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## Some RECOVERY DO's and DON'Ts for PEOPLE DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

AFFIRMATION: **ALL PEOPLE** have the right to **CHOOSE** their own **RECOVERY DO's and DON'Ts**.

**DO HOLD ON TO YOUR DREAMS...**To get ANYWHERE BETTER, you have to picture and dream of someplace BETTER, and you have to GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION to be someplace BETTER, realizing it will take work, effort and help to get there.

**DO PAY ATTENTION TO AND SORT OUT YOUR VALUES AND WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN YOUR LIFE...**Your values are the important beliefs about how to live that should steer and guide your life course, and help you set goals along your Recovery path, while you work towards your preferred Recovery/life story.

**DO SET LIFE GOALS CONSISTENT WITH YOUR VALUES and CONSISTENT WITH WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU....** Your valued life goals are the destinations you wish to reach. These goals help you plan what paths to take on your road map to Recovery, and help you decide what skills you need to learn and work on to get where you want to go.

**DO NOT SELL YOURSELF SHORT...** While you do not want to set yourself up to fail with supposedly 'unrealistic' goals, the act of setting high goals and of having HIGH HOPES can empower you to take steps that can lead you all kinds of good places..steps you will HAVE TO take to start getting ANYWHERE better..

**DO NOT THINK THAT YOU ARE TOO 'SICK' TO RECOVER...**Research has proven that even people with the most severe mental health problems can Recover to the point of having a high quality of life.

7-23-2012

**DO NOT THINK THAT SHOWING UP FOR A MEDICATION SCRIPT IS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO RECOVER....** Medication can be one tool that can be used to assist with Recovery. But rehabilitation from any type of severe problem (including severe mental health problems) requires that YOU DO THE WORK and the EMOTIONAL HEAVY LIFTING (with help) day after day for as long as needed.

**DO REMEMBER** that while CHANGING your actions and thoughts often is part of Recovery, learning to ACCEPT and COPE with your challenges is another powerful way you can move forward (even if none of this is EASY).

**DO REMEMBER** that while it is normal to be AMBIVALENT (have mixed feelings) about what you need to do to Recover, ultimately it is UP TO YOU to decide if your current mental health challenges are getting in the way of your valued life goals, and if so, to decide what you want to do about it (including if you want to get and accept help).

While it may have taken some time for things to get as bad as they are, and while your challenges probably will not go away overnight, if you apply new learning TODAY, or if you catch yourself in an old habit, and see something differently TODAY, it can start getting better TODAY.

**DO REMEMBER** that while to try and fail over and over is discouraging, when working to lift a heavy weight, you have to TRAIN AND TRY EVEN HARDER because of how hard it is, you cannot give up. Positive effort can and will MOVE YOU FORWARD, but if the wind is blowing hard enough, sometimes positive effort KEEPS YOU FROM MOVING BACKWARD, or helps you MOVE BACKWARD MORE SLOWLY.

YOUR EFFORT ALWAYS MATTERS, it matters even more when it seems like nothing matters.

**DO NOT THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO DO THIS ALL ON YOUR OWN...** There are people just like you out there going through similar tough times, and when you

7-23-2012

work WITH YOUR PEERS, you CAN LEARN TO HELP EACH OTHER. PROFESSIONAL HELP is available not just to help you get motivated, but TO HELP YOU LEARN NEW SKILLS or REMEMBER SKILLS YOU USED TO HAVE to help you move towards your valued life goals, to learn to help yourself.

LEARNING IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE.

**DO NOT DEFINE YOURSELF BY YOUR PROBLEMS OR ILLNESS.** You are SO MUCH MORE THAN your PROBLEMS and your mental health CHALLENGES. It is bad enough that to some degree there is still STIGMA in society about mental health problems. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STIGMATIZE YOURSELF! You are a GOOD PERSON, you did not ASK FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, and you will need your SELF ESTEEM to help you make good choices for your Recovery.

**DO PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETINGS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.**

You want to make sure that between your therapy sessions, you are keeping track of your positive efforts and noting your progress and struggles. Because SHARED DECISION MAKING is part of the Recovery Model, you want to be ready to speak up to discuss your questions and concerns about your treatment and your Recovery, when you meet with your mental health providers.

**DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE...**Even in the worst of times, it is possible to find STRENGTHS within yourself, or SUPPORTS you did not know were there. As you get better at getting up each time you fall or are knocked down, you can learn how to better handle the next obstacle or roadblock, or to even avoid it.

PERSEVERENCE (never giving up) will lead to RESILIENCE, as you learn how to and get better at dealing with the stress of the challenging things in your life.

YOU ARE A SURVIVOR.