, Crisis,
and Loss
with
Acceptance and
Commitment
Therapy

Russ Harris

"This was such a good book and helped me with how to effectively live life to the fullest in spite of the inevitable pain and loss that will come."

OPEN PHONE LINE

Want to talk to another caregiver who understands what you're going through?

Call EASA's Open Phone Line:
971-610-1529
Mondays, 5 - 6 PM Fridays, 9 - 10 AM

Or, email Karma at clarkejung@ohsu.edu to schedule a time that works for you.

