

*"We are all broken, that's how the light gets in." - Hemmingway*

As is true for many injuries, illnesses, and life events, it is also possible to recover from a mental illness or mental health crisis. I didn't know that. Nobody ever told me that recovery is possible. The stoic faces of therapists and Psychiatrists gave me little hope.

When I was diagnosed with first one disorder, then another, then another I became absolutely without hope for myself and my future. Everything seemed to revolve around my symptoms and my medications, and my providers. I didn't even know what most of the people who came to my house to deliver services where even there for and nothing seemed to ever change.

I didn't feel heard because when I asked questions, the answer was either a big circle of nothing or over my head. I resigned myself to a dreamless life where nothing would ever get better and getting through the day was my only goal. I was sick, I was broken, I was the stigma of a person with mental health issues. It was a death sentence.

I began to understand that my wellness was up to me and I didn't want to be sick. I started to really think about how I needed to feel in order to function and what I might need to do to feel that way. Despite my barriers, I decided I was going to live the best possible life that I could. I worked on my homework. Therapy, coping skills, social skills, parenting skills, and a job all became connected to give me a sense of purpose that I could manage.

Over time, my mental illness was no longer the most important thing in my life, living was. Today I consider myself recovered from my mental illness. That doesn't mean I no longer have to take care of my mental health, I do, just proactively instead of reactively. I've learned to listen to my body's subtle cues that things may not be optimal. I've learned coping skills to keep my mind from spinning and my emotions from getting out of control (most of the time).

Most importantly I've learned that I am not my mental illness. Recovery from my mental illness has made me a stronger person. I have found the positive in this situation and I celebrate it.

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