



Living with a mental illness is about recovery, what that own person's definition of recovery is for themselves and their own experience with mental illness. Each person is on a different path of recovery. By sharing a short story about my life, I hope to close the gap to how alone one might feel in the recovery process.

My recovery did not just happen effortlessly. I was fed up with stay of committals, hospitalizations, and my lack of safety being homeless at times. I decided to move into adult foster care in 2007 and work on utilizing the resources needed to get better. While still having some miserable symptoms (such as feeling possessed, mania, and paranoia) I made sure to talk to my Psychiatrist's nurse regularly when those symptoms would flare up. This helped to get the medications and doses right so I could function. I sign up for an ARMHS through CMMHC. The ARMHS worker was my advocate, resource, and "head" when I needed her to be. We would meet once a week, even when things were great and there was nothing I needed, for medical documentation my workers needed to know when I was great as well as when I was having symptoms. We could refer to what was working and what was not. Over time my health got better. I was hospitalized one more time in 2013 for a medication change to a generation 3 medication. My ARMHS participation was switched over to the ACT team and I for the first time in my life I felt as though I recovered. After that I got my certification for Peer Support Specialist and I now work at the Northway IRT helping others start their journey to recovery.

This journey was long and sometimes painful. I found that even though I did not seem to be paying much attention in the past, when given resources, I still was able to utilize them when I needed the resources the most later in life. People did give up on me and I gave up on myself more than once. I had to stop judging people for their stern attitudes, or just my own paranoia. Taking the information needed to recover sometimes meant being selfish, letting go of judging attitudes, and getting the information I needed. My path to recovery was frustrating at times but I did not give up and I made it! With all the different stages I had of mental illness, from incoherent laughing to anger and more, I believe all of us can recover if we take care of our minds and bodies and utilize our resources.

*We are the evidence; We hold the hope.*