



RECOVERY IS BEAUTIFUL

RECOVERY

Talk to an individual in long-term recovery and they will tell you that recovery is a beautiful thing. Their life has changed in multiple ways for the better. Recovery is about HOPE and the optimism that things can, will, and do get better! Hope needs to be internalized and can be nurtured by anyone who is willing to talk to others about the true benefits and realities of recovery.

Recovery is much more than addressing physical issues. True recovery is physical, emotional, and spiritual – it's about waking up every morning making conscious, healthy, and productive decisions.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), recovery from a mental disorder and/or substance use disorder is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. In the end, recovery is really about living life to the fullest!

MAKING OHIO A RECOVERY STATE

We need Ohio to be a state that believes in recovery and supports others to find and live in recovery. As individuals in, and allies of, we **have to BELIEVE** in and be passionate about recovery, and promote the benefits recovery provides to individuals, their families, and our communities.

To become the leading state of recovery, we must empower a strong recovery voice. We have to engage individuals and families in recovery and ask them what works and what doesn't -- then we need to listen to them! One of the most important activities we can undertake, is to ensure that local systems of care have strong and active recovery supports throughout, including peer supports, housing, education, employment supports, and peer run organizations for individuals in recovery from addiction and/or mental illness.

Supporting and empowering a strong recovery voice and strong recovery community is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. The evidence supports the fact that individuals involved with others in recovery will have a stronger and more sustained recovery! Additionally, as these individuals in recovery interact with their friends, family members, and the public --- they will help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction.

STIGMA

Stigma is any attitude or behavior that treats people as less than or discriminates against them. Stigma is generally based on fear, lack of knowledge, assumptions, and/or misconceptions. We know that stigma can be a challenging obstacle for individuals to even admit that they have a problem and can keep individuals from seeking help.

To help individuals to want and have access to mental health and/or addiction services, we must eradicate the stigma around these illnesses. Stigma affects individuals, families, and communities in many ways. It negatively stereotypes individuals and families dealing with mental illness and/or addiction; it contributes to bullying and social isolation for young people; it causes disparities in funding for research and treatment; at times it hinders where treatment services or recovery housing is located; and it can and does lead to the denial of mental illness and addiction as being illnesses as opposed to moral weaknesses, or self-inflicted conditions.

If individuals do get help, stigma can make recovery more difficult, particularly if the stigma they face is from family, friends, individuals with influence in their lives, or health care providers. If the issues of stigma are not addressed, the person may well feel isolated and alone. The good news is – we know that stigma can be overcome!



RECOVERY IS BEAUTIFUL

Recovery is Beautiful is about **HOPE**, the hope that anyone can recover, and by working together we can make recovery not only possible but desirable. Recovery is Beautiful is committed to working to overcome stigma, and to ensure that we put the needs of the individuals and families needing mental health and addiction services **FIRST** and **FOREMOST**.

We know that by changing the conversation on mental illness and addiction, we provide families and individuals in need of help with hope and encouragement that things can and will get better. We want all Ohioans to know:

Mental illness and addiction are chronic illnesses

Mental illness and addiction are both chronic illnesses. They are not moral failings or character weaknesses. SAMHSA defines addiction as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive seeking, continued use despite harmful consequences, and long-lasting changes in the brain. The National Alliance on Mental Illness defines mental illness as a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior, or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others.

Mental illness & addiction can be treated – treatment works, people recover, and Recovery IS Beautiful

Both mental illness and addiction are treatable chronic illnesses that require not only crisis and/or acute care, but long-term recovery supports. Every person, when given access to the right treatment and supports, has the opportunity to recover by improving their lives and living to their fullest potential. The recovery journey is not the same for all people, there are many pathways to recovery, and we must allow individuals to choose the path that is right for them.

Recovery is to be celebrated

If we are ever to normalize recovery, we must celebrate recovery. As others see that recovery is possible it will help encourage individuals with a mental illness and or addiction to get help. Celebrating recovery also lets all people know that like heart disease, cancer, etc., with the right treatment and supports individuals do recover and become engaged members of their local communities.

NOW IS THE TIME

There is no time like the present to have Ohio become the most conducive state in the nation for individuals to recover, be healthy, and be contributing members of their communities. We can all start by talking openly about mental illness and addiction, fighting stigma, giving support to individuals and families in need of mental health and/or addiction treatment, and respond to misconceptions, or negative comments. Stigma can be overcome, and the knowledge that treatment works, people recover, and **Recovery IS Beautiful** can be learned and shared!



Sources: Recovery Is Beautiful

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities

www.oacbha.org (614)224-1111

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